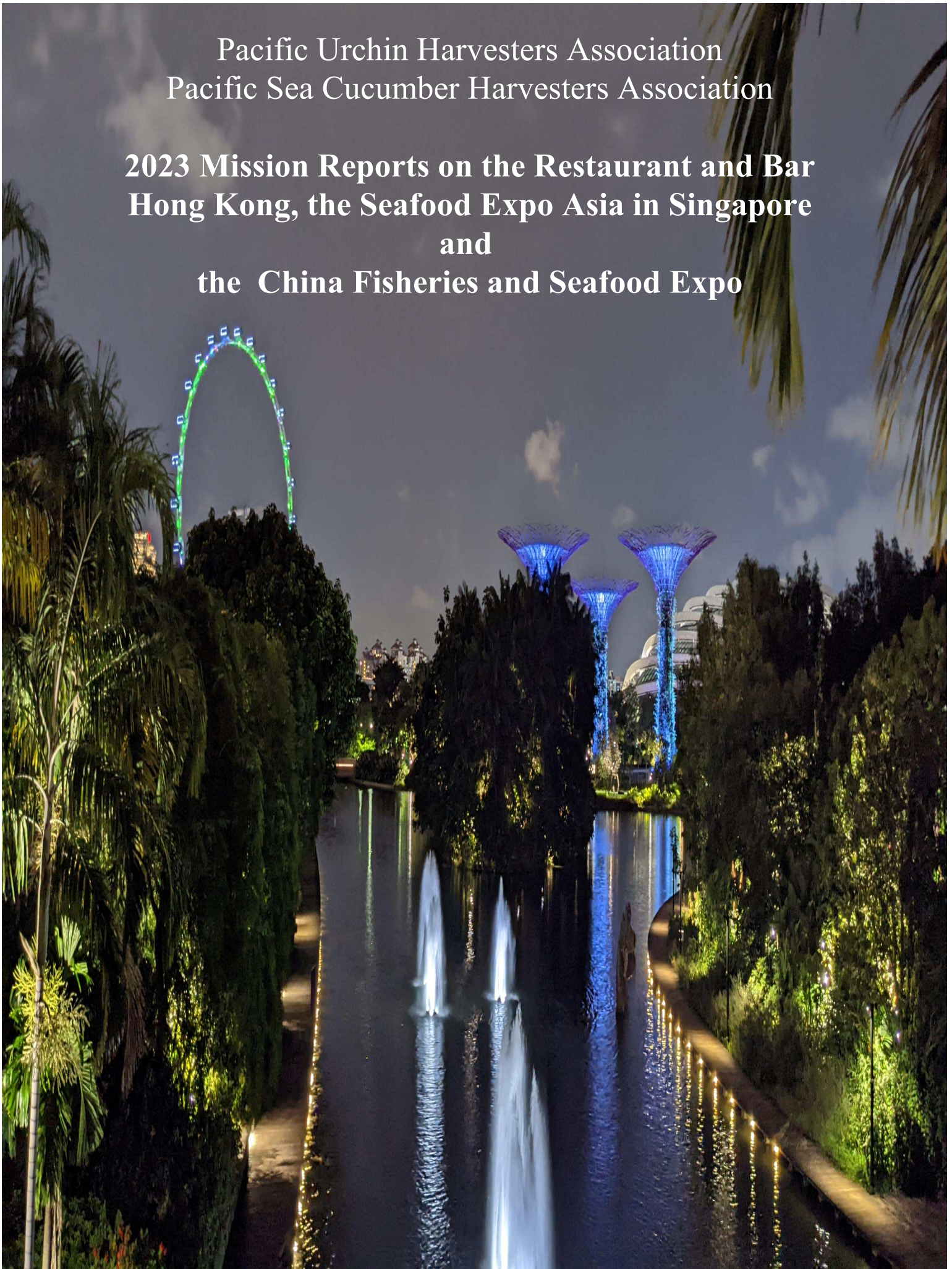


Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association
Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters Association

**2023 Mission Reports on the Restaurant and Bar
Hong Kong, the Seafood Expo Asia in Singapore
and
the China Fisheries and Seafood Expo**





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Executive Summary

Mike Featherstone, Fraser Rieche, Lawrence Anderson and Geoff Krause undertook a mission on behalf of PUHA and the PSCHA in September 2023 during which we checked out the Restaurant and Bar Hong Kong (RBHK) show before taking care of business at the Seafood Expo Asia (SEA) in Singapore.

We also made preliminary arrangements to get a delegation to attend the 2023 China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in Qingdao in late October 2023, but the visa application process proved too daunting and the effort was aborted. We decided instead to delegate some member company representatives attending the show, Franco Chen from Great Ocean Ventures Ltd. and Sang Zheng and Shirley Li from Grand Ocean Int'l Trading Ltd., as representatives for the PUHA and PSCHA respectively.

We collected contact information from 6 people at the RBHK, 83 at the SEA and 29 from the CFSE which are listed in this report, along with other information and impressions from the shows. We concluded that returning to the SEA and CFSE in upcoming years over the course of this project makes sense but that the RBHK is not a suitable exhibiting venue for us at this time. Hong Kong remains a critical market for us and maintaining a presence to keep abreast of and in front of the Hong Kong market is strongly advised but finding alternative options is recommended at this time.

Acknowledgements

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The author also extends his thanks to the Agri- Marketing Program, PUHA and the PSCHA, their respective presidents, Mr. Mike Featherstone and Mr. Thom Liptrot, their executive teams and members for their continuing support, advice and confidence.

Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters Association

2023 Mission Reports on the RBHK (Hong Kong), SEA (Singapore) and CFSE (Qingdao)

Introduction

The most important markets for BC sea urchin and sea cucumber products remain centred in Asia and the Pacific Urchin and the Pacific Sea Cucumber harvesters have been travelling to the area to learn more of the cultures and markets so we may better serve them. There have been a number of significant changes in these in recent years that are affecting all manner of relations and opportunities, so it remains important to stay abreast of their impacts.

The Seafood Expo Asia (SEA) was our first real entry into the Hong Kong market and was hugely successful and beneficial for us but the show was interrupted in 2019- 2021 and shifted to Singapore as a result. Singapore is one of the richest markets in the world and has a strong and diverse food service (restaurant) sector which values high quality seafood. Unfortunately at this point we do not have a lot of exposure or sales there, probably because air links are indirect though this is projected to change in the near future. In short, the SEA provides us with a substantial and attention-getting route into Singapore and other new SE Asian market. Singapore is a multiethnic society with a dominant and growing Chinese diaspora community and is a significant opportunity that could/should provide other options if relations and trade with China become more difficult.

China has become more difficult to travel to in recent times yet it remains the one of the most important markets for BC sea cucumber and geoduck. We understand that things change but also believe that people trading with each other is a proven means of building on trust that is and will remain beneficial for all involved. The trips outlined in this report were designed to reintroduce us to these markets, and visa versa, and provide an evolving basis for moving forward.

Hong Kong

We were anxious to get back to Hong Kong because the city remains one of our best markets and since we had not been able to visit for some time we felt taking the time was more than justified. It was in fact our first visit back to the city since 2018 and we were all wondering how things have changed since we were last there because there have been some pretty dramatic changes of late. There were the lock downs due the pandemic which had people basically locked away in their apartments for weeks on end for a couple of years. The shutdown meant lots of restaurants and bars were basically closed for a couple of years and people shifted their normal habit of eating out to preparing food at home. The city suffered through a number of major changes and there are contrasting stories about the effects, the official line being the changes are purely cosmetic and there has been no real change in the dynamism and essential freedoms seen in the City. From this angle, the rumours of decline are simply that, rumours, with no basis in reality. The other view is more complicated.

Possibly even more impactful than the pandemic were the demonstrations back in 2019 against a new extradition law “inspired” by the Central Beijing government that brought the City to a screaming halt. This event was incredibly disruptive and resulted in the imposition of a new National Security Law, again from the Central Government in Beijing, and a fierce crackdown on dissent and democracy that continues to this day. Subsequent changes in the makeup of the Legislature and Laws it has adopted conform more completely to the wishes of the Central Beijing government over the City. Given the proud free-wheeling live-and-let-live ethos that characterized “Asia’s Global City” for decades prior to that, there are a lot of people there still kind of shell shocked by the whole experience.

The imposed changes are thought by many, including perhaps most especially the UK government (their treaty partners), to abrogate the International Treaty agreed to between China and the United Kingdom in 1984 that established the One Country, Two Systems framework. This treaty transferred control of the Territory to China on July 1, 1997 and was intended to allow a certain degree of autonomy for Hong Kong for 50 years. The changes imposed after 2019 and reinforced by the shutdowns ostensibly justified by the zero-covid pandemic response were seen and felt as traumatic to the character of Hong Kong so even today its reputation as a truly international city is sadly compromised. Beijing unsurprisingly dismisses such concerns as nonsense, perhaps even treasonous nonsense, something that in itself embodies the problem the City faces.

The fact is that the “evolution” of the legal reality in Hong Kong runs contrary to the stated intentions and negotiated conditions laid out in the Joint Declaration on Hong Kong in the view of the UK government. This position is supported by many international jurists despite claims by the Chinese government that the Declaration is now an historical document of no relevance to Hong Kong governance. This is almost typical now of the Chinese government under Xi Jinping as it is establishing a fairly solid record of interpreting agreements, Conventions and even Treaties they agree to and ratify as not necessarily binding on them. They insist other countries abide by international conventions they have signed and ratified, like the United Nations Declaration on Universal Human Rights (1948) and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (signed 1982, ratified 1996) and the subsequent Implementation Agreement (signed 1994, ratified 1996), even as their own interpretive standards do not oblige them to abide by their stated conditions. The treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and the aggressive extension of the so-called 9-dash line in the South China Sea by China some thousands of kilometres from their own shores and running into recognized sovereign jurisdictions of other countries are two of the most prominent and internationally troubling contraventions of such agreements. An opinion article that examines the South China Sea situation more comprehensively from The Diplomat can be found at [Codes of Conduct Built on Foundations of Bad Faith](#)

Hong Kong’s leader still claims that the Hong Kong government calls the shots in the city, but in fact the National Security Law imposed in 2020 and new Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Article 23) lays waste to many parts of that assertion. Politicians not seen as patriots to or by Beijing have been purged or punished by the government, officials are required to pledge loyalty to “the motherland” while free speech, the free press and dissent have been rolled back and, according to many reports, essentially crushed. As a result of the alleged changes, there has in fact been an exodus of people from Hong Kong since the demonstrations over concerns of diminishing Liberties and Rights. Hong Kong remains an important market and even a culturally iconic and critical trade crossroad for many of us in the West and we were wanting to see if the fundamental underlying “vibe” of the place was still holding.



We managed to reserve rooms in Wan Chai at a hotel we have stayed at before so we might better benchmark our previous experience and more fairly compare our impressions. In general, foot traffic is less crowded, most noticeably for us on the causeway over towards the Trade and Convention Centre. Some of the businesses we had used in previous years were apparently not able to survive the pandemic shutdowns but the business culture of the City is still vibrant, though perhaps a little subdued.

A number of people we spoke with seemed resigned to Hong Kong being more quickly and completely absorbed into China and losing its uniqueness (so it becomes just another Chinese city), its free media and possibly its independent legal system and with that its vitality, drive and eventually even its language (Cantonese). It is not going to happen overnight but is something that should become more apparent over time as long as it is happening.

Food service and catering were seriously impacted by the pandemic-related lockdowns as people were simply isolated in their apartments and not allowed out to patronize the restaurants, eateries and bars that are, or perhaps were such an integral part of the Hong Kong social scene before the pandemic struck. There are still some, though fewer, bars and nightclubs in Wan Chai district as well as lots of Chinese noodle restaurants and a not bad selection of other ethnic restaurants though it seems the “western” ones have gone for higher end fare. We also heard that entertainment businesses have shifted to other parts of town, notably to Tsim Sha Tsui, and moved “upscale”.

We wandered through some nice malls filled with many expensive stores and well dressed people spread around the Central District and got the impression the architectural diversity and underlying infrastructure is still advancing, not surprising given the same is still happening over on the mainland. It all seemed a little superficial though and we did question the viability of some shops given that the apparent product and store diversity did not seem consistent with the needed sales and margin requirements for rent and other related costs in such high end locations. We did not get into some of the “old” Chinese style malls so cannot comment on how they might be doing but were encouraged to see some of the street markets apparently carrying on a healthy trade.



We heard that the restaurant trade was no longer the backbone of the seafood sales business in Hong Kong since the pandemic. Much of that sector had apparently been replaced by retail sales in supermarkets as people needed to prepare meals for themselves at home. We took time to check some places out and saw 100 g trays of RSU uni from Canada at \$68.55 CAD in City Super. Note those prices are up from between \$42 - 43 CAD back in 2015. The seafood and sushi section in The Food Place had moved from what I recalled on the last visit but were more expansive with a wide range of offerings, though the RSU uni seen there looked off grade and cheaper, possibly from Mexico. At any rate, it is apparently those outlets that are largely supporting sales now in Hong Kong according to folks in the business we spoke to.



As far as the RBHK went, the show was quite a bit smaller and less boisterous than we had seen in the past. There was no common area with an open bar where people could mingle, though some booths in a far corner were sampling their drinks carefully. There was no feeling of the old “drink up and be merry” or the frenetic buzz it had and we all agreed that it didn’t make sense to commit right away to exhibit at this show, thinking perhaps that we should look at another venue. The RBHK is playing again next September (2024) at the same time as the Singapore show, but the larger Hospitality and Food Expo Hong Kong (HOFEX) is not happening until May 2025 meaning we will be blowing off a year of funding if we wait for that. We have never been to the HOFEX but it is worth noting that the Seafood Expo Asia (SEA) too is a smaller show of a type where we have been most successful, in part because we “stand out”. At larger shows, especially the world’s two biggest, the Seafood Expo Global (SEG) and the China Fisheries and Seafood Expo (CFSE), we are easily overshadowed.



Singapore

We carried on from Hong Kong to Singapore for the next edition of the Seafood Expo Asia. The show this year moved to the Marina Sands Convention Centre, right under that most iconic of hotels, providing more space than the hall last year at the Suntec Exhibition Centre. The move was required to accommodate a larger show this year and the fast, modern Singapore metro made the extra distance simply disappear.



We have been with the Seafood Expo Asia since its inception in 2010 in Hong Kong and have been accorded some prominence in the show because of the support we have provided over the years. We are not only generally able to secure a preferred location for our booth because of our long history with them, but we are also generally represented at the opening ceremony for the show which, in Singapore, involves a Lion Dance because of course, Singapore is the Lion City.



As mentioned, this has been our most successful show in the past and while we did find a few things to be critical of this time around, at the end of the day it was still a good show. We were joined by Fraser Rieche and shared the booth as we usually do with the PSCHA. Notably as well this year also had the UHA join us. We collected contact information from 83 people and felt we were well received though I expect it could be better if we can get more participation from our exporters.



We were again located in a good location right at the entrance to the show, but there was a bit of a problem because we were offset from the main entrance by about a row and a half and we had a large column right in front of us that impeded the sight lines to the booth as people entered. The problem for us essentially was that our traffic was down by about 20% from the year before. People entering the show generally split either left or right at about 60:40 towards the larger, more eye-catching booths to the left of the entrance while we were to the right side. On top of that, the path lying between the column and the wall was significantly wider than the path between the column and our booth so most people seemed to simply walk that path past the booth without ever seeing anything but the column. We mentioned this to the organizers who assured us that the show will be on a lower floor next year where this will not be an issue. We will apparently be set up again right at the entrance to the show and there will be no column(s) in the way obstructing people's view of us.

The premo location was taken up this year by a large Chinese pavilion that, while taking up a lot of square footage, actually comprised just a large number of very basic 3x3 booths offering little to see other than a couple of people sitting at a table waiting for someone to talk to. This was China's first year back at the show and of course they came in big: companies from China comprised between $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the exhibitors at the show. They were a large presence, and of course were and are more than welcome, but the "basic" appearance of the booths did detract from generally superior "high quality" visage the show is trying to build, especially as they dominated the entrance so their pavilion provided the initial impression people got of the show.

As mentioned, the show was bigger this year than previous years and while traffic was reported by the organizers to be within expectations, it was distributed between more booths and displays, so it seemed slower. We did manage to collect some 83 contacts with an average score (as determined by the consultant) of 5.1 as summarized in the following tables. This result remains in the top tier of our success at the various shows we attend as indicated by a show score (calculated as the number of contacts collected x the average score) greater than 400.



Table summarizing comparative metrics for all shows attended since 2014

		Visitor Totals and Averages									
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	
SEA	Number	126	93	105	84	83			101	83	
	Score	5.5	5.38	5.52	5.09	5.35			5.04	5.1	
	Show score	693	500	580	428	444			509	423	
CFSE	Number	71	102	74	92	62	57	54		29	
	Score	4.84	5.2	4.49	4.6	4.53	4.48	4.67		4.59	
	Show score	344	530	332	423	281	255	252		133	
SENA	Number			53	45	64	56		42	38	
	Score			5.89	5.00	4.58	4.69		4.57	4.66	
	Show score			312	225	293	263		192	177	
SEG	Number				55	38			19	25	
	Score				4.68	4.47			4.7	4.84	
	Show score				257	170			89	121	

The above table illustrates a number of things. First off, there is the demonstrated consistency of the SEA, maintaining high scores throughout including even after the move to Singapore in 2022. Our appearance at the SEG has been intermittent through the years but that show became more important because of the travel limitations imposed by the pandemic which emerged in March 2020 and caused the cancellation of all shows that year. The SENA and the SEG were the first shows at available to start meeting international customers after the pandemic but both saw substantial changes in their scores after the pandemic that they have still not recovered from. On the other hand, the CFSE only saw a serious decline this year, a year where we did not have dedicated staffing at our information counter. This suggests we lost a substantial portion of our expected data. Note that the data received in 2021 when we had paid full time in-country representatives present was consistent with previous years when we were personally present.

Our sales to Singapore thus far are kind of underwhelming - but the show offers access to many SE Asian markets as well as to Singapore itself, a place with great potential to grow a new market. It has the second highest per-capita GDP in the world, a stable business and social environment including a well regarded independent legal system. It also loves seafood and is a nice place to visit. Singapore is part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) along with Canada and we understand direct air transport is coming back with at least a couple of flights per week which should help enormously in facilitating seafood trade.

One other point worth mentioning relates to my experience doing these shows over the years. It strikes me that our success at these shows really does come down to having our exporters with us as lots of visitors want to talk “turkey” and the only guys who can do that are the exporters themselves. We have not gotten a lot of participation from our exporters at this yet but hopefully this will change at the SEA and we will become even more successful in coming years.

Contact information collected at RBHK in Hong Kong and on Day 1 of the 2023 SEA in Singapore

Product	Date	Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Comments
U.C.G	06-Sep	China	Hong Kong	govt	Kitty	Ko	Gov't of Canada	6	
U.C.G	06-Sep	China	Hong Kong	distrib	Justin	Wong	Jiangzeng Food trading (HK) Ltd.	4	domain not active as website so...
U.C.G	06-Sep	China	Hong Kong	show organizer	Carmen	Leung	Informa Markets	6	show organizer for RBHK and HOFEX
U.C.G	06-Sep	China	Hong Kong	www services	Brian	Wong	Create Global Limited	4	website design and hosting
U.C.G	06-Sep	China	Hong Kong	trader	Vincent	Lam	Linson Global Seafood Trading Ltd.	4	not sure about the domain - does not seem to work
U.C.G	06-Sep	China	Hong Kong	distrib	Sky	Mak	Ocean Tai Foods Co Ltd	5	
U	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	distrib/wholesale	Shy Yea	Wang	Nakajima Suisan (Asia) Pte. Ltd.	8	aka Mr Sushi: imp/whole/distrib/rest/e-tail high end sushi, mult outlets in Singapore
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	association	Belinda	Lee	Seafood Industries Association Singapore	7	Vice Chair of SIAS, lots of connections on the "members" page
U	11-Sep	Japan	Tokyo	import/distrib	Aoyama	Keisuke	United Ocean Co. Ltd.	6	deals in Russian product (uni not listed)- but looking for alternative sources
U	11-Sep	Spain	Puerto Pasquero	import/distrib/etail	Inigo Martin	Garcia-Abril	Buba Camaron	7	high end products, looking for compliant uni for EU
U.C.G	11-Sep	Canada	Toronto	int'l logistics	Susie	de Sousa	Nuera Logistics Inc.	5	int'l logistics, daughter Emilie de Sousa= fish scientist + seafood influencer
U.G	11-Sep	Philippines	Manila	food process consult	Jose P.	Peralta		5	
U.C	11-Sep	Indonesia	South Kalamantan	processor/exporter	Satria	Utomo	Pt. Yobel Utama Seafood Indonesia	4	looking for urchins & cukes, the latter likely for re-export to China
G	11-Sep	China	Hong Kong	trader	Qiang	Wu	Hong Kong Huangfeng Trading Co.	4	looks liek main focus is beef as opposed to seafood
U.C.G	11-Sep	Canada	Richmond	logistics	Pablo	Rodriguez	EZ Link Logistics Ltd.	5	
U.C.G	11-Sep	Indonesia	Jakarta	distrib/etail	Anthony	Aliwarga	AS Foods	5	really basic website, loks like a bit of meat and some shellfish
U.C.G	11-Sep	Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh Sity	trader	Sacha	Lisse	CTA Group Co. Ltd.	5	looking for live RSU and G into Vietnam, also sourcing for Metro in Quebec
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	trader	Anthony	Nguyen	Indochine Seafood	5	network of seafood exporters from Vietnam- Private label services, works with Sacha
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	procurement	Michael	Diong	Resorts World - Sentosa	5	no notes- but it is a pretty substantial vacation resort
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	logistics	Justin Ryan	Fernandez	Trinity Cargo Link Pte. Ltd	5	full service point to point logistics and freight
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	logistics	Melvin	Lin	Trinity Cargo Link Pte. Ltd	5	
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	traceability consultants	Sarah E.	Harding	Koltiva: Beyond Traceability	4	leading the industry to new level of digital traceability etc
U.G	11-Sep	China	Hong Kong	trader	Jonn	Eng	Sure Well (China) Ltd.	6	Currently buying from Franco, can consolidate UF into loads to HK
G	11-Sep	France	Vitry sur Seine	trader	Ky T.	Loi	Wanly	3	website blocked because of malware
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	government	Genevieve	Chew	Gov't of BC, Trade and Investment	5	BC Trade Commissioner for Singapore
U	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	trader	Elon	Neo	E&E Global Pte. Ltd.	7	Patrick Soa as well- ph: 9876-1011- interested in fresco score assigned by MF
U.C.G	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	government	Francis S.S.	Chan	Gov't of Canada Trade Commissioner Service	6	recomm. Food Hotel Asia as bigger show- willing to arrange meet etc with buyers
U.C.G	11-Sep	Canada	Dartmouth	consultant	Sacha	Smith	Taste of Nova Scotia	6	int. in building pan-Canadian presence at SEA & can bring Maritimes and maybe Q
U	11-Sep	Malaysia	Selangor	AqC	Seth	Selbaraju	KS Aquaculture	5	interested in Uni Fresco
U	11-Sep	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	trader	Macy	Wong	Piau Kee Marine Sdn Bhd.	4	
U	11-Sep	China	Hong Kong	trader	Alan	Leung	Top Honest Limited	5	
U.C.G	11-Sep	Vietnam	Long An	cold chain	Tran Ngoc	Lam	Viet Cold Chain	4	
U.C.G	11-Sep	UK	Birmingham	import/distrib/etail	Jay	Yu	Linxiang Shengmeng Seafood Supermarket	5	importing high end seafood into the UK
U	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	import/etail	Joyce	Ying	Sochinsen Market place Pte. Ltd	6	they lead with uni - specialize in Japan origin the looking to diversify (Fukushima?)
U	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	import/etail	Gabriel	Tan	Sochinsen Market place Pte. Ltd	6	as above
U	11-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	import/etail	Joan	Tan	Sochinsen Market place Pte. Ltd	6	as above
U.C.G	11-Sep	Armenia	St. Sargis	import/distrib/etail			Katran Fish and Seafood	4	still a work in progress

Contact information collected on Day 2 of the 2023 SEA

Product	Date	Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Comments
G	12-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	restauranteur	Fiona	Gan	Jumbo Group of Restaurants	8	
U	12-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	restauranteur	Melvin	Lim	Parkroyal Collection: Marina Bay	8	might be worth checking with PanPacific Vancouver as = part of same group?
U	12-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	restauranteur	Tuck Wai	Chan	Parkroyal Collection: Marina Bay	8	
C	12-Sep	India	Pallipuram	processor/exporter	Basil	D'coutho	Greenline Marine Exports	4	looking for SC and SC processing
U	12-Sep	China	Hong Kong	import/distrib/etail	Valoria	Ching	Oriental Partners Ltd.	5	multiple products and countries as suppliers, meat, dairy, seafood- urchins = new
U.C	12-Sep	China	Hong Kong	import/distrib/etail	Tracy	Lau	King Rise Asia Ltd.	4	meat, dairy & bakery- frozen pref. Seafood not mentioned on website
U	12-Sep	China	Fuzhou	trader	Rainbow	Shen	Fuzhou Mandy Foods Industries Co. Ltd.	4	website not working- apparently looking for fresh and frozen uni for Thailand
U	12-Sep	Australia	Melbourne	producer	Johnson	Teoh	Pacific Urchin Australia	5	this might have been the guy just handing out and seeking intel
U	12-Sep	China	Zhoushan	producer/trader	Zhiping	Sun	Zhoushan Boda Aquatic Products Co. Ltd	4	looks like a big vertically integrated fishing co with lots of export interests
U	12-Sep	Thailand	Bangkok	retailer	Chakhrut	Masawat	Big C Supercentre Public Co. Ltd	6	website is an etail shop- so not real informative
U	12-Sep	Thailand	Bangkok	retailer	Wongkongkathap	Pakawadee	Big C Supercentre Public Co. Ltd	5	is a subsidiary of BJC - the Berli Jucker Company- est. 1887
U	12-Sep	USA	Portland ME	reporter	Chris	Chase	Diversified Communications	6	reporter for DivCom shows and Seafood Source
G	12-Sep	Cambodia	Phnom Penh	import/distrib/etail	gary	Leung	Goal Sseafood Wholesale Co. Ltd.	5	28% VAT applied to seafood into Cambodia
Prawns	12-Sep	Vietnam	Camau City	producer	Johnny	Ho	Camau Safety Seafoods Company Ltd.	4	shrimp supplier looking for customers
U.C.G	12-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	trader	Bernard	Yong	Transmex Trading Pte Ltd.	6	Pat Fantillo's buddy from Singapore
U.C.G	12-Sep	China	Shanghai	show organizer	Minnie	Li	Shanghai Aige exhibition Service Co. Ltd	5	fairly substantial show organizer with shows around Asia, JV with UK co,
U & Prawns	12-Sep	USA	Harlington TX	equipment supplier	Esteban	Avendano	Sort-Rite Designers and Manufacturers	4	shrimp processing equipment mainly
U.C.G	12-Sep	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	equipment supplier	Paige	Cheah	Roto Speed Moulding Sdn. Bhd	5	plastic moulding co- fish totes, coolers, ewtc
U	12-Sep	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	trader	Chester	Chong	Global Nexus Seafood Sdn. Bhd.	4	
	12-Sep	Taiwan	Kaohsiung	producer- pelagics	Jianzhi	Lin	Hiyori Yodo Industrial Co. Ltd.	4	these folks are a fairly substantial pelagic fisheries player- squid, sword etc
	12-Sep	Indonesia	Lombok	producer	Bruno	Milito		3	
U	12-Sep	Australia	Tasmania	producer	Jordan	Tan	True South Seafood	5	competitors to PUHA
U	12-Sep	Japan	Kyoto	trader	Ken (Mark)	Matthews	Ocean Trading Co. Ltd.	6	
U	12-Sep	Japan	Kyoto	trader	Naoki	Kaneko	Ocean Trading Co. Ltd.	6	
U	12-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	trader	Kaven	Chang	Mee Han International Pte. Ltd	5	domain not active as website so...; apparently seeking SU for Taiwan
G	12-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	import/distrib/etail	Yuki	Fong	FISC Holdings Pte. Ltd	5	seeking Geoduck for Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia
C	12-Sep	Canada	Lower Wedgeport	producer	Jules	LeBlanc	Ocean Pride Fisheries	5	Sea suke toppers and dogfood- alt market opportunity
C	12-Sep	Vietnam	HoChiMinh City	AqC producer	Thi Anh Tuyet	Nguyen	Lecon Seafoods	4	SC farm
U	12-Sep	China	Shanghai	import/distrib/etail	Min	Fang	Shanghai Baso Food Co. Ltd.	6	

Contact information collected on Day 3 of the 2023 SEA

Product	Date	Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Comments
U.C.G	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	hotelier	Derek	Chang	Peninsula Excelsior Singapore	7	suggested we contact them directly to get a cheaper corporate rate on rooms
U.C	13-Sep	South Korea	Seoul	importer	Hang	Choi	GattenKorea	6	looking for product into S. Korea
	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	producer- pelagics	Jocelyn	Neo	Chun Cheng Fishery Enterprise Pte. Ltd.	4	swordfish producer out for a wander
C	13-Sep	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	importer	Jolene	Law	Tam Kah Seafood Pte. Ltd.	5	
U.C.G	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	show organizer	Lynn	How	Koelnmesse	4	looking to drum up business for Thai seafood show
G	13-Sep	China	Hong Kong	retailer	Lam	Chan	Sin Seafood Delivery	5	
U.C.G	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	marketing promoter	David	Zhang	Interlunar	5	promoter- agent services
U	13-Sep	SE Asia		trader	Shahid	Gazipura	GPS Seafood	2	website checked but blocked because of malware etc
U.C.G	13-Sep	USA	Corpus Christi TX	validator	Chuck	Anderson	Certified Quality Foods	4	
U	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	importer	Jet	Goh	Kwaasong	5	wants to replace his Japanese source(s)
U.C.G	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	investment banker	Joshua	Siow	Virtus Assure	4	stock exchange investment guy
U	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	trader	KockMin	Ooi	Hong Wun Pte. Ltd	5	China importer
U.G	13-Sep	Vietnam	HoChiMinh City	import/distrib/etail	Ly	Phan	Royal Seafood	5	website again an e-tail site for seafood
U.C.G	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	currency X Change	Nicole	Ng	3S Money	5	transfers dollars at highly competitive rates
U.C.G	13-Sep	USA	Portland ME	show organizer	Iris	Kwan	Diversified Communications	6	Event director for SEA
U.C.G	13-Sep	USA	Portland ME	show organizer	Neal	Timoney	Diversified Communications	6	marketing director for SEA
U.C.G	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	logistics	Robin	Low	Aglogis	4	logistics- primarily c-cans
U.C.G	13-Sep	Malaysia	Pulau Pinong	restauranteur	W. Y.	Tan	Haku	4	
U	13-Sep	Vietnam	HoChiMinh City	trader	Hirotsugu	Kobayashi	Zensho	5	Japan based company delivering food internationally
U	13-Sep	Vietnam	HoChiMinh City	trader	Bui Cong	Duy	Zensho	5	
U.G	13-Sep	Taiwan	Xinyuan Township	producer	Jimmy	Chen	Wen Chi Seafood Co. Ltd.	4	pelagics fish harvesters- tuna, swords, sails, etc
	13-Sep	Singapore	Singapore	import/distrib/etail	Andrew	Goh	Imperial Premium Seafood	6	australian uni - wants BC product
U.G	13-Sep	USA	Carolina Beach NC	distrib	Francois	Tondeur	Atlantic Partners United	6	supply high end hotels and restaurants from Miami to New York

Table comparing metrics collected at various edition of the SEA over the years.

	2023			2022			2018			2017			2016			2015		
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
# of visitors qualified	31	29	23	57	31	13	49	25	9	32	41	11	49	43	13	43	34	16
% for show	31%	29%	23%	56%	31%	13%	59%	30%	11%	38%	49%	13%	47%	41%	12%	46%	37%	17%
average score	5.26	5.14	4.87	5.05	5.23	5.23	5.31	5.64	4.89	5.19	5.10	5.00	5.55	5.72	4.77	5.23	5.68	5.25
Local	41.9%	21.0%	43.5%	26.3%	32.3%	32.3%	33.0%	32.0%	78.0%	52.0%	49.0%	73.0%	49.0%	42.0%	69.0%	63.0%	53.0%	69.0%
China	9.7%	21.0%	4.3%	3.5%	3.2%	3.2%	37.0%	28.0%	22.0%	24.0%	27.0%	9.0%	24.0%	23.0%	15.0%	16.0%	15.0%	0.0%
other Asian	25.8%	48.0%	34.8%	45.6%	45.2%	45.2%	10.0%	8.0%	0.0%	17.0%	10.0%	27.0%	12.0%	19.0%	0.0%	9.0%	9.0%	13.0%
N. Am	6.5%	10.0%	17.4%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%	6.0%	12.0%	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	8.0%	7.0%	8.0%	2.0%	9.0%	19.0%
EU	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	6.5%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%	5.0%	2.0%	0.0%	2.0%	5.0%	0.0%	5.0%	9.0%	0.0%
Brochures- Urchins																		
- traditional	2	5	5	0	9	5	74	43	13	43	61	29	55	44	30	56	42	24
- simplified	5	2	0	6	1	0	43	40	12	33	74	19	40	38	19	44	47	23
- English	18	11	12	55	54	14	34	20	10	19	24	9	37	43	21	38	40	16
- French	0	0	1	0	7	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
-Spanish	2	0	0	8	6	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
- Japanese	1	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
- Korean	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Brochures- Cukes																		
-English	12	4	13	42	19	4	42	58	16	23	24	18	37	32	9	12	19	1
-simplified	6	7	3	15	8	0	131	48	20	65	73	45	65	53	18	47	36	9
- French	0	0	0															
- Spanish	0	0	0	8	6	1												
Total- all languages	46	29	34	134	110	26	324	209	71	183	256	120	234	212	97	197	184	73
% for show	42%	27%	31%	50%	41%	10%	54%	35%	12%	33%	46%	21%	43%	39%	18%	43%	41%	16%
# brochures/# visitors	1.48	1.00	1.48	2.35	3.55	2.00	6.61	8.36	7.89	5.72	6.24	10.91	4.78	4.93	7.46	4.58	5.41	4.56

China

Once the SEA was over, the China Fisheries and Seafood Expo was the next event coming up that we had to prepare for. I was planning on leading a delegation to Qingdao to attend the 2023 edition of the show and then perhaps continuing onwards to South Korea and/or Japan, but ran into a problem. A visa is unsurprisingly required for China visits but they invoked a requirement to confirm, and therefore pay for, flights and hotel reservations before you can even apply for a visa. Coupled with the price of flights these days, the uncertainty that a visa would actually be forthcoming made it hard to justify taking said risk so the plan changed.

We fell back on a plan to piggy back on the UHA effort to again get in-country representatives to man the information counter for us at the BC booth at the show, but then Franco Chen from Great Ocean Ventures and Sang Zheng and Shirley Li from Grand Ocean International Trading Ltd. volunteered that they were going to be there at the BC booth and would take care of whatever we deemed needed doing. We passed along up to date pdf's of urchin and sea cucumber brochures which were then printed in China and made sure they had appropriate numbers of business cards and advice on what we expected in return i.e. copies of contact information collected and a short, even verbal report on the show, the prevailing vibe and their general impressions on what is happening in China as a market. The organizers of the BC scheduled a media session within which each company involved in the booth presented a summary of their operation(s) and/or fishery to generate a bit of buzz. Shirley took care of that with a joint presentation prepared for both associations even though their company is primarily focussed on sea cucumber. Franco played a movie, it sounds like one of the ones on the PUHA website, and gave a running commentary and answered questions on the BC fishery.



Franco provided a verbal summary of his observations at the show as well as contact information for about 29 visitors (see following table). Sang and Shirley collected contacts the more modern way, in this case through WeChat mediated exchange of electronic contact information, but this was not shared- by mutual consent it should be added. All of them characterized the show as really good despite all the less-than-stellar reports coming out of China that tempered their expectations. Franco conceded that a recession has apparently started in Asia, including in China, but there is still lots going on. It is -after all - China, a place where opportunities to work are gratefully and enthusiastically embraced. There was, according to all assessments, apparently a lot of interest in high end Canadian products and plenty of demand and none of them felt there would be any difficulty finding customers.

Table of contact information collected at 2023 China Fisheries and Seafood Expo

Product	Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Comment(s)
SU	South Korea	Seoul	retail	Darren	Hong	e Mart	6	
SU	China	Shanghai	trading			Chuye Int'l Trading Co. Ltd	4	website comes up blank
SU	China	Shanghai	catering	Gary	Pan	Harvest Festival Group	5	
SU	China	Sichuan	trading	Finkel	Chang	Sichuan Mote int'l Trading Ltd.	4	
SU	China	Guangzhou	trading	Yinquan	Li	Guangzhou Lufeng Hong Trading Co. Ltd.	5	
SU	China	Xiamin	academic	Changan	Xu	Third Institute of Oceanography	5	
SU	China		restaurant	Jianhui	Wu	Sushi	4	
SU	China	Beijing	etail	Yazhou	Liu	Benlai	6	
SU	China	Shanghai		Tony	Zhang	Blue Ice Seafood	4	website cannot be reached
SU	China	Guangzhou	wholesale mrkt	Jiecong	Huang	Yu Hao Trading Co. Ltd	5	
SU	China	Guangzhou	trading	Hongwei	Zhang	Guangzhou Yitianzhong Trading Co. Ltd.	5	goes by David
SU	China	Beijing	trader	Andy	Huang	Geijing Alen Seafood Trade Co. Ltd.	4	website will not load
SU	China	Hong Kong	wholesale	Chris	Lin	Oceanwild Frozen Food Co. Ltd	6	
SU	Taiwan	Taipei	trader	Erina	Wu	Mitsui Food and Beverage Enterprise Gro	5	looks like a fancy restaurant
SU	China	Beijing	finance	Lei	Tong	Morgan Stanley Huaxin Securities	4	card cut off a bit short
SU	China	Shanghai	trader	Yuling	Song	Aichen (Shanghai) Trading Co.Ltd.	5	
SU	China	Qingdao	trader	Zhi	Li	Shangzhi Trading	5	trader on taobao
SU	China	Foshan	ecommerce	Vicky	Wong	Guangdong Pinzhen E-Commerce Co. Ltd	5	Pure Fresh looks to be a company in Brunei
SU	China	Shanghai	trader	Rick	Kung	Aichen (Shanghai) Trading Co.Ltd.	5	
SU	China	Qingdao	public market	Zhao Jiang	Wang	Qingdao Comprehensive Food	4	website des not load, email illegible
SU	Taiwan	Taipei		Marco	Chao	Organic Ocean Taiwan	4	URL not working
SU	Taiwan	Taipei		Youcheng	Chen	Xin'nan Int'l Co. Ltd	4	card cut off a bit short
SU	China	Dalian	producer	Peng	Zhong	Dalian Shengsheng Food Co. Ltd	5	
SU	China	Chongqing	trader	Yiran	Jiang	Chongqing Huigan Trading Co. Ltd.	3	looks like commodities traders - grains
SU	China	Hongzhou		Bin	Huang		4	nice card- but cannot find a legible company name and QR code not loading
SU	China	Beijing	trader	Hongjun	Zhang	Beijing Zhenghong Shunye Trading Co. Lt	3	website for machinery manufacturer- does not match
SU	China	Beijing		Yashuang	Wen	Shunfung	3	website doea not load
SU	China	Hong Kong	etail	Freda	Tsang	Oceanus Int'l Trading Ltd.	5	on line offering: 5 hole Cdn uni Grade A- HK \$299
SU	China	Shanghai	restaurant	Naomi	Zhang	Shanghai Yuzu Restaurant	6	website won't connect but weibo account seems legit

Unfortunately China's border control and customs services are being more difficult. Franco, for example, reported robust demand for live RSU in Dalian but also difficulties in getting product to the market. Any product flying in from Japan, including transshipments from other countries, are held in customs for 10 days to allow for radiation testing. This is because of a national policy response to the Fukushima water release, and there is no flexibility permitted. Franco apparently had one order for live reds from Dalian that had to be routed through Indonesia to avoid the delay.

There are also ongoing problems with the China CIFER system which some, perhaps many, see as a deliberate obstacle intended to gum up any trade. Live urchins are apparently more than welcome in China and able to easily pass customs, presumably to processors where they are processed so they capture the value-added premium(s). Urchin products processed in Canada though are not allowed in, in some cases because of incomplete plant information while in others apparently because they do not recognize the official Latin name of the species, in this case *Mesocentrotus franciscanus*.

The previous name, *Strongylocentrotus franciscanus*, was changed a few years back by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN). This updated name was quickly adopted by Canadian and US authorities but other jurisdictions, including China as well as the EU, have been slower off the mark and are not allowing trade in the products. We have alerted trade commissioners from Canada in China about the problem and are making some headway with Europe but are not so far getting any joy from China.



We are very grateful to Franco, Sang and Shirley for representing us at the CFSE, but it was also apparent that they were stretched as a few things fell through some cracks. Nothing really major—mainly problems with the “look” of the information counter and a lack of dedicated personnel to look after any queries, but it is enough to recommend having dedicated representation at future shows. There are always little things that go sideways at these events and it is attention to details that makes the difference between an exemplary showing, which is what we want to achieve, and one which does not make that grade. Reports from the Franco, Sang, Shirley and the on-scene BC booth representatives affirmed that having a better dedicated presence would be beneficial and preferred.

Conclusions

The effort this past year were restrained because we did not actually get a signed deal in place in time to allow proper planning for all the trips we wanted for the year. As it turned out, we would have been OK had we undertaken the program we laid out, but reluctance to move forward in the absence of a signed agreement is understandable. We did manage to shift some funds into subsequent years so those opportunities have not completely evaporated. We are hoping to see more active participation from processors in the last two years of the project.

Results from this year demonstrated the benefits of using dedicated personnel on these trips to take care of the inevitable things that do not completely go as planned and to ensure all the contact information and informal observations and comments on the market are catalogued, appropriately assessed, analysed and included as part of the trip report(s). Continuing collaboration between fishing groups with similar characteristics and marketing objectives, like the long running collaboration between the sea urchin and sea cucumber fisheries (PUHA and PSCHA respectively) allows sharing and pooling of resources and continues to provide advantages for both. Strengthening collaboration with the geoduck fishery (Underwater Harvesters Association) promises additional shared benefits.

Diversifying market opportunities further remains a strategic goal for all BC dive fisheries. One just has to note the many geopolitical changes happening these days, with visitor and market access getting more complex and reportedly riskier, most especially in China. The real problem will arise if things really do go off the rails and China feels it has to move on Taiwan or pushes matters too far in other parts of the South China Sea. Open conflict in this arena means all sorts of trade restrictions, extending to complete and strictly enforced mutual embargoes, would eliminate access to that market from western countries, quite possibly for a number of years. With that in mind, finding alternatives just seems prudent. Even if that kind of disruption is avoided, there is also the problem of being a price taker instead of a price maker- increased market diversification logically leads to increased aggregate demand which supports higher prices for producers even with all else remaining the same. This holds true for all these fisheries.

On the key question on the “changing vibe” in Hong Kong, the jury is still out. The pandemic was a major shock and continuing demographics and generational differences are driving changes in the City that will continue for some decades, but none of that necessarily means it will lose its essential vitality or character. The imposition of Beijing’s authority and its emerging policies around “preventative repression” though are affecting the calculus and it remains to be seen what will happen. The City has more than a Century under its belt as an iconic inter-cultural crossroads, one that has evolved to not only favour growing appreciation, understanding and respect between East and West, but also extending the same to include virtually every other culture sharing this planet. China is experiencing profound change as much as all the rest of us and it has some burdens of history, like the Cultural Revolution, that it has yet to properly deal with, but as a rational optimist I see no alternative to developing stronger bonds and respect between peoples as we continue to define our true place in the reality we are discovering through modern science. We now know we inhabit only one small orb, essentially a tiny and vulnerable Eden of Life in a very large and hostile cosmos. That inescapable fact simply overwhelms any pretension to any kind of ordained “divine” superiority or privilege. In reality, if we are to survive our own rise through technology, we cannot help but leave our fears and prejudices behind to recognize and take better advantage of the myriad strengths and advantages inherent in our diversity, most explicitly those which are contrasted in our shared and varied humanity.