



**GEODUCK**  
underwater harvesters association



Mitigating impacts to industry, communities and resource-dependent families:  
proposed revisions to the marine protected area (MPA) network in the northern shelf bioregion



# About Us

The **Underwater Harvesters Association (UHA)** is a non-profit formed in 1981 to represent the British Columbia geoduck and horse clam fishers. The UHA is a co-management success story and is actively involved in geoduck science, management and marketing working closely with DFO, CFIA, ECCC, and First Nations. The geoduck fishery has an annual landed value of \$45-50M.

The **Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association** is a non-profit association that represents the British Columbia the Spot Prawn license holders. The Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association is actively involved in managing and promoting the sustainability of the fishery. The commercial spot prawn fishery is one of the most valuable in the Pacific Region, accounting for a landed value of around \$30-60M annually.

**BCSA:** The UHA and PPFA are both members of the BC Seafood Alliance.



# Geoduck Trivia

- Largest burrowing clam in the world
- Oldest on record >160 years
- Sustainable: no bycatch, harvest <2% stock per year
- 40+ active vessels each with 3-person crew
- \$45-\$50 million landed value per year
- 3 main transport companies
- 8-10 exporters and processors in the Lower Mainland
- Invest \$3.5 million per year in science and management
- \$250 K per year in marketing with Provincial and Federal support



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# Prawn Trivia

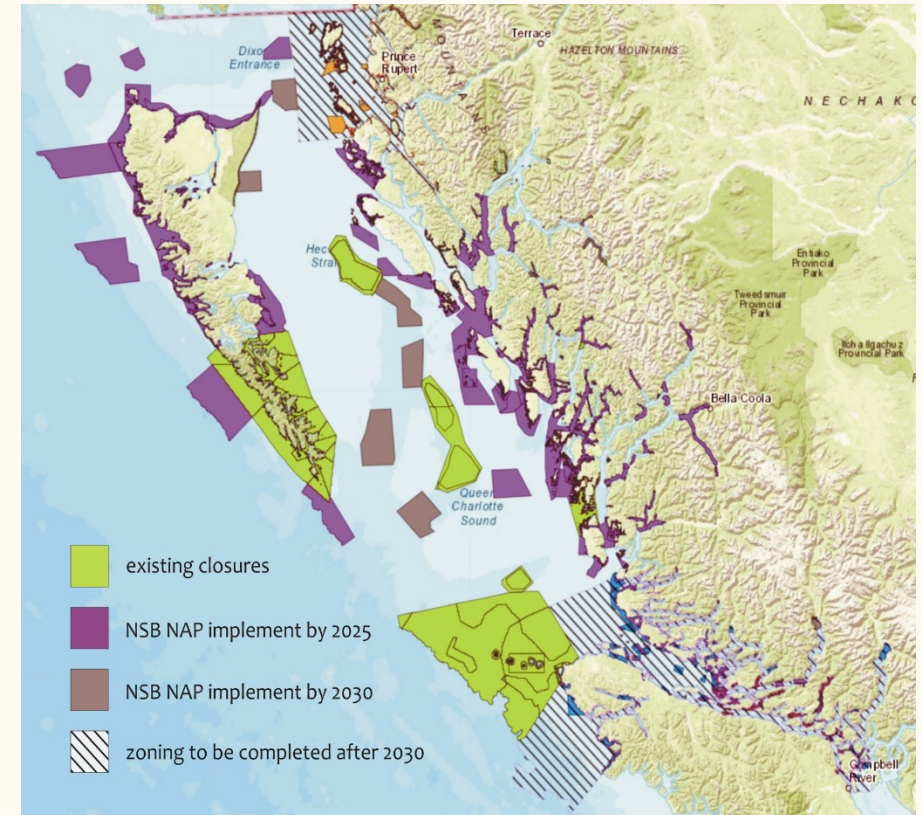
- Commercial harvesting began +100 years ago
- Sustainable: little to no bycatch, closely monitored
- 245 commercial licences (+25% FN held)
- Small vessels of 3-5 crew members
- Industry invests roughly 1 million into management and science annually
- Wild prawns are a short-lived – 4-year life cycle
- All prawns start as males then transition to females
- Harvested by trap, prawns are typically harvested from ocean depths ranging from 50 to 150 meters (165 to 500')
- \$30-\$60 million landed value



# Marine Planning: Northern Shelf Bioregion Network Action Plan – endorsed by Federal Govt., Provincial Govt. and Signatory First Nations in February 2023

## 2023 NSB Network Action Plan Endorsed February 2023

- No baseline socio-economic analysis available. Disagreement between industry and Partners on economic impacts. Network will be implemented without an understanding of the socio-economic impacts.
- Management measures to be dealt with on zone-by-zone basis through multiple regulatory processes.
  - No strategy to measure cumulative impacts to commercial fishing
  - No clear process to integrate past or future commercial fishing advice
  - No engagement to determine NSB NAP impacts on science and management required for sustainability
  - MAJORITY OF ZONING TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY 2025!

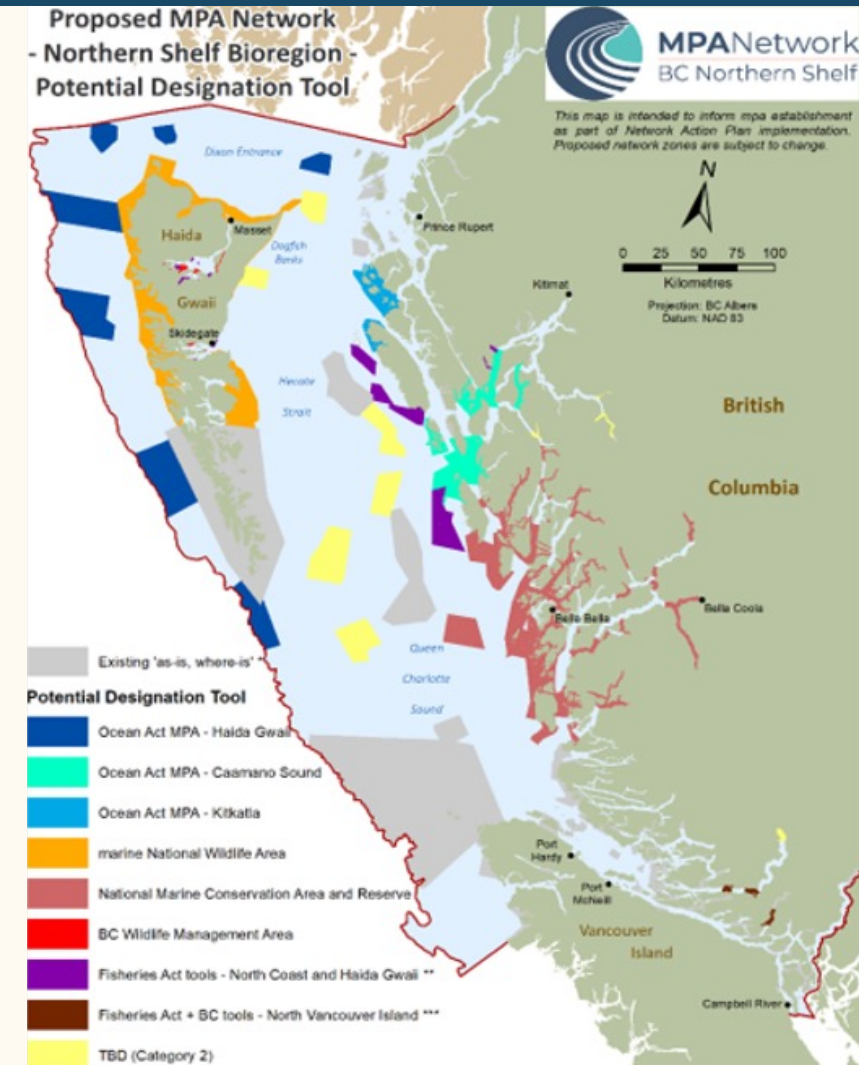


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# Implementation Strategy: 2025 & 2030

- Different 'Designation Tools' will be utilized in 9 or more regions
- No clear consultation process proposed for multiple implementation tools in NSB
- **Winter 2024:** Partners not willing to undertake a baseline Socio-economic impact analysis (SEIA)



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# NSB – What’s at Stake

## Background

The NSB Network Action Plan calls for significant reductions in harvesting which will lead to severe economic impacts across Coastal BC communities and for fishery-dependent families. A BC government study in 2019 compared the complementary advice of the BCSA Marine Planning Team (MPT) to the NSB Partners.

## Draft Scenario 1 – MPATT Proposal

- Devastating economic consequences

## MPT Advice for Scenario 1

- Adopts MPT’s advice and reduces negative economic and job impacts
- Recognition that economic costs will be far greater than indicated in provincial study as open areas become fragmented, lost funding for science, reduced investment, etc.
- Creates framework to mitigate impacts while still achieving conservation targets

## Northern Shelf Bioregion MPA Economic Impacts BC Ministry of Agriculture (January 2020)

	Draft Scenario 1	MPT Advice
Lost revenue	\$125 M (annually)	\$30 M (annually)
Lost employment	545 FTEs	110 FTEs
Lost labour income	\$55 M (annually)	\$15 M (annually)

BC Seafood Alliance Marine Planning Team (MPT) advice:

- new zoning map:
  - met or exceeded conservation targets
  - significantly reduced economic impacts



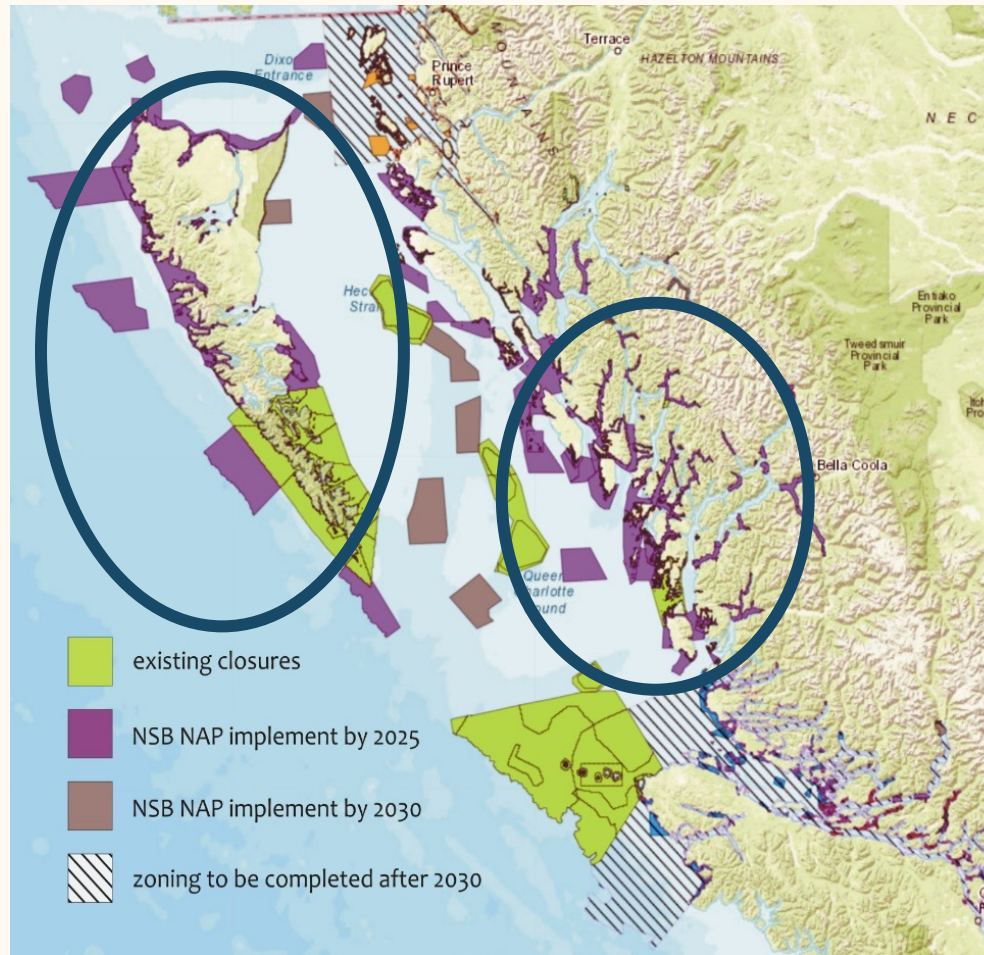
# What's at Stake: NSB Network Action Plan

## NAP HAIDA GWAI LOST CATCH:

- Trawl: 27%
- Sablefish: 18%
- Lingcod: 21%
- Halibut: 8%

## MPT ADVICE HAIDA GWAI LOST CATCH:

- Trawl: 1%
- Sablefish: 4%
- Lingcod: 12%
- Halibut: 4%



## NAP CENTRAL COAST LOST CATCH:

- Geoduck: 32%
- Prawn: 46%
- RSU Dive: 50%
- Rockfish: 34%

## MPT ADVICE CENTRAL COAST LOST CATCH:

- Geoduck: 8%
- Prawn: 7%
- RSU Dive: 16%
- Rockfish: 10%





# What's at Stake: NSB Network Action Plan

## NAP NORTH COAST LOST CATCH:

RSU Dive: 33%

Mid Water Trawl: 28%

Rockfish: 26%

Halibut: 18%

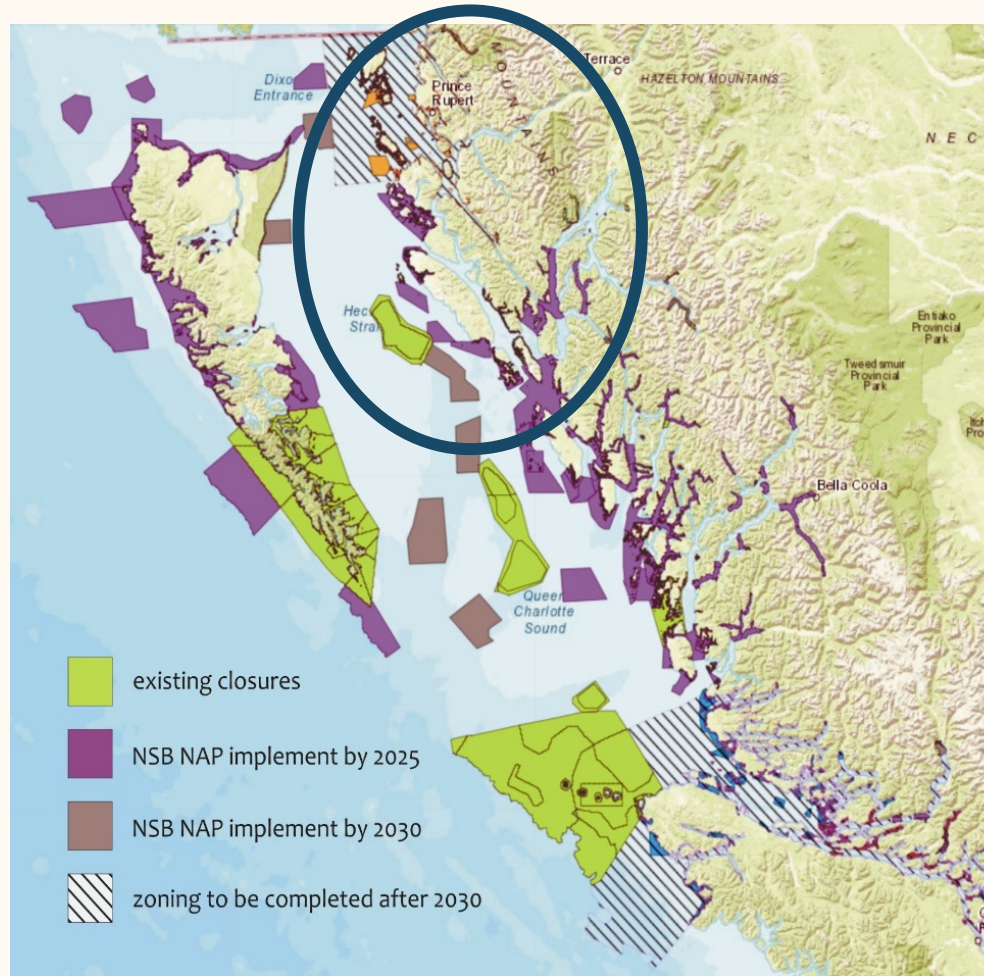
## MPT ADVICE NORTH COAST LOST CATCH:

RSU Dive: 8%

Mid Water Trawl: 0%

Rockfish: 7%

Halibut: 9%



**LARGE PORTION  
NORTH COAST NOT  
YET ZONED**

**TO BE FINALIZED  
AFTER 2030**

**REGIONAL CLOSURES  
INCREASES  
HARVESTING EFFORT  
IN OTHER AREAS**

# Economic Consequences – DFO Analysis Underestimating Value: Disproportionate Subregional Impacts

## Example: Commercial Prawn by Trap Fishery

	NSB NAP Compendium 3	Current Prices
Landed Value from NSB (annual average)	\$25.7 million (2018\$)	\$46.5 million (2023\$)
Landings	2014-2018	2000-2018
Species	Spot prawn (price for shrimp and prawn)	Spot prawn only
Price	2018 only <i>Source: BC SYIR 2018 reviewed &amp; adjusted by G. Gislason</i>	2023 <i>Source: PPFA Industry price survey</i>
Annual lost catch by Region	Not available	Haida Gwaii – 6% North Coast – 13% Central Coast – 46% North Van. Isl. – 3%*

- 48% of coastwide spot prawn catch from NSB (avg. landings 2000-2018)
- \*North Vancouver Island not yet zoned, however 28% of the annual catch harvested in this subregion (2000-2018)
- High displacement from CC will result in increased fishing pressure in other subregions

# Economic Consequences – Geoduck Fishery

## DFO Analysis Underestimating Impact of NSB Zoning

	NSB NAP Compendium 3 Table 4 (Page 20)	BCSA MPT Analysis (shared with DFO in 2022)
Landed Value	\$43.2 million (2018\$) “...harvested from the NSB each year.”	\$40.3 - \$42.8 million (2018\$)
Impact on Annual Landed Value (Activity of Concern)	\$4.6 M or 11%	\$9.0 M or 21% (double NAP estimate)
Mean Annual Catch Impacted by Sub-Region	Not Available	Haida Gwaii: 12% (21% with G. Haanas) North Coast: 16% Central Coast: 32% North Van. Isl.: 0%

- Majority of North Coast Sub-Region will not be zoned until after 2030
- All of North Vancouver Island remains to be zoned after 2030
- Overall impact of NSB will be much higher than current NAP
- Overall, the proposed NSB closures will contribute < 0.3% to the National 2025/2030 targets, but have a devastating socio-economic impact

# First Nations Reconciliation Efforts Are Advancing Through Economic Opportunities in the Geoduck and Prawn Fisheries

We recognize the opportunity to ensure First Nations Interests are advanced and new economic opportunities can be realised.

At present, the total quota blocks currently held by independent First Nation fishers and/or First Nation CFEs is 83 of 550 blocks – twenty (20%) percent of the annual quota. First Nations also hold 20% of all licenses overall (G/FG). At least 47 individual Nations are involved in this fishery. Within the prawn sector, twenty-five (25%) percent of the licenses are utilized and/or shared with First Nations. Participation continues to grow – over the last three years significant investments were made through A-Tlegay Fisheries Society, Coastal First Nations, and others via Fisheries Reconciliation Agreements. There are a number of pending deals that will continue to increase this participation. These opportunities will only grow over time.



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# Recommendations

## **Recommendation 1: Ensuring Access to Sustainable Fishing Areas are Protected**

We are seeking a commitment from the DFO to continue to grant access to sustainable prawn and geoduck fisheries on a Region-by-Region level. Closing 32% - 46% on the Central Coast to sustainably harvested, zero bycatch fisheries with significant First Nations investment is not conservation. By introducing arbitrary and non-discretionary MPAs, the entire sector will be negatively impacted. It's a lost opportunity for indigenous communities and non-indigenous communities alike that may be irreversible.

## **Recommendation 2: Update Economic Impacts Study**

Industry analysis indicates significant impacts on coastal communities in BC, most notably for families and regions that depend on the fishery. We request that the Federal Government work with the Partners to update the 2020 Northern Shelf Bioregion MPA – Economic Impacts study prepared for the BC Ministry of Agriculture to better highlight the financial impacts to coastal British Columbia. This timely data is needed for the ongoing discussions around the marine closures scheduled to be implemented starting in 2025.

## **Recommendation 3: Transition Strategy (last resort)**

Given the devastating economic and social impacts on coastal communities in BC, and for families that depend on the fishery, the Underwater Harvesters Association and the Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association are proposing a freeze on all new proposed MPAs until the Federal Government engages with the BC Commercial Fishing Industry to create a Transition Plan if access to fishing grounds becomes restricted. Our lead association, the BC Seafood Alliance, would be happy to work with Governments to move forward with a Transition Plan (which includes compensation) if access is restricted.



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# Thank You

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