



CCIRA



The Common Voice

CCIRA Newsletter
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Central
Coast
Indigenous
Resource
Alliance





Rockfish and Lingcod Research

Our Nations' rockfish and lingcod research has been continuing in our territories.

Using a combination of traditional knowledge and science we are creating an extensive dataset for these fish across the central coast. This knowledge will enhance the long-term management of these important species.

“The DFO did not start collecting scientific data on these species until 10 or 15 years ago,” says Alejandro Frid, CCIRA’s Science Coordinator. This means that there is no baseline data from the past on the size and abundance of fish to compare with what we find today. “If we want

to manage these species effectively, we really need to know what the populations looked like in the past and if they’ve changed over time”, Alejandro explains. Without this information it is difficult to know what kind of conservation targets we should be aiming for today.

Probing our elder’s knowledge

To shed light on past fish populations, Lauren Eckhart has been interviewing elders in our communities as part of her Master’s thesis at Uvic. Under the supervision of Assistant Professor Natalie Ban and Alejandro - who has recently become an Assistant Adjunct Professor at Uvic – Lauren has

Integrating our elder’s knowledge of historical fish populations with the best science of today will create an informative new picture of rockfish and lingcod on the central coast.



Two yelloweye rockfish (red snapper) and a lingcod caught on the central coast.

“It has been an amazing experience to interview elders in the communities. The breadth of the knowledge the elders have about rockfish and lingcod populations from the past is remarkable.” - Lauren Eckhart, Masters Student, Uvic

interviewed 10-15 elders in each of our communities. She is now busy compiling that information. When completed, Lauren’s work may reveal far more about what past rockfish and lingcod populations looked like than any scientific data available.

“It has been an amazing experience to interview elders in the communities,” says Lauren. “The breadth of the knowledge the elders have about rockfish and lingcod populations from the past is remarkable.”

Collecting scientific data

Meanwhile, our researchers have been out on the water collecting scientific data on the current status of fish in our territories. We are gathering important new information by do-

ing hook and line sampling, investigating the catch of long line fishermen, conducting dive surveys and towing underwater video cameras to sample deep waters.

Preliminary results from this work show very few yelloweye rockfish (red snapper) in our territories over 40 or 50 years old, even though these fish are known to live up to 120 years. The same is true for other long-lived fish. “There is a notable absence of old fish in our study,” explains Alejandro. “This suggests that there is a history of overfishing here, but we can’t really know that unless we can figure out what the fish populations looked like 40 or 50 years ago.”

Integrating our elder’s knowledge of historical fish populations with the best science of today will create an informa-

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Image of a quillback rockfish, a plumose anenome and an orange coral (*Paragorgia pacifica*) captured by towed video camera. Green parallel lasers 10 cm apart are used to estimate the size of fish and habitat features such as boulders.

Hey FSC Long line fishermen! For those who want to collaborate with our scientists on rockfish and lingcod research, we have a budget to pay for gas and fishing time. Get in touch with Alejandro Frid, CCIRA's Science Coordinator, for more details at alejfrid@gmail.com.



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tive new picture of rockfish and lingcod on the central coast. Collectively, this information will be used to enhance the long-term management of these species and help inform the marine planning processes underway in our territories.

In other words, we hope this work will help make abundant, big and old fish part of the lives of future generations – and not just part of our people’s past.



You can read more about our Nations’ rockfish and lingcod research in Newsletters 3, 4 and 5: <http://ccira.ca/site/resources.html>



Uvic Masters student, Lauren Eckhart, weighing a canary rockfish.



Heiltsuk’s Mike Reid with a copper rockfish.



Uvic’s Natalie Ban (left) and CCIRA’s science coordinator, Alejandro Frid, chatting during field research.

Collaborating with DFO on Fisheries Management

As part of our efforts to improve collaboration between the DFO and our Nations, we have been working through a joint committee to discuss marine resource issues that affect us.

Through the Central Coast Joint Technical Working Group (CCJTWG), CCIRA has been engaging with DFO to ensure that our concerns are being addressed directly. In past years, this work related to initiatives under the PNCIMA and MaPP processes. But now, the CCJTWG has shifted its focus to fisheries issues.

During bimonthly meetings our Nations have the opportunity to articulate any concerns about the management of fisheries like eulachon, herring, prawns and crabs. Other fisheries are also discussed as needed. These meetings ensure that our interests in these resources – like proposed crab fishing closures - continue to move forward.

The CCJTWG is an example of how the CCIRA Nations are working with DFO to ensure that our concerns are being addressed directly, and necessary actions are being taken.

However, the CCJTWG cannot answer all of the Nations' fisheries management concerns. That is why the Nations' ma-

rine plans direct more meaningful engagement with DFO at all decision-making levels. To this end, Coastal First Nations is currently engaged with DFO to develop a reconciliation process that includes government-to-government decision making and joint-management of fisheries.

Members from each of our communities are involved in this committee. Your current community representatives are listed below. This list of people will continue to grow in the future as more of our people become involved with this work.

Kitasoo/Xai'Xais: Clark Robinson, Doug Neasloss, Vernon Brown and Larry Greba.

Heiltsuk: Earl Newman, Kelly Brown, Julie Carpenter and Mike Reid.

Nuxalk: Wally Weber, Megan Moody.

Wuikinuxv: Fred Anderson, Susan Anderson-Behn, Peter Johnson and Dave Rolston.



Read more about our Nations crab research in Newsletters 4 and 5:

<http://ccira.ca/site/resources.html>

Our Nations are working hard to protect and restore crab populations



Herring roe on hemlock branches.





Indigenous Law Project

In the summer of 2014 a new undertaking started on the Central Coast. Members from all our Nations met at the Hakai Beach Institute to discuss a project aimed at strengthening our indigenous laws. The workshop was an inspiration to all in attendance, but it was also just the first step in an exciting and critical process.

Our Nations are often frustrated by a lack of understanding, and respect for, our indigenous laws by non-First Nations. Among other issues, misunderstandings about our laws make it more difficult for us to implement the objectives of our marine use plans – which are an embodiment of our traditional laws.

The Indigenous Law Project aims to alleviate misunderstandings by articulating our laws in ways that non-First Nations can understand. By doing so we hope to facilitate better communication with others and ensure that the marine ecosystems in our territories are managed in a manner that respects our ways of being.

Compiling our Indigenous laws

To support this work each of our Nations hired two Community Researchers last spring with support from CCIRA. In May 2015, a weeklong training workshop was held to guide the Researchers through the challenge of compiling our laws into a shareable format.

Since that training session, Researchers have been talking with elders and combing through photographs, videos, traditional knowledge studies and meeting transcripts within our communities. Archives have also been acquired from the University of BC, and even California. With this work our Researchers are assembling a comprehensive record of our indigenous laws for the first time.

Q&A with Community Researcher Saul Brown

Heiltsuk's Saul Brown is fourth-year political science student at Uvic, who is passionate about exploring and defending his Nation's culture. Last summer he was hired as one of the Community Researchers in his traditional territory. In the following Q&A, Saul tells us more about the Indigenous Law Project from his perspective.

Why are the Nations doing this work?

Saul: We are doing this work so we can present our laws to the outside world - whether it is provincial or federal governments or corporations – in a way that they can understand them. It is a tool for conversation and negotiation with others. But, it is also important that we articulate these laws for our own people to reaffirm our strength and brilliance.

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The Indigenous Law Project aims to alleviate misunderstandings by articulating our laws in ways that non-First Nations can understand.



Heiltsuk's Saul Brown (left) Christopher Dixon, Anthony Campbell and Howard Duncan en route to occupy the DFO building on Denny Island to protest the herring kill fishery. Photo by Mychaylo Prystupa.



Nuxalk's Iris Siwallace on the job for the Indigenous Law Project.



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Can you give an example of our indigenous laws in action and why it is important to be able to express them to other people?

Saul: Last spring when we stood up to the herring kill fishery we were enacting our laws. I really think that someday non-indigenous people will thank us for that – for bucking the trend of overexploitation of natural resources - and showing people another way of relating to the natural world.

Was this just a summer job for you?

Saul: This was so much more than a job for me. Getting to do this work is a dream come true. I want to continue on my educational journey specifically to fulfill my responsibility in seeing the enforcement of Indigenous legal jurisdictions and principles upheld within Heiltsuk territory. I only worked this job for the summer, but I see it as part of my life-long work.

What is one of the most memorable parts of this experience been so far?

Saul: The other researcher in my community is Liz Brown - a 78 year old elder. For a young person like me working with an elder as my counterpart has been a really beautiful experience. Liz is a wealth of knowledge. Getting to go through the archives and learn about our past with her there to correct me on the use of different Heiltsuk words and concepts was amazing. It was a really enlightening experience having Liz there as my counterpart.

Any parting thoughts you'd like to share about this work?

Saul: I am so grateful that I had this opportunity to learn - not only about myself as a Heiltsuk person, but the brilliance of our ancestors. The experience gave me hope for the future. If we can re-invoke some of these legal traditions and principles from our culture, then our people and the ecosystems on the coast will flourish.

Our Nations are currently coming together weekly to discuss this project. As this work progresses, we will be creating reports and making sure that all the information we collect is accessible to support our work of protecting our culture and territories.



To learn about the origins of the Indigenous Law Project see Newsletter 4. Our Nations' fight against the herring kill fishery is highlighted in Newsletter 5: <http://ccira.ca/site/resources.html>



Heiltsuk's Saul Brown is a student of his ancestor's knowledge.

“We are doing this work so we can present our laws to the outside world... in a way that they can understand them. It is a tool for conversation and negotiation with others. But, it is also important that we articulate these laws for our own people to reaffirm our strength and brilliance.”

- Saul Brown, Heiltsuk Community Researcher, Indigenous Law Project



A school of herring in central coast waters. Image by Ian McAllister.

Our Nations in National Geographic

Megan Moody's Masters research on eulachon, which combined science and traditional ecological knowledge, was highlighted in National Geographic online in a July 2015 story called: "Salvation Fish" That Sustained Native People Now Needs Saving. Find the story here:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/07/150707-salvation-fish-canada-first-nations-animals-conservation-world/>

In the October 2015 print version of National Geographic magazine, Jess Housty affirms Coastal Nations' long-standing role as stewards of their territories and

speaks out against the Northern Gateway pipeline in a story about coastal wolves. Read *In Search of the Elusive Sea Wolf Along Canada's Rugged Coast* here:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2015/10/sea-wolves/mcgrath-text>

Thank you Megan and Jess for being amazing spokeswomen for our Nations and our territories!





Implementing our Nations' MaPP Plan

Our Nations achieved a major milestone with the endorsement of the MaPP (Marine Plan Partnership) Central Coast Marine Plan after 10 years of hard work. But we have no intention of letting the MaPP plan collect dust on the shelf. Our people have already begun the implementation phase of many projects in our territories.

Read on to discover some of the work now underway that is building our capacity to achieve even more in the future.

Spatial Planning: assessing shellfish aquaculture potential

In our marine use plan, our Nations have expressed interest in exploring opportunities for sustainable and economically viable shellfish aquaculture.

Now, Aerin Jacob of the University of Victoria is embarking on a study to assess the potential of shellfish aquaculture in our territories.

Using a holistic approach that is consistent with the MaPP framework, Aerin and her colleagues will explore the sustainability of shellfish aquaculture in relation to

biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services such as FSC harvest and tourism potential.

With software and models called Marine InVEST (*Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Trade-offs*), Aerin and her team will map and analyze key ecosystem services under different management and climate change scenarios. They will investigate the potential interactions among shellfish aquaculture and other marine uses and activities in the MaPP plan, such as tourism, transportation, or other fisheries.

Recognizing the interconnections between ecosystem health and industry is a key part of this work. For example, increased shipping traffic could provide an economic boost for some communities, but it could also damage fisheries; for instance, wake activity can damage eel grass beds, which are critical for spawning fish. For these reasons, the MaPP plan will not look at any one industry in isolation from others.

“With this work we hope to identify the win-win marine uses and activities on the central coast,” Aerin writes. “We want to understand the impact of different management



The bright red flesh of sockeye salmon.

MaPP is groundbreaking in its collective decision-making between First Nations and the Province and its application of spatial planning to the marine environment. This process is the first of its kind on the BC coast and is also unique on a global scale.

choices and identify how to minimize some of the social, environmental or economic costs.”

New Guardian Watchmen hires

Each of our communities are in the process of hiring two new Guardian Watchmen, with training taking place this fall and winter. This extra staffing will enhance our Watchmen’s capacity as the caretakers of our territories in numerous ways.

On the ground this will translate into increased effort on monitoring and compliance in priority areas. Our Watchmen will also continue to assist in scientific research that strengthens our understanding of the ecological changes in our territories. This knowledge will directly support management decisions in our territories as we continue to implement our marine use plans.

Ecosystem Based Management indicators

Following an Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) approach, our Nations are working with our MaPP partners to develop indicators to measure the health of our marine

ecosystems, and the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of our communities.

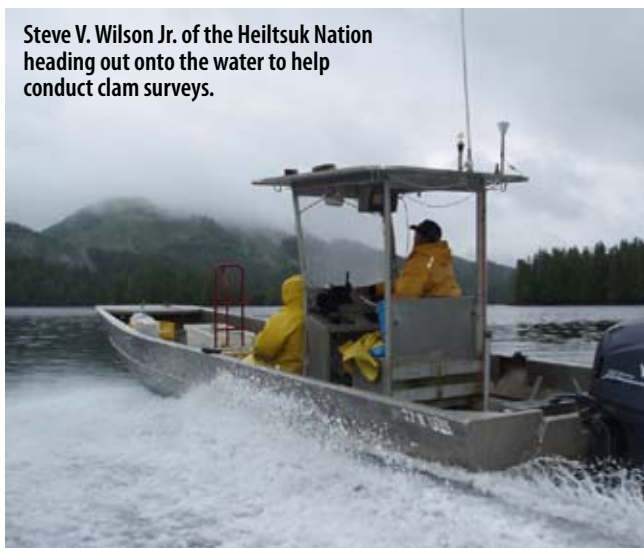
The network of indicators being developed will help us monitor environmental cultural, social and economic changes that may affect our communities. At this stage of this multiyear project all partners are working together to refine the components of this indicator program.

To this end, our Nations will be working with partners, scientists, the Province and other Nations, to set up a long term monitoring, data storage, and communication program to better understand the health of our environment and our communities. Over the long-term, indicators will provide valuable information to help manage our marine resources more sustainably and meet the needs of our people.



Read more about the major milestone our Nations achieved with MaPP in Newsletter 5 here:

<http://ccira.ca/site/resources.html>



Steve V. Wilson Jr. of the Heiltsuk Nation heading out onto the water to help conduct clam surveys.



One of many beautiful beaches on the central coast.

...increased shipping traffic could provide an economic boost for some communities, but it could also damage fisheries; for instance, wake activity can damages eel grass beds, which are critical for spawning fish. For these reasons, the MaPP plan will not look at any one industry in isolation from others.

CCIRA



About This Newsletter

Our Nations created CCIRA to build upon our success in working together to develop and implement our Nation-level marine use plans. Today, CCIRA is involved in a wide array of projects and initiatives across the central coast. The Common Voice is one source of information about CCIRA's activities in our communities. Each issue will highlight specific projects that are underway in our communities with updates on projects and policies that CCIRA is working on. The Common Voice is distributed to all central coast First Nations and is one way we are working to ensure that our communities stay connected with each other. For more information about CCIRA and what we do, please visit our website www.ccira.ca or contact us at info@ccira.ca

Your CCIRA Community Marine Use Planning contacts

Frank Hanuse – Elder representative, Wuikinuxv Nation Stewardship Committee

Danielle Shaw – Stewardship staff responsible for Wuikinuxv Marine Planning

Megan Moody – Stewardship Director, Nuxalk

Doug Neasloss – Stewardship Director, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais

Julie Carpenter – Marine Use Planning Coordinator, Heiltsuk

Your CCIRA Staff

Ken Cripps – Program Director/Biologist

Tristan Blaine - Science Technician

Alejandro Frid – Science Coordinator

Andra Forney - Lands Coordinator

Aaron Heidt – Marine Planner/Policy Analyst

Cindy Hanuse – Administrator

Penny White - Fisheries Coordinator

How to Get Involved

- » Visit your Community Coordinator or Resource Stewardship Office and ask about your Nation's marine use plan.
- » Attend local marine use planning open houses and community meetings.
- » Take advantage of training and employment opportunities.

Hey! Did you know CCIRA is on Facebook?

Like our Facebook page and get updates on issues and events that matter to our Nations.

All of our newsletters are on our website at this address:
<http://ccira.ca/site/resources.html>

Additional Photo Credits

Thanks to Nicole Kaechele, Lauren Eckhart, Julie Carpenter and Tim Irvin.



Impact statement

Paper Brand
Post Consumer Waste
Total Weight
Carbon Dioxide Equivalent

Pacesetter
10 %
161.5 kg
801 kg

