

Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association



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Bi-Annual General Meeting 2002

P.U.H.A. BI-ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MAY 30, 2001

NANAIMO, B.C.

ATTENDEES

ROSS MORRIS MIKE FEATHERSTONE DON CHRISTIAN

MIKE MILES GARY GRANT CHUCK COTTER

DONALD ANDERSON PETER CODLING KEVAN HEARD

JOE PETERS PAUL ROBINSON BRIAN CRAWFORD

GREG LOISELLE SUNG & ALICE SIDNEY SAM SR.

MARION CAMPBELL DAVID MCRAE MARK ULANOWSKI

GEORGE DENNIS GARRY LAGOS DIMITRI TZOTZOS

ROB REYNSTEIN KEN RIDGWAY JIM HUME

CHARLES GREAVES PAUL RYN TIM JOYS

BOB HEGEDUS KELLY MOULD JACK SHIBATA

FRANCIS CHEUNG

[Meeting commenced at 9:45 a.m.](#)

The minutes of last years General Meeting were unavailable for approval.

[Presidents Report---mike featherstone](#)

Presentation of the May 5, 2000 minutes were tabled to the Annual General Meeting, but were not available for distribution for approval.

The Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association has three (3)

principals: sustainability, maximize economic value of the total allowable catch and program development with coastal communities. At the recent B. C. Seafood Summit, Brian Emmett presented a report on sustainability, which credited the development of individual quota fisheries with improvements in stock assessment, selective fishing and habitat impacts. Combined with this emphasis on sustainability the industry has positioned itself to take advantage of the market demands for high quality seafood provided to the market in a rational fashion, thus maximizing economic returns.

In personal communications with Mr. Emmett, he discussed how the Pacific Urchin Harvesters were further along than many fisheries with respect to the goals and benefits of sustainability. Complete copies of Brian Emmett's report and PriceWaterhouse State of the Industry Report are available online at www.bcseafoodalliance.com.

This year P.U.H.A. has again earmarked over \$100,000.00 towards survey and research programs to address this key objective. The majority of the biomass and research study programs are conducted with Coastal Community groups. P.U.H.A. has 5 protected study sites that are removed from the commercial fishery for long term studies of recruitment, mortality, growth and habitat effects. As well, 2% of the TAC is set aside for Section 35 use. This is in addition to the 6 communal band licences and another 6 licences held by other native participants. All members of P.U.H.A. can be congratulated for the progress towards the principals that guide the Association.

In general, the 2000/2001 fishery has been an improvement over the previous years. The progression of the fishery through the management areas went smoothly and there were very few problems, excepting the West Coast of the QCC Islands, where the weather created long delays. The prices tended to be higher and there is the lowest remaining quota since the adoption of ITQ program. P.U.H.A. in combination with D. & D. has built a good relationship with Managers, which allows the industry to control its activities within the confines of the D.F.O. requirements. The new harvest size of 90 mm seems popular with the fishermen, but there has been mixed feelings on the processors side. On the financial side, the Association is forecasting a small surplus at year-end, which is a first. The P.U.H.A. website at www.puha.org is now operating.

The Management Plan has been tweaked to further rationalize fishing efforts both by area and quality. One major change for 2001/2002 will be the opening of the West Coast of the QCC Islands by September 15th. The hope is that this will avoid the weather problems seen in the past while still getting good recoveries. The TAC remains the same as 2000/2001 pending the PSARC report expected in December 2001. Based on initial reports from the plant sampling program and the biomass survey information, it is expected that the quotas will rise for the 2002/2003 season. Issues to deal with include licence movement and area selection policy.

Although most agree they would like to see a higher TAC to accompany the 90 mm harvest size, the majority is willing to wait for the PSARC report. Relative to other fisheries, the Red Sea Urchin industry has stability and industry participants have a major input into how the Fishery is managed.

Financial Report---ross morris

As of May 30, 2001, the Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association has \$52,700.00 and anticipates expenditures during the month of June to be approximately \$12,000.00 leaving a year-end balance of \$40,000.00 to start the new year. It should be noted that there was a carry-over debt to D. & D. of \$14,000.00 from the previous year. Revenues of \$12,500.00 was received during this and last year from five (5) processors at \$2500.00 each for Survey work. This is the first year that P.U.H.A. has had any surplus, however, that is something that should be an on-going issue subject to unforeseen expenses.

North Coast Report---mike featherstone

There was a general improvement over the previous year with the fishery through the management areas going smoothly with very few problems. The only problem was in the QCC Islands, where the weather created long delays. Currently in the north there are 106,600 lbs. left to harvest as compared to 520,000 lbs. this time last year. There are three (3) licences yet to achieve their quota.

South Coast Report---ken ridgway

Again this year was pretty much the same as the past year, with next to no problems. There is the age-old problem of quota reduction regarding sea otters. The poundage remaining is well below previous years at this time of year, with one (1) month remaining for this year. In the SW coast there are 45,000 lbs. left as compared to 111,000 lbs. this time last year. In the SE coast there are 3,300 lbs. left as compared to 72,000 lbs. this time last year.

D. & D. Pacific Report---don christian

Over all, this has been the best season to date since the implementation of the IQ system relating to harvest and the amount of quota achieved coast wide.

South East Coast

All quota areas have been completed but for one, area 11, Allison Harbour has a remaining quota of 16,716 lbs., however, the overall balance remaining for the SE is 3,356 lbs. once all coverages have been accounted for. Compared to last season there was 72,443 lbs. remaining. The two (2) new quota areas in the SE (12H Northern Johnstone and 14 Comox) were achieved within 3-4 days with no difficulties. All

but one licence has been achieved in the SE (under 1,000 lbs.).

South West Coast

The total remaining (once all overages have been accounted for) in the SW is 45,624 lbs. compared to 110,865 lbs. from last year. The remaining pounds are from two (2) quota areas, 27A, Quatsino Outside with 38,199 lbs. and 24A, Sydney Inlet with 8,652 lbs. Area 111, Cape Scott was achieved for the first time since it's introduction as a new quota area. All but five (5) licences have been achieved in the SW (under 1,000 lbs.). The scheduling and level of co-operation within the south coast made for a successful season.

North Coast

All but three (3) quota areas have been achieved in the NC, leaving an overall balance of 106,662 lbs. (once all overages have been accounted for) compared to 519,867 lbs. from last year. The three (3) areas remaining are RU58 Smiths Inlet, RU53 Spider/Kildidit and RU45 Laredo Inlet. Minimal problems arose as we worked through the schedule. The only real difficulty was during the QCI opening on the west side. This was addressed for next season by splitting the QCI opening into two (2) time slots. The west and north sides in September and the southern portion as usual, late February or early March. Attempts made by members and buyers to control continuity in harvest improved this season and may have had a beneficial impact on the final result of this successful season relating to remaining quota. It is also noted that many of the areas left behind (having remaining quota) because of historically poor quality have been achieved and therefore groomed (theoretically) assist in improving the quality in these areas. Remaining quota coast wide has been the lowest ever to date (since the IQ system) along with the co-operation of all members, D. & D. would like to say---great job.

General Topics

This season saw an improvement in the compliance of submission of harvest charts compared to previous seasons. The amount of missing charts at this point last year was 50% higher than this year. This improvement is a positive step, but D.F.O. has indicated to D. & D. that they may pursue the subject next season, as it is a part of the conditions of licensee's to submit the charts within one (1) month of fishing activity.

To D. & D.'s knowledge there have been no charges for undersize to date this season. The majority of fishers are still targeting 100 mm, and now have a lower risk of harvesting undersize with the new size limit.

Due to accidental events or product held contained in water for future delivery, any product that is loss and not accounted

for (validated) will be in the future. This means it will be deducted from the area quota as well as the involved licence IQ. D.F.O. will be making this part of the management plan for next season.

P.U.H.A. Biologist Report---dimitri Tzotzos

2000 Survey Summary

Laredo Channel, Broadbrush, Kitasoo/PUHA, July 22-31, Areas 6-14 and 6-15, 86 transects. Price Island, study site, Kitasoo/PUHA, Sept. 14-17, Area 7-31, 45 transects. Tofino, Broadbrush, DFO/PUHA, Sept. 19-29, Areas 24-2,6,8, 124-3 56 transects. Deserters Group, Broadbrush, DFO/3rd Party/PUHA, Nov. 13-18, Area 12-13 57 transects. Showed slides of transect locations and size frequency histograms broken down by sub-area. Laredo Channel showed large number of recruits (<50mm test diameter). 31.7% of all urchins measured were <50mm. Structure of histograms seems to indicate a healthy population. The Tofino survey in area 124-3 had the highest density out of the four areas surveyed. Area 24-2 had the lowest density. The Deserters Group survey took place in only one sub-area (12-13) with less than 4% recruitment and a higher legal density than other 2 Broadbrush surveys.

A number of areas have relatively little survey effort (4,5,6 and 13). Dimitri is planning to survey area 5, but it will probably be postponed until 2002. Figures of survey effort by sub-area was displayed as a map of the B.C. Coast.

The plant sampling program commenced in November of 2000. D. & D. and Dimitri took turns sampling, and have sampled a total of 22,739 urchins. We are continuing to refine the analysis in order to gain as much information as possible from the data. The sampling program should be continued regardless of whether the size limit stays the same or changes. The data collected will be used in the upcoming PSARC paper, and in quota estimation. There were very few undersize urchins (193), less than 1%, with the average size being 111mm. Almost 65% of all urchins sampled were between 100mm and 120mm. We missed the start of the 2000 season due to a late start and were unable to sample a number of large landings. It is recommended that a dedicated sampler be hired in Vancouver. This would allow areas and landings to be sampled, thereby providing a much larger and comprehensive data set. Surveys and seeding were done at Yaquina in March of 2000. In March of 2001, a survey was conducted to obtain densities, associations and size frequencies for the 3 control and 3 seeded plots. 658 jaw samples were collected for lab analysis. Dimitri started looking at the jaw samples, and out of 52 jaws examined, 27 were found to be tagged.

2001 Research Plans

The plans for Broadbrush surveys will be Kelsey Bay, areas

12-3 and 12-21, July 31 to August 10th; Fitz Hugh Sound, areas 8-3,-4 and 16 August 16 to 25th; Price Islands, area 7-31 September 7 to 10th and Beaver Pass, area 5 TBA.

The study site surveys will be at Tofino, area 24 June 18 to 24th; Louise Island, QCI, area 2 July 12 to 21st and Price Island, area 7-31 September 3 to 6th. The Beaver Pass survey should wait until next year so that we do not create a backlog of surveys to be reported. Dimitri has started laying out transect positions using new GIS software, and will continue to evaluate the plant sampling program. He will be doing an analysis of 2000/2001 surveys and report publication which will be adding habitat and substrate data to reports. Laboratory sampling and analysis of jaw samples from Yaculta outplanting study will continue; improvement in urchin bed analysis used for quota calculations; plant sampling and bed area analysis to be used in upcoming PSARC paper and quota estimation. The PSARC paper will mention the importance of collecting the best possible data, such as fishing depths and locations; figure illustrates some of the inputs to the PSARC paper and quota estimation, such as Broadbrush survey data (biomass/density), bed areas, plant sampling (size range harvested).

Budget and Directors for 2001/2002---mike featherstone

A budget was handed out to all members in attendance. The figures were almost identical as the budget of the previous year, with the only difference being a reduction in Survey/Research and an increase in Unforeseen Expenses. It was agreed to continue with the services of Galloway Botteselle & Co. as P.U.H.A.'s auditor. Motion for approval by George Dennis, seconded by Gary Grant---approved by the membership.

All directors agreed to run again for the coming year with the exception of Jim Hume, who will be replaced by Herb Watson.

Management Plan 2001/2002---mike featherstone

A two (2) page handout was given to all attendees showing the Red Sea Urchin draft schedule and re-allocations for the fishing season 2001/2002. Reference attached. Concern was expressed regarding fleet traveling too much due to weather conditions in the North Coast area. It was suggested that a survey vessel go into an area first to establish quality of weather, thus saving unnecessary fleet movement. A committee consisting of Tim Joys and Charles Greaves along with the processors was formed to establish if the above is feasible. Based on surveys, area 17 (Nanaimo) was reduced from 57,200 lbs. to 40,000lbs. to give the area a rest. 9,000 lbs. were given to the Deserter Islands and 8,200 lbs. given to Johnston Straits. There is a boundary change in area 13D.

Licence Movement---mike featherstone

One of the Northern licence holders wished to move South to better rationalize his fishing. All existing South licence holders were contacted, but no one wished to move North. The Association went to considerable effort to contact South members and facilitate a transfer. At one point, one South licence did agree to switch and the two parties were put in touch with each other. Unfortunately, the licence was jointly held and the second partner protested the transfer at the last moment, thus causing the transfer to collapse. The South licence holder then circumvented the Association and went to the Minister who declared that a lottery be held. There was considerable discussion on this issue, but, there was no resolution. The lottery will take place before the start of the 2001/2002 fishing season.

Harvest Size---mike Featherstone

Generally the Association agrees that the harvest size has been beneficial, particularly from the enforcement point of view, as there have been no charges under this harvest regime. There is some concern from a minority of the processors that this size has caused extra expense for processing and the lower quotas have cost the industry. It was agreed to continue with the current harvest size of 90mm until the PSARC review at the end of 2001 and then discuss options based on the D.F.O. findings. It was recommended to continue with the plant-sampling program to better quantify the harvest ranges.

Professionalization---john & diane

Representatives from the Professional Fish Harvesters presented their ideas and goals regarding the professionalization of fish harvesting. Concerns were raised by the membership that due to the relatively small representation of P.U.H.A. in comparison to the rest of the fishing industry, regulations would be forced on P.U.H.A. that were not applicable to the dive fishery and that the voice of our fishermen would not be heard. Seafood harvesters have to already pass specialized training courses, unlike any other fishery, before they can be employed in the industry. Considering that the D.O.T. looks after radio operating, vessel operating and safety, it was felt that our industry already had more than enough regulatory requirements and that this organization was not required.

D.O.T./Safety/W.C.B.---jim hume

Transport Canada has proposed new regulations for vessel operators. These requirements will eventually affect all operators of any commercial vessel. There are currently courses offered for experienced commercial operators to upgrade for these new requirements. P.U.H.A. will notify all members of any upcoming dates for these training courses.

Website---ross morris

P.U.H.A. has a new website (www.puha.org) up and running;

however it needs to be refined. It would be appreciated if members with good photographs would submit them for the website.

General Discussion

George Dennis expressed his concern about the E.I. fraud along with the W.C.B. fraud, and that we as members should be more diligent in monitoring this problem as it is the members who pay more in the long run with increased premiums.

Meeting Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.