

PACIFIC SEA CUCUMBER HARVESTERS ASSN.

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016 BEBAN PARK, NANAIMO, BC

License Holders and Representatives Present:

Ken Ridgway, President; Marion Campbell, Paulo Demeo, George Dennis, Glen Dennis, Larry Duggan, Eric Gant, Gary Grant, Charles Greaves, Richard Hamilton, Garry Lagos, John Lindsay, Thom Liptrot, John Parkin, Al Shanks, William Strong, Mark Ulanowski, Alfa Wong, Sheila Wood. 48 Licenses were represented.

Others Present:

Darin Macy-D&D Pacific; Janet Lothead-DFO, Pauline Ridings-DFO; Erin Wylie-DFO, James Mortimer-DFO, Floyd Campbell, Geoff Krause, Mike Lagos, Sidney Sam, Sr.

REGISTRATION OF PROXIES

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Request for addition to Agenda from William Strong
Re sequence change for cleanup in Southern North Coast. Close area to Central border.
Executive to deal with it.

Moved by John Parkin, seconded by Charlie that agenda be approved. Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 2015 AGM –

The year for approval of minutes corrected to 2014.

Name spelling corrected for Pauline Ridings.

Moved by Mark, seconded by John Parkin that the amended minutes be approved.

Carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Ken Ridgway

This will be Ken's last report as he will be retiring as of this meeting. He thanked everyone for their help and support but feels it is now time for someone else to take over.

The 2015 fishing season went well. Rotational was good.

Moved by John Lindsay and seconded by Gary to accept the President's report. Carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Sheila Wood

Sheila presented a Comprehensive Balance Sheet and a Comparative Income Statement for the fiscal year 2015-2016 with details of revenue and expenses. Sheila asked Ken to explain the DFO Collaborative Agreement re surveys, specifically Barkley Sound and Nootka.

It was moved by Paulo and seconded by Charles that the Financial Report be accepted. Carried.

THANK YOU

Paulo thanked Ken on behalf of the executive and members for serving as President for these many years. All present echoed Paulo's thanks.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Nominations were called for three times. Elected are:

President	Thomas Liptrot
Sec/Treasurer	Sheila Wood
Vice-Presidents	Mark Ulanowski John Lindsay

It was moved by Ken and seconded by Sheila that the current Board of Directors stands. Carried.

The Board of Directors for 2016-2017 is the following:

Paulo Demee	John Parkin
George Dennis	Al Shanks
Gary Grant	Mark Ulanowski
Rafal Kalus	Alfa Wong

VALIDATION CONTRACT FOR 2016 FISHERY

It was moved by Mark and seconded by William that D&D Pacific be retained as our Validation Company for the 2016 fishery. Carried.

VALIDATOR REVIEW OF THE 2015 FISHERY – Darin Macey, D&D Pacific *Management Summary and Changes for the 2015 Season*

Fishing Season was from October 5, 2015 to December 5, 2015 with scheduled QMA openings and closures.

No season extension was requested.

Adaptive Rotational Fishing Strategy (ARFS) was initiated in 2011 and continues for a second cycle to 2016.

New Quota Management Areas (QMAs) were created in portion of Area 6 and 11 for this season.

A large QMA was split in Management Area 6 into 2 smaller QMAs

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for 2015 was 1,360,000 pounds split weight

ZD Quota remained at 16,000 pounds split weight per licence, as in previous seasons

Two New Closures for Commercial No-Take Reserves (CNTR) for First Nations' access for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes were created in QMA6.

A Harvest Questionnaire was sent out to the fleets in get on-grounds observations from harvesters on each of the QMAs harvested during the season.

Area Licencing was adjusted in 2015:

NC – 33 licences

CC – 28 licences

ECVI – 22 licences

WCVI – 2 licences

Licence Stacking limit has been discontinued effective 2015.

2015 Harvest Summary & Fishing Dynamics

- Friday, October 2nd, only 7 of 25 ZD tabs registered at DFO were for the North Coast, confirmed by phone.
- Confirming licence issuance to vessels was almost impossible and logbook delivery was definitely last minute. As a result, confusion on who had what licence on what vessel plagued a few vessels as it related to lease issues.
- Many vessels called while enroute to the grounds looking for a logbook and tab number they were going to use. It was a difficult process for D&D. 312 calls into D&D on the weekend prior to the opening – all related to the PRD opening and licence issue.
- The 2015 fishery opened on October 5th in North Coast 5A QMA.
- As a result of QMA 2A's closure by DFO in-season, fallback quota was utilized and recalculated to balance the TAC. 5A had no additional quota added as the fleet fished the area and was not going to return due to logistical reasons.
- Landings were strong in the first three weeks of October, leaving most of November with small landings and QMA clean-ups.
- The last day fished was November 29th in East Coast 16D.
- The Association utilized a sequential QMA opening format for the 2015 fishing season.
- 85 licences were active this season, fished by 31* vessels in all four regions over a total of 44 days fished. Landings totaled 1, 366,652 pounds.
- Darin reported on Historical landings between 1990 and 2015 and the landings by Week and Month on a 2-season comparative chart.

Landings by Quota Management Area Review, Sequence of Landings

Darin reviewed the two charts for Landings.

Activities by Region and QMAs

North Coast

- 10 Vessels active on first day.
- Harvest rates & vessels increased and remained steady through the first four QMAs.
- Opened in sequential order. Fished by 16 vessels in 25 fishing days.
- Communications with some Packers and ground (packer) weight issues, math issues, all added to the difficulties in managing the North Coast.

Central Coast

- 2 vessels active on the first day.
- Opened in sequential order. No in-season changes.
- Fished by 13 vessels in 21 fishing days.

East Coast Vancouver Island

- Opened in sequential order.
- Fished by 11 vessels in 35 fishing days.
- Packers were used to transship product, but in final days boats brought in own product.

West Coast Vancouver Island

- Opened October 12th but did not start until October 26th.
- Fished by 1 vessel in 13 fishing days.

Licence Activity

All 85 licences were active and fished by 30 vessels. Nine fished two regions and one vessel fished three regions. Six licences were re-designated (compared to one last season)

Sea Cucumber Buyer Activity

There were eight buyers active.

19 vessels fished for one buyer, 8 vessels for two buyers, and 4 vessels for three buyers. Many vessels split their load between two buyers.

Compliance

This is the fifth consecutive year where the number of Incident Reports issued has declined.

47 Incident Reports were issued through the course of the Fishery.

Majority were related to: Missing harvest information, NTOs, Incorrect or missing harvest data, No validation/harvest log page sent with product.

Industry is proactive in reporting non-compliance to D&D. Issues included: Fraudulent fishing practices, disregard for QMA clean-up vessel limit.

All reports were dealt with in a timely matter.

Problems & Issues

Certain packing vessels had difficulty in providing accurate ground weight information.

In-Season – D&D conducted a thorough review of packer weights to identify the area of error – D&D had difficulty in reducing the QMA quotas to zero. Some other irregularities:

- Water retention in the containers – on product not being de-watered.
- Over 3 days passed before some packers offloaded their product – multiple quota areas on these packers – extremely hard to manage with poor packer weight data.

Recommendations

Have buyers identify their packers prior to the season starting. This will enable D&D to discuss requirements of the packer and to hand out a protocol sheet detailing the requirements.

Provide Packing vessels a protocol sheet prior to the start of the season. Detailing what is required and expected of them in the Sea Cucumber fishery. This will eliminate:

- Adjustments to scale readings on the grounds.
- Poor Communication.

Having to chase packers down via other dive vessels, other packers throughout the night.

Conclusion

In D&D's perspective, the 2015 fishery was a success. Minor issues occurred and were dealt with in real time. The sequential opening format supported the fishing effort and processing capacities.

All Harvest Data and Charts have been received by Industry – digitized and delivered to Leslie at DFOs Shellfish Data Unit ahead of schedule.

Electronic Charts, IFMP and other relevant fishery information provided by D&D online was received well and will continue to be revised.

The problems, issues and the success of the 2015 season, from D&Ds point of view, would not have been so effective if it was not for:

- The on-ground coordinators
- The buyers/processors
- DFO Resource Management for expediting D&D requests in the short timeframe of the Sea Cucumber fishery. Special thanks to Pauline and Erin.

It was moved by Charles and seconded by John Parkin that D&D report be accepted. Carried.

Haida-Gwaii

Louise Island – Pauline. Up for rotation. To be discussed with Haida. We have quota there but it is uncertain. Dialogue was negative when Ken travelled to talk to them. Planners may or may not deal with uncertainty.

Guidelines from Gwaii-Hamaas - talks going on. Information sharing so far. Discussions re sea cucumbers – need surveys.

A comment was made that the Council of Haida Nations wants control.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING REPORT – Geoff Krause

We exhibited at two shows this year – the Seafood Asia Expo in Hong Kong in September 2015 and the China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in Qingdao in November 2015. We were joined by processors/exporters at each show. We also provided samples for and attended a Canadian Seafood Networking reception in Qingdao in November 2015, hosted by the Canadian Embassy and Consular Services. Detailed reports on the trips are on our website.

-The shows provide information on contacts and prospects to the processors. Their companies report the program provides approximately 10-15% of their gross sales and benefit by having a place to meet new customers and renew ties with old customers. There is good feedback on what people are expecting and what is happening with markets in the region.

-The program is building awareness of the products there but also by the Association to better understand the market. Independent information on markets is difficult to come by. Sea Cucumber products have only had a dedicated HS code since 2012, which limits the data available through international trade stats.

-Wholesale prices declined last year. Demand was high for whole cooked product and is a viable option for northern China markets.

Mid-September – Licensing begins
October 3 – North Coast licence Area opens
October 10 – Central, ECVI, WCVI licence areas open

2015 Harvest Questionnaires

-18 returned this year. Last year only 9 were returned.
Pauline would like all Harvest Questionnaires returned.
Darin to print on log page.

- Harvesters reported seeing more juvenile sea cucumbers than they normally do
 - Noticed a lack of sea stars
 - Concern about the quota being too high in the Area 15 QMAs
 - Positive comments regarding the effects of the rotational fishery on size & density in some areas
 - Suggestion that some QMAs may need longer than 3 years between harvests
 - Suggestion to split QMA9A – Rivers Inlet and to increase its quota
 - Suggestion to look at a different survey protocol – pencil sized sea cucumbers are too small to be harvestable so shouldn't be used to calculate quotas
 - One harvester noted that all the boats fished in one spot (Kingkown Inlet) in the 5A West Banks QMA. Suggested a survey. (Note: This is on the DFO list to survey)
- Some adjustments are to be made with input from PSCHA re areas.

Discussion followed on the following:

- Rotational Fishery – 47% available coastline for fishing.
- Focus area 13 has never been surveyed.
- Sea otter predation- letters to Marine Mammal re otters.
- Zeballos – 4 days count.
- Marketing and processing of small animals
- Pauline asked what the PSCHA members think is small. Eg: pencil size?
And what size is maturity
- Species smaller – thick skinned with lots of meat
- Bald sea urchins; symptoms of “bald sea urchin disease” - mostly reds infected and some greens.

Mathieson - suggest 7-9 be split in two

Pauline will send options to Thom. 7-9 highest density. 7-11 Similar 7-10 7-9.

2015 first year fished at 10% rotational. Maybe lower harvest rate.

Kitasoo still not Satisfied.

7-29 also is a problem.

AQUACULTURE PSCHA – Ken Ridgway

Joint planting program with Fan Seafoods. 400,000 animals from Wen Lian planted after harvest and monitored for a year. They would be planted and the next day hidden then got further toward deep water. 60 feet down – all small. Program is stopped but we will check occasionally.

AQUACULTURE DFO – Erin Wylie

There is no policy for sea cucumber aquaculture and no applications are being accepted. 10 sites have been allowed to harvest on their claim and have to provide 72 hours' notice of harvest. Not required to seed.

SEAFOOD EXPO – COMOX VALLEY

To be held June 9th and 10th.

AHOUSAHT REPORT

-Sid Sam reported that First Nations won court case. Sea Urchins are health fool to band and Sea otters have wiped out their sea urchins. A discussion followed about getting rid of sea otters now.

-Marion Campbell reported that Ahousaht has four certified divers now.

A lively discussion followed about fish farms and sea otters.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ken and seconded by Mark that the meeting be adjourned. Carried.

