Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

ALYSSA BALL

BA (Simon Fraser University, 2017)

“Fisheries at a new scale: The contributions of archaeological fish scales in understanding Indigenous fisheries in Wuikinuxv First Nation territory and beyond”

Department of Anthropology

Friday, May 14, 2021
1:00 P.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Iain McKechnie, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Quentin Mackie, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Natalie Ban, School of Environmental Studies, UVic

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Dr. Terri Lacourse, Department of Biology, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Archaeological fisheries information represented in fish scales provides relative abundance and age-at-harvest data that can assist in understanding a range of culturally vital Indigenous fisheries. In this thesis, I undertake fish scale analysis (squamatology) to explore fish scale preservation in twelve coastal archaeological sites from two First Nations’ territories in coastal British Columbia (Wuikinuxv and Tseshaht). These data demonstrate that fish scales are more readily preserved in coastal archaeological deposits than is currently appreciated and can refine species-level identification of culturally significant Indigenous fisheries including forage fish and salmon. Fish scales can additionally generate baseline data on age-at-harvest in Pacific herring and when considered alongside other fisheries records provide relative abundance records for forage fisheries in Wuikinuxv territory that span the last 3000 years. This study additionally temporally anchors eulachon fishing along the Wannock River by at least 3000 years ago extending upon previous archaeological assessments by over 2000 years. I apply the concept of two-eyed seeing, as envisaged by Mi’kmaw elder Dr. Albert Marshall, to recognize the strengths of Indigenous and Western perspectives in developing decolonial practices for sharing archaeological fisheries data with community-based fisheries managers. Two-eyed seeing highlights the strength of archaeological data as deep time records of Indigenous fisheries that can be anchored by Indigenous knowledge including cultural stewardship and fishing practices. In this case study, I provide baseline fisheries data co-derived from archaeological and Indigenous knowledges including deep time accounts of relative abundance and traditional harvest methods that community-based managers may wish to use on their terms to pursue future activities of restoration, renewal, and affirmation of traditional fishing practices.