



# P. U. H. A. NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue 4

April 20, 2004



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT—MIKE FEATHERSTONE

It is no secret that this season is one of the poorest in recent memory. The amount of surplus product left in the water is much higher than it has been in the last 5 years. Still some vessels are continuing to fish and most of the QCC Islands quota has now been completed. A number of RSU areas have more than 40,000 lbs remaining and the remaining fleet (10-12 vessels) is continuing to fish, at least as long as the market holds.

Another rule of thumb to judge the fishery is the grounds price. I have heard reports of prices lower than those which were common before the institution of the quota system. When one considers that lease costs are then deducted from these record low grounds prices there is nothing left for the fishermen!

What is the cause of the decline? The main reason is the global competition and particularly the huge imports of Russian product (at rock bottom prices) into Japan. This compounds the already existing problem of the huge volume of cheap product from Chile. PUHA and the processors have worked to address this problem by concentrating the fishing effort during those months when there was a good market opportunity. PUHA is also working to promote Canadian Sea Urchin in other markets as well as in Japan.

Looking ahead it seems inevitable that the lease prices must go down. There is no way that the current benchmark of \$25,000 can be maintained in these market conditions.

Bottom line is the market is poor, leases are relatively too high and the Industry is in a consolidation phase. One thing for sure the fishermen cannot work for nothing so something is going to have to give.

It should be an interesting off season. The quota planning meeting has been postponed until the middle of May due to the extension of the season. The recommendations proposed by the fishermen in the quota planning meeting will be presented to DFO for inclusion into the management plan. Once the plan is approved it will be presented at the semi-annual general meeting in June. Draft budget, management plan and research plan will be discussed at the semi annual general meeting. Hope to see you all then and good luck to those still fishing!

On Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, I attended the opening of Mayday at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. This display was fantastic and I strongly suggest that you attend with your family. Some of my favorite displays include; a cold water tank with two bolts that you wait 30 seconds with your forearm in the water and then try to move the nuts from one bolt to another; the four lighted accident storyboards with the aftermath of the accidents in a slide up panel at the side of the display; the try on a survival suit section where survival suits are left out for you to try; the six man life raft on the floor with a nice steel rail to climb into the raft with, just try to get six people into the raft and imagine doing this in the dark in stormy seas while wearing a survival suit; and the helpful staff who will answer your questions and assist with the displays. This and much more awaits you and your family in this very well thought out and executed display.

OFFICE

604-524-0322

FAX

604-524-1023

E-MAIL

[puha@telus.net](mailto:puha@telus.net)

WEBSITE

[www.puha.org](http://www.puha.org)

## LANDINGS BY MANAGEMENT AREA

<b>Pacific Region</b>		<b>North Coast</b>		<i>monthDive:</i>			
<i>Open</i>	<i>Close</i>	<i>Quota Area</i>	<i>No of Vessels</i>	<i>Quota Allowed</i>	<i>Period Landings</i>	<i>Remaining quota</i>	<i>% Quota taken</i>
30-Jan-04	03-Feb-04	<b>RU35</b> Oswald Bay	1	75,000	4,271	<b>70,729</b>	5.69%
30-Jan-04	03-Feb-04	<b>RU36B</b> Estevan Group S.	18	95,000	67,962	<b>27,038</b>	71.54%
05-Feb-04	07-Feb-04	<b>RU03A</b> Laskeek Bay	19	60,000	58,989	<b>1,011</b>	98.31%
07-Feb-04	08-Feb-04	<b>RU03B</b> Skedans	29	120,000	119,200	<b>800</b>	99.33%
08-Feb-04	09-Feb-04	<b>RU04B</b> Section Cove	28	100,000	96,236	<b>3,764</b>	96.24%
09-Feb-04	10-Feb-04	<b>RU05A</b> Skincuttle Inlet	30	150,000	146,856	<b>3,144</b>	97.90%
10-Feb-04	12-Feb-04	<b>RU05B</b> Carpenter Bay	62	150,000	147,190	<b>2,810</b>	98.13%
12-Feb-04	15-Feb-04	<b>RU06</b> Lower 2E	47	160,000	148,785	<b>11,215</b>	92.99%
14-Feb-04	15-Feb-04	<b>RU07</b> Lower 2W	29	142,000	134,639	<b>7,361</b>	94.82%
15-Feb-04	26-Feb-04	<b>RU08</b> Flamingo/ Englefield	28	132,000	122,551	<b>9,449</b>	92.84%
26-Feb-04	27-Feb-04	<b>RU09</b> Van Inlet	21	85,000	79,370	<b>5,630</b>	93.38%
27-Feb-04	28-Feb-04	<b>RU10</b> Rennel Sound	24	85,000	87,970	<b>-2,970</b>	103.49%
28-Feb-04	29-Feb-04	<b>RU11</b> Hippa Island	27	100,000	105,656	<b>-5,656</b>	105.66%
29-Feb-04	01-Mar-04	<b>RU12</b> Port Louis	23	70,000	70,589	<b>-589</b>	100.84%
25-Mar-04	29-Mar-04	<b>RU38A</b> Campania Isl/ Surf Inlet	7	400,000	22,105	<b>377,895</b>	5.53%
<b>Total</b>				<b>1,924,000</b>	<b>1,412,369</b>	<b>511,631</b>	<b>73.41%</b>

<b>Pacific Region</b>		<b>South Coast</b>		<i>monthDive:</i>			
<i>Open</i>	<i>Close</i>	<i>Quota Area</i>	<i>No of</i>	<i>Quota</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Remaining</i>	<i>% Quota</i>

## RESEARCH—SIMITRI TZOTZOS

We are still in the process of setting up the summer survey schedule. Anyone (boats or divers) that are interested in survey work this summer should contact Dimitri at (250) 756-7147 or tzotzosd@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca, and should make sure that they have all the required paperwork (diver medicals, one person on the boat with a valid first-aid ticket, and a valid

## SEA OTTER RECOVERY ACTION PLAN WORKSHOP

A number of P.U.H.A. representatives attended the various workshops on Sea Otters that were organized by D.F.O. in February. P.U.H.A. would like to follow up with the Sea Otter Recovery Team (SORT) after a number of P.U.H.A. members, crews and consultants attended the latest round of workshops to discuss the plan. We appreciated the opportunity to speak directly with marine mammal researchers, D.F.O. biologists and other specialists first hand.

P.U.H.A. members have two main concerns with the recovery plan for sea otters in B.C. The recovery plan completely lacks an assessment of the present and future impact of sea otters on the commercial shellfish industry, First Nation harvest and recreational harvest. Secondly, the plan is being developed with the lack of good census information on current sea otter populations.

P.U.H.A. has repeatedly requested that the recovery plan include an assessment of the impacts to the B.C. shellfish industry. At present, commercial and shellfish operations land approximately \$210 million worth of shellfish per year. The existing analysis of costs of the plan only includes the costs of implementing the recovery action plan. This action plan is a "non-interventionist approach", so this limited cost analysis will likely be quite brief. Based on existing sea otter areas, shellfish harvesters are left to expect the worst and D.F.O. managers and scientists have no mandate to deal with impacts to the fisheries they manage.

On the species by species basis, an impact assessment of sea otters would be straight forward, i.e. for red sea urchins:

- Detail annual harvest in management areas with established sea otter populations that are now closed due to lack of red urchins such as the following West Vancouver Island areas: Klaskish, Klaskino, Nuchatlitz and Kyuquot.
- Forecast sea otter expansion to forecast biomass estimates of red urchins and landings for any area of the coast. This past month divers report rafts of sea otters and otter excavations in the vicinity of Ahous Bay, just over 8 km from Tofino.

The recovery plan states that the goal for recovery of sea otters in B. C. is to: *Ensure that the sea otter population in B. C. is sufficiently large and adequately distributed so that threats, including events catastrophic to the species, such as oil spills, would be unlikely to cause extirpation or diminish the population such that recovery to pre-event numbers would be very slow.*

The SORT plans to set objectives to identify a population size and distribution target, then monitor the population to determine when those targets have been reached. This illustrates that accurate, current estimates of B. C. sea otter populations is crucial to measure the success of the recovery plan. The last status report (estimate of population size and distribution) was published 9 years ago in 1995. This data was used to confirm the "threatened" status in 2000. The next status report will not be requested by COSEWIC until April 2005. Optimistically, this would be completed by 2006, at which time COSEWIC will review the report to confirm the threatened status or de-list sea otters (2007). If sea otters are not de-listed at that time, COSEWIC is not legislated to review the listing for another 10 years (2017)!

would like to see the value of the shellfish industry recognized and a true assessment of the impacts to the B. C. shellfish industries included in the recovery plan.

**For more information on the Sea Otter Recovery Strategy and Action Plan, go to:**

**[www-com.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/sea-otters/default\\_e.htm](http://www-com.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/sea-otters/default_e.htm)**

P.U.H.A. encourages each of our members and crew to get involved in this issue and provide your comments to D.F.O. You can be sure that many people from the public at large are commenting about the need to expand the numbers of otters in B.C. and their range. D.F.O. needs to hear the voices of concern for shellfish resources and the livelihoods of the people who are in the business of shellfish harvesting, processing and marketing.

Comments can be sent by e-mail or fax to:

Laurie Convey

Management Biologist—Species at Risk

3225 Stephenson Point Road

Nanaimo, B. C. V9T 1K3

## PUHA PLANNING CALENDAR 2004

DATE	EVENT
February, 2004	Survey QCC study site pre-harvest
February 5, 2004	Queen Charlotte Fishery Opening
February, 2004	Experimental harvest at QCC Study site
March 15, 2004	Fishermen comments re: changes for 2002/2003 Management Plan
March, 2004	Directors Meeting: provide comments to directors for changes, etc.
Week of March 15-04	Red Sea Urchin Sectoral: research and management plan meetings
Week of April 20-04	Shellfish Working Group: present any issues to Juanita for discussion
Week of May 10-04	<b>Quota Options Planning Meeting- Most important for fishermen's input</b>
June 1, 2004	Draft Plan Available for comments
June, 2004	Management Plan sign-off
Week of June 15-04	Summer PSARC
June	Annual General Meeting: elect officers, draft budget, draft management and research plan
June -September	Surveys and research
July, 2004	Catch monitoring and Research agreement sign-off
August, 2004	PUHA General meeting approve plan, review fishing goals and protocols