

Speaking notes for presentation to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans by Dan Edwards, Executive Director of the Area A Crab Fishery based in northern British Columbia

I am a long time fishermen from the West Coast of Vancouver island, my son and I own a longline groundfish vessel together that fishes in the integrated groundfish fishery, I have over fifty years of working on the water in a variety of fisheries, and am a past vice president of the Canadian Council of Professional Fish harvesters, presently a member and alternate on the Canadian Federation of Independent Fish Harvesters and I represent the longline fishery in a variety of forums in B.C. I represent the commercial fishing industry on the West Coast Aquatic, a management board mandated under the Oceans Act in 2001.

I have been working for the Area A Crab fishery as their Executive Director since 2009 and am presently the acting e.d. of a coastwide crab association. When I first started working for Area A I told them I was going to focus my efforts on Integrated marine Planning, which at that time was just starting to ramp up through the PNCIMA process. Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area, which encompassed the area in which these fishermen worked, the Hecate Straits, Haida Gwaii and Queen Charlotte Sound.

The Department has a mandate under the Oceans Act to facilitate and enable cooperative relationships between agencies, other governments and stakeholders, including First Nation and Coastal communities in developing an integrated marine planning process. I had already spent ten years of my life working on building an Aquatic Management Board on the West Coast of Vancouver island during the nineties that was mandated under the Oceans Act to integrate marine governance with four levels of government for the west coast of Vancouver Island and I believed, and I still do, that the only way to properly manage ocean space is by cooperatively organizing all the relevant governments and their agencies and stakeholders under a principle driven ecosystem based governance process. The need to integrate fisheries into this type of process in the north coast, had become critical, with the rising potential for significantly increased freighter traffic, wind and other alternate power generation being contemplated, the aspirations of First Nations in the region in developing their own coastal and ocean marine plans, and a rising interest in developing protected areas not only to protect unique habitats but also to provide exclusive opportunities for First Nation food social and ceremonial fisheries, one of the stated objectives of the Canadian Marine Protected Area Strategy. We were also seeing significant changes to the marine environment that pointed to both climate change and ocean acidification impacts that research is now showing having significant negative effects on shellfish.

The Area A Crab industry, working closely with the Commercial Fishing Caucus, which was set up specifically to focus on marine planning by all the fishing interests in the region, spent a considerable amount of time supporting the initial PNCIMA process, which was providing capacity for proper engagement of many interests that would otherwise not had the capacity to engage, by an 8 and 1/2 million dollar Moore Foundation grant in partnership with DFO. The previous government, in 2013, killed the Moore grant, citing concerns around American ENGOs influencing Canadian government policy, and influenced by negative lobbying of the

integrated process by both the Chamber of Shipping and the Oil and Gas industry, which were concerned about the Northern Gateway proposal at the time. When this occurred, the building momentum around integrated marine planning in the north coast of B.C., from our perspective in the crab industry, all but disappeared. Out of the ashes of that exercise came the use of that money to support the Provincial government and 18 First Nations in the region in developing their own truncated planning process. I call it truncated because the Federal government specifically refused to participate and by withholding their mandate, very seriously undermined the opportunity for Integrated marine planning. Area A Crab and the Commercial Fishing caucus continued to participate in MaPP (Marine Planning Process)while other fishing interests withdrew, citing the lack of Federal involvement, which manages fisheries, as the rationale for their withdrawal.

Area A and the other remaining CFC partners took the position that we were better off supporting those elements of marine planning in MaPP that were important to fisheries, such as foreshore infrastructure and coastal community economic and social agendas, which were under the mandate of the Provincial government. We also objected to the use of this planning process to zone Marine protected areas under IUCN designations because the IUCN designations specifically speak to fisheries management curtailment and this planning process had no mandate, due to the absence of the Federal government, to mandate these types of potential fisheries closed areas. Our advice on this matter was noted but ignored and these plans to this day continue to identify significant ocean areas as potential IUCN IB areas, which means that, if gazetted, they would be closed to all fisheries except First Nation Food Social and Ceremonial Fisheries. Many of these potential IUCN designated areas include some of the most productive fishing areas in the north coast region.

In our research into this situation in respect to the development of MPAs, the commercial industry in partnership with the ENGO community hosted a major science workshop on MPAs two years ago in Vancouver, and it became clear in our reading of the proceedings from this workshop, that in areas of the world where well managed fisheries existed, MPAs were of little use and in those jurisdictions, the establishment of MPAs would have serious negative economic consequences to the existing fisheries while providing little conservation benefit. In areas of the world where there was little or no fisheries management structure, and where the species of fish in some of these areas were of a sedentary nature, MPAs have shown to be useful. In B.C. The commercial fishing industry was supportive for instance in establishing Rockfish Conservation Areas, because it was obvious to those of us who fished these species, and I was one of them, that these more sedentary species would benefit from being in protected areas. Ironically, in this latest debate around what is considered to be a worthwhile closed area protection, these areas are not considered by the ENGO community or by the present review process looking at existing closed areas as part of the overall percentage of spatial protection to be worthwhile for inclusion because they do not fit the IUCN criteria, which from our perspective as fishermen, is a ridiculous stance to take.

In respect to the Dungeness crab fishery, these animals live in an open ended fluid environment. The early larval life cycle lives in the water column and travel hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles on ocean currents and the second life cycle, the megalop life cycle, is also highly mobile in the water column. It is only when the animal settles out and stays on the bottom do they become more sedentary but they have been known to travel great distances as adults in search of food sources. Species like Dungeness crab would be very difficult to protect unless very large MPAs were created and even then, the question is: Protect for what purpose? The same question needs to be asked for a majority of pelagic ocean species that are presently being fished sustainably through proven fisheries management methodologies. The management of Dungeness crab is done by season, size and sex restrictions and effort and license controls. This method of management has been successful in maintaining healthy biomass populations of Dungeness crab for over a hundred years along its Pacific range from California to Alaska. The Area A fleet is further managed through tracking of all trap hauls through camera and GPS technology so its actual ocean footprint is tracked right down to the individual trap for the last seventeen years. There would appear to be no rationale to set up an MPA to protect this species because of both its life cycle in the water column and the success of its existing management regime.

However, the use of MPAs to lock out sand habitats as one type of unique habitat to limit human activity and maintain pristine environments is now on the table as a possible part of the MPA network design for the North Coast bioregion. One area in the Hecate Strait being contemplated as an IUCN 1B designation, in some years contains significant crab catches. The potential negative consequences of locking out that area will create economic hardship for this fleet.

That being said, the government of Canada has committed to five and ten Percent MPA protection in its EEZ within the next three years. We know that this is a political commitment that will be acted upon. Considering the facts I have just presented, the present Terms of Reference for designing and implementing these MPAs is in our estimation inadequate considering the risks involved to the long term economic and social viability of the fishery with very little conservation benefit. We are being told that we will be consulted and be allowed to give advice to a tri-partite government structure consisting of Federal, Provincial and First Nations governments. There is no commitment to collaborative decision making in relation to this file despite the Prime Minister's mandate letter that commits to this type of process. There are no conflict resolution principles within the Terms of Reference yet it was obvious from the science workshop in Vancouver that the inclusion of structural adjustment funds to compensate for lost opportunity of traditional users of the resource was a critical component of the planning process. The Australian example of providing structural adjustment at the end of the process of creating the Great Barrier Reef protected area was a glaring example of how not to design MPAs yet the Canadian OAP has no Terms of Reference at the outset of the planning process to cover the conflict resolution, mitigation, and compensation components of this planning exercise. And the MPA strategy is being treated as a one off process, not integrated in a meaningful way within an overarching integrated ecosystem based governance structure. It is in fact ignoring the existing combined governance bodies that were set up to manage bioregions. On the west Coast of Vancouver Island, the DFO has deliberately sidelined the

Aquatic Management Board in the region that was specifically set up in the region to oversee the management of the ocean space within its mandate and is setting up a separate consultative process that is bypassing this board altogether.

In conclusion, Integrated Marine Planning is very important to maintain the future health of Canada's marine area. MPAs are only one tool of many that may be needed to achieve these planning objectives. There is growing evidence that MPAs are being oversold for their benefits and it is well known in the field of Marine Planning that one of the major mistakes in this relatively new field is to treat Marine Plans as mirror images of terrestrial plans. Unlike Terrestrial Areas, Marine areas are not static, they are highly variable and more mobile than the terrestrial environment and we need to take that into account when contemplating the possibility of locking out large areas of ocean space from human use. We see the need for a much more responsive and structured Terms of Reference for including the affected commercial industries into the MPA planning process. There is too much at stake for this industry to simply be part of a very loose consultative process that at the end of the day could very well see major negative economic consequences for our fishery. We are more than willing to be constructive partners in the design functions and the knowledge that fishermen have of the marine environment needs to be incorporated into the design framework in a meaningful way.