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Geoduck Fishery Community Safe Plan Presented by the UHA and AMR

The Underwater Harvesters Association (UHA) and Archipelago Marine Research (AMR) are coordinating a fishery that is part of a sector designated as an essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Geoduck vessel crews, owners, exporters, packers, and geoduck fishery contractors are represented by the UHA. These contractors include biotoxin samplers that collect geoducks to be tested at the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency (CFIA) lab before and during geoduck openings implemented by Federal Fisheries (DFO). AMR helps coordinate the fishery and contracts the full-time on-grounds monitors that oversee every geoduck opening on West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI) and the North Coast.

The UHA and AMR submit this **Geoduck Fishery Community Safe Plan** along with the **Geoduck Safe Work Procedures** that have been developed to keep the fleet and communities safe. Contractors in the geoduck fishery and vessel operators and crew have participated in the development of these procedures and plans. The following recommendations are based on best practices known at this time. This is a working document and is subject to change as new information and advice becomes available.

All of our COVID protocols and community plans can be downloaded at:

<https://www.geoduck.org/covid-safety-links/>

Background:

The geoduck fishery shut down early in the pandemic due to the strong influence of the Chinese market on geoduck from Canada. On January 24th, 2020 BC exporters asked the fleet to stop fishing because COVID had completely halted their geoduck sales. The UHA and AMR worked together to develop procedures for safe operation during COVID and after the designation of fishing as an essential service ([Provincial BCCDC link](#), [Federal link](#)) the fishery started up again in early April 2020.

This Community Safe Plan works in conjunction with the UHA and AMR **Geoduck Safe Work Procedures** that focus on rules and guidelines such as education, increased cleaning, disinfecting, hygiene, and limiting contact between dive vessels, packer crews, the on-grounds monitor, and communities. These guidelines also rely on proper use of PPE when practical.

This **Geoduck Fishery Community Safe Plan** focusses on keeping coastal communities safe and minimizing the risk of transmission from geoduck fishery participants.

Geoduck Fleet Recommendations for the Community Safe Plan:

1. Pre-Trip Departure:

- Complete the Geoduck Vessel Crew Pre-Trip Questionnaire in the **Geoduck Safe Work Procedures**.
- Review and educate your crew on the UHA and AMR **Geoduck Safe Work Procedures**.
- Provision grub and supplies for multiple days. Vessels should have protocols in place to minimize interaction with shoreside suppliers.

2. Geoduck Fleet Fishing Operations:

- Treat your crew and vessel as a separate unit and limit contact outside your vessel.
- In many areas, the fleet will receive fuel and grub from the geoduck packers while on the grounds.
- Follow the protocols in the **Geoduck Safe Work Procedures** to maintain physical distance from the packer crew and on-grounds monitor
- Vessels will avoid landfall unless there is an emergency or protocols are in place to provision from local suppliers. Such protocols could include vessel crews staying on-board while tied at the dock and local suppliers delivering goods. Suppliers and crew to always maintain physical distancing.

- Pauses in fishing: while flights are limited geoduck vessels will travel to and from fishing grounds.

3. Geoduck Fleet / Community Interaction:

- Geoduck dive vessels and packers will avoid landfall to minimize contact.
- If a vessel requires shoreside supplies or contractors from communities, the crew will always maintain physical distance from shoreside personnel. Crew will remain on vessel and arrange for delivery of goods. Sanitize goods transferred between vessel and shoreside (i.e. parts, supplies).
- Fueling vessels: Dive vessels will receive fuel from the geoduck packers when possible. If vessels require fuel from a port, the crew will remain on their vessel and sanitize fuel nozzles before and after use. Crew will wear disposable gloves for fueling, wear masks and maintain physical distance whenever interacting with shoreside staff and personnel.

4. Biotoxin Sampler / Community Interaction:

- Geoduck samples to be packed in a tote or cooler addressed and sealed with paperwork inside tote.
- Ship samples via the packer whenever possible. Maintain physical distancing with the packer crew. The Sampler can place tote on deck of the packer. Sampler to sanitize tote with appropriate disinfectant before packer crew handles and stows tote.
- Packer crew maintain physical distance with geoduck truck and/or courier. Geoduck truck / courier to follow their protocol for package shipping during COVID-19.
- If shipping sample via shoreside or on-water courier/transport other than the geoduck packer, crew will wear mask and maintain physical distance, sanitize tote as per method with packer, and follow protocol of courier/transport company.
- If shipping sample via flight, samplers will contract local assistance to deliver a sealed tote and avoid the sampler crew having to leave vessel.
- If shipping via float plane direct from sampler vessel, sampler will ensure float plane company obtains required permits.

5. On-Grounds Monitor / Community Interaction:

- OGM vessels and crew to avoid landfall.
- Vessels will receive fuel and provisions from geoduck packer whenever possible.
- If a vessel requires shoreside supplies or contractors from coastal communities, the crew will always maintain physical distance from shoreside personnel. Stay on

vessel and arrange for delivery of goods. Sanitize goods transferred between vessel and shoreside (i.e. parts, supplies).

- Fueling vessels: OGM will receive fuel from the geoduck packers when possible. If the packer is delayed and the OGM requires fuel from port, the crew will sanitize fuel nozzle before and after use. Crew will wear disposable gloves for fueling, wear masks and maintain physical distance whenever interacting with shoreside staff and personnel.

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