

The Common Voice

CCIRA Newsletter
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CCIRA



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Central
Coast
Indigenous
Resource
Alliance





New Hope for Herring

Over the past two years the herring fishery on the central coast has been a source of controversy. Disagreements between our Nations and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) have led to peaceful but persistent conflicts. On the water, commercial seiners have been surrounded by our boats and asked to leave our territories. On land, DFO offices have been occupied to protest the fishery. All these actions have aimed to safeguard the herring from over-exploitation while protecting our way of life and our indigenous rights.

Now for the first time in two years, there is some optimism for the future of central coast herring. Successful negotiations, pro-active planning and collaborative science in Heiltsuk and Kitasoo/Xai'Xais territories are giving our Nations hope for these fish, the ecosystems they support and our people.

Now for the first time in two years, there is some optimism for the future of central coast herring.

Heiltsuk win a victory for all CCIRA Nations

After major protests over the herring fishery in 2015, the Heiltsuk began extensive talks with DFO that led to the creation of a joint management plan for herring in their territory. The Heiltsuk are hopeful that this one-year plan may signify a new chapter in their relations with DFO.

In a press release Heiltsuk's Chief Councillor, Marilyn Slett, said the "development of this plan has set the stage for future co-management of resources with the federal government." Marilyn applauded the DFO for "establishing the foundation for a nation-to-nation relationship between DFO and the Heiltsuk."

With the plan in place things looked much different on the water this spring. There were no protests, and spawn-



Herring spawn. Photo by Markus Thompson

This is an achievement that benefits all central coast Nations. As we seek to protect our territories it moves the needle in a positive direction, creating a better platform for negotiation with other governments.

ing areas like Spiller Channel, that are culturally and ecologically important, were closed to sac roe fisheries. These closures gave local stocks a chance to rebuild while providing spawn on kelp (SOK) and food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fishing opportunities for the Heiltsuk.

This is an achievement that benefits all central coast Nations. As we seek to protect our territories it moves the needle in a positive direction, creating a better platform for negotiation with other governments.

Planning for herring's future in Kitasoo/Xai'Xais territory

Kitasu Bay is a critical SOK and FSC fishing area for the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Nation. Unfortunately, over the past two years it has been a major struggle to keep it safe from non-indigenous fisheries. Nonetheless, the DFO did agree to keep this important area closed to a seine fishery in 2016. "This is a step in the right direction," says Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Chief Councillor Doug Neasloss. But he

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Researcher Markus Thompson surveys deep herring spawn in Heiltsuk territory.



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also notes that the DFO's decision making process was not as transparent as his Nation would have liked. "We hope the DFO will engage with us more fully on this issue in the future. Our Nation wants to be meaningfully involved in the management of the resources in our territories through joint decision making."

To support a future co-management agreement with DFO, the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais are currently working on a herring management plan specific to their territory. The Nation has deliberately chosen to draft their management plan before engaging with the DFO.

"We're going work with them to protect stocks and respect different user groups," says Doug, "but we're going to write our own management plan first. We think this is the best way for us to ensure that our values and knowledge are incorporated into herring management decisions within our territory."

Nations working together on herring science

In the past five years the Heiltsuk have witnessed herring spawning at greater depths than normal. People are concerned about this unusual behaviour, what may be causing it and the impact it may be having on herring populations. Together, the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais and Heiltsuk Nations are supporting research projects to learn more about central coast herring populations, including this particular phenomenon.

Under the supervision of professor Anne Solomon at Simon Fraser University, Masters student Markus Thomp-

son is investigating instances of deep herring spawn on the central coast.

"Typically herring spawn from the intertidal zone to depths of about 10 meters," says Markus. "But," he continues, "people have been witnessing herring spawning on kelp and anchor lines as deep as 30 to 40 meters." This, he says, has never been seen before. "I was amazed by what we saw when we dove to examine the spawn. At one place in Spiller Channel it looked like snow covering the rocks. It went from the intertidal zone all the way down to 40 meters for a kilometer along the shore."

Markus is investigating if changes in fishing practices, increased noise from boats or rising water temperatures from climate change may be influencing herring spawning behavior. "We're also looking at the potential impact of predators and trying to gage what impact deep spawning may have on the survival of eggs." His findings will enhance our understanding of herring spawning behaviour and may inform new management actions to help protect the fish from human-caused environmental changes.

Meanwhile work continues with other collaborators at the university of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University who are trying to unravel if there are distinct populations of herring on the central coast that warrant individual management plans. Currently, the DFO lumps all central coast herring together for their population estimates. There is concern that this could inflate their estimates of commercially viable herring and lead to over fishing.



"...we hope the DFO will engage with us more fully on this issue in the future... our Nation wants to be meaningfully involved in the management of the resources in our territories through joint decision making." — Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Chief Councillor Doug Neasloss

CCIRA is Growing

New Marine Planning Coordinators

CCIRA is excited to welcome **Barry Edgar** and **Peter Siwallace** as the new marine planning coordinators for the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais and Nuxalk Nations. Marine planning coordinators are integral to implementing our Nations marine plans. Barry and Peter are excellent additions to these Nations' stewardship teams.

New Staff

Rich Chapple is the new CCIRA President. Rich brings a wealth of experience to the role and will enhance CCIRA's engagement with each Nation's leadership and our many partners.

Anna Gerrard is our new Marine Plan Implementation Coordinator, bringing her love of the marine environment and strong project management skills to CCIRA.

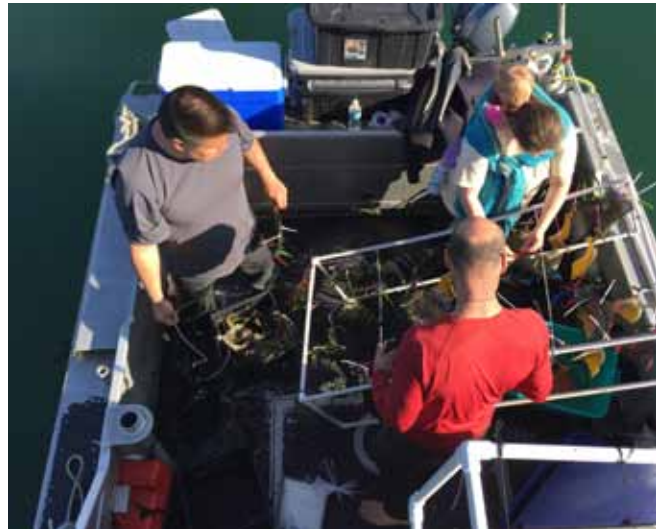
Madeleine McGreer has started as CCIRA's Fisheries Coordinator. She has already proven herself invaluable to CCIRA, doing much of the modelling for our Dungeness crab and rockfish work. We're excited about her expanded role as the fisheries coordinator.



Learn more about CCIRA's marine planning coordinators and our staff at www.ccira.ca/site/about



Alejandro Frid and Dan Okamoto recording wildlife abundance in Kitasu Bay during the 2016 herring spawn. Photo by Markus Thompson



Alejandro Frid, Ernie Mason and Sandy Hankewick preparing herring eggs for an experiment in Kitasu Bay. Photo by Markus Thompson



Crab Research Shows Impact of Fisheries in our Territories

Our Nations have completed the first major study of Dungeness crab on the central coast and the results are clear: commercial and recreational fishing can have a negative impact on crab populations and our food fisheries. The study also demonstrated our Nation's capacity to enforce protective measures under indigenous law when resources in our territories are under strain and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) fails to act.

Crab is an important traditional food for all our communities, and our people are concerned about the sustainability of the stocks. As fishing pressure has increased across the central coast, our people have found it more difficult to catch crab for Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) purposes.

“In recent years we've noticed commercial crab fishers coming into our territory on top of a heavy recreational and food fishery, says Nuxalk Guardian Watchmen Ernie Talio. “We think it's important to scientifically gage the impact of all that fishing pressure on the crab populations.”

Thanks to the Coastal Guardian Watchmen and fisheries staff from our communities who conducted the field work for this study.

- » Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Nation: Ernie Mason and Sandie Hankewich
- » Wuikinuxv Nation: Brian Johnson and Chris Corbett
- » Nuxalk Nation: Ernie Talio and John Sampson
- » Heiltsuk Nation: Richard Reid, Randy Carpenter, Davie Wilson and Carey Stewart

Applying indigenous laws to support science

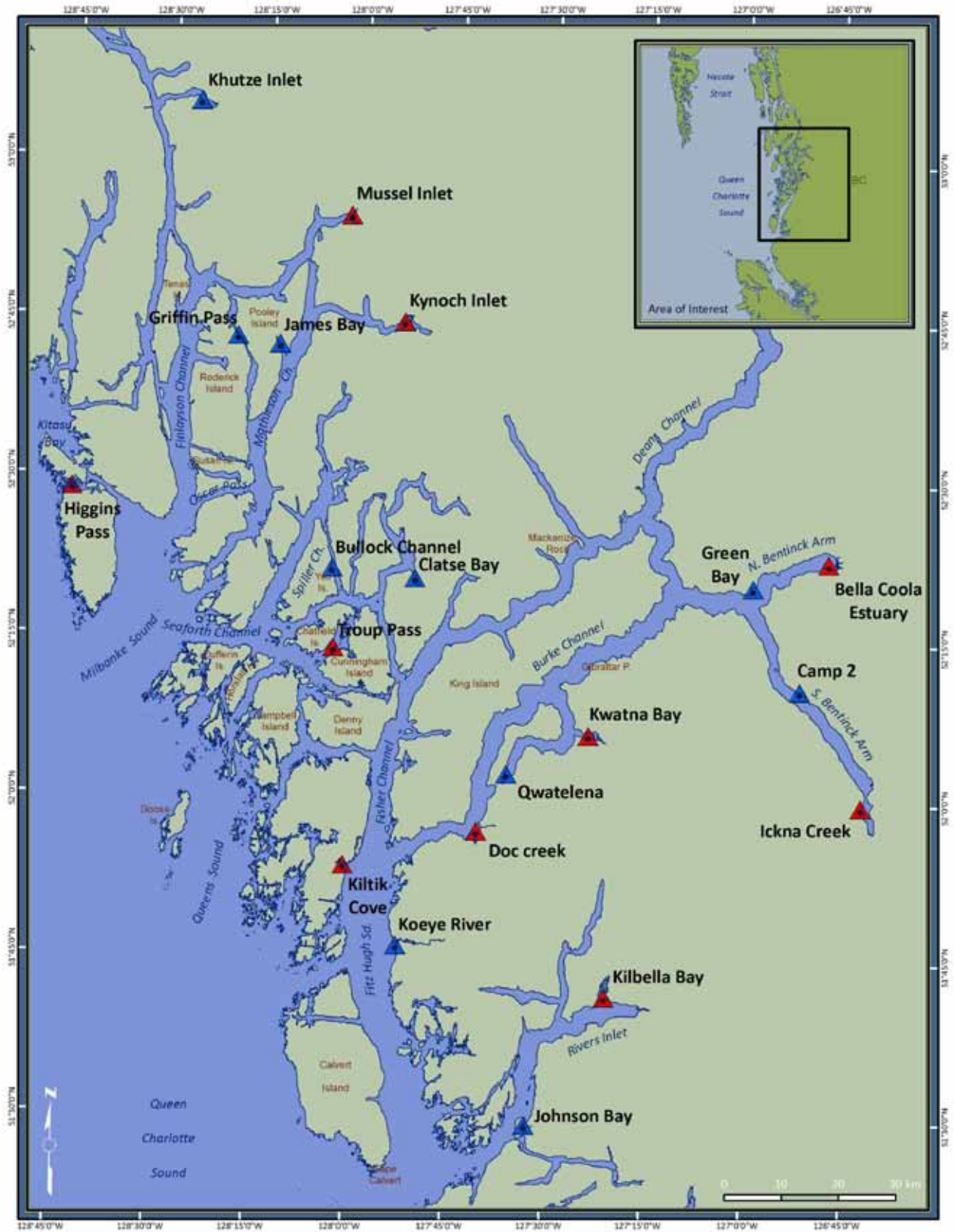
Under the direction of CCIRA's Science Coordinator Alejandro Frid, our Nations initiated a research project aimed at assessing the impact of recreational and commercial fishing on Dungeness crab within our territories. As the first scientific research project of its kind on the central coast, this project also fills a gap in the scientific knowledge of crab in this region that has not been addressed by DFO research.

The project involved 10 sites open to recreational and commercial fishing and 10 sites designated as experimental crab fishing closures under indigenous law (See map page 7). Closed sites were determined by our community's marine planning processes and focused on areas of particular importance to our FSC fisheries. Unfortunately, the DFO chose not to recognize or enforce these closures.

Accordingly, our Watchmen took matters into their own hands by monitoring the closures and educating fishers about crab declines and our research. When Watchmen asked fishers to voluntarily pull their traps, most complied.

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Adult male crabs became larger and more plentiful at the sites that were closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing.



Research sites on the central coast. Blue triangles indicate areas that are open and red triangles indicate areas that are closed to commercial and recreational fisheries.



Continued from page 7.

The study examined two classes of crabs: those that are legally fished (adult males over 154 cm across) and those that are not (females and juvenile males).

The results published in *Global Ecology and Conservation* revealed that, legal-size adult male crabs became larger and more plentiful at the sites that were closed to recreational and commercial crab fishing. By comparison, the number and size of adult male crabs declined at open sites. These findings confirm that the experimental closures reduced mortality of legal-size males from fishing, but also gave them a chance to bounce back.

“These results are consistent with other studies showing that marine sanctuaries free from fishing can help populations recover,” writes Alejandro. This work illustrates why implementing the spatial plans we created during the MaPP process – and creating new marine protected areas – can help contribute to the long-term sustainability of marine resources in our territories.

“long-term conservation solutions require collaboration in research and management between federal and indigenous governments to be successful.” — Alejandro Frid, CCIRA Science Coordinator.

Conservation requires greater collaboration

By creating effective spatial closures for research this project has also illustrated the importance of traditional knowledge and the use of indigenous laws for conservation.

The long-term knowledge held by our hereditary chiefs and other elders exceeds scientific data sets for numerous other resources as well. When deemed necessary by hereditary chiefs, applying indigenous laws to protect resources can be an effective tool for many modern marine conservation issues. However, to achieve our resource management goals our Nations need greater buy-in from the upper levels of government agencies like DFO. (See Crabs, Conflict and Reconciliation, page 9)

Applying indigenous laws to protect resources can be an effective tool for many modern marine conservation issues.

“Long-term conservation solutions require collaboration in research and management between federal and indigenous governments to be successful,” writes Alejandro. For this particular project, DFO scientists, Jason Dunham and Zane Zhang, generously leant their time and expertise to advise on the study design and analysis. We are hopeful that Canada’s new federal government will enhance collaboration with our Nations at a larger scale and begin to integrate indigenous laws into co-management of fisheries within our territories.



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

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

Crabs, Conflict and Reconciliation

This spring there was a dispute in Nuxalk territory when commercial crab fishers began working within experimental crab fishing closures that were set aside under indigenous law for research purposes (See Crab Research page 6). The disagreement prompted a protest on the water with Nuxalk leadership and Stewardship staff threatening to pull the fishermen's gear from the water.

Since the closures were put in place, the majority of commercial fishers have been respecting them. Unfortunately the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has not enforced these closures, which was the root of the recent conflict. This incident highlights the need to establish government-to-government (G2G) decision making processes between our Nations and the DFO so we can avoid conflicts in the future.

Change through reconciliation

Protests on the water are not good for anybody. However, until a more inclusive decision making process is solidified, further conflict will likely be inevitable. And yet, despite the recent tensions, progress is being made.

Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative and the DFO are currently working on a reconciliation process, using crab, to test the G2G decision making structure. This non-treaty negotiation process is one way we hope to make headway towards shared decision making on marine resources. If this approach is successful for crabs we hope to use it as a template for co-management of other resources.

Even as conflicts arise they provide a chance to make things better. Coastal Nations and the DFO have shown a willingness to work together towards that goal. Success on this front will make things better for everybody.



A male Dungeness crab captured during crab survey work.



Guardian Watchmen Essential for MaPP

It is not easy to get hold of Heiltsuk's Desiree Lawson these days. When you call the office of the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department they tell you she is not available; she is out on the water doing crab surveys, or assessing archaeological sites or doing more training. Try tomorrow, they say. But that won't work either. First thing in the morning she'll be off again doing any number of tasks in her new role as a Guardian Watchmen in Heiltsuk territory.

"It is exciting to be a Guardian Watchmen", says Desiree. "We are the eyes and ears on the land and water and we help inform our managers about what is going on. It helps them make sound decisions for our territory."



Heiltsuk Guardian Watchmen Desiree Lawson showing off a Dungeness crab captured during a crab survey in her territory.

The Heiltsuk are not the only Nation humming with activity from their Watchmen. With funding from the Central Coast Marine Planning Partnership process (MaPP), each central coast Nation has hired and trained two new Guardian Watchmen in the last year. A big part of their jobs in the months and years ahead will be implementing strategies in the Central Coast MaPP plan and monitoring the plan's effectiveness.

The MaPP plan is the result of a comprehensive government-to-government marine planning process co-led by First Nations and the provincial government. For our Nations, the overarching objectives are to ensure that coastal ecosystems, our economies and our cultures flourish in the future – and that our Nations are directly involved in stewardship decisions in our territories.

But all this planning will only be effective if change happens on the water – and our new Watchmen are the front-line workers poised to make that happen.

Watchmen provide local vision

"It is essential to have Guardian Watchmen implementing the MaPP plan," says Heiltsuk's Fisheries Manager Mike Reid. "The Watchmen, like Desiree, know their territories, the resources and the various user groups intimately. They have all grown up here and have all this local experience to bring to this work. If we hired outsiders for this, there would be big gaps in their knowledge."

Importantly, the Watchmen are also the ones who will monitor how well the MaPP plan is working over time. "Without the Watchmen we are going in blind," says

"Watchmen are... a critical presence on the water...We see everything and are well-positioned to be there to enforce our traditional laws, which is critical." — Desiree Lawson, Heiltsuk Guardian Watchmen

Mike, “we won’t really know what is working [with MaPP] and what isn’t. The Watchmen will be the first to know if the plan is working or not.” (See Measuring MaPP’s Progress on page 13).

17 new Guardian Watchmen from 10 coastal Nations - including all central coast Nations - have now received training in enforcement, fisheries management, electro-fishing,

cultural awareness, small motor operation and maintenance and more. The first phase of this training was in Prince Rupert last November. Training continues within each Nations’ territory, and this fall the new Watchmen will reconvene at Hakai to further enhance their skills. With more training under their belts, each Watchmen will return to their territory better equipped to help implement their Nations’ marine planning objectives.

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MaPP represents a new era of marine management in British Columbia - one that is co-led by First Nations and the Province. It has become a model for marine planning worldwide.

Our Guardian Watchmen are the eyes and ears in our beautiful territories. Photo by Ian McAllister.

Welcome to our new Coastal Guardian Watchmen

Each of the central coast Nations has hired two new Guardian Watchmen (See Watchmen story page 10). All of them are already out on the water helping implement our marine plans and monitor their territories. They include:

Desiree Lawson and Jordan Wilson	(Heiltsuk territory)
Chantal Pronteau and Curtis Rollie	(Kitsao/Xai'Xais territory)
Charles Sanders and Keith Windsor	(Nuxalk territory)
Josh Vickers and Gordon Moody	(Wuikinuxv territory)



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“Watchmen are an important resource to our Nation and a critical presence on the water,” says Desiree. “We are the only ones who are always here. We see everything and are well-positioned to be there to enforce our traditional laws, which is critical.”

This makes it personal

As part of her Watchmen training, Desiree also began studying her own ancestry and learned that her family has long history with places like Roscoe Inlet and Stryker Island, not far from where she grew up in Bella Bella. This, she says, gives her a very personal connection to these places. Talking through tears Desiree explains: “Now when I am doing fieldwork in Roscoe it means so much more to me because I know I have deep roots there – it is

a place where my family lived - and it is really meaningful that I am now conducting research to help protect it.”

These personal connections to place are one reason our Watchmen are such important caretakers for our territories. It is also one reason why they are so well suited to implementing the MaPP plan.

MaPP represents a new era of marine management in British Columbia - one that is co-led by First Nations and the Province. It has become a model for marine planning worldwide.

There is a lot of work to do in the months and years ahead to achieve our MaPP objectives, and it is our Guardian Watchmen, like Desiree, who will be out on the water playing a key role in making that happen.



“Anna Gerrard, CCIRA’s new Marine Plan Implementation Coordinator, works with Heiltsuk Guardian Watchmen Desiree Lawson and Jordan Wilson to map out a schedule for monitoring their territory”

Measuring MaPP's Progress

Our Nations have high hopes for the Central Coast Marine Planning Partnership (MaPP) plan to create healthy coastal ecosystems and a vibrant future for our Nations. At the core of this work is a desire to maintain and enhance ecological systems and human wellbeing over the long term. Measuring our progress is critical as we begin implementing the MaPP plan.

How will we measure if MaPP is working?

As part of the MaPP plan a set of indicators are being developed to track changes in the state of environmental and human wellbeing in our territories.

Multiple indicators will be selected within seven different categories or themes. The categories include:

- » Species and habitats
- » Climate change and oceanography
- » Clean water
- » Seafood
- » Sense of place and wellbeing
- » Stewardship and governance
- » Coastal development and livelihoods

What are some examples of indicators?

Under the Species and Habitats category, indicators may include: herring spawn distribution and biomass, salmon abundance, eel grass biomass, kelp forest canopy cover and Dungeness crab status.

Under the category of Coastal Development and Livelihoods indicators like participation in the workforce, local business ownership, regional wealth, and the number of commercial and recreational licenses and tenures held by our people, could be monitored over time.

Who will do the monitoring work?

The First Nations and Provincial MaPP partners will partner with academia, governments and other organizations to collect existing indicator data. Where data gaps exist on the central coast, our Guardian Watchmen will play a leadership role in data collection and monitoring (See Guardian Watchmen page 10).

What will the indicators tell us?

Keeping tabs on these indicators over time will create a comprehensive picture of where the MaPP plan is succeeding and where more work is needed to meet our objectives. This work will also provide warning signs about potential or growing threats to marine systems and inform resource management decisions.



Our Nations Produce New Film

Keepers of the Coast is a beautiful film that delivers an inspiring vision for our Nations' future.

While showcasing our spectacular territories, the film explores how traditional knowledge and science are being combined to inform our marine use plans.

With vivid imagery and thoughtful interviews, the film reveals how these marine use plans are the key to uphold-

ing our indigenous laws; they guide the stewardship of our marine resources in a way that sustains our cultures, marine ecosystems and local economies.



You can watch the film and the trailer on the CCIRA website <http://ccira.ca/site/keepers-of-the-coast>



Investing in Central Coast Fisheries

Christina Smith and Glen Clellamin have four boys and a dream – to build a commercial fishing business that will support their kids well into the future. But creating a successful business is a daunting task. Without the specific knowledge needed to attract investors and create a solid business plan, their first attempts were not successful.

Recognizing the barriers that people like Christina and Glen face when trying to get a foothold in the fisheries industry, our Nations and CCIRA created the Central Coast Commercial Fisheries Association (CCCFA). The CCCFA has invested heavily in commercial dive training (Newsletters 1 and 4), licenses and quota for communities, and has worked with Bella Bella to revitalize their processing plant by providing a reliable flow of seafood products (Newsletter 2).

Glen is one of the people who took advantage of training opportunities and became a certified commercial diver. But diving credentials alone are not enough to get a business up and running. That is why the CCCFA began helping people make viable business plans and acquire loans to kick-start their business ideas. For Christina and Glen, this was just the support they needed - and the man who is helping them with all of this is Don Allan.

Supporting local entrepreneurs

Don is the Economic Development Officer for the CCCFA. He's been working with local entrepreneurs to help them establish their own commercial fishing businesses and improve our Nations' access to local fisheries. "My job is to help re-establish a First Nations commercial fishing fleet on the central coast as a viable economic driver," he explains. "I want to work with local entrepreneurs

to help get more people involved in the fishing industry here."

Not only does Don help people draft business plans and acquire loans, but he provides ongoing business planning support along the way. "The people here already know how to catch fish," says Don. "I am here to help out with the other parts of business that many people don't like doing – like creating efficiencies around auditing and financial planning. I want to see people benefit financially from their fishing expertise."

With help from Don and the CCCFA, Christina and Glen finished their business plan, bought and re-fit a reliable boat and secured investors and quota. "We would not be where we are now without the direction and resources Don and the CCCFA have provided," says Christina. "We always go back to them if we don't know something. It makes us feel like we are part of a team. We really could have flopped so easily if we did not have them to call upon for help when we needed it. We know we can trust them and they'll give us great advice."

Glen and Christina's family crest is the grizzly. Honouring the hope that this endeavor will support their family and provide a future for their four sons, they named their new business Grizzly & 4 Brothers. This fledgling company is now part of a bigger plan to revitalize central coast fisheries and create opportunities for future generations.

Capturing more value from our resources

"Our long term goal," says Don, "is to acquire more and more capacity for communities to capture a larger portion of the total value of the seafood products we are fishing."

"We would not be where we are now without the direction and resources Don and the CCCFA have provided... we really could have flopped so easily if we did not have them to call upon for help when we needed it. We know we can trust them and they'll give us great advice." — Christina Smith

This means our people should not only be catching seafood, but also working in packing, processing, ice provisioning, distribution and branding of seafood products.

“The more of this work we can do within central coast communities, the more the Nations can benefit from the resources in their territories,” Don explains. In the future, he’d like to see a strong First Nations brand of seafood products that help support our communities while being recognized for their quality and sustainability. “We’ve got a long way to go to get there,” says Don, “but success stories like Christina and Glen and the work of the Bella Bella and Kitsoo processing plants are showing us what is possible for central coast communities.”

There is a lot of untapped potential in our communities, Don says. “We are in our infancy now, but there is a lot of room for growth. Grizzly & 4 Brothers is a great ex-

ample of that. In the future, we hope to see more people like Christina and Glen running successful businesses that help support the local economy on the central coast. “

At the time of writing Glen was out fishing urchin in his boat and Christina was busily managing the numerous administrative tasks. Things are looking good for Grizzly & 4 Brothers – the urchin and sea cucumber market is expected to grow rapidly in the next 10 years. “We know we are going to succeed,” says Christina, “because we have the tenacity and the support we need. And we know our kids will carry it on. We are just happy we can do this for them.”



Find more stories about the CCCFA in Newsletters 1,2 and 4 at this link:

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



Glen Clellamin refinishing the hull of his boat in preparation for the fishing season.



Glen Clellamin's catch of sea urchins.

“Our long term goal, is to acquire more and more capacity for communities to capture a larger portion of the total value of the seafood products we are fishing.” — Don Allan, Economic Development Officer, CCCFA.

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

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Impact statement

Paper Brand	Pacesetter
Post Consumer Waste	10 %
Total Weight	204.5 kg
Carbon Dioxide Equivalent	1,012 kg

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>

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.

