UNDERWATER HARVESTERS ASSOCIATION

UHA NEWSLETTER

Volume 26 Issue 09 // October 2019

Upcoming Meetings

UHA/WCGRC General Meeting

Dorchester Hotel, Nanaimo.
Thursday, Dec. 10th, 2019
Members and Proxy Holders: 09:00
Associate Members / Guests: 10:30

Note the meeting is at the Dorchester Hotel, not Beban Park.

Agenda includes approval of 2020 UHA and WCGRC budgets, 2020/21 Quota Recommendations, and updates from UHA and WCGRC programs.

Marine Planning Meetings to Provide Feedback on the draft Northern Shelf Marine Protected Area Network

Coast Hotel, Nanaimo, BC

Tuesday, Dec. 3rd, 2019
Wednesday, Dec. 4th, 2019
Thursday, Dec. 5th, 2019

See enclosed article. We need have divers with detailed knowledge of the North Coast beds at these meetings.

Geoduck Ageing Research

DFO and the UHA have been working with Bryan Black to fine tune shell aging techniques over the years. Bryan has been using geoduck shells to extend the climate record back for the NE Pacific and submitted this short article to the UHA after analyzing shells that Mike Atkins and the survey crew collected near the Tree Nob Group in the north coast.

Bryan Black
Associate Professor
University of Arizona
bryanblack@email.arizona.edu

Decadal-scale climate variability in the North Pacific Ocean strongly influences fisheries production, forest growth, wildfire, drought, and snowpack in western North America. However, there remains considerable and long-standing uncertainly about its behavior prior to 1900 and the extent to which the past century, characterized sudden shifts between 20 to 30 yr. warm and cool phases, is atypical in a longer-term context. Given that the instrumental record is relatively short extending a maximum back to 1870, a proxy to “stand in” for observations is necessary to establish longer-term perspectives.

Over the past decade, a growing body of research has found that the growth-increment widths of Pacific geoduck strongly reflect ocean temperature in which warm years result in unusually wide growth and cool years result in unusually narrow growth. Thus, geoduck can be used as a proxy for water temperature and thus used to hind-cast

Pacific climate. Geoduck can live up to 180 years, which is long, but does not considerably extend observational climate records back in time. To provide an even deeper history, Mike Atkins arranged for divers from the UHA in coordination with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, to sample dead geoduck shells from the ocean floor at two sites along the British Columbia coast in the summer of 2018.

UHA survey diver Dan Condly collecting dead shell with a venturi dredge.

Over the past year, scientists at the University of Arizona Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research have been applying techniques developed in tree-ring science to match time-specific growth patterns in the dead shells with one another and also with pattern from live-collected shells. The result has been that a continuous geoduck chronology that extends back to the 1760s along with chronology fragments that date back through most of the past millennium. These chronologies are exactly dated and well replicated with one value per calendar year to provide a high-resolution history of water temperatures.

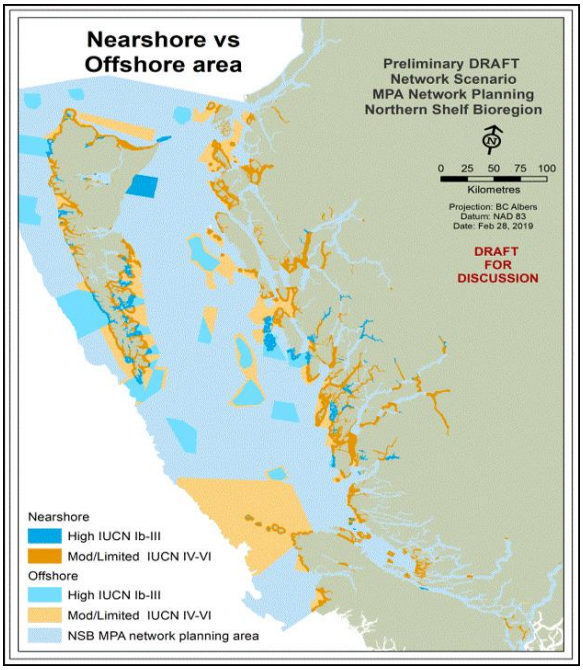
As more samples are processed, it should ultimately be possible to generate a continuous 1,000-year record from geoduck, yielding an unprecedented view into past climate of the North Pacific. Moreover, these geoduck chronologies will be combined with tree-ring chronologies along the Pacific coast to further refine our estimates of Pacific decadal climate variability. Overall, we anticipate that geoduck will provide unprecedented context for interpreting modern climate patterns and the impacts of future climate changes.

Update on Marine Planning Meetings

The Marine Planning Team (MPT - Brian Mose, Grant Dovey, Mike Atkins and Bruce Turris) provide this update to commercial fishing industry members regarding our ongoing efforts to develop a coordinated meaningful response to the Northern Shelf Bioregion MPA Network draft scenario released by the NSB Partners (DFO, the Provincial Government, and 16 First Nations).

To date we have coordinated 24 meetings with 372 commercial fishery members from all the shellfish, groundfish, salmon, herring and tuna fisheries. This included meetings in Masset, Queen Charlotte City, Prince

Rupert, and Campbell River. The schedule included specific meetings focused on First Nation Commercial Fishing Enterprises to receive important information for each of the species layers. The MPT has also scheduled regular updates with various environmental organizations and with the NSB Partners to update them on our progress to develop a collaborative, integrated, comprehensive response to their draft scenario.



Draft proposal from the NSB Partners.

The first 15 meetings developed initial fishery specific layers for each of the 24 commercial fisheries that occur in the Northern Shelf Bioregion. Over the last two weeks the meetings focused on developing overlay maps for:

all salmon & herring fisheries,
all shellfish fisheries,
all groundfish and tuna fisheries,
followed by
offshore based fisheries, and
inshore based fisheries.

As we overlay fisheries maps we continue to consider changes that will protect important ecological and cultural features and targets in a balanced manner with the need to maintain access to fishing grounds for viable commercial fisheries.

The next dates we need fishers to attend and provide on-grounds knowledge are December 3rd, 4th and 5th. All three days are scheduled for the Coast Hotel in Nanaimo. It is crucial that we continue to have strong and comprehensive attendance and participation by experienced and knowledgeable fishermen at these upcoming meetings to ensure that the interests of each fishery are being properly represented.

The MPT wishes to express our continued thanks and appreciation to all the individuals that have taken the time to attend these meetings and provide valuable input. We are developing a commercial fishing industry response and your participation is essential to the success of this initiative.

Please contact Grant if you have any questions and notify Grant if you will be at the December meetings so we know geoduck will be well represented.

Fish Safe: *Dive Fishery Safety Best Practices*:

Ryan Ford

Working in the underwater dive harvest industry provides opportunities to

workers that can be uniquely rewarding for many. However, along with the rewards, workers face risks equally unique and challenging.

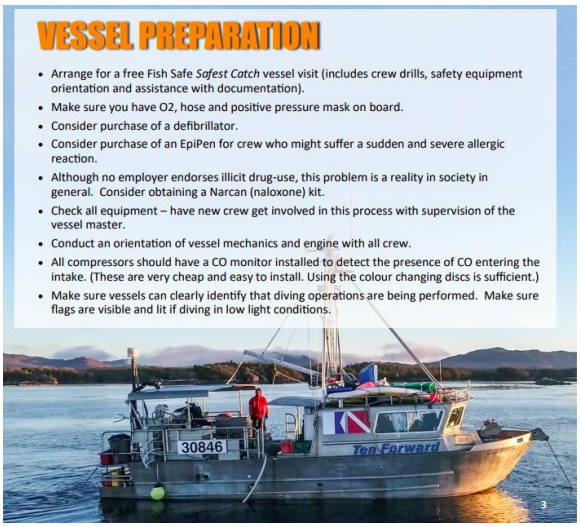
The tragic death of a young worker a year ago in the sea urchin fishery, an incident which is still under investigation by WorkSafeBC, serves to underscore this fact. For this reason, over the past year Fish Safe has helped lead a collaborative effort by fishermen and members of the Underwater Harvesters Association (UHA), Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association (PUHA) and Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters Association (PSCHA) in the creation of a *Dive Fishery Safety Best Practices*.

On October 30th, this publication became available for download on Fish Safe's website here: https://www.fishsafebc.com/best-practices

These Best Practices are designed to complement the existing WorkSafeBC regulations for employers and workers by providing practical insights from experienced, life-long dive harvesters and educators that cover the full range of dive harvest activity including **vessel preparation, pre-dive planning, dive operations, emergencies and documentation.**

Whether an individual works in a SCUBA or a surface-supply environment, or both, there can be challenges bridging the gap between what is taught in order to obtain mandatory dive certification and what actually occurs in a dive harvest environment. The intent of these Best Practices is to help bridge that gap while providing valuable reminders for divers and tenders alike, regardless of tenure in the industry.

Finally, although the release of these Best Practices marks an important milestone, the process of maintaining and updating the document is only beginning. In the months and years to come Fish Safe will continue to work with industry, regulators and educators in improving upon this important tool to help ensure its relevancy and practical value in helping all underwater harvesters come home safely.



Marketing Update:

Katie Lindsay

Throughout the month of October, the UHA attended numerous marketing and promotional events in China. During our annual Asia trip, Katie Lindsay and James Austin conducted market research in Shanghai and Guangzhou, presented at the BC Seafood Promotional Dinner in Guangzhou, and exhibited at the China Seafood and Fisheries Expo in Qingdao.

In Shanghai, we visited the Jiang Yang Seafood market with Leo Liu from the BC Trade and Investment office. There were significant advances in the market this year in comparison to last year. There was an increase in Canadian geoduck of all grades available in the market. We noted that there seemed to be more Canadian geoduck over Alaskan or Washington geoduck, which is the opposite of what we saw in October 2018. There was also a reduction in the amount of Mexican geoduck available.

A-Grade Canadian geoduck in Shanghai.

B and C Grade Canadian geoducks available in the Jiang Yand market, Shanghai.

We also conducted market research at the Huangsha Seafood market in Guangzhou with Pacific Rim Shellfish. We attended on a Sunday evening, which was the day of the Alaskan geoduck arrival. As a result, there was less Canadian geoduck in the market. As a result of the US-China trade war, the price of Alaskan or Washington geoduck has reduced dramatically.

In Guangzhou, the UHA also exhibited and presented at the BC Seafood Promotional Dinner. There were over 70 local seafood importers who were invited to learn all about various BC seafood companies. We provided a presentation to explain the sustainability behind our fishery.

UHA displaying at the promotional dinner networking reception in Guangzhou.

ALASKA GEODUCK UPDATE

Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Assoc. has graciously been providing PSP results to UHA executive prior to Fish and Wildlife fishery announcements so that the BC fishery can anticipate market demand ahead of time. The fishery schedules one or two day openings each week (usually Wednesday & Thursday), if PSP allows. A key change implemented last season that will continue this year was the setting of trip limits per vessel. In general, when an area opens each vessel is only allowed to harvest 1,000 lb over two days. This restriction has reduced market flooding and spread the weekly harvest over two days instead of just one.

In October and the first two weeks of November, 2 of the 7 weeks did not allow for fishing due to PSP. For the 5 open weeks there were openings for 30,000 lb or more.

WASHINGTON STATE UPDATE

The next State auction will take place on Tuesday, December 10th, 2019 in Olympia, Washington. Twelve quotas in the South Sound and Eastern Straits, and Central Sound Regions ranging from 23,000 to 24,800 lb will be auctioned. Harvest period will run from February 3rd to March 27th, 2020. Please see the Washington DNR website for more details.

The last auction was on October 2nd, 2019. The successful bidder results posted on the DNR auction announcements show that the dock price paid for these latest bids averaged $8.62 US per lb (dock price includes estimated harvest cost of $2.50 US per lb) and ranged from $7.30 to $11.15 US per lb. At the Oct. 2nd Bank of Canada exchange rate ($1.3294) the average price equated to $11.46 Canadian per lb (range of $9.70 - $14.82 Can.).

Coho and pink in the Quinsam River this fall from @maxwelhohn.

In the News

Divers Salvage 100-Year-Old Liquor from WWI Shipwreck

Stop herring fishery to save troubled orcas, environmental groups say

Deadly Algae Are Creeping Northward

DFO crew frees humpback calf tangled in fishing line near Ucluelet

Sea otters eating through Alaska Fisheries

Geoduck market hit hard by US-China trade war

Father calls for changes after son's death harvesting sea urchins

Shellfish aquaculture permitting shot down in Washington

International Expedition Answers Troubling Questions about BC Salmon

Fisheries associations question goal of 30 percent MPAs

China's Singles Day shopping frenzy sets sales records

BC First Nation hunters meet with Chinese officials to establish fur market

LANDINGS SUMMARY

To November 17, 2019

From Archipelago Marine Research

Gulf: 93.5 % of quota harvested

West Coast: 84.0 % of quota harvested

North Coast: 43.3 % of quota harvested

Coast Wide: 1,691,074 lb or 54.9 % of the 2019-20 season coast wide quota (3,080,000 lb) has been harvested

Fishing Year: 71.7 % of the fishing year has passed.

2019-20 fishing season started March 1st, 2019 and ends February 29th, 2020.

Last Week: November 11 – November 17 total geoduck landed weight was 15,989 lb.

One Year Ago: Coastwide landings to November 17, 2018 amounted to 1,824,856 lb or 59.2 % of the 2018-19 coastwide quota of 3,080,000 lb. The 2018-19 season ran for 12 months from March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019.

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS A PUBLICATION OF THE UNDERWATER HARVESTERS ASSOCIATION prepared by Grant Dovey, ExecutiveDirector@geoduck.org, and Katie Lindsay, Marketing@geoduck.org.