



**OFFICE**

604-524-0322

**FAX**

604-524-1023

**E-MAIL**

puha@telus.net

**WEBSITE**

www.puha.org

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT —MIKE FEATHERSTONE

The fishing season has progressed quite nicely with a steady supply of product to market since August. At this time 50% of the total coast wide quota has been achieved, with 65% of the mainland North Coast completed, and, 60% of the south Coast. Weather has plagued the fleet since late December and when the weather did cooperate the market softened with the volume of product.

The Haida Gwaii fishery is planned to open in early March (weather dependant) and there is a full 2 million pounds currently untouched. On the North coast mainland there are a number of small clean up areas (25- 50,000 lbs) as well as 500,000 in the Prince Rupert area and another 500,000 in the Central coast. The Central coast product is tentative due to the unknown effect of the sea otters. It has been recommended that PUHA request the quota in the heavily impacted Central Coast areas be moved to West coast Haida Gwaii.

There have been 3 fleets working since November. Since only 2 areas can be fished concurrently this means there needs to be cooperation between the fleets. A reminder to everyone that OGM's need plan well ahead in advance as DFO requires 3 business days to open a new area.

As everyone probably knows Don has semi-retired, although he is still in the wood work, helping out behind the scenes. We wish Don well and welcome to John who will be taking over some of Don's responsibilities.

WCB has been inspecting on the fishing grounds in the past few months. An important reminder for the vessel owner and master is the requirement for planning dives, having a hard copy of the planning logs, and a hard copy of the dive logs. (fishing log book is not acceptable).

For more information on the responsibilities of the dive supervisor, Work-SafeBC has a Diving Supervisor's Handbook available for purchase:

<http://www.worksafebcstore.com/topic/general-health-safety/the-diving-supervisors-handbook.html>

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## D. & D. PACIFIC—DARIN MACEY

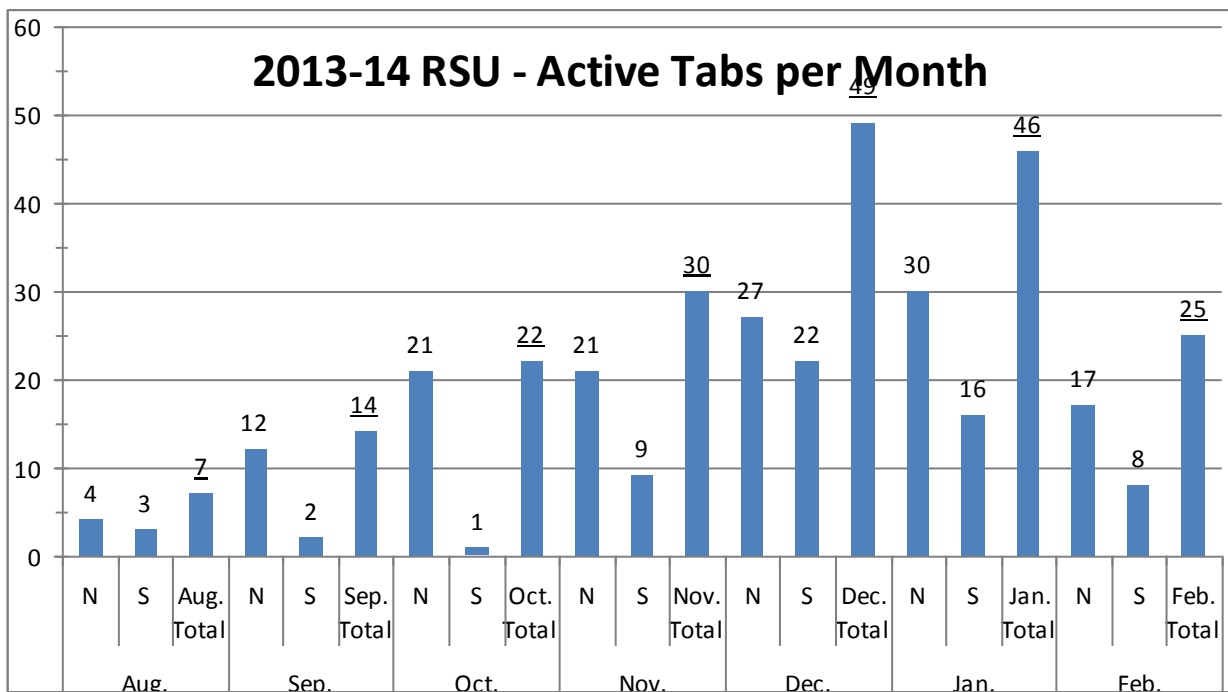
The **South Coast** was slow to start, but stayed ahead of the previous season's numbers slightly until November. Harvest activities picked up in November with the use of a packer right up to the holiday season in December. Public sales were weekly through this time fading off in December. The number of ZC tabs active (see chart below) dramatically increased in December, and strong into the first week of January (see landings by month chart below). Historically, this is normal and industry is pleased with being back to "normal". The end of January, poor market conditions reduced the fishing effort and February (so far to date) has landed minimal pounds due to weather.

**Cold weather** reduced harvest in the last month as product was freezing at offloading – colour brown. The south coast shutdown over this issue.

The **North Coast** started immediately with four ZC tabs, and increased steadily up to thirty ZC tabs by January. The groups have been working exposed areas, and only working protected areas close to Prince Rupert when weather is poor. This has been working well. Fleets have harvested as far south as Finlayson, and Mathieson. Laredo areas and Prior Pass have also been harvested. Currently, fishing is ramping up after the poor market conditions, but weather is plaguing the entire coast for the first half of February.

**Cold weather** reduced harvest in the last month as product was freezing— colour brown, and quality was not good. Processors finally shutdown their fleets for this reason also.

Almost everyone has asked about the **start date of the Haida Gwaii** quota areas, so PUHA contacted processors to pick a date. The start of March seems to be the timeframe (around weather of course) that the fleet (s) will head there. Seems to be a good idea as minimal quota is left north of Laredo Sound. The fishing fleets will have to work Dundas Island in efforts to delay a Hecate Strait crossing until March.

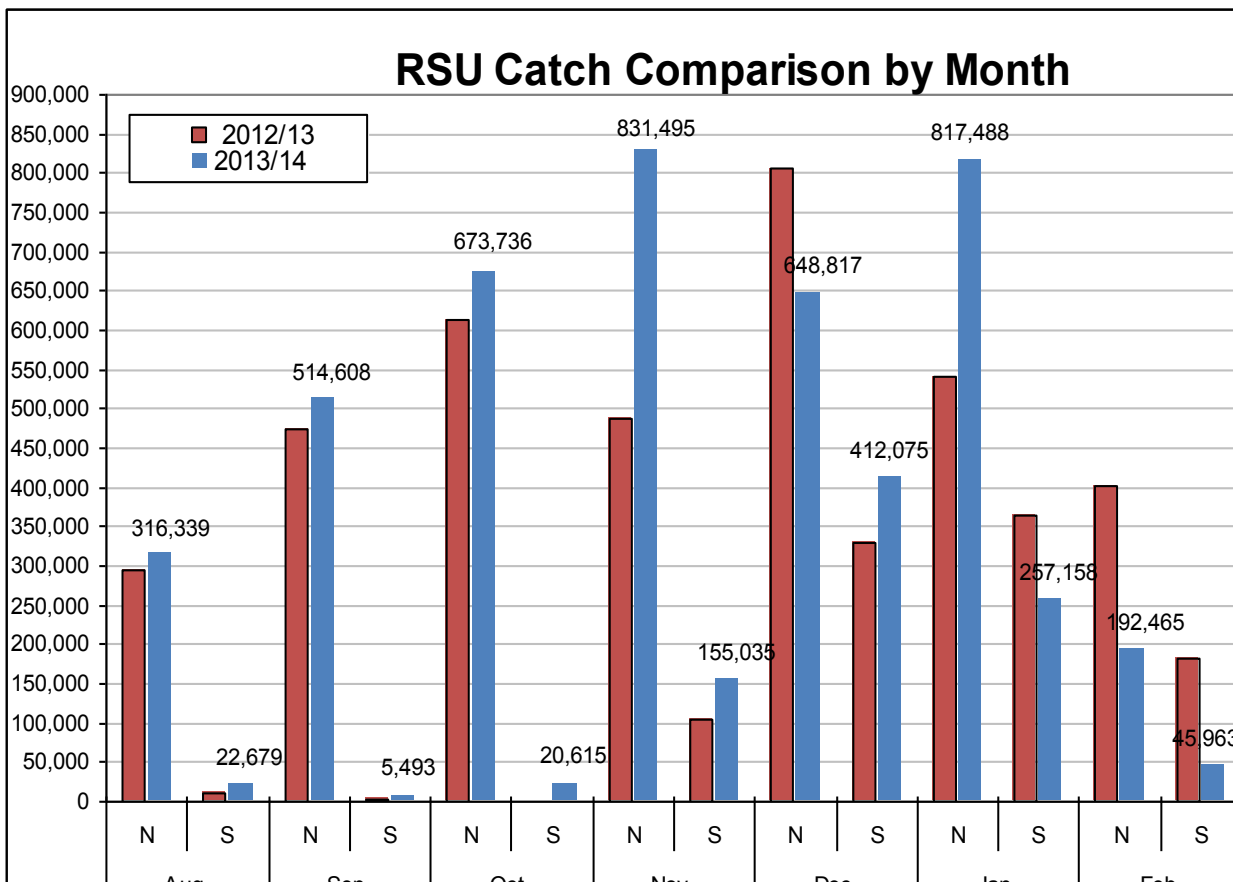


**Harvest Charts** are required to be filled out by midnight of each days harvest like the logbook itself. This is a Condition of Licence. The Logpage and Chart must be completed by the vessel master or crew that is on-board the vessel. Having someone else complete the harvest chart who is not on the vessel is not allowed as stated in the conditions of licence. When this is done, errors occur, mis-reporting the harvest site, wrong entry – fishing in closed areas, and so on.

C&P is aware of the midnight rule for harvest charts, and will be checking for this. Please have your crew complete the data by midnight each harvest day to ensure accurate, complete data is captured in a timely manner as not to put the licence holder in a corner at the end of the year.

D&D will be sending out **Harvest Charts, IFMPs, and other random items on CD** to all active vessels in the spring. The fishing schedule and the repeat visits to quota areas up to five times a year have warranted this approach. It is becoming too hard to facilitate harvest chart delivery both by D&D and Dive vessels when re-visiting quotas areas. Vessels will still get a harvest chart set at the beginning of each tab they start (with logbook), but will be able to print off any chart they need for multiple visits to a quota area over the course of the season. About time!

**ZC Tab Re-Designations** are more frequent in the last month, and it is of concern that a copy of the newly designated licence is not on the new vessel. Processors who are re-designating on behalf of the vessel must ensure the licence copy is sent to the vessel. It is becoming apparent that some think if it is electronically processed at DFO then it is done and no further action is required – like sending the licence copy to the new vessel.



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**Opening and Closure requests by Industry dropped** in the fall, but the requests dramatically picked up again as group coordinators and individual vessels had issues with weather, and their decision making paradigm. Multiple calls to move increased and the fleets were busy jumping around again. This issue was handled by PUHA representatives working with D&D in efforts to maintain the program integrity, reducing the individual calls for moving, and back to one coordinator per fleet.

**Conditions of Licence** issues have been documented and are worthy of discussion. Undersize of urchins has been noticed in both north and south. Reasons for undersize were: Bent rakes, no quality control top-side relating to the tender, and new diver. Industry has had an influx of new divers, and that is a good thing. We need to emphasize to crews to check their urchin size top-side as well as on the bottom. Check your rakes often as they take so much abuse.

Buyers commented that the undersize is an issue for exporting, and it is warranted. All undersize noticed were minimal in ratio to the load, with the exception of a couple of loads that you could easily see one of the two diver's rake was bent as the dive bags for one diver had undersize, and the other did not.

**Green Sea Urchins** – Market has finally brought this fishery back to almost normal. Since 2006, this fishery has seen poor markets, less than 40% of the TAC landed on a yearly basis. The WCGUA, PUHA, Industry, and D&D have all worked hard to keep the fishery alive. Market has increased and Vessels and buyers have landed over 80% of the TAC this season so far. Hopefully price and landings will increase back to historical records also.

**D&D Retires Don Christian from the phones** – Yes, Don is no longer answering D&D anymore. After so many years of phones, all day, all night, Don has let go of the daily fishing program. I thought Manatee Bob (RIP) would have been the one to send us both to the psych-ward, but it was another who called him way too many timesJ

Don will still be active with D&D behind the scenes on a smaller scale, but we cloned him like a sea cucumber and now John Byrnes has been training for the phone system and fishery management. John comes from a technological background and will be an asset to the programs D&D is involved in. We tested John in October when he had to deal with Reds, Cucumbers, Greens, Krill, and the new regulations for Observer Programs that DFO is ever-changing. We gave certain vessel masters the job of “helping” and it was good training for John,.. I think.

Don and I have been working this fishery since 1994, and I even monitored plant processing of sea urchins to ensure fair price to fishermen before that. We have come so far in leading DFO to better fishery management with Industry, to DFO burying us in red tape *now* just so we can continue doing our job. We have seen great people do great things and others we had to let go to the sea. I appreciate everyone's support of D&D and our goal is to remain the best service provider in BC and to serve you until *you* retire. Hopefully that will occur, as retiring seems to be a thing of the past! - Best Fishes - Darin Macey



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They also have a Dive Log book for sale. Provincial regulations require that dive logs be kept by all occupational divers as well as divers undergoing occupational dive training. This hardcover, personal commercial diver's log book is designed to help record all required information for inshore diving:

<http://www.worksafebcstore.com/diver-s-log-book.html>

All the WorkSafeBC diving regulations are available on line at:

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/publications/>

This year PUHA will conduct a quota planning meeting or conference call. If anyone has any recommendation for changes to the quota's or the fishing plan please forward the information to PUHA or D&D.

With the upcoming Haida Gwaii fishery and the possibility of encountering strong winds and high sea conditions we encourage all vessels, owners and masters to review all safety procedures and equipment. It is strongly recommended that crews participate in the Safest Catch program where a industry Safety advisor will visit your vessel and provide a free inspection and review all the safety drills and procedures. The information and contact is available at:

<https://www.fishsafebc.com>

If there is interest Fish Safe will arrange a Safety advisor to visit Prince Rupert prior to the fleet departing to Haida Gwaii. Fish Safe also provides training and safety materials for the Industry.

Good luck in the upcoming fishing and a safe season until your quota is complete!

## SURVEY'S—DAN LEUS

Two surveys were completed in the Fall of 2013, one out of Bamfield and one in Okisollo Channel. Data is being analysed and will be incorporated into the next iteration of quota options for consultation. Location of 2014-2015 survey(s) will be developed in cooperation with PUHA with emphasis on areas where quotas have historically been achieved or where there are other aspects of interest to PUHA and DFO. If you would like more information on the survey program or other science questions please contact Dan Leus, DFO program lead for red sea urchins at DFO: 250 756-7147 office, 250 739-3483 cell.





## MARKETING—GEOFF KRAUSE

I have been hearing that things are going along very nicely in the world of BC urchin fishing this year so far, both for the reds and the greens. I just got the export stats from StatsCanada for 2013 and it looks like our exports to Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and the US are all up substantially over last year. RSU exports to Japan increased from about 16% from 204 MT last year to 237 MT this year while the value increased by an even greater 23%- a sign of rising prices which is also good. Shipments to Hong Kong increased by over 50% from 29 to 49 MT while the value increased by just under 50%. This exceeds our goal for Hong Kong as expressed in our AMP proposal. The same goes for Taiwan and China which saw increases of 12 and 29% to 23 and 8.4 MT respectively. Shipments to the US of what looks to be processed RSU also increased from about 1 MT last year to about 8.3 MT this year.

Looking at imports in the Japan Customs stats, our shipments are a bit higher at about 280 MT but do not show the dramatic increase seen in the StatsCan numbers. Imports of GSU from Canada apparently doubled according to both sources, from 34 to 75 MT according to the Japanese site and from 70 to 149 MT according to the Canada stats. It is hard to pin down a definitive explanation for the differences but one can assume exporters and importers use different strategies to advantage in each particular case.

Using the same site to examine US exports of RSU to Japan reveals that they have stabilized at about the same level that Canada achieved this past year. However, at , 288 MT, they are down by about half since 2009 and by 2/3 since 2004. This contrasts to the Canadian experience which has us at just higher now in comparison to 2006 and down by about 25% since 2004. In terms of value, the 1.9 B ¥ recorded for this past year (2013) is roughly the same as 2001 which recorded a value of 2.0 B ¥ for 411 MT which works out to a price increase of about 38% from ¥ 4,992 to ¥6,896 per kg. How this will translate into changes in Canadian dollar terms is still unclear- the yen has devalued by about 20% vis a vis the US dollar in the last year while the Canadian dollar has declined by about 10% in the same period.

The Japan Customs site also provides us with a good history of what is happening with Russian imports, particularly what used to be IUU product. IUU production peaked in 2006 at about 11,175 MT but it fell to about 6,500 - 7,500 MT by 2008 where it has remained since. Last year imports from the Russian IUU fishing area was 7,057 MT with the import pattern reflecting Russian coast guard and fisheries presence in August and September only, also the same as each year since 2008. Not much change there for the past few years, and more of the same expected.



So - all in all things are looking like they are going in the right direction, although I believe it is still apparent that unless we can establish BC RSU as a preferred distinct and differentiated product, higher prices will be elusive. There are lots of fishermen willing to work cheap, way cheaper than is reasonable in Canada, so working harder is not the answer, working smarter is the way to go. Seafood production is global and you have to choose who you are going to compete with and on what terms so others do not by default choose for you. And remember too, those divided are more easily conquered.

We completed our AMP project this year and are currently putting together a new proposal for the next four years. The basic plan is going to remain fairly consistent with the past few years, annual attendance at the Asian Seafood Expo in Hong Kong each September and the China show each November with hopefully some processor assisted introductions and special side trips to new markets in China around the time of the China show. The budget is also about the same- about \$100 K per year with 50% coming from the AMP, 10% from processors (50% share of their travel costs) and the same for the travel costs absorbed by members who come along on the trips. I am hoping to have the proposal complete and submitted by the end of next week so we can be given priority consideration before the program starts looking at other applicants.

