

## Sunshine Coast Rotary - HEP2022

Welcome to the **Herring Enhancement Program 2022 (HEP2022)**.  
Sponsored by the 4 Rotary Clubs on the Sunshine Coast BC.  
In Rotary District 5040.

This newsletter is going out to all the known volunteers involved with hanging herring curtains on the Sunshine Coast. Feel free to share this newsletter with other like-minded herring helpers!

### Why Help the Herring?

Pacific Herring has been an important species for British Columbia's (BC's) commercial fisheries for over 100 years. They are harvested in all stages including roe spawn-on-kelp, for food, bait, and special-use fisheries creating both employment and contributing significantly to the revenue generated from fisheries in BC. Herring fisheries have also been extremely important to BC First Nations since time immemorial (500+ generations) and continue to be very significant, both commercially and as traditional food.



(Herring eggs on Hemlock boughs)

Historically herring provide more value than just the individual fish or their roe. When the herring returned to spawn in the winter they brought with them sea birds, chinook salmon, lingcod, halibut, and other groundfish species, which could then be harvested to feed communities or to trade with other people.

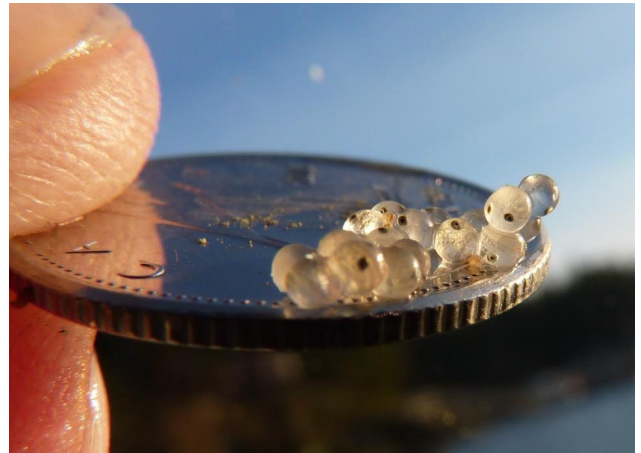
Recognizing that herring is the key to the orca and salmon food chains, the four Rotary Clubs on the lower Sunshine Coast have sponsored the use of herring curtains, hung beside docks for easy access, to help improve the survival rate of herring on the Sunshine Coast.



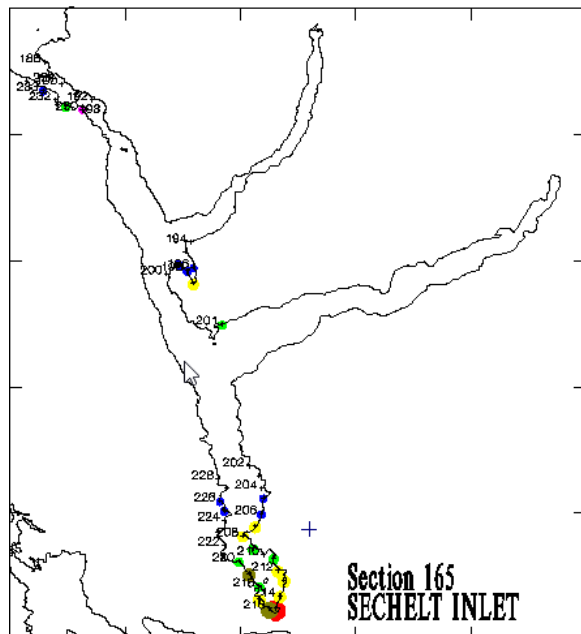
## Recent Rotary Club Herring Initiatives

In the Springs of 2020 and 2021 we helped about 30 volunteers to install over 90 curtains on docks and platforms between Egmont and Langdale. We rely on the anecdotal evidence of local fishermen and first nations contacts to tell us where the herring are seen spawning.

The eyes are just forming on these herring eggs shown on a coin.



## History of Herring Spawning on the Sunshine Coast



We recognize that the science behind the herring population and availability is weak, and that historical data only goes back about 50 years.

However, looking at the DFO spawning maps we see the best locations for spawning, based on the limited historical data, are in quiet bays.

On the lower Sunshine Coast, historically the best spawning sites are found in the Sechelt Inlet. With the hot spot at the government dock beside the Lighthouse pub in Sechelt!

Based on historical DFO data, and our own observations, the spawn first appears as early as February and can be as late as April. The herring balls move around and there can be weeks between sightings in False Creek, Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast.

**SOME** HEP 2022 Initiatives

**THE** four Rotary Clubs continue to support the volunteers that hang herring curtains. We are also monitoring the work done by the DFO with respect to the herring fisheries. We see the value in herring as a keystone species in our marine ecosystems and ultimately a foundational component of our blue economy.

We also believe that herring, eelgrass, and the concept of "sea-forestation" are just a few examples of how ecosystem-based management can support sustainable and regenerative economic development of our local Sunshine Coast ecosystems.

The herring are not finding the natural kelp or eelgrass to lay their eggs on, so the ones that do arrive here on Coast are looking for other surfaces.

**WE** are working with a local entrepreneur who is growing kelp from seed and transplanting the 'seed strings' into quiet bays to encourage regeneration of kelp and attract herring to lay their eggs, as in this picture .....



**WE** will ensure that supplies and help are made available for the construction and installation of any new curtains. Delivery options are available.

Each curtain is a length of fabric landscape cloth, heavy duty type, cut at 8 -10 ft lengths. The top needs to float on top of the water and you either use foam floats strung through nylon rope to do that or, use PVC pipe cut into lengths the width of your fabric, usually 4 feet. Buy a package of thin nylon rope which will thread easily through your PVC pipe, for tying off at the dock. The curtain bottom has to be weighted so the curtain doesn't twist around on itself, plus not touch the seabed at low tide. We had used some lead-core rope at first but it's expensive, so we now use rocks wrapped in burlap.







**SERVE TO  
CHANGE LIVES**

**WE** have enlisted the help of some Interactors from our local High School to get involved in the hanging and weekly checking of the curtains in Sechelt in 2022.

Hopefully these students will also be part of the educational video we will be creating in 2022 with the help of a videographer from Eastlink Cable TV. Similarly, we plan on creating printed materials that can be used for educational and promotional support of the herring, salmon and orcas.

Prior to the Covid restrictions in 2020 the interactors were involved in sewing and making some curtains in the High School.



**WE** will also be supporting the local indigenous youth community and we look forward to hanging traditional boughs again this year to attract the herring. We're planning several field trips with youth to different docks in 2022, so that they learn today what they'll need to know tomorrow, as future leaders.

**FINALLY**, we will be relocating the Rotary Seabin demonstration project of 2021 to a location near to some herring curtains. The Seabin collects floating trash in quiet ocean areas like marinas. We have a Team to sort the trash that includes teachers and High School students.

The picture shows the original location of the Seabin at the Sunshine Coast Air floating dock in Porpoise Bay.

Thanks for being interested in our SC Rotary environmental program.

Mike Price, HEP Coordinator,  
Past President, Sechelt Rotary Club  
Cell: 604-865-0294  
Email: [secheltrotaryclub@gmail.com](mailto:secheltrotaryclub@gmail.com)

