



FISHERMEN **HELPING** FISHERMEN



# ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

Fishermen Helping Fishermen  
Come Home Safely!

# Financial Summary

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

## SOURCE OF FUNDS:

WorkSafeBC Fishing Assessment Levy	\$400,000
DFO PICFI	\$96,060
Courses and Materials	\$10,701
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$506,761</b>

## USE OF FUNDS:

Prevention Programs	\$119,097
PICFI Program	\$97,865
Claims/Assessments	\$2,000
Administration	\$267,710
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$486,672</b>

## STAFF

John Krgovich – Program Coordinator  
Stephanie Nguyen – Program Assistant  
Rhoda Huey – Accounting

## SAFEST CATCH ADVISORS

Ralph Roberts  
Harold Wulff  
Paul Bevandick

## PROGRAM CONSULTANT

Barbara Howe

# MESSAGE FROM THE FISH SAFE TEAM

As the Health and Safety Association for BC commercial fishermen, Fish Safe has been working with hundreds of fishermen up and down the coast since its inception in 2002. The 2022/2023 fiscal year alone, had 142 participants in our Safest Catch Program and 39 participants in the 9 courses that were held for commercial fishermen.

Our Fish Safe team grew smaller with the loss of our Program Manager last year, but despite this, the dedication, commitment and, most of all, flexibility of the team and Safety Advisors remained strong. Everyone took on a little more responsibility and after some fine-tuning, Fish Safe has been operating as efficiently as ever.

One of the highlights this year occurred in late February 2023. Our Program Coordinator received an unexpected call from Vice Admiral Bob Auchterlonie, Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command (SAR) in Ottawa. Vice Admiral Bob Auchterlonie is from Vancouver Island and his son is a commercial fisherman. His son was scheduled to partake in the Safest Catch program with his crewmates later in the week and had mentioned it to his father. This peaked his interest and so he decided to do a little research into Fish Safe BC.

Vice Admiral Bob Auchterlonie praised Fish Safe BC and emphasized the importance of the Safest Catch. During the conversation, he mentioned looking into funding for the East Coast to work on developing a Safest Catch program. It was such an invigorating conversation and was a good reminder that the work that we do is recognized and appreciated not only on the west coast, but on a National level as well.



FISHERMEN HELPING FISHERMEN

# PACIFIC INTEGRATED COMMERCIAL FISHING INITIATIVE (PICFI)

Fish Safe has been a proud partner in the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fishing Initiative (PICFI) program for over a decade. The PICFI program is an initiative run by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), designed to increase commercial fishing capacity within BC First Nation’s communities.

With 11 years now under our belt, Fish Safe has become a well respected and known safety organization to these communities. Fish Safe’s approach of hands-on, practical learning for course delivery continue to be highly regarded by the participants. The way the topics are presented with demonstrations, boat models, matching cards, and story-telling engages them and boosts understanding of the course material and achieving certification.



Many Commercial Fishing Enterprises (CFE) are still reaching out to Fish Safe to get their community training needs met. With the introduction of the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) in 2021, where a significant component of the initiative is the voluntary Pacific Salmon Commercial License Retirement program, we are noticing a shift in the fishing industry resulting in increase First Nations participation in commercial fisheries. Fish Safe anticipates that this need will continue to grow and is grateful to assist with safety training requirements where needed.

A snap-shot of fiscal 2022-2023 activity is provided below.

	Fiscal 2023	Fiscal 2022	Fiscal 2021	Fiscal 2020
<b>1 Day Courses/Workshop</b> (SDV-BS, ROC-M, Safest Catch, Stability, Orange Decal, Knots & Lines)	26	26	21	33
<b>4 Day Courses</b> (SVOP & Stability)	10	15	5	16
<b>Total # of Participants</b>	207	291	127	268

Course delivery occurred in the following locations this year: Sidney, Port Hardy, Kyuquot, Tofino, Duncan, Bella Bella, Campbell River, Masset, and Harrison Mills.



# THE FIVE NATIONS FISHERIES

Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht

## Safety Education and Awareness

In June 2022, Fish Safe was invited to the First Nation communities of Ahousaht, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht (the Five Nations) to promote safety and awareness onboard their vessels. The Five Nations fleet consists of over 100 vessels ranging from 14 ft aluminum gillnet vessels to 63 ft longline/trap vessels...and everything in between! Needless to say, it can get complicated to keep everyone's safety needs and regulatory compliance in order, so having them participate in the Safest Catch Program was valuable safety training that was needed.

Program Coordinator, John Krgovich, and Safety Advisor, Ralph Roberts spent 2 weeks working with the fleet in Tofino, Ahousaht, Campbell River, Gold River, and Hesquiaht/Hot Springs Cove.

## HA'OOM FISHERIES SOCIETY

The Five Nations participate in commercial rights-based fisheries and are facilitated by Ha'oom Fisheries Society.

# The Five Nations Safest Catch Vessel Visits

In total, 57 vessels and 62 people participated in the Safest Catch Program from May 30 - June 10. There were some familiar faces as Fish Safe has worked with these First Nations communities several times facilitating the SVOP, SDV-BS, and ROC-M courses for the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fishing Initiative (PICFI) program over the last 10 years.

Discussions about safety equipment orientation, PFD wear, cold water survival, the contents in Safety Quik Emergency Drills Guide, and the Safest Catch binder were among the many topics that were covered. Our Program Coordinator and Safety Advisor observed during the vessel visits that while most participants had all their certifications, their vessels lacked the important basic safety equipment required by Transport Canada and WorkSafeBC. For the small percentage of vessels that did have safety equipment on board, the

equipment was in poor shape and lacking the necessary maintenance. Needless to say, it was a disheartening observation.

Fish Safe had a very limited supply of Emergency Ditch Kits to award and unfortunately didn't have enough to cover all the vessels that took part in the Safest Catch Program during those two weeks. The Ha'oom Fisheries Society, however, stepped in and used our kits as a template to build their own. These were provided free of charge to the Five Nations fleet and each received the much needed equipment to keep them safe on the water.

One of the participants commented that they were disappointed in the community's lack of safety culture on the water and having Fish Safe present to discuss this was extremely beneficial for everyone. Creating awareness and highlighting safety is one small step in the right direction. We look forward to continued progress and working with these communities in the future to improve fishing safety.



*Thank you again for the past two weeks, the fishers sent us great feedback and the training was very valuable for the communities. Thank you again!*

-- Audrey Adelinet, Development Manager  
Ha'oom Fisheries Society





# HERRING OUTREACH

## PFD Cartridge Replacements

Our much anticipated event held every year is the Herring Outreach which takes place at the end of February/beginning of March—right before the season starts. It has always been an important part of our year as many gillnet and seine fishermen congregate along the eastern side of Vancouver Island and present a perfect opportunity to bring safety top of mind and help fishermen prepare for a safe fishery.

Our Herring Outreach has evolved over the last several years. During the first few years, Fish Safe had sent Safety Advisors out on the water to award those who were wearing their PFDs with gift cards and emergency kits. The next few years, Fish Safe had adjusted this approach and decided to focus on conducting safety drills such as man overboard, abandon ship, and immersion suit drills and working with fishermen on their overall emergency preparedness. Fast forward a few more years, and it has evolved yet again to maintenance checks on inflatable PFDs and providing free re-arm kits to those that needed them. Now, with more than a decade of being at the wharves at the start of the season, regardless of our focus for that year, fishermen have been anticipating our arrival and are eager to chat with our Advisors.





The PFD re-arm cartridge replacements have been well received by the fishermen the last three years. Because of this, Fish Safe predicted another busy week at the wharves checking PFDs and installing re-arm kits so made the decision to send two Safety Advisors this year.

Our dynamic duo, Harold Wulff and Ralph Roberts, tagged teamed the next few days with Ralph walking the docks and sending fishermen up to the “Safety Booth” so Harold can inspect their inflatable PFDs and if needed, replace the CO<sup>2</sup> cartridge.

Fish Safe travelled to Campbell River, Comox, Deep Bay, and French Creek in 6 short but very busy days.

Our Advisors woke up in Campbell River to snow falling and below freezing temperatures the first day. Despite the frigid weather conditions, Harold and Ralph bundled up and got to work. It was a slow start to the morning, but when the weather eased up, the fishermen started venturing out and the “Safety Booth” was bustling with activity. The next stops in Comox, Deep Bay, and French Creek saw the same type of cold air scurrying through the region but that didn’t stop the fishermen from getting their inflatable PFDs checked and cartridges replaced.

In addition to the PFD cartridge replacements, Fish Safe also provided fishermen with an opportunity to win a Fish Safe prize pack. By completing a short “Test your Safety Knowledge” quiz, fishermen had a chance to win a Stormtech waterproof duffle bag, Safest Catch hoodie and hat, Arctic Zone Safest Catch travel mug, a fishing day shape, and VHF handheld radio.

Overall, the 2023 Herring Outreach was another success! In total, we had 54 completed quizzes, approximately 70 inflatable PFDs checked, 35 re-arm kits installed, and loads of conversations about safety. At the end of the day, we are just *Fishermen Helping Fishermen* preparing for a safe season so that they can come home safely.



The winner of the Fish Safe Prize Pack was Dave Taylor on the FV Miss Meg!



# FISCAL 2023 MEETINGS, EVENTS & CONFERENCES

Fish Safe’s engagement with fishermen and other important industry stakeholders is key to building awareness around our programs, events, and courses. With no COVID-19 restrictions in place this year, we made a conscious effort to increase our visibility and attended the following meetings, events and conferences:



- Attendance at the National Day of Mourning Memorial Service (Steveston—April)
- Presentation at the Area D AGM (Coombs—April)
- Attendance at the International Commercial Fishing PFD Working Group (IFISH), Quarterly Meeting (Zoom—June)
- Attendance at the International Commercial Fishing PFD Working Group (IFISH), Quarterly Meeting (Zoom—September)
- Attendance at the PACMAR Meeting (Vancouver—September)
- Attendance at the CMAC National Meeting (Ottawa -November)
- Attendance at the Pacific Marine Expo (Seattle—November)
- Exhibited at the Harbour Authority Association BC Seminar (Victoria- January)
- Presentation at the Fisheries for Communities Gathering (Victoria—February)
- Presentation at the BC Young Fishermen’s Gathering (Campbell River- March)
- Attendance at the Regional CMAC Meeting (March—Vancouver)



Safety Advisor, Harold Wulff, was honoured to lay down a wreath at Steveston Memorial on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

The National Day of Mourning is not only a day to remember and honour those lives lost or injured due to a workplace tragedy, but also a day to collectively renew our commitment to improve health and safety in the workplace.

# BC YOUNG FISHERMEN'S GATHERING

## Mythbusters: Cold Water Survival

Fish Safe was invited to present at the annual BC Young Fishermen's Gathering in early March. Held in Campbell River this year, the Gathering hosts approximately 80 people from across the industry to share knowledge, skills, network and experience a renewed sense of community among new and seasoned fishers, industry experts, and association representatives.

Digging out from the archives, we decided to refresh our *Mythbusters: Cold Water Survival* presentation for this enthusiastic group. Based on a presentation by Jerry Dzugan of AMSEA and Jennifer Lincoln of NIOSH over 10 years ago at the Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle, Fish Safe was given permission to use it to help educate BC fishermen on Cold Water Survival.

The presentation was delivered in two parts. The first part encouraged a lively discussion on the myths of cold water in a question, answer and conversation format. The second part was a demonstration of how to wrap someone who is hypothermic. Selecting volunteers from the audience, Harold Wulff, instructed the group on what to do. We received wonderful comments afterwards with many agreeing that the hypothermia demonstration ended up being the highlight of the presentation.



“

*I just wanted to reach out and say thank you for joining us for the Young Fishermen's Network Gathering. It was wonderful to have you out to share your knowledge and expertise on marine safety; everyone I spoke with said it was a hoot, and a great way to involve the audience and get your message committed to memory.*

**Trish Whetstone**  
BC Young Fishermen's Network Coordinator

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# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Congratulations

to the following vessels who received their Safest Catch decals this fiscal year:

- Second Wind
- Kornat-1
- Rumours 1
- Western Brave
- Stormryder
- Miss Jane II

Course Summary	Fiscal 2023		Fiscal 2022		All Time	
	Courses	Participants	Courses	Participants	Courses	Participants
SVOP	5	28	2	14	89	803
ROC-M (Radio)	4	11	5	20	91	748
Stability	0	0	0	0	143	1189

Safest Catch Program Summary	Fiscal 2023	Fiscal 2022	All Time*
Vessel Visits	53	147**	1376
Participants	142	264	3676
Emergency Procedures Manuals	6	7	222
Decals	6	8	295
Orange Decal - Vessels impacted	7	13	95
Orange Decal - Participants	9	24	120
TC Safe Navigation - Vessel Visits	0	73	73
TC Safe Navigation - Participants	0	81	81

Safest Catch Activity by Vessel Gear Type	Vessel Visits Fiscal 2023	Vessel Visits Fiscal 2022
Longline/Trap	30%	39%
Packing	4%	2%
Seine	30%	8%
Trawl	4%	3%
Gillnet/Troll	23%	47%
Dive	9%	1%

\* The Safest Catch program was launched in the 2009/2010 fiscal year

\*\*Vessel Visits include Safest Catch and TC Safe Navigation activities in visits in fiscal 2022



# SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Fish Safe's overarching mandate is to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities in an inherently risky industry. Data provided by WorkSafeBC (WSBC) are the primary source of statistics that assist Fish Safe in measuring its progress towards creating a sustainable safety culture.

(Data for 2023 from WorkSafeBC has not yet been released at the time the Fish Safe Annual Report was published.)

## CLAIM STATISTICS FOR 2022

(only WorkSafeBC claims associated with wage loss are presented)

### Time-Loss Claims by Gear Type

Calendar Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Dive	5	10	8	8	9	5	9	8
Trap & Longline	42	33	23	22	32	22	22	32
Trawl	39	36	41	36	37	26	41	39
Gillnet/Troll	10	7	9	11	20	17	25	20
Seine	9	2	4	3	6	11	17	12
Packing (includes farm fish)	1	2	3	2	4	4	8	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1**</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>3</b>

\*One work-related death was recorded by WorkSafeBC in 2016 but applies to a 2015 incident.

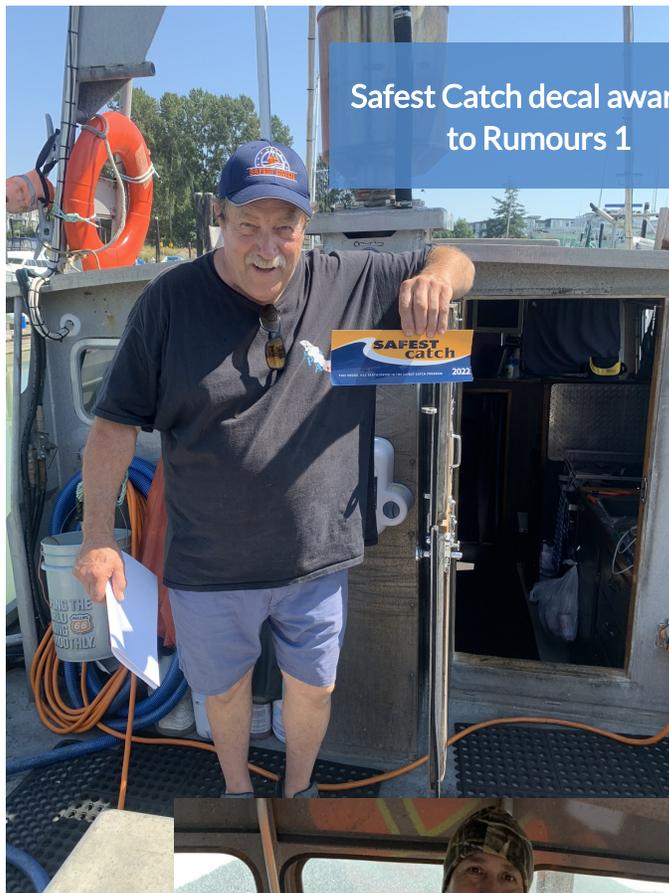
\*\*A total of 2 work-related deaths occurred in 2017. 1 death has been attributed to asbestos exposure and is not reflected in the table above.

### WorkSafeBC Assessment Rates

Calendar Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Assessment Rate	7.30	7.19	6.42	6.48	6.39	6.81	6.50

# 2022/2023 FISH SAFE HIGHLIGHTS

Safest Catch decal awarded to Rumours 1



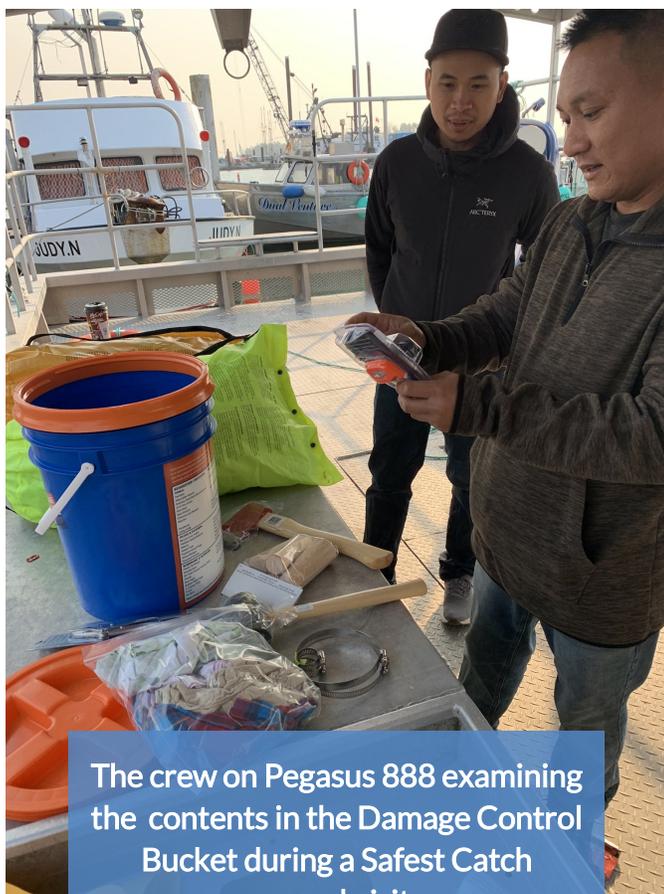
## Safest Catch Damage Control Buckets being put to good use!

*A fisherman was sharing a story with a WorkSafeBC inspector about them hitting a beach close to Butedale a couple of years ago. It knocked off the sounder transducer. They said they grabbed the damage control kit and used the provided plugs to stop the leak and continued on their trip.*

Emergency Ditch Kit awarded to a member of the Five Nations



The crew on Pegasus 888 examining the contents in the Damage Control Bucket during a Safest Catch vessel visit





Safest Catch vessel visit on the Trotus



Demonstrating how to inflate a PFD during a SDV-BS course



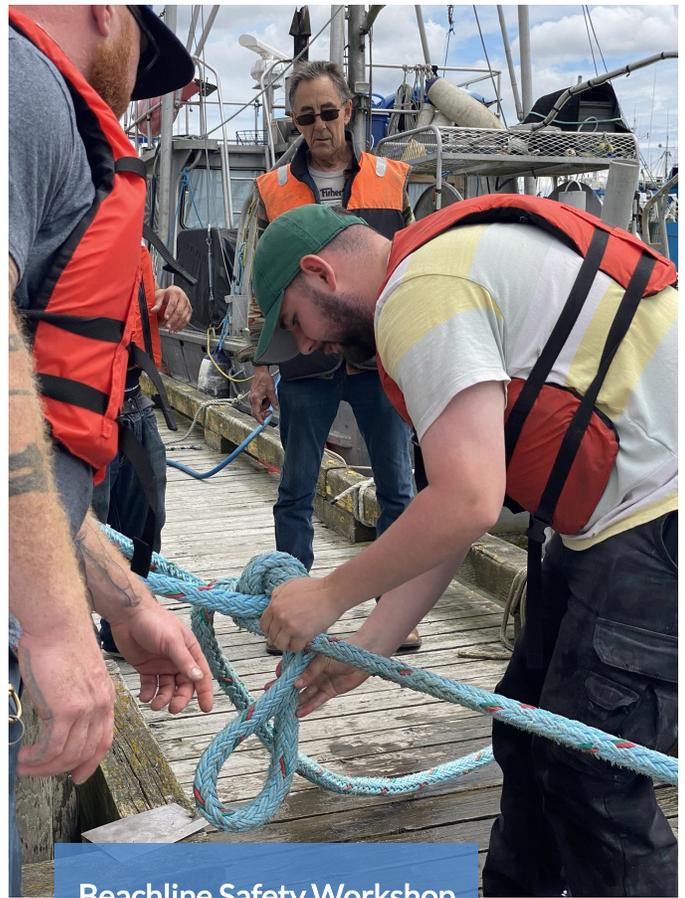
The crew on Just Travelin' doing their drills before the season starts

### Survey Responses from Nesika Insurance:

*All fishermen and vessels should participate in the Fish Safe Safest Catch program before each season.*



Hands-on activity during a SVOP course



Beachline Safety Workshop

**Response from the Safest Catch Evaluation Form**

*I appreciated the first hand stories and experience. It was the most impactful part of my day and I'll remember those stories forever.*



The crew on the Ocean Pearl getting into their life raft



Using a smoke machine to mimic a fire in the wheelhouse



Using the rescue dummy during a man overboard drill

**Safest Catch Damage Control Buckets** being put to good use!

*A fishermen was telling me awhile back that one of their boats lost power and went ashore in a strong westerly when fishing in Barkley Sound. The vessel pounded on the rocks and drove the rudder up through the hull with lots of water pouring in. They grabbed the bucket from both boats and used the content to pound the rags supplied to slow up the leaking enough to keep up with the pumps. They towed the boat into Port Alberni and got hauled on the dry-dock for repairs.*

Life ring toss during a vessel visit on the Western Brave



Completing a Muster List on the Second Wind



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