



P. U. H. A. NEWSLETTER

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President's report --MIKE FEATHERSTONE

Presently the Total Catch for the 2004/2005 season is just over 8 million pounds; comparatively this is approximately 500,000 pounds behind last season. The south coast landings are slightly better than last season with over 97% of the TAC completed. The north coast however is further behind last season with presently only 78% of the TAC completed. The forecast from the processors is that the market can continue into May, unfortunately the weather has slowed the landings to a dribble over the past 2 weeks.

PUHA has coordinated closely with DFO and D&D to set up a workable final clean up schedule. DFO has permitted 2 fleets to operate one starting in the central and the second starting in the far north at Dundas. The value of this flexibility is that it provides better opportunity for continuity of landings, for example if the weather is affecting the northern fleet it may not affect the central coast to the same extent (or visa versa). Secondly by spreading the effort each fleet has time to explore each RU area and fish areas not previously accessed. So far this has resulted in particularly positive results in the central where a group of up to 11 vessels managed to complete Smith, Rivers, Hakai and Nalau – of which most of these quotas were not completed in past years. The processors comments were mixed but generally the product was acceptable! For the northern fleet weather has been hindering progress as there are no protected areas to fish.

In terms of validations there are presently 7 licences outstanding. This is a concern as the PUHA budget costs are fixed prior to the season and there is very little wiggle room. Nevertheless PUHA should complete this season without running into a deficit position as there has been savings in the research and biologist portions of the budget. However the fishing schedule relative to the remaining quota may cause some problems with respect to cost. This is due to the requirement to have an OGM in the QCC and Dundas RU areas. At this time there is only 4 days left in the OGM budget and any further requirements beyond this will incur costs. There is 500,000 lbs left in the QCC RU areas and over 200,000 lbs in the Dundas RU areas. The result is that with the presently validated licences all the remaining mainland RU quotas will need to be

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- Office
- 604-524-0322
- Fax
- 640-524-1023
- E-mail
- puha@telus.net
- Web Site
- www.puha.org

Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations & Construction Standards

Transport Canada is introducing new *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* under the Regulatory Reform initiative. These new Regulations are planned to come into force at the end of 2006. Since February 2004, Transport Canada Marine Safety has conducted many consultation sessions to discuss the proposed requirements that will apply to the Small Fishing Vessels (up to 24 metres in length). These consultations will refine the requirements to be included into the new *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations*.

Transport Canada is introducing a single construction standard for all small fishing vessels under 24 metres in length. Core technical requirements have been established with differences accommodated through exception statements and appendices as appropriate. "Risk-based" methodology is being applied in all of the regulatory requirements. Flexibility and choice of alternative arrangements will provide stakeholders different ways of meeting the "equivalent" level of safety requirements. Copies of the Construction Standard will be available at the meetings or you may view online at www.cmac-ccmc.gc.ca/En/onlinemenu.htm

Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations Sessions will be held as follows 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm.

April 25, 2005	Vancouver, B.C.	Best Western Richmond Inn 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond, B.C.	604-273-7878
April 27, 2005	Campbell River, B. C.	Campbell River Community Centre 401-11th Ave. Campbell River, B. C.	250-286-1161
April 29, 2005	Prince Rupert, B. C.	UFAWU Fisherman's Hall 869 Fraser St. Prince Rupert, B.C.	250-624-6048

tidbits

Canadian Fishing Vessels more than 65 ft involved in fish packing or processing in the U.S. are required to have an Automatic Identification System on board.

The Canadian Vessel FV Freeport packing herring out of Sitka was recently issued a captain of the port (COPT) order by the U.S. Coastguard for not having an AIS on board. They were required to correct this deficiency by March 31, 2005 or not be allowed back in the U.S. This type of order can also require a vessel to be tied to the dock.

The urchin price paid to the Chilean boats is 35 pesos per kilo, (current exchange rate is 590 pesos to the U.S. dollar, 485 pesos to the Canadian dollar) this is because by the time it gets to the plant it can be 4 days old and not very well looked after. This was quoted from a Chilean sea urchin buyer.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT—continued

completed in order for all present licences to be completed. If each RU area on the mainland is not completed this will mean the fleet will have to return to the QCC or Dundas and thus require an OGM or not all active tabs will be completed.

Due to the continued fleet activity the Quota Planning Sessions for the 2005/2006 season will be delayed until the majority of the vessels have ceased fishing. PUHA will send out a notice once a date has been set, tentatively the meeting will be held in mid to late May. This is the most important meeting of the year for all divers and skippers to provide input into the schedule and quotas for the next season. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to provide their input. If you are not able to attend you can also provide any suggestions for improvement in writing to either D&D or to PUHA.

Global fisheries

At this time **Chile** has not started fishing. The companies have offered the harvest vessels 230 pesos/kg (\$Cnd .22/lb) and the fishermen are not accepting this price at this time (pers comm.) These prices are based on landings in La Playa and product from further south is subject to deductions for packing and trucking. The majority of the Chilean product is steamed and frozen resulting a lower priced product which does not compete directly with our fresh market. There is some product which is water packed and shipped for repacking in LA.

The largest exporter of live sea urchins to Japan is **Russia**, which exported to Japan 7,905 MT during the January-September period in 2004--an increase of 13.3% from 6,979 MT in the same period of 2003. However, the average unit import price to Japan decreased by 15.5% from ¥542 per kg to ¥458 per kg. This trend has increased into 2005 with Russia continuing to provide large supplies directly into Hokkaido. Presently the supply has slowed considerably providing an opportunity for Canada. Imports of live sea urchin from the **United States** into Japan decreased sharply from 105 MT in 2003 to 53 MT in 2004, a decrease of 49.7%. The average import price for US urchins also decreased from ¥1,003 per kg in 2003 to ¥826, a decrease of 17.6%. The US producers have increasingly focused on their domestic market in past years due to declining price pressures in Japan. PUHA continues to work on the Russian over fishing problem.

Transportation and Logistics Study

PUHA has just received a \$21,000 grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to develop a program to improve the logistics in the handling and transporting of red sea urchins from harvest to processing and shipping to end receivers. The study will examine current practices with an eye to improving quality and value. One aspect of the study will include the use of new containers to prevent breakage and water damage.

Abalone Recovery Update

Tim Joys attended the recovery team workshop for PUHA. The recovery team appreciates the information provided by PUHA harvest logs and PUHA continues to support the collection of data. One interesting point to note was a presentation from C&P regarding the possession of abalone shells. Apparently charges can be laid with possible fines up to \$50,000 for the possession of an abalone shell. This point was further discussed at the recent Red Sea Urchin Sectoral Meeting where PUHA representatives pointed out that empty shells may be inadvertently picked up by the live urchins and included in the harvest bags. We warn all divers, tenders and skippers to be aware of these regulations. If you see any suspicious activity involving abalone please call 1 800 465 4336 (Coast Watch).



D. & d. Pacific report

Since the 1st of April, only seven ZC tabs have not registered with PUHA. The season was first expected to leave over ten tabs in the water, but with the lease prices down, many fishers have commented on the season ending not too bad. The bad part of the fishery is the weather. Constant weather patterns have been restricting harvest on the mainland at this time.

South Coast – There has been no activity in the south coast since the Bamfield quota was active back in early March. Over 97% of the south coast quota has been taken, with the exception of Bamfield and Sydney Inlet. It seems to be understood that the remaining quotas in the south coast will remain in the water due to lack of interest in the area(s) by buyers.

North Coast – The fleet left the Queen Charlotte quota areas with product remaining in the water. Over 75% of the north coast quota has been taken, which has not changed for over 17 days.

The top of Langara and the Westside all have quota remaining due to quality and weather. Quality was a problem at the top of the islands and most of the Westside. The fleet left unexpectedly from Englefield which resulted in a possible return to the Queen Charlotte quota area in the summer.

A possible return to the Charlottes is due to the number of ZC tabs not registering this season, and the fact that if we leave too much in the Charlottes, we will not have enough quotas for the active tabs to finish on the mainland.

Since the fleet has been on the mainland, we have also left the Dundas Island area quotas behind as well. The amount of quota left behind the fleet will dictate whether we go back to the Charlottes. The problem that the fleet faces is that we now have to pick all pounds remaining in the quota areas that are in front of them, the good and the bad. If we leave any pounds on the mainland it will result in two scenarios:

1. Active tabs will not be able to complete their individual quota(s) and will cease fishing,
2. We will be required to return to the Queen Charlottes and /or return to Dundas Island.

If the fleet has to return to the Charlottes or Dundas, the program has only four days left of the monitoring budget. PUHA will have to come up with more money for monitoring unless Fisheries and Oceans can produce funds to monitor. The QCI and area 3 both require monitoring of the fleet due political reasons – unlike other areas of the mainland.

It is expected by consult of buyers that a fleet will be active through May of this season. Currently, there are two fleets working in the north coast:

Central Fleet – is active working their way up to Shearwater and over to the west side of Aristazabal Island. The fleet has been lucky as it relates to the weather, and has fished most of their at-sea days. Their buyers shut them down over the Easter long weekend, but are active again.

North Fleet – was active in the Dundas north quota in late March, but has been stuck in port for over ten days with weather problems restricting them from fishing the Tree Nob quota area. Unfortunately, the only areas available for fishing in the north are exposed areas the fleet had left behind previously due to weather.

PUHA and DFO have been consulting on the clean-up schedule and protocol with each other, and have agreed on a clean-up plan that will enable two fleets to work at both ends of the mainland coast. The agreement by DFO is a big one that will see harvest from two fleets without an On-grounds Monitor. PUHA has a great opportunity to show DFO that they are able to conduct their harvest activities in a responsible manner, following the protocol strictly. Any deviation from the protocol or breach of the ZC Conditions of licence will result in the coast closing until a monitor can be funded. As of today the fleet is active or actively trying to fish around the weather, and yes they are following the protocol very well.