

# Annual Report

2024-25



COASTAL NATIONS

— FISHERIES —

100% INDIGENOUS OWNED



*Cover image: Crab fishers for the Gitga'at First Nation.  
Photo credit: Cristina Mittermeier.*

# Table of Content

---

4 Message from the Board Chair: K'unya Laurie Bevan

5 Message from the CEO: Guy Dean

6 Who We Are

Vision

Mission

Purpose

7 Shareholder Nations

8 Governance

Board of Directors

Operations Team

9 Strategic Priorities

Key Performance Indicators

10 Featured Stories

12 Community Based Fisheries: Shaping the Future of Indigenous Fishing

14 Tasha Sutcliffe: A Champion for Community Based Fisheries

16 Haida Nation and Ecotrust Canada: Dockside Monitoring Program

19 Financial Summary



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR:

## K'unya Laurie Bevan

Over the past year, CNF has continued to revive coastal fisheries and community-based fishing fleets throughout the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. We have also made great progress implementing the Fisheries Resource Reconciliation Agreement (FRRA) and on our four core mandates:

- Supporting the Nations in implementing commercial Community Based Fisheries in shareholder Nations.
- Establishing a coast-wide sustainable boat-to-table fishing company: Coastal Nations Commercial Fishing (CNCF).
- Acquiring and distributing fishing assets as requested by CNCF and the CBFs.
- Working with Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative to drive necessary changes in the fishing industry through regulatory reforms.

During the 2024-25 fiscal year, CNF stepped up in its commitment to enhance communications with our leadership, the shareholder Nations, and our Nations' Trust representatives. We communicated regularly with leadership following quarterly board meetings, shared numerous newsletters, and set up monthly meetings with the Trust. In addition, CNF participated in a new Coordination and Communications Working Group comprised of Coastal First Nations executives and staff, Coastal Nations Fisheries executive and Board, Trust representatives, and legal counsel to deal with higher level needs and communications back to the shareholder Nations.

During the year, CNF launched a prawn Community Based Fisheries pilot project with a vessel from the Kitsoo Xai'xais Nation as well as a Haida Salmon Troll pilot project with five local fishers. Further, a dockside monitoring program was delivered in partnership between the Council of the Haida Nation and Ecotrust Canada.

I am also thrilled to share that CNF continues to gain recognition for its efforts, receiving the "Outstanding New Venture" award at the 2024 Business Distinction Awards by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. This award recognized CNF's business growth, employee engagement, community impact, and sustainability.

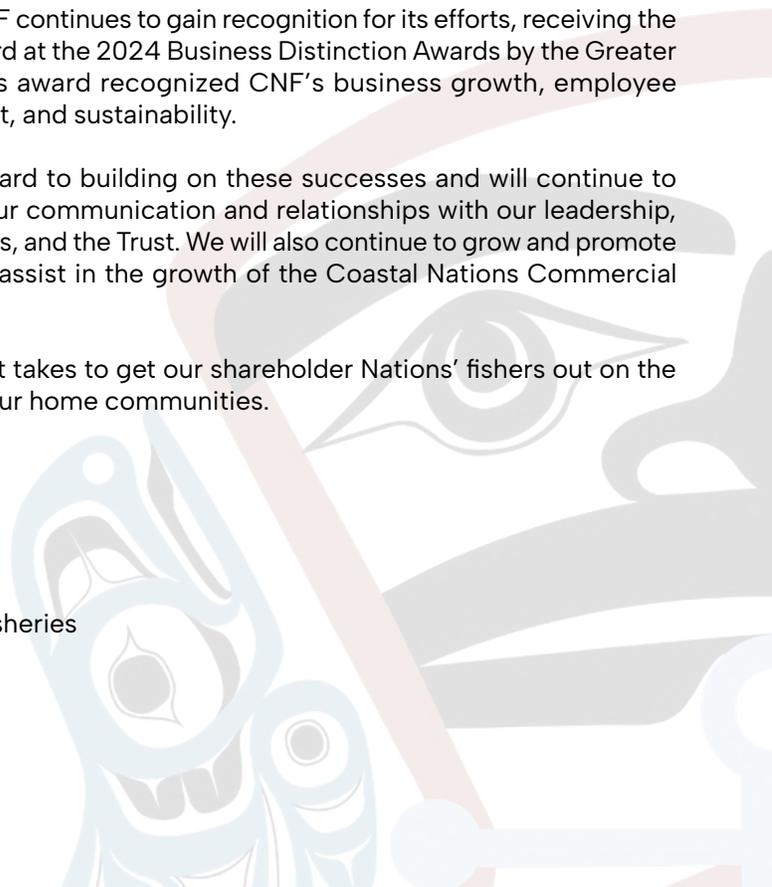
In the year ahead, we look forward to building on these successes and will continue to further enhance and maintain our communication and relationships with our leadership, shareholder Nations' communities, and the Trust. We will also continue to grow and promote the Vessel and Gear Fund, and assist in the growth of the Coastal Nations Commercial Fishing company.

As always, we will do whatever it takes to get our shareholder Nations' fishers out on the water to provide stable jobs in our home communities.

Hawaa,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bevan".

K'unya Laurie Bevan, Haida  
Board Chair, Coastal Nations Fisheries



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO:

## Guy Dean

Coastal Nations Fisheries was created as the economic driver for the implementation of the Fisheries Resource Reconciliation Agreement (FRRA). After three full years of operating profitably, our mission remains the same: to invest in coastal fisheries while continuing to support our shareholder Nations for long-term financial growth and prosperity.

As our portfolio of fishing vessels, licences and quota grows, so too have the opportunities for our shareholder Nations' fishers, with close to 90 percent of our fishing effort being fished by members from our communities this past year. We are proud of this accomplishment. However, just as important, by distributing the commercial fishery profits back to our shareholder Nations, we are not just supporting these fishers and their families but providing long-term wealth back to the wider community.

In addition, this past year we supported the successful implementation of two Community Based Fishery (CBF) pilot projects—one for Prawns and one for Troll Salmon. This was a major achievement and a great starting point for progress in future years.

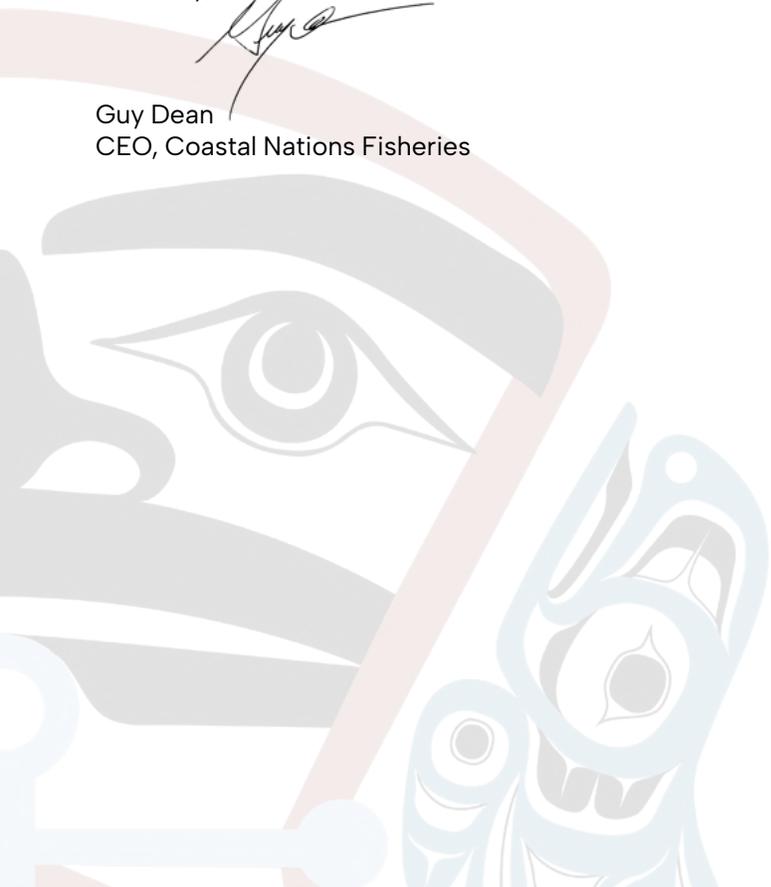
As we advance our fishing assets for both CBF and the Coastal Nations Commercial Fishing company, we are emerging as a leader within the industry, with a strong reputation for focusing on sustainable fishing methods that will support the resource for generations to come. Our goal is to have a significant impact in the management and stewardship of the key species that are important to our Nations, so that our investments benefit not just our shareholder Nations, but all communities that depend on the ocean for their livelihood.

Our 2024–25 fiscal year closed out with international tariffs and major changes within the marketplace that we expect to continue into 2025–26. While this is cause for unease, we are strongly positioned with a diversified collection of assets that will continue to benefit local food sovereignty and the economic wellbeing of our shareholders next year and for years to come.

Sincerely,



Guy Dean  
CEO, Coastal Nations Fisheries



# WHO WE ARE

Coastal Nations Fisheries (CNF) is a transformative fishing company on the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii of British Columbia, collectively owned by eight First Nations—Gitga’at, Gitxaala, Haida, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai’xais, Metlakatla, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv.

## Vision

Vibrant and prosperous fisheries, sustainably harvested and managed, by our coastal shareholder Nations.

## Mission

To support shareholder Nations in the revitalization and stewardship of community-based fisheries and the development of a thriving boat-to-table, Indigenous-owned and sustainably operated commercial fishing company.

## Purpose

The eight shareholder Nations have come together to exercise their ancient inherent rights and responsibility to self-determination and self-governance. This includes breathing new life into each Nation’s jurisdiction, authorities, responsibilities and laws, as well as revitalizing and implementing their respective legal systems, customs and traditions.

Through their alliance, the Nations honour each other’s holistic and integral relationship with the marine environment. Each Nation is committed to preserving healthy ecosystems that, in turn, support their communities through sustenance and contribute to economic wellbeing and social, cultural and spiritual practices.



# SHAREHOLDER NATIONS

Our shareholders work together to provide opportunities for their respective citizens at both the coast-wide commercial and community level. Each of the Nations below is both a limited partner of Coastal Nations Fisheries Limited Partnership and a shareholder of Coastal Nations Fisheries (GP) Inc.



Gitga'at



Kitasoo Xai'xais



Gitxaala



Metlakatla



Haida



Nuxalk



Heiltsuk



Wuikinuxv

# GOVERNANCE

Coastal Nations Fisheries consists of a Board of Directors and Operations Team who work together to ensure that CNF is operated in a transparent manner and accountable to the shareholder Nations.

## Board of Directors

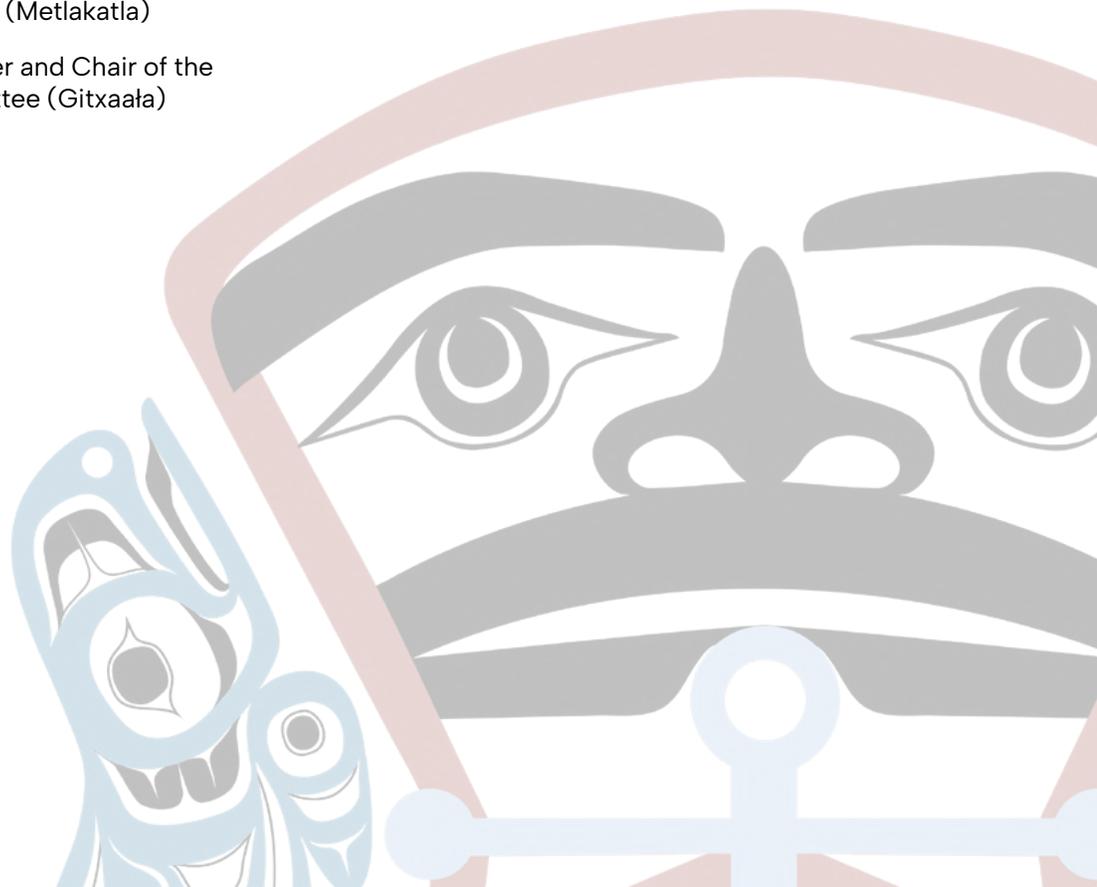
The CNF Board serves as the key governing body overseeing the organization's strategic direction. With representatives from each shareholder Nation, the Board of Directors ensure the Nations' voices are heard and respected on every level of the company.

- K'unya Laurie Bevan – Board Chair (Haida)
- Ken Cripps – Board Vice-Chair (Kitasoo Xai'xais)
- Nang Jingwas Russ Jones – Board Member (Haida)
- Donald B. Simpson – Board Member (Haida)
- Fred Anderson – Board Member (Wuikinuxv)  
(term ended Dec 2024)
- Shirley Antonelli – Board Member (Wuikinuxv)  
(term commenced Jan 2025)
- Kevin Carpenter – Board Member (Heiltsuk)
- Jeromy Andy – Board Member (Nuxalk)
- Wah Goot'm Haida Kyle Clifton – Board Member and  
Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee (Gitga'at)
- Ryan Leighton – Board Member (Metlakatla)
- Michael Uehara – Board Member and Chair of the  
Corporate Governance Committee (Gitxaala)

## Operations Team

Working closely under the guidance of the Board of Directors, CNF's Operations Team tends to the day-to-day operations and executes the Board-approved strategies.

- Toni Bonacci – Administrative Assistant
- Guy Dean – Chief Executive Officer
- Sandra Manow – Business Manager
- Aaron Sinclair – Chief Financial Officer
- Tasha Sutcliffe – Community Based Fisheries Lead



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CNF's paramount goal will always be to support our shareholder Nations' fishers getting back on the water and into stable fishing careers.

In 2024-25, nearly 90% of the licence and quota that CNF leased out was fished by shareholder Nations' fishers, and 94% was fished by First Nations fishers.

In the years ahead, Coastal Nations Fisheries will continue to focus on the following six priorities to fulfill our mission and vision.

## Coastal Nations Commercial Fishing

Through Coastal Nations Commercial Fishing (CNCF), we will continue to maximize profits for shareholder Nations, and provide coast-wide commercial fishing opportunities for the Nations' fishers. The profits CNCF generates are available to shareholder Nations, to be reinvested in fishing related activities.

## Community Based Fisheries

We will continue to support shareholder Nations in implementing commercial Community Based Fisheries in their respective territories. We will also continue to acquire fishing assets for CBFs and CNCF respectively, as requested depending on market conditions and availability. In addition, 15% of annual CNF profits are used to support work, alongside Coastal First Nations, on collaborative fisheries governance.

## Board Governance

We will strengthen Board governance through a commitment to continuous learning. This will include, but is not limited to, training and implementation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policies and practices that reflect a commitment to mitigating our environmental and sustainability impacts.

## Coastal Nations Fisheries Trust

We will collaborate with the Trustees and Trust in accessing and deploying the Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement (FRRRA) capital in implementing the intentions of the FRRRA and the aspirations of the shareholder Nations.

## Administration and Capacity

We will continually strengthen our administrative and organizational capacity through transparent, accountable and cost-effective practices.

## Traceability of Product

CNF will remain committed to seafood traceability, which can help deter illegal practices, verify environmental and social responsibility claims, and allow the public to support local, sustainable seafood producers.

# Featured Stories

---





*The late Kitsoo Xai'xais Hereditary Chief Haay-maas Ernest (Charlie) Mason, fishing with others in Kitsoo Xai'xais territory. Photo credit: Jason Houston.*



*Yalh Kulh Jaadaas Laina Bell, FRRM Manager for the Haida Nation.*

## Community Based Fisheries: Shaping the Future of Indigenous Fishing

At the 2025 Indigenous Seafood Supply Conference, hosted by the Native Fishing Association at the Crest in Prince Rupert on January 16–17, several critical topics were covered, including rights-based seafood harvesting and creating new business opportunities in the Indigenous fishing community.

Along with many other presentations, Yalh Kulh Jaadaas Laina Bell from the Haida Nation shared a panel with Jackie Tait (Nisga'a) and Ron Barlett (Kitsukalum), to discuss the innovative Indigenous-led seafood projects, including Community Based Fishery (CBF) startups, in their respective Nations.

Sharing her perspective on the Haida CBF salmon troll pilot project, Laina said there were some challenges getting the fishery up and running, but the Haida fishers will continue to work toward the ultimate goal of making it a lifetime fishery for the Nation.

In 2024, the Haida Nation launched their CBF salmon troll pilot for Area F troll, the fishing waters that surround Haida Gwaii, with seven salmon licences purchased on the open market. With those licences, the Nation was able to develop a management plan for salmon troll with built-in flexibilities.

“We were also able to split those licences and put them onto smaller boats—what we call the mosquito fleet,” says Laina, adding that of the nine Haida fishers who were registered, five made it out on the water for the first season.

One of the challenges the CBF fishers had to contend with were the size of the boats. With many under 25 feet and some small open skiffs, the Haida fishers were at a competitive disadvantage in Area F, because the smaller boats simply cannot get out there safely and can’t carry enough fuel or ice to compete with the bigger boats.

One area where the Haida CBF fishers go above and beyond, is ensuring their consumers know exactly where the fish they buy was caught. The commercial standard for this is to provide 5-percent tissue samples for genetic stock assessment, whereas the Haida CBF fishery provided 20 percent for coho, chinook and even the food fish. They continue to be a leading example across the coast.

Another major success for the Haida CBF is the ongoing training, employment and youth engagement. In 2024, Ecotrust trained 12 Haida citizens to be dockside monitors for the six-week fishery, while 30 people were trained in Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP), 60-ton or Fish Master. In total, just under 50 people were employed in the CBF salmon troll pilot.

“The Haida want their community to be healthy and eat well, so they have reached out to local retail stores, schools and hospitals to provide locally caught fish to them,” says Laina. The ultimate goal is that the fisheries policies and reforms implemented through these new CBFs will continue to support fisheries revitalization and sustainability on Haida Gwaii and throughout all eight CNF shareholder Nations.



Fisher Jack Ward (left) and staff at CBI Fisheries complete the first offload for the Haida salmon troll Community Based Fishery.



From left to right: Ramona Gerak, Haida Wild Manager; Laina Bell, FRRR Manager; Charmaine Adams, FRRR Assistant; and Renee Samels, Ecotrust Canada.



*Tasha Sutcliffe in spring 2025, enroute between Kitasoo Xai'xais and Heiltsuk territories.*

## Tasha Sutcliffe: A Champion for Community Based Fisheries

As CNF shareholder Nations work to revitalize small boat commercial fleets in their communities, they know they have a key ally and experienced professional in Tasha Sutcliffe, CNF's Community Based Fisheries Lead.

There is a lot to highlight in Tasha's 30-plus career in fisheries, community economic development, food systems, small business development and policy, but all that experience doesn't come close to telling the whole story. Her career path took her off the fishing boat and into an office setting, but she has always worked closely with fish harvesters and fishing communities. One constant that shines through all her work is a deeply held conviction to support the people and communities who rely on the ocean for their food, livelihoods and community wellbeing.

"In this field I enjoy the people first and foremost," Tasha says. "It's an incredible combination of traits you need to be a fish harvester – you need many hard skills, resilience, and a respect for the marine environment, as well as an ability to read and navigate all the elements around you on the ocean. I've heard many describe fishing as being in their veins, often with multi-generational ties and an attachment to fishing not just as a career, but as a lifestyle. There are not many jobs like that."

Growing up in Vancouver, Tasha says some of her most memorable experiences, which ultimately informed her career path, were the times she spent working as a teenaged deckhand on her father's wooden troller, the

Cathy Bell. "I was very proud that my father was a fish harvester," she says. "He was gone for months every year travelling the west coast and would bring home tales of his adventures. When I was old enough to be his deckhand, not only did I get to spend more time with him, but I also got to be mentored in salmon fishing. I loved being on the boat and I loved being on the water, experiencing for myself what I had heard about for so many years."

Tasha's experience in fisheries, and community-based fisheries in particular, touches on virtually every aspect of the industry. In her early 20s, she moved to Prince Rupert to work on a contract with the United Fishermen & Allied Worker's Union and Native Brotherhood of BC, supporting fishers and shoreworkers who were losing jobs due to restructuring of the salmon fishery. "I didn't expect to stay longer than that six-month contract," she says, "but the need was so great that a new organization was created to support and work with displaced fishery workers." That led to the launch of the Community Fisheries Development Centre, which Tasha ran for nine years as Executive Director. "I worked with a lot of incredible people there," she recalls. "With their support, I learned by fire as a young inexperienced person running a new organization."

In her various roles, including 17 years as an executive with Ecotrust Canada and as an advisor on Committees and Boards focused on fisheries, social enterprise development, and food security, Tasha says there's another constant theme that runs throughout: the challenges faced by fish

harvesters and fishing communities are the same kinds of struggles faced by natural resource workers all over the world. “In many places, bigger industry players and non-local interests have come in and over time taken more of the economic and broader community benefits away from those that have historically relied on those resources. People are struggling to maintain those benefits or bring them back. They are being displaced and disconnected,” she says. “It’s the same for many other sectors as well, including farming and forestry.”

Throughout her career, Tasha has praised the critical role played by a thriving, sustainable fisheries sector in coastal communities. “There is such a broad set of community benefits from fishing,” she says. “It’s monetary in terms of job creation, but it’s much, much more than that – it’s local food systems, community relationships and having that educated, informed and skilled presence on the water. It’s a network of skilled captains and crews of vessels who are essentially eyes and ears on the coast – who participate in keeping those on the water safe, and have local knowledge of what’s going on in the ocean, including warning signs such as changes in fish stocks and climate. It’s all the community value gained by a deep connection to the ocean, in addition to providing local food and jobs.”

Before becoming an inaugural team member of CNF, Tasha brought her knowledge and experience to a key role with Coastal First Nations, supporting the Nations’ technical teams during early negotiations of the Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement (FRRRA). After the agreement was signed, she moved seamlessly into her current position with CNF—a similar supporting role, but this time focused on the FRRRA’s implementation.

“I’m lucky to have been able to work with and learn from those who have been involved from the start, first achieving the agreement and now moving into implementation,” she says. “It’s an incredible agreement that could be transformative in furthering fisheries reconciliation and bringing back local infrastructure and a skill base on the water, which is so essential for communities and the fabric of the coast. I am truly grateful to be a part of it.”

A primary objective of Community Based Fisheries is to re-establish that direct connection to, and economic benefit from, fishing for the FRRRA signatory Nations’ communities. “CNF is a small team and we’re learning as we go, but everyone here is deeply committed to this work and we work alongside many brilliant people,” she says. “This is not just a job for anyone here. We bring our own experience and backgrounds, but we all believe in the leadership of the Nations we are accountable to, and we believe we can make a real contribution to the outcomes.”

Tasha believes there can be broader benefits of this work that will help realize a stronger coast overall, but there is much more work ahead. For now, it is one day at a time.



*Standing on the shore of the Skeena River at the Cassiar Cannery site in 2018.*



*Working as a deckhand in the commercial crab fishery, at 19 years old.*



Jennifer Paton, Fisheries Monitoring Manager at Ecotrust Canada, teaches a salmon and groundfish dockside monitoring course in Masset. Photo credit: Ecotrust Canada.

## Haida Nation and Ecotrust Canada: Dockside Monitoring Program

A collaborative dockside monitoring program, led by the Haida Nation and Ecotrust Canada, completed its first full year of training on Haida Gwaii.

The program was designed to advance Haida Community Based Fisheries by building skills and capacity for monitoring activities. It will lead to a host of other communal benefits as well—not just well-trained monitors (both Haida and non-Haida citizens), but ultimately healthier fish populations.

The training included two five-day sessions during the year—one in Skidegate with four participants and one in

Masset with 12 participants. Many of the participants were Haida Watchmen, who already had significant experience with sampling and monitoring procedures.

Jennifer Paton and Renee Samels from Ecotrust Canada's Community Fisheries program delivered the training mostly as classroom learning, but lessons also included some hands-on rockfish species identification, using frozen samples, as well as specifics on identification for salmon, halibut and groundfish.

“We’re inviting all residents on Haida Gwaii to get involved in future dockside monitor training,” says Yalh Kulh Jaadaas Laina Bell, from the Haida Nation. “This collaboration is just one part of a much broader goal to re-establish thriving fisheries on the coast... it builds skills and ensures well-trained monitors, but it will also lead to healthy fish populations in the long run.”

After participants completed training and passed their exams, they still had to do five “shadowed” offloads with an experienced monitor to gain their full designation. An offload is defined as one harvester landing their catch, for which a monitor fills out a validation record to verify it. If participants successfully complete the initial six-month period, they are validated as a monitor for up to three years, and will need to complete a minimum of five offloads annually to keep their designation.

Dockside monitoring is an important step in the fish harvesting process. When fishers return with their catch to a designated landing site—T&M Seafood in Skidegate and the Government Dock or CBI Fisheries in Masset—they are greeted by either a designated monitor or validator, depending on the size of the boat and volume of the catch. After being separated by species, the catch is weighed and counted, with the total weight of each species documented. The dockside monitors are tasked with recording this information and reporting it in real time to DFO, Ecotrust Canada, and Haida Stewardship.

The role of a dockside monitor is best suited to someone who is able to multitask and work in a fast-paced environment, and of course, is comfortable working on docks, fishing vessels and handling fish. The job is particularly suitable for those with flexibility, such as retired fishers who are looking to either complement other current roles or maintain a connection to the sector.

“Throughout the training, prospective monitors and fishers worked very well together,” says Laina. “Everyone knows each other on Haida Gwaii and the familiarity made for a smooth process. As with the Community Based Fisheries in general, the monitoring training is part of a much broader goal to provide long-term fisheries jobs year-round, and ultimately make our communities thrive.”

Coastal Nations Fisheries is looking forward to working with the Haida Nation and other Nations to continue advancing monitoring capacity across the North Pacific Coast.



Dockside monitoring sampling equipment, including a Tally Wacker (the metal bar), which is used to count different species of fish, among other purposes. Photo credit: Ecotrust Canada.



Laina Bell, Haida FRRM Manager, supports the dockside monitoring team by placing scale samples from a chinook or a coho salmon. Photo credit: Ecotrust Canada.



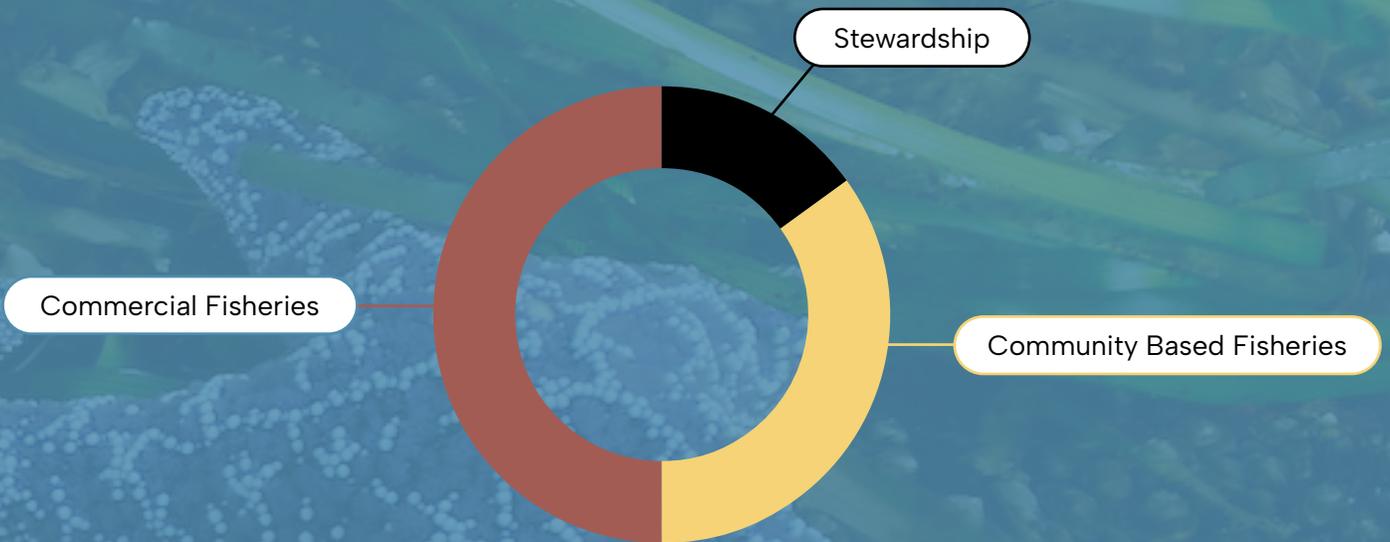
# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In 2024-25, CNF generated a profit of \$4,134,219.00, which was distributed according to the FRRRA as follows:

Stewardship Payments: \$419,254.22 – Distributed to Coastal First Nations–Great Bear Initiative on behalf of the Nations for collaborative governance work.

Community Based Fisheries: \$1,397,513.90 – Distributed to the Trust for reinvestment in the respective communities segregated funds for Community Based Fisheries.

Commercial Fisheries: \$2,317,450.90 – Distributed to the Trust for reinvestment in the respective communities segregated funds for Commercial Fishing Opportunities.



# Contact

---

Learn More – Visit the CNF website and sign up for our e-newsletter.

504 – 321 Water Street  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 1B8

