Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association

A History of BC’s Red Sea Urchin Fishery

Presented by:
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3 Pillars of the Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association (PUHA)

- Sustainability
- Maximizing Economic Value of the Catch
- Increasing community awareness and knowledge of the industry
Early days (Pre-quota)  
1971 - 1993

- Fishery grew slowly until the early 80’s.
- Expanded rapidly until 1992 when fishery landed just under 29 million pounds.
- Limited entry in 1991
- Late 80’s and into the early 90’s the management became more intensive
- Relationship between managers and fishermen was uncooperative
Early days (pre-quota)

• Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association was incorporated in 1992
• 1993 managers instituted a coast wide Total Allowable Catch and area selection which intensified fishing activities into the classic “Shot-Gun” style openings
  • poor safety practices, poor compliance to harvest regime and supply gluts (poor prices).
• Up to 1994 license fees were $50 and PUHA fee was $25
Voluntary Individual Quota System
1994 - 1995

• January ‘94: 1 million lbs. landed in first few days
• February fishermen stopped fishing and created Voluntary IQ System
  – VIQs included validation log, off load monitors, equal division of TAC
• Financed by a fishermen imposed $.02/lb landing tax
Voluntary Individual Quota System: Impacts

• No quota overages
• Improved safety records
• Increasing cooperation between managers and fishermen
• Prices increased and market supply more consistent
Investing in Co-management

- 1994 PUHA in co-operation with DFO, Community Groups and the Province of B.C. set aside 5 Experimental research management areas
  - Haida Fisheries Program, Kitasoo Fisheries Program, PUHA and DFO

- Research funded 50% by Province of British Columbia
  - Partners In Progress Program
DFO Sanctioned IQ System
1996 – present

- 1996: DFO officially sanctioned the Individual Quota system
  - license transferability was permitted
- In addition to the off-load validation program, DFO required an On-grounds Monitor (OGM)
- 2% of the TAC was allocated for Native Food, Social and Ceremonial Use
- 23 south coast fishing areas and 33 north coast fishing areas.
IQ System: 1996 - present

- Prices increased steadily until 2002 and then stabilized
- All licenses validated with PUHA until 2004
- PUHA administered program cost was $5,000/licence,
- This increased to $5,321.36 in 2000 and $5,500 in 2002
Forecast only 80 licenses will validate, leaving a budget shortfall of $165,000.
Today’s Fishery
2006 - 2007

- Fishery has evolved to a modern progressive fishery embracing co-management
  - Co-management involves commitment to core values, co-operation with DFO science and management
- 34 South and 71 North coast fishing areas
- 58 permanently closed areas
- Current system of management and science is a role model for other fisheries
Today’s Fishery  
2006 - 2007

- Market demand sporadic, prices trending lower since 2003
- Market limitations are making it ever more difficult for industry to fully fund all of the current science, management and operational commitments.
- Challenge today is where do we go from here and “how will we do it?”