

August 2, 2013



Brian Braidwood,
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Hon. Gail Shea
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Room 556, Confederation Building
Ottawa, ON
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(619) 992-9223

Dear Minister Shea,

The Dean River in British Columbia is considered among the very best steelhead sport fisheries and every year anglers from around the world come to British Columbia in their pursuit.

However, large-scale non-selective gill net fisheries in Dean Channel and Fitz Hugh Sound (the outer reaches of Dean channel) capture and often kill steelhead in large number. During commercial gill net openings for chum salmon, sport fishing is dramatically impacted and many of the fish that do reach the Dean River bear fresh wounds from their time spent in these nets. Visitors are far less likely to come back after witnessing fish in this condition and are more likely to boycott steelhead fishing in Canada altogether.

When gill net fisheries do occur in conflict with steelhead returns selective harvest methodologies should be mandatory. The Steelhead Society of British Columbia strongly recommends the implementation of selective fish harvesting practices (e.g., purse seine or use of weed lines) in Area 8 to help manage all incidental bycatch. Ideally, cork to web distances should be at least 100 cm to allow shallow swimming steelhead to pass over gill nets (as currently done in area 8-8). We determine that Fitz Hugh Sound and Dean Channel are all part of the same long body of water and; therefore, request that both these measures be implemented from sub area 8-1 to 8-8 and from July 1- August 31.

The implementation of these measures would continue to provide a viable large-scale commercial fishery while protecting critical non-target species. It would also support the conservation of one of the most important sport fish in the world and the substantial revenue they generate.

Yours truly,

Steve Morrow, SSBC, NRT, BNRS, PBJOUR, Guide Blackwells Lodge, Dean River, BC

Brian Braidwood, President SSBC