

Building an Assessment Framework for the Goose Barnacle Fishery off the West Coast of Vancouver Island: Melding Analytical Methods with Indigenous Local Knowledge

Ca?inwa (goose barnacles, *Pollicipes polymerus*) are sessile crustaceans found in exposed intertidal zones with strong tidal surges and wave action, creating difficult and potentially dangerous harvest conditions. Ca?inwa are a traditional food of the Nuu-chah-nulth people of the West Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia Canada, a popular delicacy in parts of Europe, and a growing market in North America. The B.C. Supreme Court decision in the 2009 Nuu-chah-nulth fishing rights case (Ahousaht et al.) affirmed the aboriginal rights of five Nuu-chah-nulth Nations to harvest and sell all species found within their territories. The Nations are working with the Canadian Government to develop an assessment and management framework that recognizes their proven aboriginal rights and provides sustainable harvesting opportunities. The assessment methods combine information from local ecological knowledge (LEK) surveys, GPS bed area mapping coupled with GoogleMap analysis, and goose barnacle density information from archived survey data. This fishery on the west coast of Canada is in its infancy, and incorporating local indigenous harvester knowledge is key to our management approach, given their connection and familiarity with the remote harvesting sites, and ecosystem understanding. Our presentation will showcase the findings of the assessments conducted to date, and discuss how the Nations informed the development of the assessment framework. As well, the importance of Nuu-chah-nulth fishing culture will be discussed, and recommendations will be presented for a sustainable ca?inwa fishery that ensures the Nation's can exercise their aboriginal fishing rights while rebuilding their fishing economies and culture.

Key Words:

Goose Barnacles; Local Knowledge; management; indigenous; First Nation

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