

Sea Urchin Zone Council Meeting Summary June 22, 2016 in Ellsworth, ME

DMR staff: Trisha Cheney, Carl Wilson, Maggie Hunter, Robert Russell, Rob Watts and Les White.

SUZC members present: Teresa Johnson, Steve Eddy, Larry Harris, Joe Leask, Mark Nickerson, Jason Leighton, Duane Carver, Dean Norris and Clint Richardson.

SUZC members absent: Atchan Tamaki, Chun Muth, and Tracey Sawtelle.

Public: Rachel Hutchinson and Kim Ovitz.

Sea Urchin Zone Council Research Subcommittee Meeting Summary

Meeting commenced at 2:00pm

The Subcommittee discussed updates on the Cat Ledges Project. Joe Leask went diving on the site earlier that day. He reported the urchins are still in the area, have spread out a bit, are looking healthy and there is evidence of grazing. Site 3 looks the best as it is the deepest site and there is a high volume of water flowing by it. Joe only observed 3 crabs today at the site. Clint and Mark noted that they observed two the other day when they also visited the site. He noted that the smaller sized urchins were a bit harder to find and did not see any signs of die off; only one empty shell after the transplant. Then the group watched the video compiled of GoPro footage taken by Joe at the site. To view, follow this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5kE_hlYpkeyOUE1SWlxU3V3NUU/view

The settlement panels need to get out ASAP as urchin settlement happens in June through the end of July. Larry has found over the years since 1983 that June-July is the critical settlement period. He shared that back in the 1980-90s there used to be more than 1000 pinhead settled urchins on the panels, however, now 5 or 6 urchins are considered good. Ken Mann from Dalhousie University has done work suggesting that settlement in kelp beds is zero and that this is why we need to disturb a site or habitat to encourage settlement. As the urchins open up the bottom from grazing, it will increase the chances of settlement. This is the goal of the project, which will be determined by if recruitment happens next summer. There will be two sets of three panels at each site; two in barrens and one as a control. Participants will work to get them out in the next two weeks. The group expressed concern about the summer water temperatures and crabs negatively impacting the urchins over the next few months.

There was some discussion regarding that if this project is successful, the possibility of expanding it next summer in other places. Many harvesters are essentially farming ledges on their own, going back to the same spots for 15 years now. Bulking and farming has been tried for years while guys have been refining their transplant methods on their own for years as well. The big challenge is increasing quality in Zone 1. Urchins are really only in one place in Zone 1 and there is not a lot of food to support them. Japan has been farming urchins with mixed results and at great expense. This has been a small project without any funding support as everyone has volunteered their time and resources (boats, fuel, sample processing, data collection etc.). No research surcharge funding has been used for this project or any other grant funding. If success is demonstrated in this project, it could be used as proof of concept to leverage future grant proposals. However, the funding may have to come from industry to support this work. The urchin research surcharge fund is decreasing precipitously, so other financial support would be needed. In Alaska one participant note, a \$0.08/lb. fee goes in to supporting surveys. At 2 million lbs. of landings, that would generate \$100,000 to work with for our Maine fishery. The council requested that a report be presented at the next meeting regarding the surcharge's current state and to estimate how long it will last. It was mentioned that there currently is a mechanism being used in the quahog fishery where dealers pay so much per lb. to cover the Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) testing and a survey every three years. The group would like to determine an estimated budget for the project to see what they need to work with and discuss ways of raising additional funding.

The group then discussed how success will be measured in the project. Thanks to the work Kim has done measuring subsets of urchins during the transplant, we are able to estimate how many animals/lbs. were transferred. Next spring a quadrat survey will

be undertaken to see if there are any new recruits to the site. Larvae spend a month in the water column in a pelagic life phase before settling to the bottom. The current urchins have disturbed/grazed the bottom which is hoped will promote recruitment and settlement of new urchins to the site. The settlement panel results can then be compared to other ones collected along the Maine shore and at the site itself last summer. Last year's panels had large amphipods and shrimp, however, no urchins. Quadrat sampling may be able to shed light on how many of the urchins survived in order to quantify mortality and how much they grew. The test will be if they can survive the summer. While there are no crabs at the site now, that may change in August. Also, the water temperatures may soar.

Sea Urchin Zone Council Meeting

Meeting commenced at 4:00pm

Welcome & Introductions

J. Leask welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the room.

April 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes

T. Cheney: From now on I will be providing a summary of the meeting. While I have been doing transcripts over the past few months in order to accurately capture the conversations associated with the season discussions, summaries will now be provided.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS. Approval of minutes passed.

DMR Updates: Import Export Issues

Representative Pingree and Poliquin sponsored legislation that would exempt sea urchins from export inspections. In order to get the language passed through committee, a compromise was negotiated which resulted in the import inspection requirement being maintained. Some of the council members noted that while this does help, the majority of the issues now are regarding imports from Chile and Canada with inspection delays causing product losses. If there is any variance from the estimate of yield on the import paperwork when product is crossing into the USA, this triggers further inspections sometimes which costs dealers valuable time as it is a perishable product. If more flexibility was provided for variance, this would be very helpful as when urchins are purchased, the roe weight is estimated as it is difficult if not impossible to provide extremely accurate numbers on the forms.

DMR Updates: Dive Survey

The urchin survey is now complete as Robert and crew finished up in Cobscook last week. Preliminary observations indicate some good areas; however others, such as Jonesport, looked horrible. The historical sites have dwindled and there are only a few that have rebounded. Lots of urchins in Whiting & Dennys Bays; possibly consider a transplant project in this area?

Discussion: Swipe Card Implementation

Rob Watts from the landings program attended the meeting to provide a brief explanation for the need of accurate and timely reporting and to review the swipe card implementation timeframe and demonstrate how the swipe card hardware and software will work (**Appendix A for slides**). The Department has just completed a successful third season with swipe cards in the elver fishery and continues to revise/improve the program with harvester and dealer input. You will have one card that will work for multiple fisheries and just keep this with your licenses in your wallet. The receipt that is printed out at the time of the dealer transaction will reflect the dealer name, time, price and poundage. In three years of use, only one dealer swipe card reader failed and it was from testing use. Rob also put two reader units in a freezer overnight to address concerns regarding the readers functioning in cold weather and they worked fine. They have thermal ink so it won't freeze, but you can't leave the receipts in the sun as they will turn black. Also, Marine Patrol will have extra readers with them in the field if there is an issue which needs to be addressed in a timely fashion. The dealers will need a laptop or a tablet in the field. The reader unit is Blue Tooth capable. Dealers won't need the internet while recording information in the field; they will just need to make an internet connect within 24 hours so information can be uploaded to the DMR server. The harvester cards themselves can be turned on and off if lost. Each fisherman will have one card, if lost a new one will be activated and the old one turned off. Only harvesters are allowed to be in possession of and sell urchins, not tenders. When the dealer connects to the internet, the most recent license holder list will be populated in the reader so that someone without a valid endorsement will not be able to sell. Harvesters will still need to submit their harvester reports as effort and location information comes from those reports and not the dealers. The dealers will be sent out a letter inviting them to set up a meeting with landings program staff to be given the equipment and trained in how to use it

and to customize the software to their specific buying ports, etc. Roe content will also be collected. Divers that don't have a boat can either manually enter the registration number or enter "unknown"; this will not prevent the transaction from going through.

A participant asked if this system will help deal with harvesters who are landing over the daily possession limit by selling extra totes to a dealer or splitting their catch and selling two daily limits to two different dealers. Rob replied that while there is nothing preventing someone from selling more than the daily limit, dealers are prohibited from buying more than the daily landings limit from any harvester. If a harvester sells two sets of limits on the same day to two separate dealers, it would be reported in the landings data would be available to Marine Patrol in a more timely fashion if it is needed for a landings violation. Also, if Marine Patrol discovers that a dealer has excess product, it would be subject to seizure if there was evidence that the product was taken in violation of the daily limit or the transactions was not recorded as required. The overage would be liberated after seizure and the dealer would be given a violation and Marine Patrol would follow up with the harvester as well. However, the primary purpose of the swipe card is to improve accuracy and timeliness of reporting.

Another participant asked is the swipe card will help with being able to pick fishing days. Rob replied that this system does have that potential to allow greater flexibility and safety in the future by letting fishermen pick days and the Department is going to evaluate that potential this upcoming year when the program rolls out.

Discussion: Cat Ledges Project

The council touched back on the discussion which was had earlier by the Research Subcommittee (see above). It was noted that the funding for this project work has been provided by the industry, Larry Harris and volunteers such as the fishermen and Kim Ovitz; no Sea Urchin Research Surcharge funds have been provided.

Other Business

For the next meeting the council wishes to discuss the Research Surcharge Fund and the Fishery Management Plan (FMP). A council member asked if the sea urchin FMP would be adopted into law. He expressed concern that the FMP not be actionable by law. It was clarified that the FMP is simply a guidance document for the fishery and will not be adopted into law or regulation. The council would also like to discuss swipe cards and the option to pick days and have a hard TAC at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 5:49pm. The next meeting is scheduled for **August 17 in Ellsworth at City Hall at 3:30pm**. A Research Subcommittee Meeting will **NOT** be hosted on that day and full council meeting will commence at 3:30pm.

Appendix A

Rob Watts Swipe Card Presentation Slides.

Why collect landings and catch data?

- To monitor the health of Maine's marine resources
- To obtain information for use in fisheries management
- To demonstrate the social and economic importance of the fishing industry

Landings vs. Catch

- **Landings** = Amount of marine species captured, brought to shore, and sold (or transferred) to another person or party. Organisms that are released/discarded not included.
- **Catch** = A measure of marine species removed from the environment, including bycatch, fish released, at sea discards and species not sold (transferred, etc.).

What is collected?

Dealer	Both	Harvester
grade (ns/os)	harvester/boat	no. of crew
market (size)	date	amount of gear
price	gear	time gear fished
	species	depth
	amount	area fished
	port landed	sea time
	disposition	set number
	dealer	

How are data used in management?

- CPUE for management decisions/assessments
- Number of active harvesters can be determined and to what extent vs. licenses sold
- Helps measure impact of regulations or marine activities on fisheries and communities
- Provide information to better understand how fisheries impact one another

Why Swipe Cards?

Current Elver System

- Allowed the DMR to keep a very lucrative fishery open.
- Dealers are able to verify if a harvester is licensed or not.
- More accurate and timely data were available.

New Swipe Card System

- Same as above plus:
 - Able to verify harvesters vessels (if listed on license).
 - Harvester's issued one card for all licenses that would require swipe card (elver, sea urchin and scallop).
 - Remove need for paper dealer reporting in two more fisheries that have a management need for more timely data.

Why Swipe Cards? (continued)

New Swipe Card System

- Allows harvester to verify what dealers have submitted purchasing at time of sale.
- Does not replace harvester reporting.
 - Dealers do not report any effort or harvest location information.
- Dealers are not reporting any more information that what has been reported in the past.
- Data are submitted daily allowing fisheries managers access to the most timely data possible.

Printed Receipt

SHE'S eDR mobile TRANSACTION RECEIPT
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Dealer Report ID: 29617-180-2R-81100
Landing Transaction ID: 18944

Harvester License Number: 29617
Harvester Agency: Maine
Landing Date: 04-08-2016
Landing Time: 02:44 PM
Purchase Date: 04-08-2016
Port: Boothbay Harbor
State Reg / CG Num: ME1774M
Dealer License ID: MEDEALER
Dealer Agency: Maine

Landing Details:

Species: SEA URCHING
Quantity: 350 LB
Disp: Food
Grade: ROUND
Market: WITH 10% OR 11% ROE
Unit Price: \$2.75
Landing Sub (\$): \$962.50
Gear: BY HAND, DIVING GEAR
Source: Standard

Species: SEA URCHING
Quantity: 150 LB
Disp: Food
Grade: ROUND
Market: WITH 0% ROE
Unit Price: \$1.25
Landing Sub (\$): \$187.50
Gear: BY HAND, DIVING GEAR
Source: Standard

Report Total (\$): \$1,150.00

X
Harvester Signature

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Source: Standard

Species: SEA URCHING
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Unit Price: \$1.25
Landing Sub (\$): \$187.50
Gear: BY HAND, DIVING GEAR
Source: Standard

Report Total (\$): \$1,150.00

X
Harvester Signature

Reader Options



Datamax O'Neil Apex 2 works with Windows® and Android® platforms.



Star Micronics SM-T301i works on iOS® and Android® platforms

Harvester Card Design

