

Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association



Quality
is in our nature

The Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association (PUHA) was legally incorporated under the Societies Act of British Columbia in 1992 to represent the 110 red sea urchin licence holders as well as the divers, deck hands and processors involved in the industry.

The goals and objectives of PUHA centre on:

- Ensuring the fishery is a model of sustainability;
- Maximizing the economic value of the catch; and
- Increasing community awareness and knowledge of our industry.

Our Commitment

We at PUHA are dedicated to providing the highest quality and best value product possible and strive to consistently exceed our customers' expectations for our products and for how we conduct our fishery. We are continually upgrading our Quality Control and Quality Assurance (QC/QA) measures, improving handling and logistical coordination and enhancing customer communications. In a spirit of full and open disclosure, PUHA provides free access to all the reports and studies we have undertaken and invites comments from any interested party through the PUHA website (www.puha.org).

Red Sea Urchin

Red sea urchins are the largest sea urchin in the world and are found only along the rocky sub-tidal Pacific shores of North America. The bright red or dark burgundy animals graze on kelp and opportunistically on many other available organic materials. They are harvested for their gonad tissues, otherwise known as uni, a very highly valued seafood delicacy. Uni is a signature sashimi item in Japanese cuisine but is also used in soups, custards and seafood dishes in many other cultures as a flavour enhancer. Sea urchins from the clean cold Pacific waters of B.C. produce some of the world's sweetest uni.

Red sea urchins have few predators, and none so voracious as the Sea otter. In areas where Sea otters have re-populated, sea urchin, clam, abalone and crab stocks are all severely reduced. Sea otter populations are growing rapidly in B.C. and these animals have been identified as a major concern to the sustainability of B.C.'s sea urchin fisheries.



Fishery

The first B.C. landings of red sea urchins were recorded in 1978. The fishery is managed under a precautionary regime that includes conservative harvest quotas, a minimum size limit of 90 mm, area licencing and an individual quota (IQ) program. PUHA regularly consults with Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (D.F.O.), British Columbia's Ministry of Environment and Workers Compensation Board (W.C.B.), Native Bands and other non-government organizations on issues regarding red sea urchin management in B.C..

The Association collects and administers an annual licencing fee to fund on-grounds monitoring, off-load validation and research, underscoring our commitment to sustainability. Under these systems, every commercially harvested urchin is weighed, and the date, area of harvest and other important harvest information is recorded by an independent, third party validating company.

Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing

PUHA ratified the code of conduct for responsible fishing in 1999. The code provides general principles and guidelines for commercial fishing operations. Adherence to the code contributes directly to the conservation of stocks and the protection of the aquatic environment of present and future generations.

Processing the Product

There are seven major processors of sea urchins in B.C., all located in or around Vancouver. The plants are federally registered and inspected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. At the processing facility each urchin is cracked so the roe can be scooped out, rinsed and cleaned. The roe is then set with a light brine/preserving solution before being carefully graded and packed onto small wooden or plastic trays. These are refrigerated, placed in insulated containers and air shipped to the customers so the uni is generally available on store shelves within 48 hours of being off-loaded at the dock, even in Japan.

Research

PUHA conducts annual biomass surveys in collaboration with Federal, Provincial and other community authorities, including First Nations. Research is prioritized based on community interest, D.F.O. requests and industry advice. PUHA has set aside five major fishing areas for experimental work on sea urchin biology and ecology including ongoing, long term studies on growth, recruitment, mortality, optimum densities, diet and product quality relationships and interactions with other species.



Sea Urchin Processors

Grand Hale Marine Products Ltd.

11151 Twigg Place
Richmond, B.C. V6V 2Y2
Office: 604.325.9393
Fax: 604.325.9310
ghale@intergate.bc.ca

Paladin International Food Sales Ltd.

#9-12671 Bathgate Way
Richmond, B.C. V6V 1J7
Office: 604.821.0133
Fax: 604.821.0155
paladin@inifinet.net

RBS Seafood Harvesting Ltd.

151 Government Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 2K6
Office: 250.383.6410
Fax: 250.383.6403
Toll Free: 1.866.383.6410
info@rbsseafoods.com

Seagate Fisheries Ltd.

12180 Vulcan Way
Richmond, B.C. V6V 1J8
Office: 604.278.8684
Fax: 604.278.8270
seagate@shawcable.com

Sung Fish Co. Ltd.

1795 Pandora Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1L8
Office: 604.255.4718
Fax: 604.255.4781
sales@sungfish.com

Territory Seafoods

8383 Crompton Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5X 4J1
Office: 604.322.7700
Fax: 604.322.7712
territory@telus.net

PUHA is a member of



Nutrition Information for Sea Urchins

Sea urchin roe (uni) is a good source of energy, omega 3 fatty acids, polyunsaturated fatty acids, protein, minerals (such as zinc) and vitamins

Calories	-----172kcal/100g
Protein - total	-----13.27%
Polyunsaturated fatty acids	-----1.75%
Omega 3 fatty acids	-----1.07%
Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)	-----.79%
Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)	-----.04%
Zinc	-----17.00 ppm

Links

PUHA www.puha.org
D&D Pacific Fisheries www.d-dpacificfisheries.com
BC Seafood Alliance www.seafoodalliance.com
Code of Conduct www.responsiblefishing.com

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