



# PUHA NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

OCTOBER 30, 2007

## OFFICE

604-524-0322

## FAX

604-524-1023

## E-MAIL

puha@telus.net

## WEBSITE

www.puha.org



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Report	1
Fish Safe	2
President's Report	3
D. & D. Pacific	3
D. & D. Pacific	4
Biologist	5
Marketing	5

## President's Report — MIKE FEATHERSTONE



The season is off to a slow start with many dive boats and most processors choosing to work on sea cucumbers, while other processors are still working on hake or salmon. There is interest from Japan but the processors are generally being cautious and at this time no one has any firm commitment on price. One interesting development is an earlier start to the green urchin fishery with more landings this year than past years, hopefully this is a positive sign for the red urchin fishery. At the time of this writing there is less than 2% of the total TAC taken and only 4 vessels fishing. Things should pick up in early November as most dive boats and processors start to focus on reds.

The management plan was delayed this year as the DFO wrestled with the OGM requirements. Industry proposed a drastic reduction in the OGM days to 45 days compared to 135 days in past years. The reduction in days provides significant cost savings to industry but places the responsibility for the on grounds monitoring squarely on industry's shoulders. To offset the OGM requirements PUHA has strengthened the On Grounds Coordinator position and provided some funding to cover the required daily phone calls and other necessary communications. D&D is providing an operational protocol for the on grounds coordinators, we encourage all fishermen and licence holders to review these protocols and to follow them. There are few or no fisheries that have been afforded the opportunity and flexibility to monitor their own fishery management and we cannot squander this special opportunity. If industry does not rise to this challenge the cost to each licence is an estimated \$1,500. DFO approved the reduction in OGM days in early September but the delay meant that the usual early season south coast fishing window was mostly forfeited.

The Russian IUU fishery seems to have slowed and there is continued news that the Russian Government is getting more serious about controlling all IUU fisheries within its jurisdiction. Even so, the landings are still significant and will influence the market. Japanese buyers are trying to negotiate the purchase prices in Yen which is a new twist to the currency convolutions. The Canadian dollar has appreciated 20% against the \$US this year alone but the Yen is also strengthening but not to as great an extent. It is estimated that the Canadian price will have to increase close to \$10/kg just to maintain the ex-vessel prices of last season. Geoff Krause is working on a report for the APEC group which details the current Russian IUU situation. This paper will be presented as one of a group of papers on IUU fishing at an upcoming APEC conference.

*continued on page 3*

**“You don’t need to get old to slow down and pay more attention to safety, you need to pay more attention to safety to get old.”**



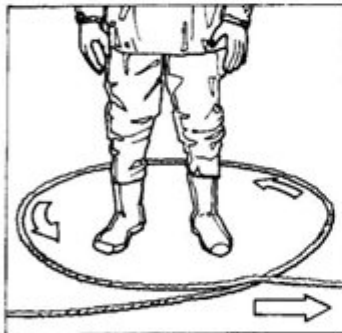
Over the last year and a half we have made some serious headway in taking ownership of safety through the Stability Education Program. **Over 400 fishermen have taken advantage of the fully subsidized 4 day course to learn how they can analyze their own vessels for potential threats to stability**, find useful information in a stability book and develop procedures to make safety top of mind and reduce the risk of capsizing. We put stability as the focus for our education and awareness program as it was the number one cause of the high fatality rate in our industry. We have 15 more subsidized courses available this year. For those of you that haven't taken advantage of this opportunity give us a call.

In my role as Fishing Industry Safety Coordinator I am also tasked with monitoring injuries on board.

This summer the injuries sustained in the fishing industry across all gear types have shown alarming trends in the cause of the injury, the volume of injuries and unfortunately in the fatalities. There were lacerations/punctures by fish spines, knives or hooks that either caused tendon damage, permanent disability or serious infections. Our 2 fatalities were from falling overboard – **WCB investigators relayed that they felt strongly that if PFD's were used as required these type of fatalities could be avoided.** (There are some comfortable collar style PFD's on the market these days). More recently we had 3 fishermen narrowly escape a capsizing incident—again no PFD's were worn. And finally, my reason for calling this article back to the basics: recently, 2 **permanent life altering injuries** were sustained by crewmen that were caught in the bight. **A 24 year old's**



**foot was amputated by a tie up line, a 29 year old skiff man suffered a multiple fractured leg from being caught in the bight of the sea anchor.**



*Stay out of the bight.*

**Stay out of the bight**, wear a PFD, cut away from yourself, take care to keep your wounds clean – (the Dettol is under the sink). These are basic safety instructions that every crew man should hear before his foot hits the deck for the first time. Are we in that big of a hurry that we are not taking the time to cover the basics with our crew or if we are crew are we becoming complacent about the basics? If so these unfortunate cases should serve as a wake up call for everyone.

**Some talk about the cost of safety** whether it is the cost of a pfd, survival suit or the cost of time to take a 4 day stability course or a one day medical emergency duties course. The cost to the 19 year old that has a permanent disability due to a slip of the knife while cutting bait or the crew man who fell overboard and his skipper who could not retrieve him is too high. Even with non life threatening injuries there is the simple cost of lost fishing time. Can you compare the a cost of a pfd at \$250-\$300 compared to the average WCB cost of a fishing fatality at \$250,000 or the cost to that family? The cost of fishing injuries are paid for from the fishing industry through WCB assessments. The costs determine the rates paid by the fishing industry, so by reducing injuries through getting back to the basics you can reduce your costs.

**What do we need to do to get back to the basics?** Take ownership of safety on board! Whether you are a crew man or a skipper, get the training or mentoring you need to stay safe. If you aren't sure what you need to be doing to stay safe on board, give Fish Safe a call or get a copy of Gearing up For Safety or the Safe at Sea Video series. It is no longer acceptable to plead ignorance. "I tell my crew to wear pfd's but they won't do it" Skippers could be taken to penalty at the tune of \$2500 if their crew are not found operating in a safe manner. If that isn't incentive enough, then maybe think of the family that you will have to talk to if one of your crew is injured or worse. Take a moment and review the basics yourself and with your crew. Make sure you and your crew take advantage of educational opportunities like the fully subsidized Fish Safe Stability course, first aid courses and marine emergency duties training .

**Dealing with injuries and fatalities is not what you need in your fishing operation. SAFETY - Make it your business.**

## President's Report—CONTINUED

Anyone interested in Fishing Vessel Stability should check out the Stability Course times and dates offered by Fish Safe BC on the website [www.fishsafebc.com](http://www.fishsafebc.com). Further in the newsletter you will find an article on "Getting Back to the Basics". There were 2 drownings this year that could have been prevented by the workers on deck simply wearing a lifejacket, this is a terrible tragedy both for the lost lives and also for the cost to industry. Let's all think about educating our deckhands to wear floater coats or auto inflate PFD collars so that this type of tragedy doesn't happen to our fishermen.

## D. & D. PACIFIC FISHERIES

The Red Sea Urchin Fishery in BC has been working through poor Japanese markets due primarily to the Russian Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishery. Industry has been adapting to the extreme changes in market conditions over the past 5 years, and the 2007/2008 season will require more effort from industry and DFO to sustain the fishery. DFO has agreed with PUHA to help reduce the financial responsibilities of industry by reducing the On-grounds Monitoring requirement for the fishery from 120 days to 40 in efforts to make the fishery viable during these hard economic times. As a result, there are changes to the fishery program and industry will have to be more involved, constructive, and responsible for fishing co-ordination.

For the 2007/08 season the on-grounds monitoring program for the north coast fishery will be limited to 40 days of monitoring, most likely in mid November until the Christmas break. D&D will distribute the fishing protocol that will allow for the proper tracking of the north coast area quotas and fleet movements. DFO will be evaluating the fishing protocol compliance through-out the season to ensure that all licence conditions and management requirements are being met. If enforcement, quota tracking, or management issues arise in season DFO may require the reinstatement of the On-grounds Monitoring requirement for the fishery, or may simply close the fishery until requirements are being met.

### FISHING PROTOCOL

PUHA will designate members as "On-Ground Co-ordinators" (OGC's) for the 2007/2008 fishing season. The OGC's will communicate with D&D's head office at the beginning and the cessation of each fishing day. This will provide the daily updates between the fleet and D&D and will ensure proper communication for management of area quotas, opening and closure times.

An OGC "Checklist" will be provided by D&D that will detail what information is required on a daily basis both in the morning and at the end of the fishing day.

The fishing schedule is broken into three regions: North Coast, Central Coast, and South Coast (*see south coast fishing protocol*). Each region will have the quota areas broken down into "Blocks".

There will be only one fleet allowed to operate within each region at any time. Two fleets within one block will not be permitted. When required, PUHA will have the ability to have one fleet in a North Coast block, and one fleet in a Central Coast block fishing simultaneously.

The North and Central regions will follow the opening sequence order within each block. The fleet will not be able to harvest from all quota areas at one time within the block. Quota Areas will be opened and fished by sequence number but not necessarily by the sequence order.

In the South, there will be only three blocks permitted to be active at any one time; two within the East Coast of Vancouver Island, and one on the West Coast Vancouver Island.

Fishing activity will be restricted to two quota areas within any one block at any given time. Vessels will not be permitted to switch from one area to another within the same day.

*continued on page 4*

## D. & D. PACIFIC—CONTINUED

Clean-up protocol involves the estimated or actual remaining quota of an area to be divided equally between all vessels hailed prior to the day of the clean-up. Each vessel will have a harvest limit imposed, any overages of this limit will be tracked and reported to DFO.

Attempts will be made for each quota area within a sequence to be harvested to completion before moving to the next area. Vessels will not be permitted to switch from one area to another within the same day.

If weather or roe quality prevents further fishing effort in a quota area the fleet will be permitted to move to another area, as a group, within the same block. Any alterations to the opening schedule must be based on recommendations from PUHA.

All areas will be opened within the block in which the fleet will be working to alleviate the necessity of directly involving DFO and the two business days necessary to open any new areas. However, moving from one block to another will require advance planning of a minimum of 48 hours notice from PUHA (exclusive of weekends and holidays) to open a new block for fishing. Jumping from one block to another will not be permitted – NO EXCEPTIONS

### **South Coast – Harvest Activity**

The Port Hardy area has seen harvest since the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 opening of the season. The extension of last season was active right up to the start of the new season. It seems that there is an effort to secure more market share of Canadian Red Sea Urchins this season.

Over 36,000 lbs have been harvested from the south since the start of the season, and with the new block system, should work well with the fleet. PUHA decided not to schedule any reserved openings for the Holiday season in December. Offloading may still be an issue in the south coast (with the exception of Port Hardy) as there is no company setup to custom offload in remote ports. The fishermen may have to get organized for this issue.

### **North Coast – Harvest Activity**

The fleet is active in Block one, and have been following the Sea Cucumber packers around in efforts to get their product into Prince Rupert. Four vessels have been active, and are currently in Willis Bay working closely with the Sea Cucumber fleet. Reference cards have been sent out to the fleet detailing what the On-Ground Co-ordinators are required to do. These cards are laminated so they last the season.

As stated above, DFO has dropped almost all conditions for PUHA as it relates to monitoring of the fleet(s). What this means to industry is that proper management is the responsibility of PUHA, and any issues, problems, errors will be borne by PUHA and it's members. D&D needs to express to industry that DFO is watching for errors in management of the fishery, and will use that information for next season's monitoring. We need to run this season properly, and that means constant communication between the fleet and D&D. Please follow the protocol established by PUHA and D&D responsibly. If the protocol is not followed, the openings will be closed until PUHA can ensure proper communication from the fleet.

### **Harvest Chart Delivery**

D&D wants vessel masters to adhere to their conditions of licence and get their harvest charts in on time. Extremely late charts are costing the program more money when the program cannot afford any increases. D&D was chasing charts from the 2005/2006 season in late May of 2007. PUHA, D&D, and the Shellfish Data Unit have all agreed to charge vessel master and/or Licence holder for late chart submissions. The reason for this is why *should* industry pay the price for vessel masters who consistently burden the fishery with their lack of commitment to their condition of licence. There is no cost yet for late chart submissions, but industry wants a large fee to encourage timely submissions.

### **Winter Harvest**

This section is to remind fishers to be safe, and hopes are strong that Mother Nature will take a year off, and let the reef fishermen have a good year in BC. News from Russia seems to be positive as the government appears to be getting tougher with IUU fisheries in their east coast. Best fishes – D&D

## BIOLOGIST—DAN LEUS

In the 2007 field season, PUHA and DFO have completed red urchin surveys in the Tree Nob group, Louise Isl. (QCI), Price Isl., and Tofino with analyses of data to be conducted over the winter. Industry feedback on urchin habitat gathered in the summer of 2007 has provided valuable information for the new quota recommendations model. Survey data and industry feedback are currently being analysed and will be incorporated into recommendations for the 2008/2009 quotas. Six surveys are planned for the summer of 2008, two each in the North, Central and South Coast. PUHA and DFO are looking for vessels and crew interested in conducting these surveys. Please contact PUHA or DFO (Dan Leus: 250 756-7147). PUHA and DFO would like to thank the crew of the vessels that participated in the surveys this year. Your assistance is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

## MARKETING—GEOFF KRAUSE

PUHA is seeking certification from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), commissioning a \$20 K pre-certification process with the assistance of the Province (Thanks to Lorraine Saunders et al). Getting MSC certification will validate PUHA's reputation as a supplier of high quality, environmentally sustainable sea urchin products that should open additional opportunities on both the price and demand sides of the equation.

As far as the local market development goes, advice from California and Japan suggests that getting natural, alum-free uni out for local restaurants might be a further measure to build local reputations and demand at higher prices. The shelf-life of the product is short, so the order- re-order inventory system will have to be very tightly controlled but the taste is much better. More work is required but there may be enough there to grow a dedicated premium quality seafood distribution business. Finding uses for the off-grade product might also represent an opportunity- that sea urchin bisque at the sea urchin summit was outrageously good.

PUHA is also continuing with a temperature logging study to examine possible post- harvest temperature events and impacts which will allow the identification and remedy of problems if in fact they exist. Fishermen in California this summer found their uni melted in about 10 minutes at water temperatures higher than 72E F (24EC) so finding changes over much longer periods at air temperatures of ~16EC+ is reasonable. It would also be nice to get some measurements on salinity in the harvest areas as this also has a direct physiological effect on the texture of the product.

There was tentative agreement that a trip to Japan would be a good thing this year again, but the marketing committee has yet to meet to further discuss such plans. This is the last year of the CAFI funding and there is approximately \$ 45 K in matching funding committed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to assist with SUFC marketing. A trip to Japan and China was included in the marketing budgets this year and a good chunk of that money will be lost if the trip does not come off. It sounds like there might be another program available next year but the program requirements and funding limits have not yet been published so SUFC participation is still speculative at this point.

