



PUHA NEWSLETTER



Presidents Report Mike Featherstone

The Haida Gwaii fishery commenced March 25 with the fleet starting in Rose Harbour and working the lower east and west. At the peak of the fishery there were 22 boats fishing. There was

an abundance of sea urchins in most areas, but no kelp. There were many empty urchins and it was a challenge to find good quality. As a result, the fleet moved through some areas after

1- or 2-days fishing. The fishery in Haida Gwaii finished April 25th, almost exactly 1 month after starting. There were 7 boats on the final load.



PRESIDENTS REPORT



MARKETING REPORT



D&D PACIFIC REPORT



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Despite the difficulty finding quality, the fleet did as good a job as possible. Approximately 40% of the quota was taken. The fleet followed Covid protocols and the community safe plan. Overall, the fishery went well, although everyone would have wished for better quality and landings.

The fleet is now working in the areas around Prince Rupert but are running into the same issues of lack of feed, fields of empty urchins and difficulty finding quality.



Due to the ocean conditions and challenges finding quality our landings are lagging this season. The Covid challenges with market, processing and flights have also hindered landings.

The urchin sectoral meeting was held April 7th with attendance from most Directors. A lot of work went into making recommendations for both the red and green fisheries as both IFMP's renew in 21/22.



For green sea urchins, recommendations were made to increase quotas in both new and existing areas. DFO has agreed to increase the quota approximately 1,300 lbs per licence. The increase will be in some new areas such as Howe Sound and in some existing areas where an abundance of urchins have been reported. The Directors also recommended a 1-year IFMP given the dynamic changes with respect to green sea urchin populations exploding. PUHA is also working to open some fishing again in the north coast although this will be a longer process.

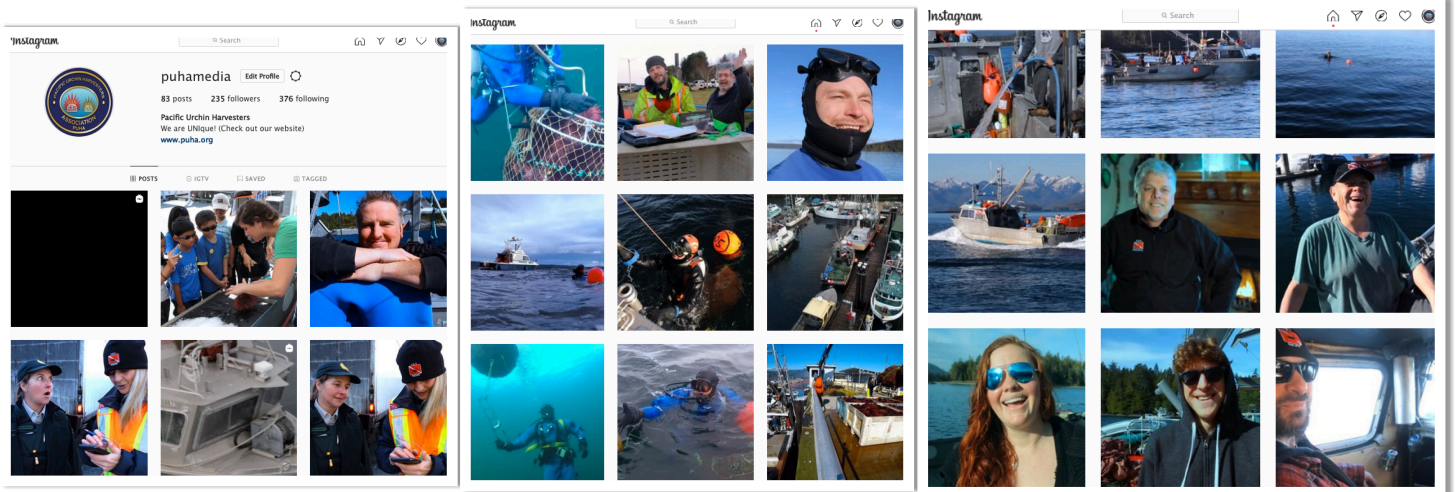
For reds, there was mostly some tweaking of quotas and some boundary changes and additions of some sub areas. Most of the changes occurred in the south coast.



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There isn't much happening with respect to trade shows and marketing although Geoff has participated in some virtual shows and has some updates and insights on the Covid effects.

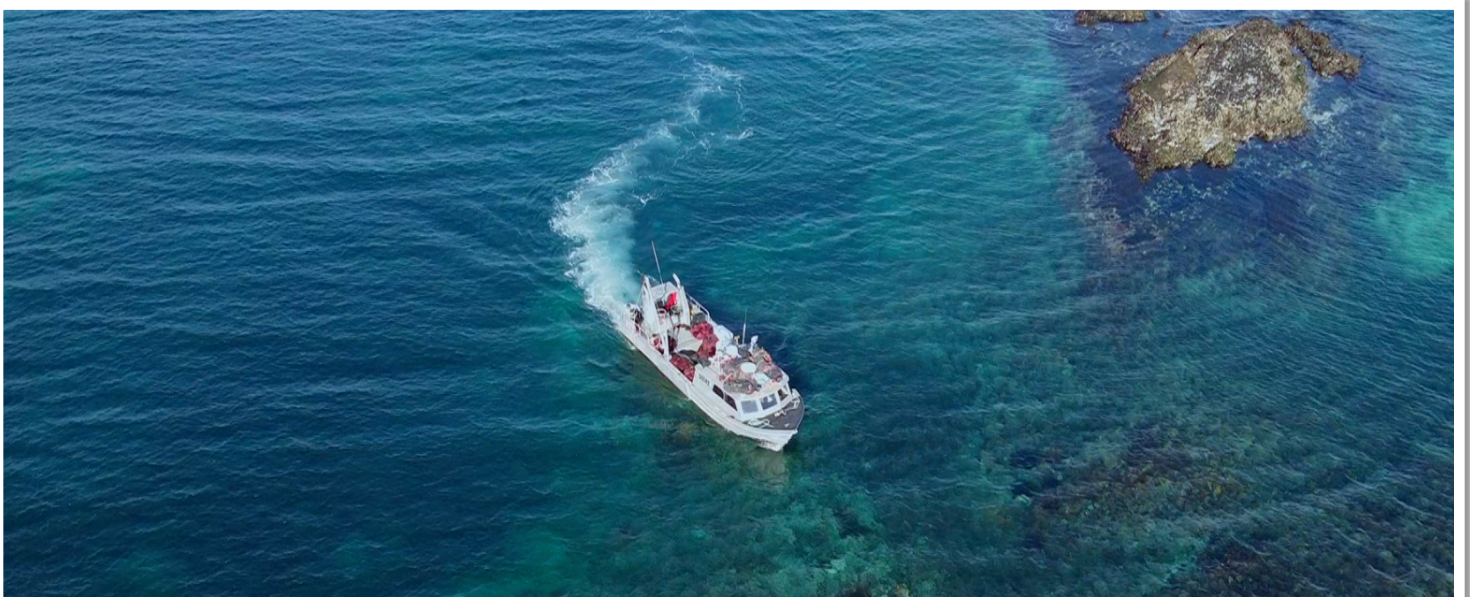
Ron Ross is working on translating a shortened version of our website and our new look website is now up and operating, along with all our social media. We encourage you to send photos and updates anytime to Ron for posting. Find the PUHA Instagram page at puhamedia and tag us in your photos and video's.



PUHA is planning to have our AGM in late June or early July. This meeting will have to be a Zoom meeting, although I guess everyone is getting up to speed for Zooming.



Look forward to seeing everyone at the AGM! Hopefully the Covid challenges are a thing of the past in the 21/22 season.





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Industry News

<https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/whales-baleines/srkw-measures-mesures-ers-eng.html#maps>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/moderate-livelihood-fishery-dfo-1.5934146>

<https://futureoftheocean.wordpress.com/2019/05/01/speaking-up-for-sustainable-fisheries/>

<https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/526193-sustainable-fisheries-are-facing-a-moratorium>

[https://www.seafoodsource.com/national-fisherman/market-barriers-constrain-alaska-urchin-fishing?](https://www.seafoodsource.com/national-fisherman/market-barriers-constrain-alaska-urchin-fishing?utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_content=newsletter&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTWpBeE5tUXdZakUyT1RGbSlzInQiOiJSRDRyMUdMYkw3bWh6bnBiTjQ4SEFpK2UrUjNhbjJHKhZJhbGtpQnIDNDVLTfMwakMwc0lVQnF1VU0wRjBIQ1BIWGRiYjdHUktoNDNFHjZjSFpqdG11eIVSYmdUKys5cVhZK01jWU8yTzdhaCs4TW1GcXRhRW4wMXBEZ0Q0ZTBpYiJ9)

[utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_content=newsletter&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTWpBeE5tUXdZakUyT1RGbSlzInQiOiJSRDRyMUdMYkw3bWh6bnBiTjQ4SEFpK2UrUjNhbjJHKhZJhbGtpQnIDNDVLTfMwakMwc0lVQnF1VU0wRjBIQ1BIWGRiYjdHUktoNDNFHjZjSFpqdG11eIVSYmdUKys5cVhZK01jWU8yTzdhaCs4TW1GcXRhRW4wMXBEZ0Q0ZTBpYiJ9](https://www.seafoodsource.com/national-fisherman/market-barriers-constrain-alaska-urchin-fishing?utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_content=newsletter&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTWpBeE5tUXdZakUyT1RGbSlzInQiOiJSRDRyMUdMYkw3bWh6bnBiTjQ4SEFpK2UrUjNhbjJHKhZJhbGtpQnIDNDVLTfMwakMwc0lVQnF1VU0wRjBIQ1BIWGRiYjdHUktoNDNFHjZjSFpqdG11eIVSYmdUKys5cVhZK01jWU8yTzdhaCs4TW1GcXRhRW4wMXBEZ0Q0ZTBpYiJ9)





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This is the first update of 2021 from me and there has been a lot happening - unfortunately and despite what some might think. Leading the update is the unsurprising observation that the COVID pandemic continues to cause havoc around the world, most especially with people's health but also including travel, tourism and food service sectors with extended knock-on effects to the freight and seafood business. Freight logistics and transport costs have risen as flights have been cancelled for lack of passengers and cargo space has shrunk even as the impacts on tourism and subsequently on food service have reduced demand from our traditional customers. Travel and tourism are expected to start picking up again later this year, although it is likely to be in fits and starts and neither are expected to return to the pre-pandemic normal for some years. Japan was hoping to welcome hordes of tourists in this year for the Olympics but they have put that idea on ice as another outbreak there is scaring people off. India is suffering through a severe storm that they had hoped, had passed. All in all- it still isn't over.

The effects on all this on international trade are predictable, though perhaps not as bad for urchin products as feared. StatsCan trade figures for 2020 are now all in and, as I am sure no one will be surprised, shipments and values are down, though we are already apparently seeing improvements in most markets where we are active. Total shipments of all formats, including fresh, live and frozen, came in about 435 MT (worth CAD \$14.8 M), down from 478 (\$19.2 M) in 2019 and 549 in 2018 (\$20.8 M). The average unit price realized for fresh product was \$59.08 per kg, down from \$66.06 in 2019 and the first showing below \$60 since 2016. Japan remains our largest single market accounting for about 54% (@ 235 MT) and 45% (@ \$6.7 M) of the shipped volumes and values of all formats respectively, though these numbers fall to about 43% (@ 86 MT) and 37% (@ \$4.35 M) respectively when live and frozen formats are excluded.

Hong Kong remained our second largest market in 2020 with sales of about 44 MT worth \$3.05 M. It is worth noting that it has in fact been our largest customer for the first 3 months of 2021, outstripping even Japan. The unit prices we realized in Hong Kong rose from \$65.35/kg in 2019 to \$68.56 in 2020. Prices rose as well in Korea and Taiwan, our third and fourth largest markets to about \$62/kg and to \$60 respectively. Sales of fresh and live product to the US declined by about 60% (to \$394 K) and 30% (to 434 MT) respectively, though it seems that our US sales are more volatile on a year to year basis than our other major markets. We've also seen good recovery there in early 2021 as the US is quickly powering up again as more folks get vaccinated. We may well see a very good jump in demand and sales there sooner rather than later.



Sales to China also declined this past year, dropping to \$516 K in 2020 from \$1.32 M in 2019 though they too were picking up pace again later in the year and through early 2021. Projecting how that market is going to develop for us remains problematic because of the other "difficulties" currently affecting our international relationship. Still, reports coming out of China suggest restaurants, travel and local tourism are back to normal so there could be a good bounce coming from there as well.



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The same holds in the projections for other places as well: i.e. that we will see improving demand as the pandemic clears. Getting back in front of our consumers and customers in these is important to regain our momentum but it seems international travel over the rest of this year is still looking like a bit of a stretch. Caution is still the word of the day when it comes to travel so it is still unlikely that we will be attending any shows over the rest of this year. Looking at the funding side of the equation, we did get a new 2-year proposal submitted that accommodates our diminished travel plans for this year with things expected to pick up, and quite possibly pick up big time, next year. We should be hearing about that in about a month (end of May).

That brings us to the other side of the equation: supply - especially of the future sort- and on that we are still looking through some clouds, albeit some that may be a bit thicker. The North Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Areas (NSB MPA) network initiative is again stirring and there have been a number of meetings, virtual meetings but meetings nonetheless, since early March. Just to recap: meetings over a period of months in 2019 saw the introduction of a first draft of the NSB MPA network for the North Island, Central and North Coast and Haida Gwaii by the Marine Protected Areas Technical Team (MPATT) to various sectors which were then invited to make comments. The commercial fishing sector put together a comprehensive industry response based on meetings held between the industry's Marine Planning Team (MPT: Bruce Turris, Grant Dovey, Brian Mose and Mike Atkins) and fishermen up and down the coast. The MPATT collected, assembled, evaluated and reflected on the many comments, most of which were critical, they received over the 6 or so months to June 2019 just before they went dark until after the federal election. The MPT continued refining the industry perspectives/response and tied it all together with a socio-economic study by Gord Gisalsen and presented both as a package at a meeting of all sectors and MPATT once the process restarted in February 2020.



Of course, right after that we had COVID and things went kind of quiet again. MPATT retreated to develop their second draft of the NSB MPA Network again a plan based in part on review of the comments from stakeholders in consultation with the "governance partners" (Federal, Provincial and Coastal First Nation governments). The original plan was to have everything sorted out by about the summer of 2021 but it has now been delayed by about a year because of the complications imposed by the pandemic. I mention this because this may turn out to be a bit of luck. It struck me that the Environmental Non Governmental Organizations (ENGO's) were pushing for the early date but they may have a bit of an undeclared motive for that. They have repeatedly held up the California MPA Network as an unequivocal success but it turns out there is a 10 year review of the California MPA network coming up and the reports on it thus far are in fact mixed. I have some queries out to get a better idea of the timing for that and, thinking it might not be as rosy as reported, am thinking there might be a bit of a landmine in there that could slow things down up here.

Anyways- the gist of the second draft to date is that FN consultations are still going on around the North Island and the North Coast - so there are a lot of areas where they really cannot say much. However, on my read there seems to be good faith from FN's (north and south) on the need to work together to find effective solutions for problems faced by their communities and the oceans without making too many problems for others.



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They are admittedly seeking a new balance based on their priorities but these include identifying and growing economic/business opportunities within an environmentally sound framework. We had some good discussions at the above mentioned meetings, discussions leading to a better understanding of what that balance means to them based on their local knowledge and local use patterns. It is definitely worth noting too that by expressing appreciation for hearing about the specifics and so getting the context on the “why” behind their reasoning, they responded, and responded strongly, in kind. Mutual respect and appreciation are not always easy to find and/or achieve, but in this case it struck me that just that is a large part of what they are seeking. That is an approach I can work with and hope it works for you guys too.



The Central Coast FN's were more forthright with their plan(s) - though I would also have to say it did not come across as a good thing. The Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk and Kitasoo/Xais'xais have coordinated and put together plans that may not leave a lot on the table for industry, at least those parts of it fishing the whole coast. Given the presence of sea otters in many of the areas around that part of the coast, the effect(s) on the urchin fishery are probably limited but the impacts on sea cucumber fishing look to be substantial.

There was some improvement on impacts between the first and second drafts for the Central Coast in terms of the number of zones protected (down by 34%), the footprint of the protected areas and protected pounds for sea urchins, sea cucumbers and geoduck, but in at least some cases it looked like areas were being strategically sealed off in ways that would favour local boats. I don't want to be inflammatory, but there were claims about declines in abundance, most particularly of sea cucumber, and a consequent need for additional dispersal refuges, seed areas, dedicated research sites and even, in their own words, Indigenous Protected Areas though a definition or an outline of what that might entail was not offered. I do not believe these declines are supported by the ongoing assessments from DFO and industry but such confirmation, and one might deduce the expertise in and dedication to science of the existing management model, are not apparently being accorded a lot of credibility. The Central Coast FN's were all represented by consultants, so it is hard to say what the FN's themselves have to say about it, but there did not seem to be a lot of compromise included in the presentations from the consultants nor a lot of effort to build or share confidence, context or understanding on the communities' perspective(s) and/or priorities.

The Haida also came to the meeting dedicated to Haida Gwaii well prepared. They stated off the top that they expected the discussions would “not be easy” but they were to my mind more positive in the sense that they too are wanting to make this process work in a non-adversarial manner if possible and so are willing to compromise. They are however also adamant that their history is respected and their ideals, priorities and prerogatives are reflected in the ongoing governance of what everybody recognizes as their homeland. They concede that they have benefited as well as suffered from the explosion of modernity on them, and most directly from the repeated boom-bust cycles of the past few centuries, but they retain an inherent respect for nature and feel the impacts of changes to the environment are affecting all aspects of their culture and their relationships to just about everybody and everything. They also worry that these changes are accelerating and the potential consequences becoming more threatening so want to take what steps they can to slow and maybe even arrest those changes.



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This is a position I personally and professionally respect and have sympathy for, and I thought the dialogue from all sides throughout the meeting was positive and respectful. It is really hard not to see that these “changes” are obviously happening around us and I am sure we can all agree that there seems to be some growing urgency to do something about it. However, as is nearly always the case, there are differences in opinion on the best course of action, or as some would point out is the more likely case for the proposed Marine Protected Areas, inaction. In this regard, shutting boats and on-water activities out of areas makes no sense if there are no other sources of data to track what changes are occurring. And this is especially a worry if there are no effective enforcement and monitoring capabilities, something which to this point has only been mentioned peripherally in the whole exercise.





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Some feel abandoning nature to itself is the best option- ergo the argument for MPA's- but this does not work with ecotypes like urchin barrens which are persistent and resilient in the absence of any perturbation that actively reduces the urchin abundance. Recent research in California has found that even sea otters ignore barrens urchins because there is too little food value in them to bother spending the energy to go get them. The only thing that works is human intervention, just as PUHA divers did around Murchison a couple of years back. That effort highlighted once again that once things go too far, commercial harvests of barrens urchins are out of the question and popping them with a hammer as the only effective option.

Continuing along this line, there are still good reasons to further explore the use of effective management measures to reach the stated outcomes and goals desired by all. A study from DFO in 2019 into Provisional Reference Points for RSU suggested increasing the harvest rate from 2% to 5% of total harvestable biomass is sustainable. The data used for this study were obtained from fishery independent surveys carried out on various parts of the coast including Haida Gwaii between 1995-2016. The study also found that the standard 2% harvest rate (HR) used in BC was too low to have an effect on the Red Urchin population growth in Haida Gwaii and other parts of the North Coast, meaning urchin abundance will increase indefinitely at that rate, and that a 5% rate or higher would be more effective. If increased marine productivity through recovery of kelp forests is the desired endpoint, logic would suggest increasing the harvest rate and area quotas to that level is the way to go. Alternatively this same logic leads to the conclusion that converting areas to MPA's and shutting down any urchin harvest, especially in the absence of other sources of predation like seastars, is actually counterproductive in that it effectively puts the whole region at eventual risk of degradation into urchin barrens.

I am also sitting in on a sea otter modelling study for Haida Gwaii that is being coordinated by Lynn Lee that is looking at what happens on a number of different levels when otters show up: ecologically, economically, sociologically and culturally. It is not in any way a simple, one dimensional issue for any of the people participating and I think appreciating and building on the different perspectives coming from the range of disciplines and approaches involved is again helping build understanding, trust and respect. The timeline has the project: "The Sea Otters Return to Haida Gwaii" aka the "Haida Gwaii Kuu Project" (Kuu being the Haida word for Sea Otter) extending for another couple of years before any conclusions will be evident, but in the meantime there is a lot of discussion and learning going on - and that in itself is I believe a good thing.

So on that line- I, and I expect many others, would be really interested to get more details on what is happening on and under the water up that way. That would include insights or observations on the condition of the kelp, numbers/densities/condition of red- and purple - urchins, any changes that seem widespread and/or significant to you guys as the ones who have the best feel for what is happening. Video would be great, but even just comments and general observations would be appreciated.

I do not believe this conversation is over, nor is likely to be for quite some time- maybe decades, but I believe we have to continue making the point that the best solution(s) will be found by working together on the issues, and that includes continuing to build, share and discuss our separate knowledge bases on what is happening. I think compromises are still not just needed, but also that all- or at least most - parties involved recognize that and are anticipating stepping up to make the needed deal(s) when the time is right.

I welcome any comments and invite you to send along some feedback anytime you can.



RED SEA URCHIN FISHERY – To April 30th 2021

North Coast Fleet

- The fleet continues its' struggle with quality as the major issue as vessels struggle to find any urchins with acceptable roe
- Weather has also restricted vessels, but a slight improvement in the new year enabled vessels to look further
- Vessels searched QMAs in Smith Inlet, south of Klemtu and through Milbanke to Prior Pass. Quality was the major issue then weather
- Fleet start landing pounds out of Laredo QMAs and then back to West Aristazabel QMAs until weather pushed the fleet back to Prince Rupert
- The fleet struggled until Haida Gwaii opened with PUHA getting clearance to have a fleet in region with COVID-19 rules in place
- Haida Gwaii opened in QMas around Rose Harbour. With mixed reviews on quality, the fleet worked through QMAs until the feed lines were exhausted and the fleet started their movement north up the eastside of Haida Gwaii
 - Quality proved poor and the fleet was in Charlotte City by the end of the week
- Weather kept the fleet in port for a week and then started harvest on the west side of Haida Gwaii. Quality proved poor and weather was no help as the fleet moved quickly through QMAs ending up in Langara
- The fleet worked the Langara QMAs until the weather pushed them off and back to Prince Rupert
- The fleet is currently working in Dundas QMAs with a move coming as they plan to work other QMAs in hopes of quality returning
- The North Coast Protocol created by PUHA and DFO to replace the contracted on-grounds coordinator is being tested by certain vessels as being not workable. A review of the protocol will require DFO comments

South Coast Fleet

- Increased vessel activity this season due to the area selection process that happened in 2020, and
- The lack of harvest from the north coast in 2020 and into 2021 pushed harvest levels up in the south
- Two regions of the south coast still have quota but quality was and is an issue
 - Ucluelet QMAs still have quota – hopefully quality will improve



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- Campbell River QMA's still have quota but suffer the same as Ucluelet QMA's
- Minimal activity on the south coast is limited to live market sales out of Steveston and the occasional landing out of Campbell River

General

- Breaches to the conditions of licence have increased this season
- Hails to harvest and Hails to offload are not being met as per the conditions of licence – this issue improved November and into December, but has fallen off since then
- Harvest chart delivery by the deadline as per the condition of licence is showing signs of problems. Charts are late for many vessels
 - Reminder – chart filled out by midnight – chart submitted to D&D within 30-days of the harvest date – DF0 C&P are aware of the timeline and will be asking to show charts for corresponding log pages and tab numbers

Figure 1 – RSU Comparison by Month to Date - 5-Year Trend

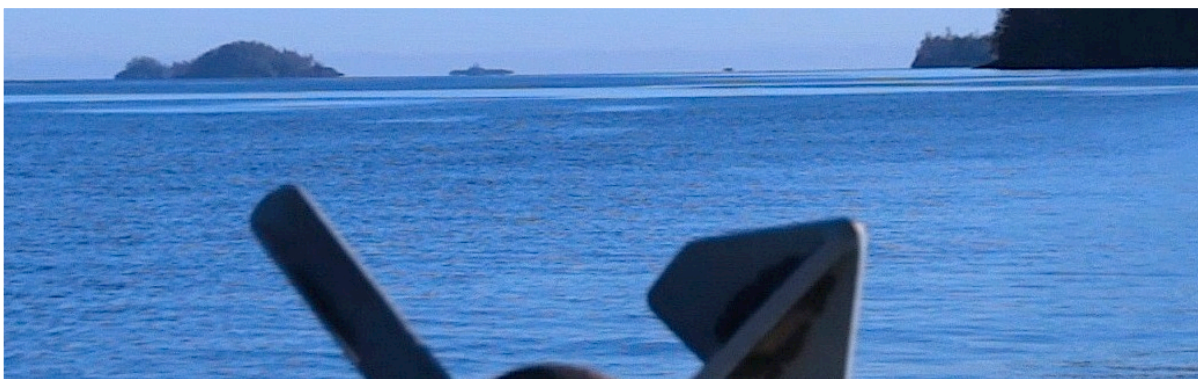
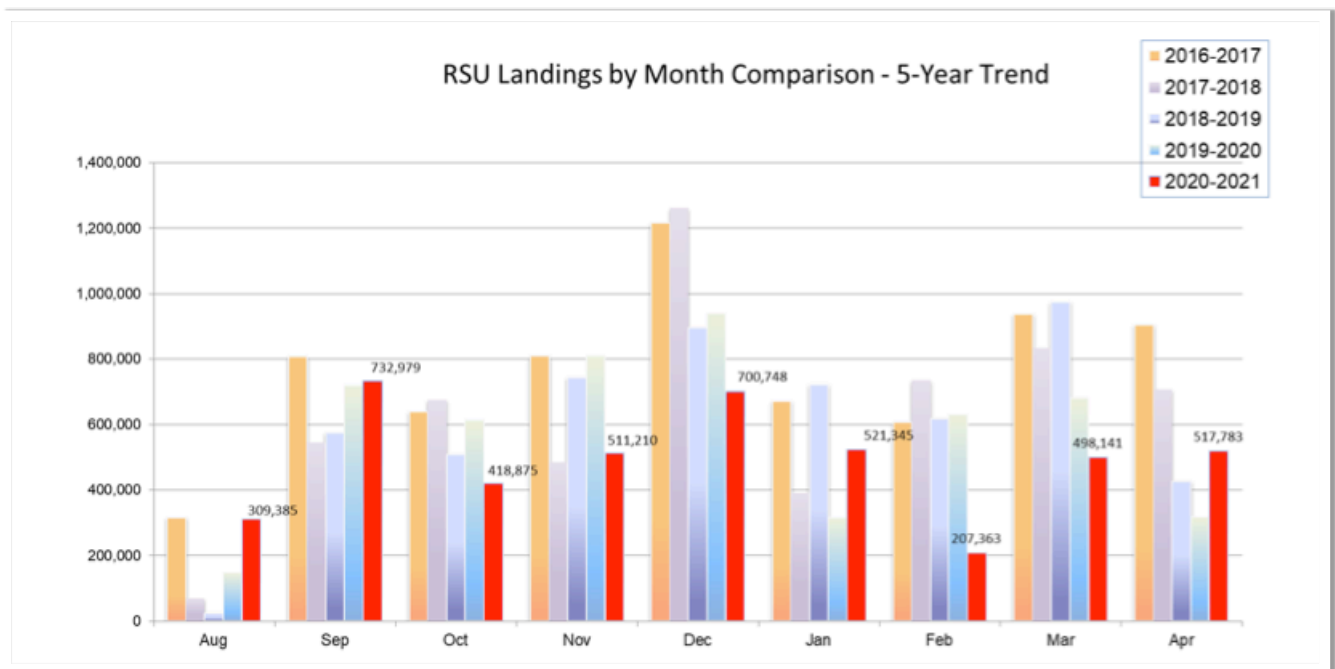




Figure 2 – RSU Landings by Season to Date - 5-Year Trend

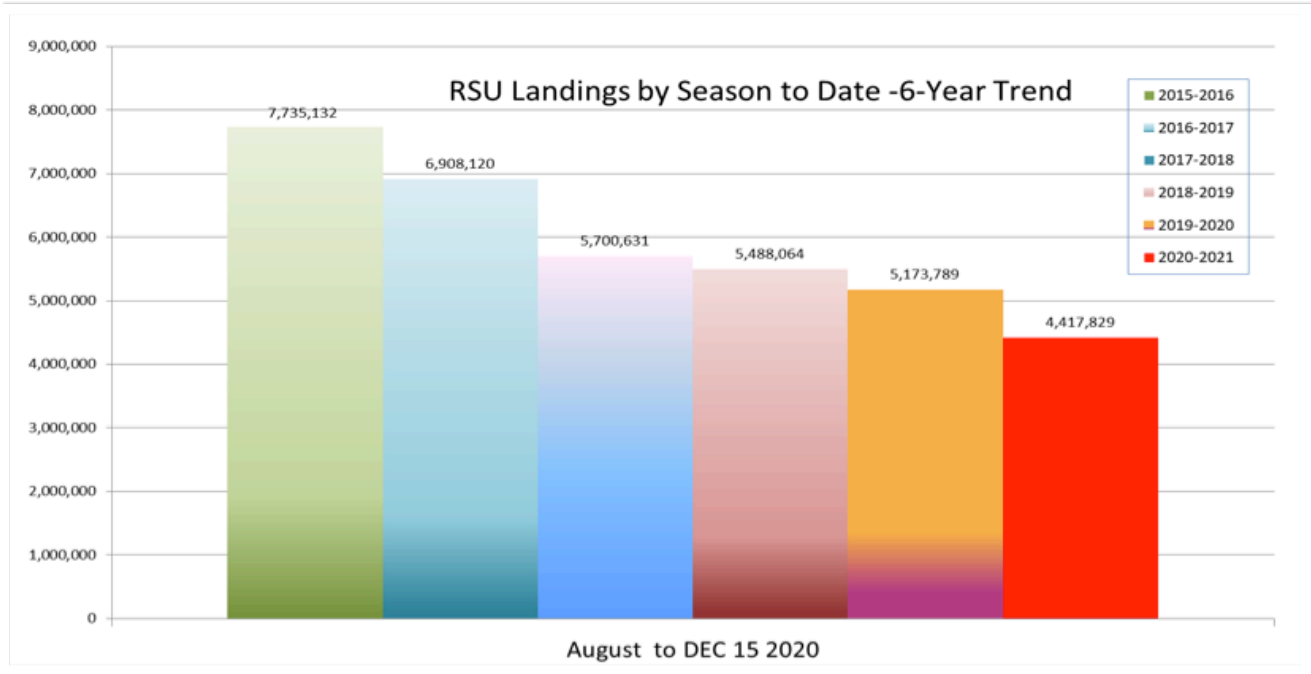


Figure 3 – RSU North Coast Catch Comparison by Month – 2-Year Trend

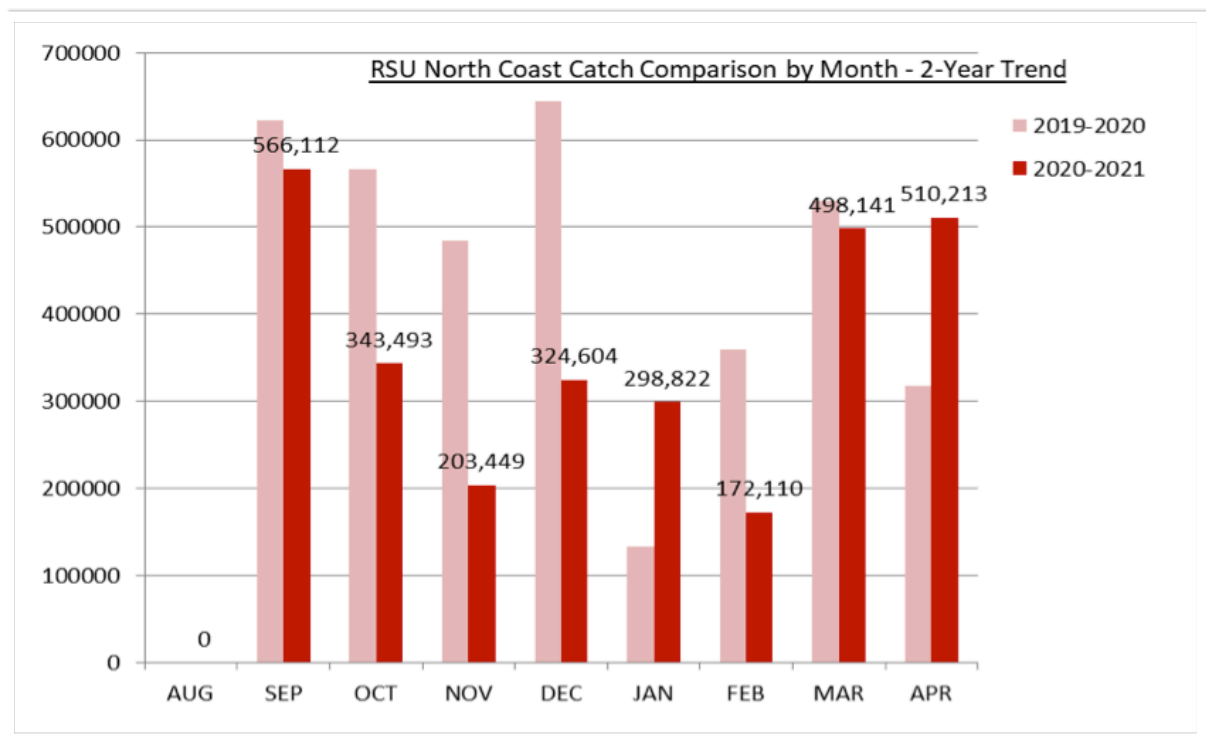




Figure 4 – RSU South Coast Catch Comparison by Month – 2-Year Trend

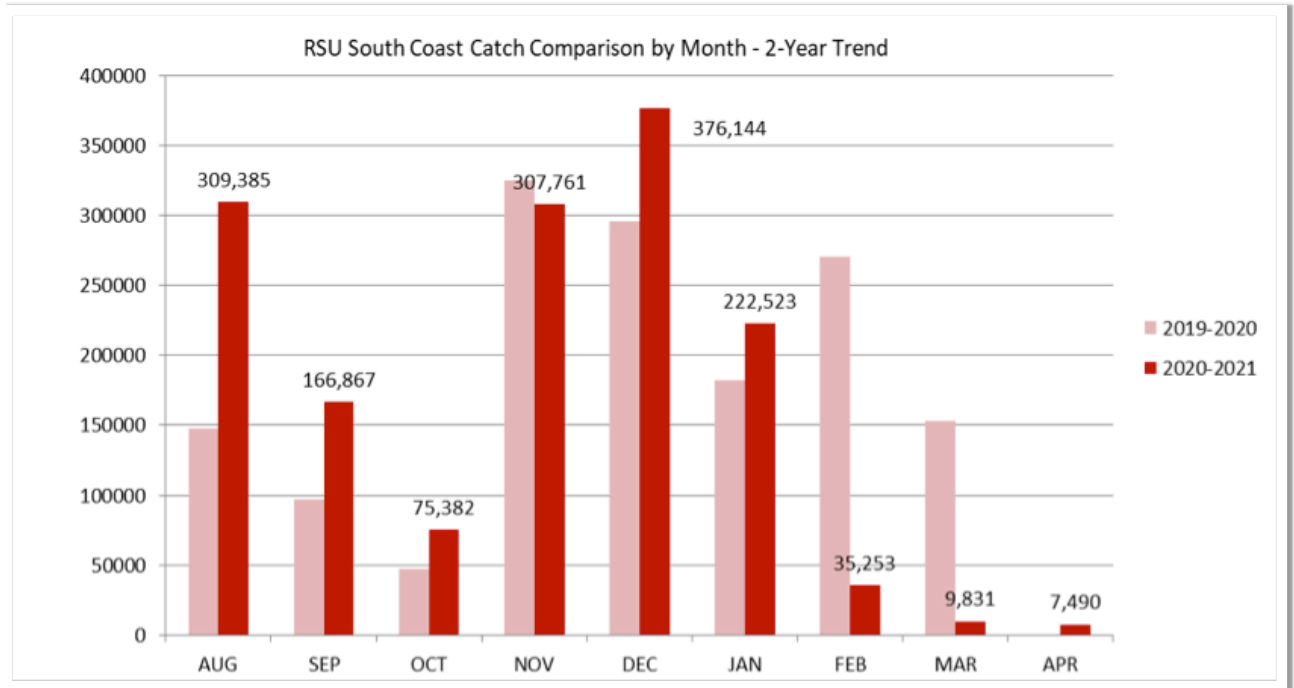
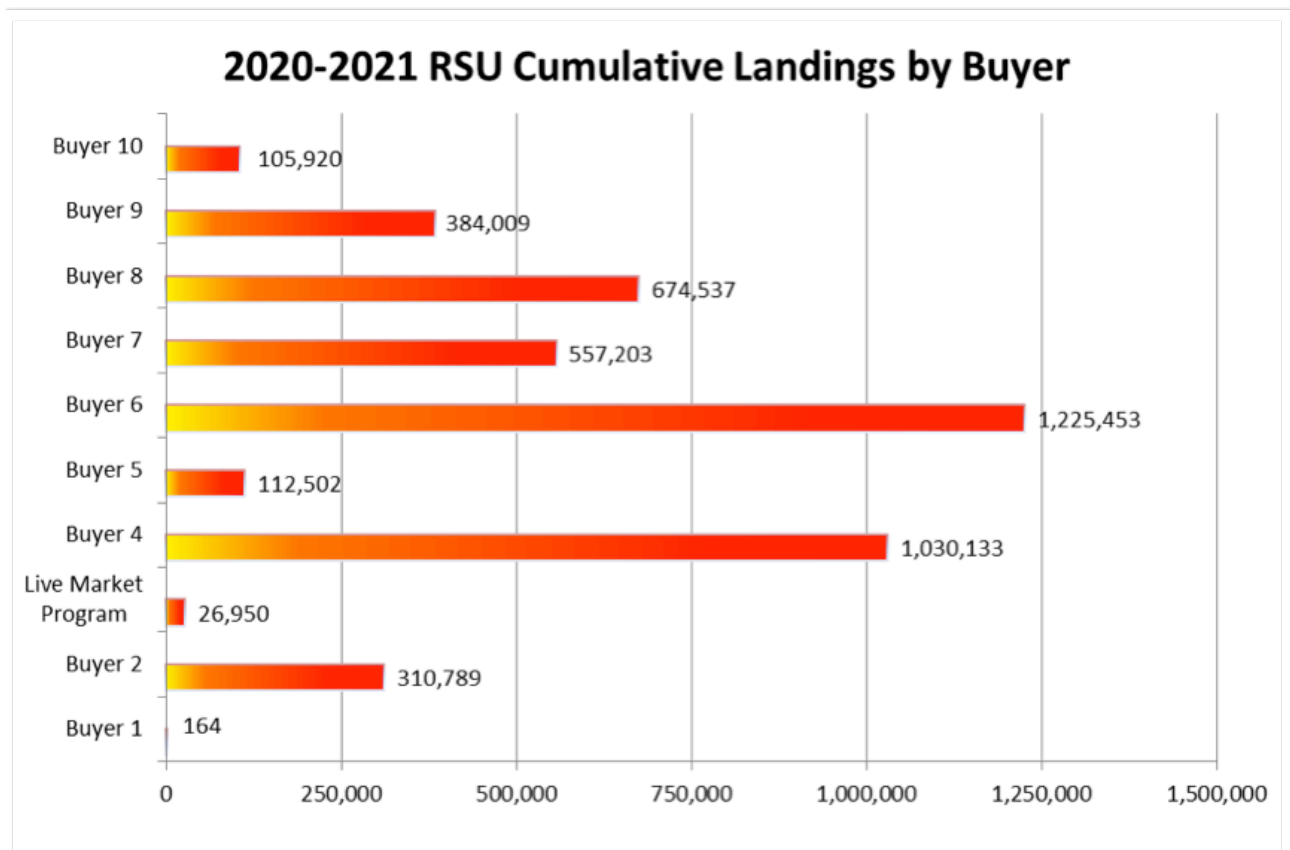


Figure 5 – RSU Cumulative Landings by Buyer

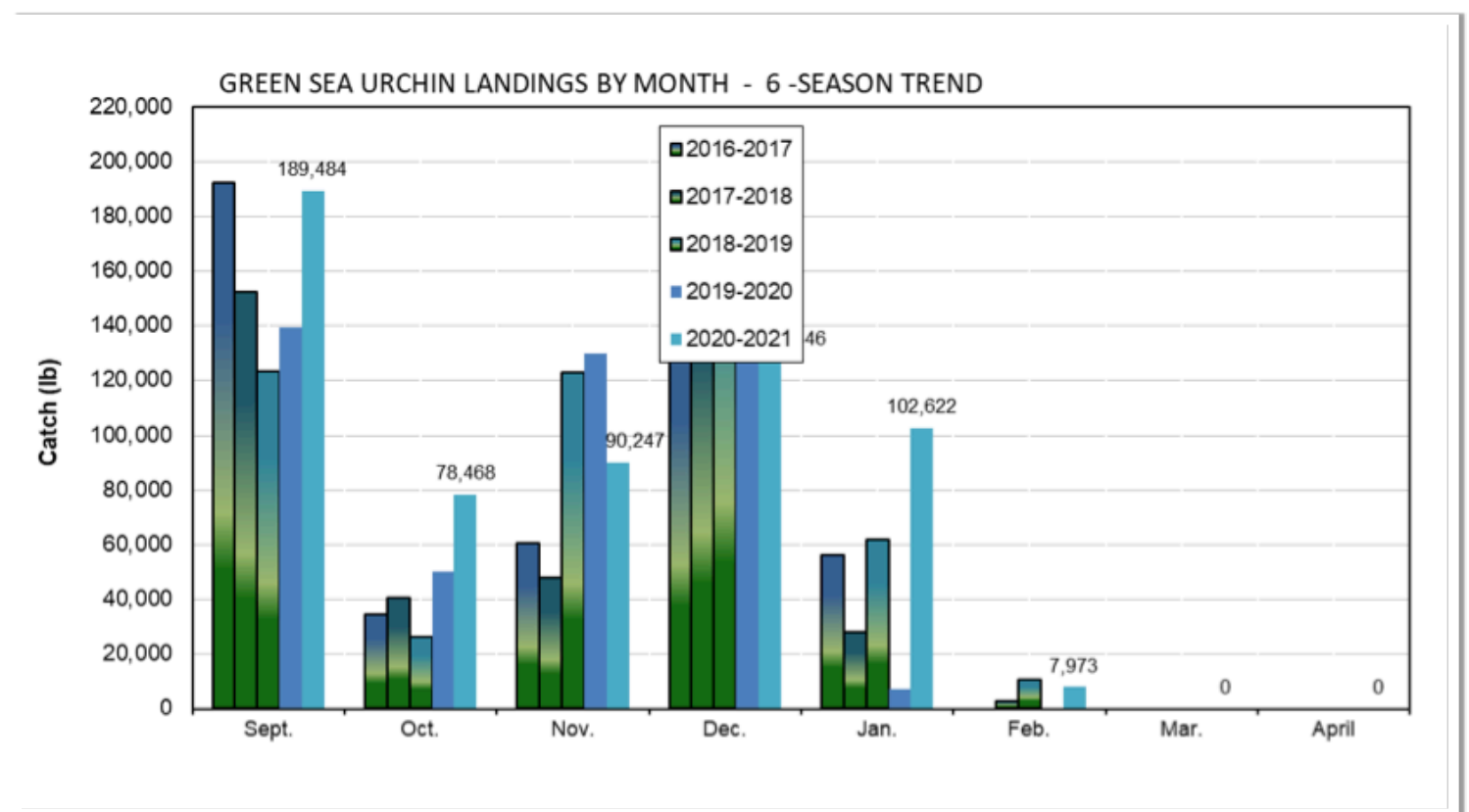




2020-21 GSU FISHERY- To April 30th 2021

- The 2020-21 GSU fishing season is quiet now after mid-January with 95% of the TAC achieved
- Currently, quota remaining is primarily out of Kelsey Bay with a little bit in Campbell River and Area 11
- Kelsey Bay QMAs have the majority of quota remaining
- Great effort by vessels producing quality with so many greens south of Kelsey Bay
- Harvest data good
- Adherence to Conditions of Licence overall good
 - Hails to fish the only real breach as market orders come in last minute

Figure 5 – GSU Historical Landings by Month 6-SeasonTrend to April 30th 2021





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Note: Figures 4 & 5 reflects the GSU fishery increase of the total allowable catch the past three seasons.

Figure 5 – GSU Historical Landings – 2020-21 To April 30th 2021

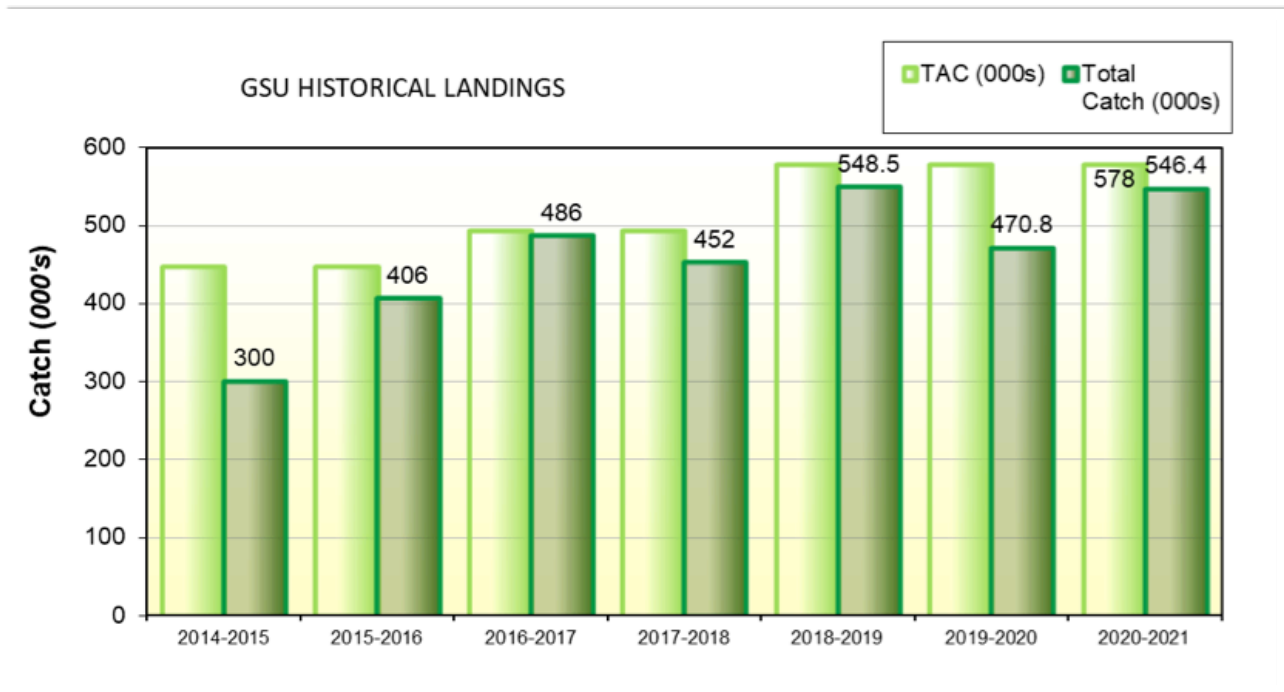


Figure 6 – GSU Landings by Buyer To April 30th 2021

