

CENTRAL COAST COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

CFE PROFILE

OVERVIEW

Central Coast Commercial Fisheries Association (CCCFA) is an alliance of four Central Coast communities: Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv.

It was set up in 2010 to work on fisheries issues that the four Nations knew they could address together. This included a need for access (licences and quota), a need to combine resources to be more efficient, and a need to reinvigorate fishing skills and traditional knowledge that were in danger of being lost forever. There was also an understanding that once skills were in place, creating and growing local fishery businesses would make sure they were used.

CCCFA works closely with the Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance (CCIRA), a body made up of the same four communities to ensure ecosystems return to a healthy balance, while respecting cultures, advancing members' well-being, and enhancing economies. It ensures First Nations interests and traditional knowledge is balanced with science.

CCCFA has trained more than 200 people and now has more than \$14m of fishing licences and quota. Profits of more than \$3.2m have been distributed equally to the four communities' economic development programs.

PICFI SUPPORT

Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) is central to CCCFA's success. More than 160 members have received essential small vessel operator training, with programs in each community. Other training has ranged from basics such as first aid to commercial dive training for harvesting species such as geoduck and sea

cucumber. All members that took part passed the dive training – and all of those people are working! “There is a demand for these skills,” says CCCFA general manager Don Allan. “Now we get calls all the time looking for divers.”

By keeping costs down (there is no central office, for example), CCCFA is able to focus all of its efforts on training, securing access and supporting an increasing number of Heiltsuk, Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv entrepreneurs.

SUPPORTING CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

In the past, many people saw fishing as a dying industry, but CCCFA is proving the opposite.

Transferring knowledge from Elders and fishers with commercial experience to youth is an important part of the story. Coupled with formal training, practical experience is important and brings the knowledge of the ocean and local area to a new generation.

“With the right stewardship, this industry is going to be around for a long time and it's going to produce a lot of really good jobs, income and business opportunities,” says Allan.

“In the past, people have had to go away to find work,” he says. Now, CCCFA is creating the possibility for people to build a career right at home that fits with the four Nations' traditions and culture – including working on the water. By working right from their communities, they act as role models to the next generation of youth.

CCCFA has been created to fit within the broader environmental and stewardship responsibilities of CCIRA, which in turn has produced, and is implementing, the Central Coast First Nations' Marine Use Plan. Linking these together ensures economic development happens in a sustainable and respectful way.

DEVELOPING ECONOMY, JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Around 200 people are now employed directly as a result of CCCFA – around 150 have found work harvesting and the remainder are mainly involved in processing. Other work has also been created in industries supporting fishing.

CCCFA's income comes from leasing the \$14m of quota and licences it has acquired. A dividend system puts 20 per cent of its income back into each of Heiltsuk, Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv's economic development programs – more than \$3.2 million to date – to allow each community to further develop its own economies.

The vast majority of fishers leasing licences and quota are community members, and they have first refusal to access. Where this is not possible, non-member operators must commit to involving community members through training, mentorship and employment.

CCCFA supports fishing entrepreneurs to produce business plans and to help secure funding, as well as being available for ongoing support once a business is up and running. It also works with processors to make sure everyone involved gets the value they deserve for what they catch.

THE FUTURE

CCCFA plans to continue and expand the current model of focussing on fishery access, training and business support. This will mean purchasing more licences

and quota to create business opportunities for more community members, with a hope to triple access in the next five years.

As more people are able to build their fishing careers within the communities, there is a need to make sure that youth are aware of the opportunities to inspire another generation of success and sustainability.

"We want a fleet that is privately owned by Heiltsuk, Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv. Elite fishermen who understand sustainability and conservation while also being successful commercial fishermen," says Allan. "With that, local economies can flourish."

GRIZZLY & 4 BROTHERS

Glen Clellamin and Christina Smith have four boys and a dream to support their kids and move home.

Thanks to CCCFA training, Glen is now a certified commercial diver and the couple has had business planning help to secure the loans that they needed to get started.

Their business – Grizzly & 4 Brothers – has bought and refitted a boat and now has quota to harvest. The urchin and sea cucumber market is expected to grow rapidly in the next 10 years, leaving a great legacy for Glen and Christina's kids – who are already getting ready to join the business.