



NAIMO, BC

WESTERN



BC Young Fishermen's Network Overview

Updated 2022

Fostering the Next Generation of BC's Commercial Fishing Fleet

What is a young fisherman?

We define a young fisherman as anyone under the age of 35 or new to the industry. Experienced fishermen over the age of 35 are still welcome to participate as BCYFN alumni.

What is the BC Young Fishermen's Network?

The BC Young Fishermen's Network (BCYFN) is a supportive space for the next generation of BC's fishing fleet. We foster learning, networking and growth among young fishermen, creating connections to the people and resources they need to succeed.

What do we do?

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The network provides a space for young fishermen to connect with each other and with folks across the industry. We build community offline at events and community meetings, and online through email and social groups.

EDUCATION & SUPPORT

We provide skill building opportunities and access to industry experts, resources, events and opportunities. These include an annual BC Young Fishermen's Gathering, workshops, and a growing resource directory.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

We share the story of what it means to be a BC young fisherman, and communicate the value of fish to our coastal communities and seafood consumers. Through our social media channels and at community events, we profile young fish harvesters, celebrate BC's diverse fisheries, educate about fishing and fishing methods, and draw a connection from fish harvester to seafood consumer.

Why do we need young fishermen?

Commercial fishing sustains our families and our communities. Fishing provides meaningful livelihoods to those on the water, along the seafood value chain, and in supporting industry services such as boat building, welding, carpentry, shipwrighting and more. But fishing is more than an economic driver. Fisheries have woven the social and cultural fabric of our communities; creating tight social networks, a sense of pride, connection, and identity. Fishermen are resource stewards. By working on the water, we maintain our centuries long connection to the ocean, our sense of place and longing to protect the marine resources. As small scale fishermen, we are akin to small scale farmers. Fisheries play an important role in sustainable food systems and local food security, offering a fantastic source of clean protein.

Overall, fisheries provide social, cultural and economic stability to our coastal communities. Yet the fleet is "greying", meaning that the average age of a fish harvester is increasing. Over the last 30 years, shifts in management, resource availability and distribution of access have led to a decline in the participation of the fishery. In 2016, only 23% of BC's fish harvesters were under the age of 30. Fishermen are growing older without being replaced by young folks early in their careers. BC is



losing our intergenerational connection to fishing, and there is a greater need for facilitated skill and community building opportunities. We believe that supporting young fishermen means supporting the health and wellbeing of our coastal communities. Network Support TBuck Suzuki Environmental Foundation provides backbone support for the BCYFN. The BCYFN is a fisherman to fisherman network and our direction comes from a volunteer steering committee of young fish harvesters across the coast.

Guiding Principles

CAPACITY BUILDING

Facilitating skill and community building activities to increase young fishermen's capacity to engage in their businesses and communities.

ENGAGEMENT

Growing strong coastal leaders that are actively engaged in decision-making processes and grassroots stewardship initiatives.

COLLABORATION

Bridging communication across fleets, and weaving a web of connection across related organizations (including environmental non-profits, academia, businesses, governments, food security and community groups).

COMMUNITY

Building social capital within the young fishing community, and creating a stronger connection between fish harvesters, coastal community members, and seafood consumers.

DIVERSITY

Valuing and actively including the range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives that make up the BC fishing fleet.

SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting and ensuring the environmental, social, and cultural sustainability of our coast.

Join

If you are a BC fisherman and share our principles, we invite you to join. Please contact bcyoungfishermen@gmail.com and specify if you are starting out, or an experienced fish harvester! Find us on Facebook & Instagram: @bcyoungfishermen #bcyfn #bcyoungfishermen