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PRESIDENT'S REPORT—MIKE FEATHERSTONE

The 2012 season was off to a positive start with a good market and near record high December landings (of almost 1 million pounds) in the North. The New Year started slowly due to the weather but when the crews did return to the fishing grounds the market was favorable and fishing was good. Unfortunately the weather turned again and the freezing temperatures forced the vessels to shut down. The winds are hampering fishing and the fleet has run to town and there has been no fishing for over 2 weeks. Everyone is hoping the weather will moderate and the market will stay strong. The overall landings are now behind last year due to the poor January.

Transport Canada is running a number of outreach sessions for fishing vessel operators to register for their Canadian Number and submit a declaration of at least seven years as master of a fishing vessel. The Marine Personnel Regulations came into effect 1, 2007. They require that the master of any fishing vessel to hold:

A master certificate

Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP) training

A Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCCOC)

A declaration of at least 7 years as a master of a fishing vessel of up to 15 gross tonnage or not more than 12 meters in overall length

Vessels with LOA of over 6 meters required by November 15/2015.

Check out the dates of the outreach sessions in this newsletter and on line.

The TC website is:

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/regions.htm>

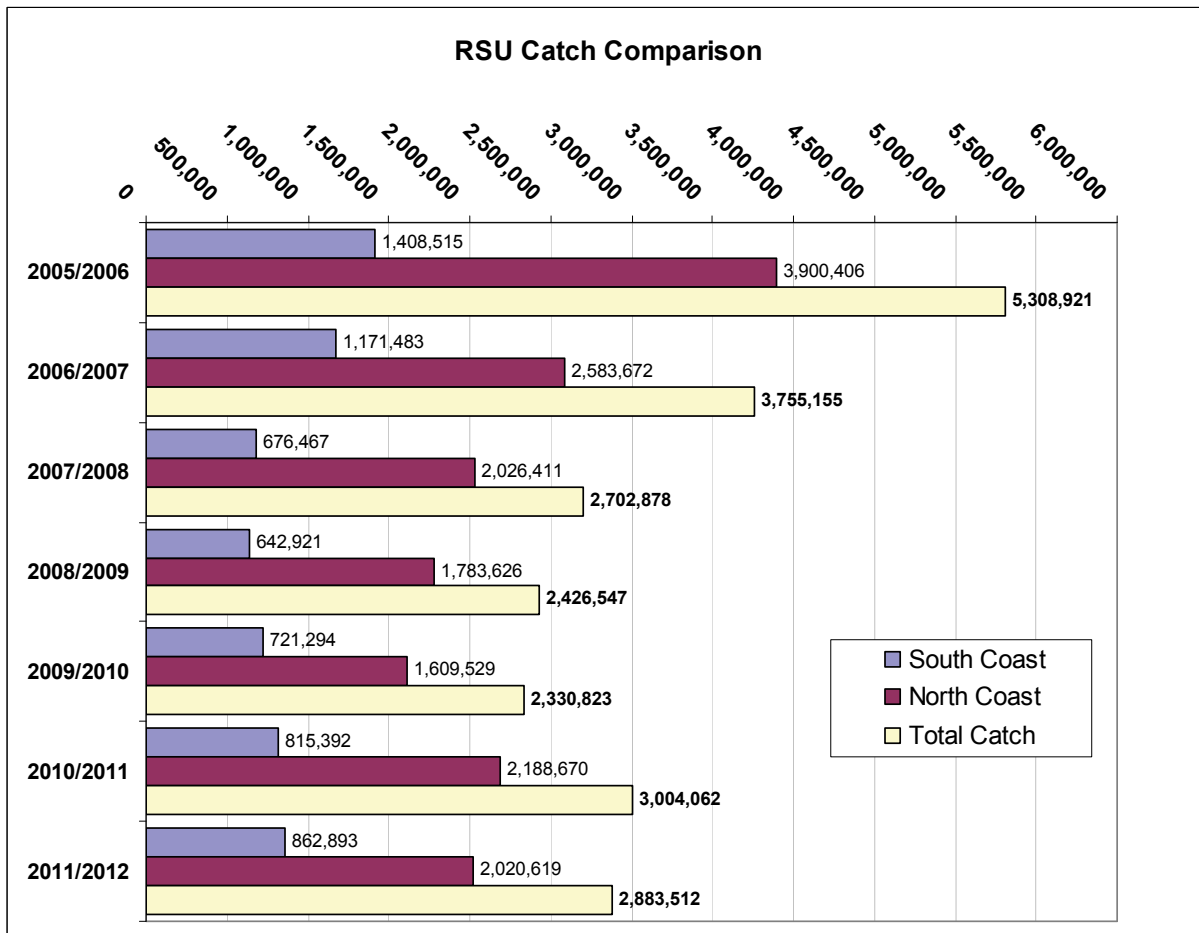
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Red Sea Urchin Update – January 2012

Catch Comparison to Date (January, 2012)



VMS (Vessel Monitoring System):

North Coast:

Weather has caused major delays in harvest. Temperatures exceeded -20 Celsius. The North Coast fleet(s) have not fished since the 17th of January. No word on when they will return, but a snow and chill warning was issued on January 24th for the north and central coast. Trucking was also problematic as the route to Vancouver was plagued with accidents and road closures. Expect to see fishing in quota areas close to Prince Rupert when they do start up again.

South Coast:

Minimal fishing also in the south due to the weather on Vancouver Island. Vessels are now returning to the fishing grounds as weather is getting better. There still is quota in the Victoria area, and vessels are trying to clean-up quota areas that land in Campbell River. Minimal product in the quota areas north of Port Hardy and the Sea Otters are moving south by reports from Peter Codling, Chuck Cotter and many other vessels..

Happy New Year. Hopefully things are going swimmingly for everyone out fishing and everyone is staying safe. Rumour has it that things were going along nicely until the mid-January bout of winter hit and got in the way. Hopefully everyone has managed to maintain some level of comfort for both themselves and the product with extra measures to protect from damage in the freezing temperatures.

The indications coming back from processors on the market conditions have been looking up a bit this year in comparison to previous years and hopefully this is going to continue through the rest of the season. Re-building efforts in Japan, still our primary market taking about 75% of our export volume representing about 70% of the export value, are giving their economy a bit of a boost and the increasing value of the yen is making products from Canada, and admittedly other international suppliers, more attractive *vis a vis* domestic supplies in Japan. I also just read that the economic (GDP) decline in Japan has actually translated into rising per capita incomes in that country because of the declining population levels. Off the top of my head, I think Japan's population is supposed to decline by about 20% (from ~125 m to ~100 m) over the next 20 -25 years.

I have put together another funding proposal for the International Marketing through the Agriculture and AgriFood Canada AgriMarketing Program this year, again one that focusses primarily on Japan, Hong Kong and China (including Taiwan). We are also keeping a bit of an eye on Europe and the US but with each representing only about 2% of our market volume, it is as much or more because of their tender state. China is apparently doing quite nicely at this point although they are starting to ease up on the brakes a bit to make up for problems in the EU and US export markets. The consensus is that they have considerable room to manoeuvre and should be able to maintain sufficient growth to stay out of trouble. On the other side, the EU is thought to be currently in recession and there is a lot of hand wringing over the state of the US and what trouble a collapse of consumption in both might cause. Remember though that it is our modern media and that is what they do: the numbers on the US at least are not as bleak as comes across on the news and are in fact quite encouraging and one can imagine that the EU will muddle through as well.

Our program this year is much like last year's but we are again increasing levels of cooperation with the cukes and geoducks. We are also looking at increased involvement at the seafood shows in Hong Kong and Dalian (China) with them, with sablefish and with the Province and other interested parties to leverage more benefits from the program for all. One thing that seems to be a bit of a bother in most international markets is a lack of information on outlets and availability that we might be able to pass along to consumers and other potential customers. As part of this year's project we are going to try to address this by drawing on information from consumers via their smart phones as they purchase the product so we can start mapping outlets and pricing data. If information is indeed power, this should transfer some power back up the line from distributors to producers and help transform our relationship(s) with consumers.

The proposal budget comes in at about \$103 K with a request for 50% (~\$51.5 K) but, because the program has been generally over-subscribed in the last few years, this has been cut back a bit so we generally end up somewhere in the mid-40's. We should find out about the approval sometime in early April.

If you have comments etc for me- pass them along to geoffk2009@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing more of your thoughts on the fishing, marketing and market this year. Good fishing eh

PRESIDENT'S REPORT—CONTINUED

WCB has backed off on the requirements to have divers recertified every 5 years by a 3rd party located back East. Thanks to all of our members who wrote letters and special thanks to Michelle James of the UHA for organizing all diving groups to send letters and to arrange meetings to show our concerns to WCB on this issue. At the last Fish Safe meeting WCB proposed another requirement for our industry to have vessels provide daily dive location information. Of course this is a concern and we are working on alternatives. It is almost impossible and certainly impractical to have vessels provide this information individually.

On the marketing front, PUHA members joined with the Sea cucumber association at the China Seafood Show this November. See Geoff's report for details. After the show PUHA representatives joined Premier Christy Clarke in Guangzhou where the Premier signed the MOU for trade cooperation. The signing of the MOU is the conclusion of our meetings in last January with Government and Industry representatives which was initiated by Paddy Wong. One goal of the MOU is to promote trade and also work towards a more favorable duty and tariff arrangement for our seafood products. Recently I met with Associate Deputy Minister, Claude Carrier, of Agri-Food Canada. He invited me to a private face to face meeting where we discussed our marketing program, the trade shows, the challenges facing our industry and many other issues. I expressed our sincere appreciation and thanks for the continued Government funding and support. For all our fishermen and operators don't forget the spring Quota Planning Meeting. Bring all your information so we can review the quotas and make recommendations for the upcoming year. We will notify everyone once a date is finalized.

FISH SAFE

Transport Canada's Mobile Outreach, has added another two opportunities for fishermen wanting with their certification requirements, wanting to get a CDN number, renew the validity of their existing certificate or check on courses required.

The sessions start at **9:00 am** and will take place on **Monday, February 6th** and **Tuesday, February 7th** at the **Coast Plaza Hotel, 1763 Comox Street, Vancouver** and will be part of the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters Sixth General Assembly.

Remember to bring your picture ID and proof of citizenship and some cash as the certificates cost around \$30.

For other courses go to fishsafe.com —education and training



TID-BITS

HAWKAIR OFFER ON FLIGHTS TO PRINCE RUPERT

Lawrence Anderson has been able to negotiate favourable air fare rates with Hawk Air for flights into Prince Rupert from Vancouver for seafood harvest divers. The cost for a one way trip into Prince Rupert is \$215.00 plus fees and taxes. Hawk Air will not charge for any change fee or cancellation fee. The cost for a round trip with all fees and taxes included is \$543.00. The ticket is non refundable but will be valid for one year from the time of booking. Last minute bookings can be made without a penalty.

Should you have any questions, contact Liz Smaha at 250-635-4295, 1-800-487-1216 toll free or lsmaha@hawkair.ca The key word is “seafood harvest divers” for these prices.

BOUNDARIES PROPOSED FOR SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA

The governments of Canada and British Columbia have agreed on a proposed boundary for a national marine conservation area (NMCA). It would cover a broad area of approximately 1,400 sq. km. in the Southern Strait of Georgia stretching from Cordova Bay in Saanich to the south, and Gabriola Passage and southern Gabriola Island to the north, including Saanich Inlet. For a map and more details of the proposed boundary, see:

http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/amnc-nmca/cnamnc-cnnmca/dgs-ssg/page4_e.asp

After consultation with First Nations and at the conclusion of a feasibility assessment, the governments of Canada and British Columbia will determine whether to establish an NMCA in the southern gulf islands, after which Parks Canada will coordinate the preparation of an interim management plan with input from First Nations, stakeholders, and members of the public. The interim management plan will guide the management of the national marine conservation area for five years and is a required step before establishment can proceed. Then Parks Canada will recommend to Parliament the protection of the area under the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act.

This is the same process as was used to establish the Gwaii Haanas NMCA. PUHA and our members will have to monitor this process to ensure that the sea urchin fishery is not negatively impacted.

