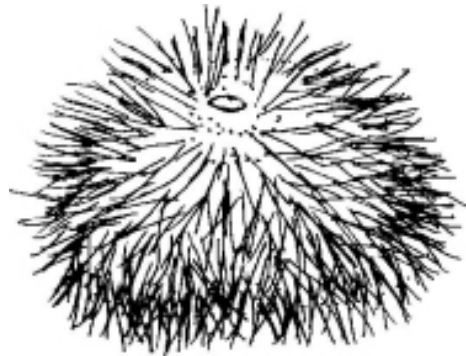




## Integrated Fisheries Management Plan Summary

### Green Sea Urchin - Pacific Region 2016-2018



#### **Green Sea Urchin: *Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis***

The purpose of this Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) summary is to provide a brief overview of the information found in the full IFMP. This document also serves to communicate the basic information on the fishery and its management to DFO staff, legislated co-management boards and other stakeholders. This IFMP provides a common understanding of the basic “rules” for the sustainable management of the fisheries resource. The full IFMP is available on request.

This IFMP summary is not a legally binding instrument which can form the basis of a legal challenge. The IFMP can be modified at any time and does not fetter the Minister's discretionary powers set out in the *Fisheries Act*. The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other valid reasons, modify any provision of the IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

Where DFO is responsible for implementing obligations under land claims agreements, the IFMP will be implemented in a manner consistent with these obligations. In the event that an IFMP is inconsistent with obligations under land claims agreements, the provisions of the land claims agreements will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

## **General Overview/Introduction**

## **IFMP Section 1**

The Green Sea Urchin dive fishery began in 1987 and experienced steady increases in effort up to 1992. Licences were limited in 1991 and currently there are 49 licence eligibilities. Quotas have remained relatively constant, however commercial catch declined through the early 2000's because of increased competition in the markets. Since then there has been a slow steady increase in landings to present. The Green Sea Urchin fishery is managed by a minimum size limit of 55 mm, precautionary quotas, and time and area openings. All commercial landings are tracked using a Dockside Monitoring Program (DMP). Green Sea Urchins are shipped whole and live to Japan. The product quality, demand, and perishability have restricted the fishery primarily to accessible south coast areas.

Aboriginal harvest for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes may occur coast-wide where authorized by a communal licence or, under treaty, a harvest document.

The recreational fishery is open coast-wide year-round and is an open entry fishery with a daily bag limit, two-day possession limit and gear limits.

## **Stock Assessment, Science & Traditional Knowledge**

## **IFMP Section 2**

Stock assessments of Green Sea Urchins are generally performed every three years and involve analyzing data collected from both fishery-dependent and fishery-independent (surveys) sources. The main objectives of the surveys are to assess variability in Green Sea Urchin populations, calculate biomass estimates and monitor impacts of commercial harvesting. Fishery-independent surveys also provide information about the sublegal portion of the population and thus insight regarding recruitment into the fishery.

Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is not generally available. Traditional Ecological Knowledge in the form of observations and comments collected from commercial divers and patrolmen over many years contributes to decisions on scientific survey locations and is considered in management decisions.

## **Economic Profile of the Fishery**

## **IFMP Section 3**

Green Sea Urchins are harvested from both the West and East Coast of Canada. Green Sea Urchins on the West Coast of Canada are harvested by divers and sold whole and live, mainly to Japan. The product quality and perishability has restricted the fishery primarily to accessible South Coast Areas. The Japanese are the largest consumers of Green Sea Urchin but more recently sales have increased to the public and to local restaurants.

The Canadian industry has multiple competitors with the largest being the Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU) fishery in Russia. Russian urchins are fished close to Japan and are delivered to market fresher and are sold cheaper than the higher priced BC product.

- Canadian coastwide landings of Green Sea Urchin peaked in the 1992/1993 season at approximately 978 Tonnes. Since then annual landings dropped consistently until the 2006/07 season. These drops were initially due to setting of Total Allowable Catches (TAC's) but continued to drop due to poor market conditions. Since the 2006/07 harvest low, the harvests have shown a slow but steady increasing trend.
- Landed value peaked during the 1994/1995 season at \$7,251/t. Since then the price has dropped consistently to a low of \$3,146/t for the 2007/08 season. Price has been relatively steady since 2007/08. Again this is believed to be due to large amounts of product coming from other markets.
- The coast-wide Green Sea Urchin quota has remained relatively constant for the last ten years ranging between 179 and 202 tonnes. The Coast wide quota has increased for 2016/18 to 223 tonnes.
- Competing markets, mainly from Russia, are identified as the largest threat to the sustainability of this fishery.

- Recreational interest in harvesting shellfish species is directed mainly at crab and prawn. The recreational harvest of Green Sea Urchin is believed to be minimal.

### Access and Allocation

### IFMP Section 6

The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other any other valid reasons, modify access, allocations and sharing arrangements outlined in this IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

The commercial fishery is managed through a TAC, limited entry licensing, area quotas and a precautionary harvest rate. To date there have been no limits placed on First Nations' harvest for food, social and ceremonial purposes. The daily limit for recreational Sea Urchin (all species combined) harvest is 12 with a possession limit of 24 and gear is limited to hand picking only. The needs of aquaculturists will be given equitable consideration to those users in the commercial and recreational sectors.

### Management Issues, Objectives and Measures

### IFMP Sections 4, 5 and 7

#	Management Issue	Objectives	Management Measure
1	Collection of biological information	To conduct on-going surveys and research to improve information on stocks, biological characteristics and impacts of the commercial fishery.	A precautionary approach to management, which ensures the Department is meeting its conservation goals, will continue for the foreseeable future.
2	Catch Monitoring from all users.	To ensure all harvests are documented.	To continue to develop catch monitoring programs for all sectors.

### Governance Process

The Green Sea Urchin fishery is governed by the *Fisheries Act* and regulations made thereunder.

The primary consultative body for this fishery is the Green Sea Urchin Sectoral Committee. The committee includes members from the Department, First Nations, commercial industry, and other sectors. The Sectoral Committee meets annually in the spring to provide advice to the Department on the IFMP. The draft IFMP goes out for a 30-day public consultation and the final version of the IFMP goes for approval by the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region. Licensing for the commercial fishery starts in August and the fishery opens September 1.

### Compliance Plan

### IFMP Section 9

Conservation and Protection (C&P) staff will pursue opportunities to monitor and enforce this fishery, in conjunction with the monitoring and enforcement priorities directed by senior management in the Pacific Region.

### Performance Review

### IFMP Section 10

Performance indicators are reported in the Post-Season Review (Appendix 1 of the IFMP)

Stock assessment and research activities are outlined. The post season review may include outcomes from meetings with First Nations and other sectors regarding Green Sea Urchin. The delivery of the commercial fishery will be assessed by performance measures such as the amount of product landed and the value of the fishery. Input from members at the Sectoral Committee meetings will be included. The post season review will also include time spent attending to enforcement of the fishery.

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada Contact**

For additional information on this IFMP Summary or to request an electronic version of the full IFMP, please contact Erin Wylie at 250-756-7271 or [Erin.Wylie@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Erin.Wylie@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)