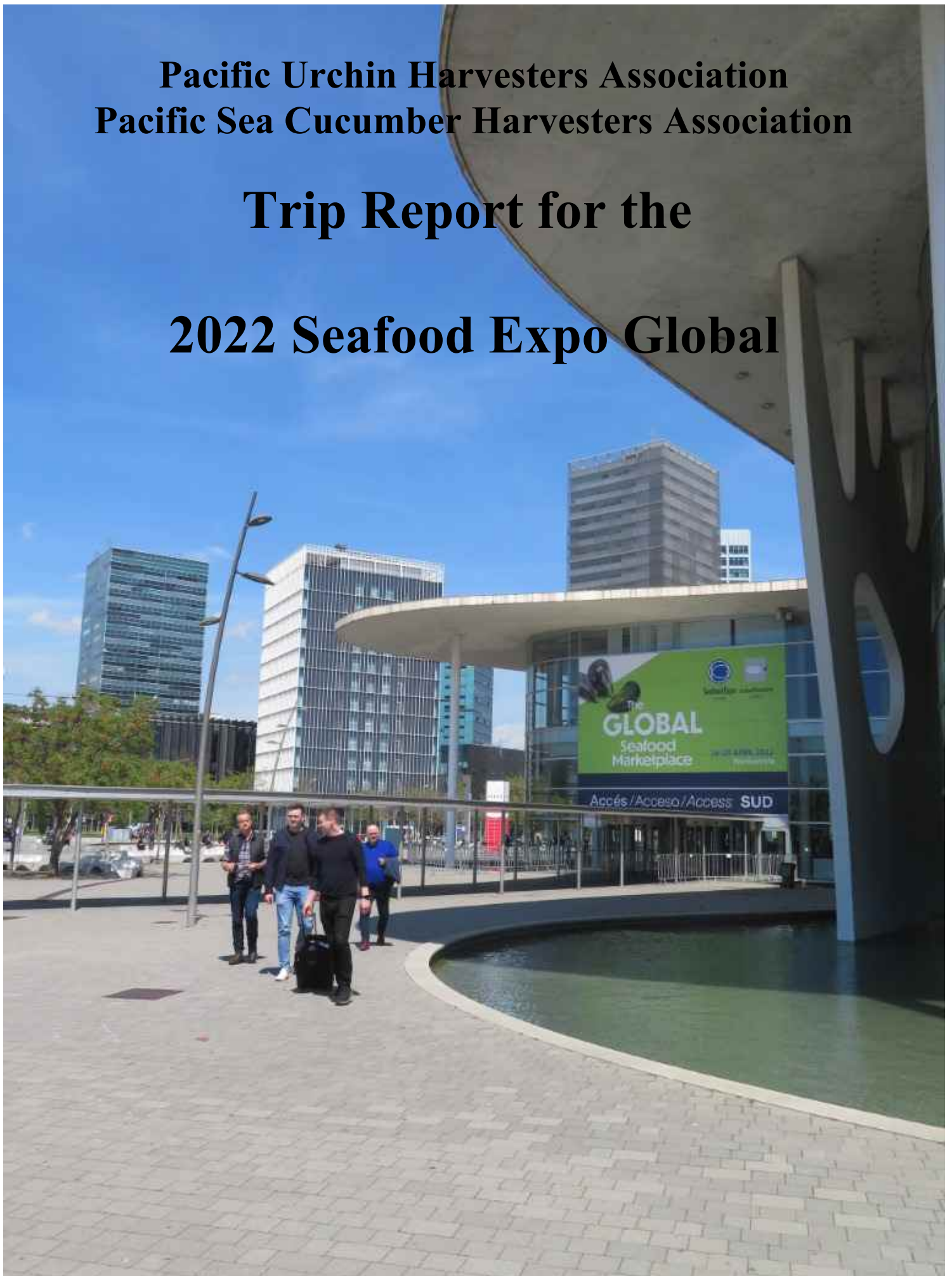


**Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association  
Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters Association**

# **Trip Report for the 2022 Seafood Expo Global**





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**April 26-28, 2022**

**Reporting by:  
Explorations Unlimited Inc**



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Fraser Rieche and Geoff Krause attended the 2022 Seafood Expo North Global (SEG) in Barcelona Spain in mid April 2022. We had hoped for at least one other representative attending but circumstances kept others away. This was of course the first seafood expo/show of any significance held in the past 2 years. The last scheduled such event, SEG 2020, was cancelled because of the COVID pandemic that has shut down so much of what we considered normal in the days prior to its emergence. This was the first year that the show was actually held in Barcelona Spain, even though the first installment was scheduled to occur in 2020. Cancellations of the show in those two years (2020 and 2021) meant this was the first time any of us had appeared at this venue in this city. As such the small delegation attending was sort of a scouting party. None of us are at all familiar with the city so being able to reconnoitre the area to provide some preliminary guidance on where things are happening and what can be anticipated in developing a successful presence at the show will provide some value, especially if attendance by BC industry representatives increases in years ahead as expected.

Barcelona is and is well known as a major cultural, economic, financial, shipping and academic centre situated on the Mediterranean coast of northeastern Spain. It boasts a climate that strikes many as just about perfect during much of the year but perhaps most especially the Spring. In April, the period during which the SEG is held each year, the usual daily high is between 19-20 °C with lows around 12 °C and monthly sunshine running around 220 hours for the month.



It is a global city with major historical, cultural significance including architectural works by Antoni Gaudi and Lluís Domènech i Montaner that have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and which every year attract millions of tourists from around the world. The city is also known for hosting the 1992 Summer Olympics as well as world-class conferences and expositions, including now the Seafood Expo Global, as well as many international sport





**Figure 4:** satellite shot of Barcelona from Google Earth. 1 is international airport, 2 is Barcelona Fira (Fair) site, 3 is old town centre-ish (~ the Church- La Sagrada Familia), 4 is container port, 5 is cruiseship docks and yacht basin (with many restaurants etc.). Pink-ish hue marks extent of urban/suburban area. Distance from 2 to 3 is ~ 6.5 km.



**Figure 5:** closer detail on main city. Orange square is venue, X is bull ring, blue is marina restaurants etc, ☆ is Sagrada Familia



tournaments (Wikipedia). These fit well with the city as it is also a transport hub, with the Port of Barcelona being one of Europe's principal seaports (container ships) and busiest European passenger port (cruise ships). Its international airport, Barcelona–El Prat Airport, handles over 50 million passengers per year and it also boasts an extensive motorway network, and a high-speed rail link to France and the rest of Europe (Wikipedia)

The city itself has a population of 1.6 million within city limits, though its urban area extends to neighbouring municipalities within the Province of Barcelona and is home to around 3.2 million people. A total population of 4.8 million makes it the fifth most populous urban area in the European Union after Paris, the Ruhr area, Madrid, and Milan. It is also one of the largest metropolises on the Mediterranean Sea, located on the coast between the mouths of the rivers Llobregat and Besòs, and bounded to the west by the Serra de Collserola mountain range, the tallest peak of which is 512 metres (1,680 feet) high (Wikipedia).

It is an old city, built up over centuries so the architecture is varied with an characteristically classical, even Gothic, bent to it. There is a world famous church, the Sagrada Familia, designed and started by Antoni Gaudi in 1882, meaning it has been under construction for about 140 years, that is a major draw for many tourists to Barcelona, but is still not slated for completion until 2026. Many people felt that alone makes a trip to Barcelona worth it.



**Figure 6L** La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona- from a distance.



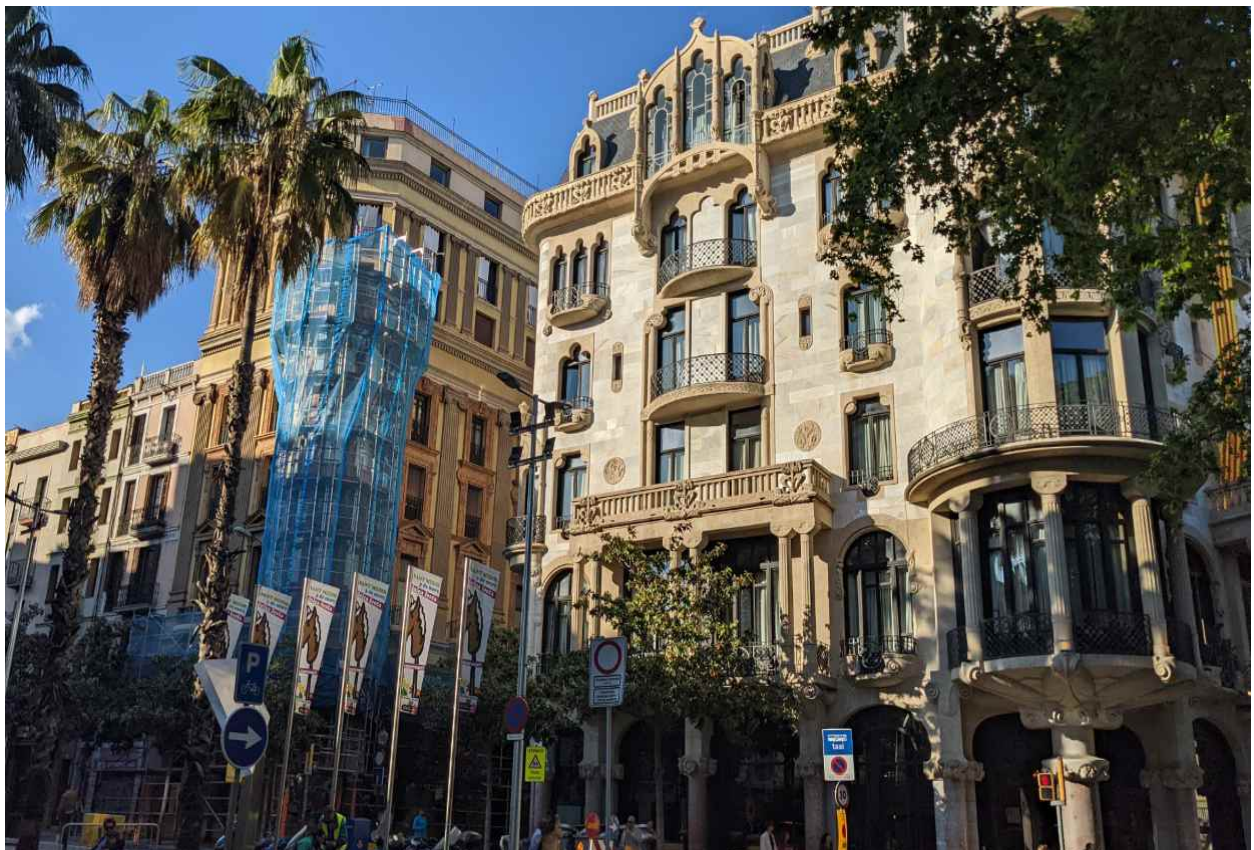
**Figure 7:** La Sagrada Familia up close



Between the Sagrada and the quayside marina district the city has a traditional architecture that we in Canada are not used to. The blocks are comprised of 5-6 story buildings that seem uniquely varied but all fit together. There are various court yards and almost hide-away neighbourhood centres that seemingly just appear, but an overhead detail view of a typical area, as below, provides extra insight even as the streets are generally attractive, green and welcoming.









For much of Europe, as for Asia, history important. It is reportedly often seen as a living and relevant guide to life that helps define one's place and is generally formative, or transformative to one's outlook. With this in mind, a quick summary (off Wikipedia) reveals Barcelona an "old city" with a mythology extending back to 5,000 BC when, some claim, Hercules founded the place - though unsurprisingly definitive records of this are nonexistent. It was however more reliably identified as a military camp by the Romans in around the year 15 AD after which it developed into a Roman city. During the Middle Ages, it became the capital of the County of Barcelona which, after joining with the Kingdom of Aragon, was part of the confederation of the Crown of Aragon and was the capital of the Principality of Catalonia. As such, it became the most important city in the Crown of Aragon and the main economic and administrative centre of the Crown. It was then overtaken by Valencia, another city wrested from Arab domination by the Catalans shortly before the dynastic union between the Crown of Castile and the Crown of Aragon in 1492, a date that should ring familiar as that was around the time that a fellow named Columbus made his name. It was the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile in 1469 that united the two royal lines. Madrid eventually became the centre of political power as the colonisation of the Americas reduced the financial importance (at least in relative terms) of Mediterranean trade which was the stock and trade of Barcelona.

Barcelona however remained the centre of Catalan separatism, including the Catalan Revolt (1640–52) against Philip IV of Spain even as the great plague of 1650–1654 halved the city's population. This extended into modern times and during the Spanish Civil War, the city, and Catalonia in general, were resolutely Republican. They did not do well as hoped in the war and as the power of the Republican government and the "Generalitat" diminished, much of the city ended up temporarily under the effective control of anarchist groups though these soon lost control of the city to their own allies: the Communists and official government troops, after the street fighting of the Barcelona May Days. The fall of the city on 26 January 1939, led to a mass exodus of civilians to the French border.

The resistance of Barcelona to Franco's coup d'état had lasting effects after the defeat of the Republican government: the autonomous institutions of Catalonia were abolished and the use of the Catalan language in public life was suppressed. Still Barcelona remained the second largest city in Spain, at the heart of a region which was relatively industrialised and prosperous, despite the devastation of the civil war. As a result there was a large-scale immigration from poorer regions of Spain (particularly Andalusia, Murcia and Galicia), which in turn led to rapid urbanisation and some dilution of the Catalan civic dominance. That being said, the city's central role in forming and supporting the Catalan identity is still reverberating in modern Spain.

The death of General Franco in 1975 brought on a period of democratisation throughout Spain. Pressure for change was particularly strong in Barcelona, which had been punished during nearly forty years of Franco's rule for its support of the Republican government. Massive peaceful demonstrations in September 1977 assembled over a million people in the streets of Barcelona to call for the restoration of Catalan autonomy, a demand that was essentially satisfied less than a month later.

More recently Barcelona was the focus city for an ongoing Catalan independence movement, a consequent standoff between the regional and national government and later protests. The 2017–2018 Spanish constitutional crisis, also known as the Catalan crisis, was a political conflict between the Government of Spain and the Generalitat de Catalunya under former President Carles Puigdemont—the government of the autonomous community of Catalonia until 28

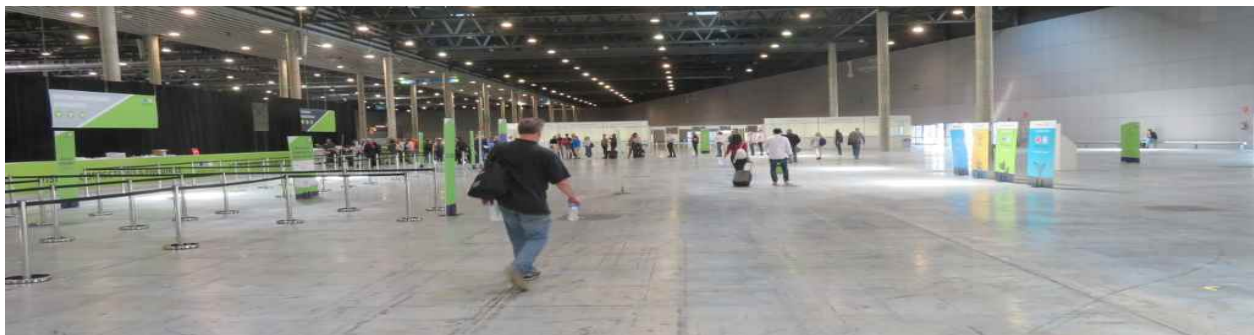


October 2017—over the issue of Catalan independence. It started after the law intending to allow the 2017 Catalan independence referendum was denounced by the Spanish government under Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and subsequently suspended by the Constitutional Court until it ruled on the issue. Some international media outlets have described the events as "one of the worst political crises in modern Spanish history".

The development of Barcelona was promoted by two events in 1986: Spanish accession to the European Community, and Barcelona's designation as host city of the 1992 Summer Olympics. The after-effects of that are credited with driving major changes in what had, up until then, been a largely industrial city as part of the preparation for the games saw industrial buildings along the sea-front demolished and 3 kilometres (2 miles) of beach created. New construction increased the road capacity of the city by 17%, the sewage handling capacity by 27% and the amount of new green areas and beaches by 78%. Between 1990 and 2004, the number of hotel rooms in the city doubled. Perhaps more importantly, the outside perception of the city was changed and greatly increased the international reputation of the city as a tourist destination. As a result Barcelona was the 12th most popular city destination in the world and the 5th amongst European cities by 2012.

One down side to the city that everyone should be aware of is that there are of course those who target tourists to relieve them of items of value. Spain has taken some hard economic hits over the past few years with the pandemic and before that the European bond crisis and they developed some “bad habits”. As a result, this is another of those places where one must always be at least a bit “en guard”, most especially in the “tourist areas lest one or another trickster uses distraction to provide cover for pilfering of untended items, like wallets, phones or passports, from exposed surfaces (like a restaurant table) or unprotected pockets (as in back pockets). That is, of course, just common sense but it is something that is easily forgotten in a relaxed and comfortable setting like this beautiful and interesting historical city.

The Seafood Expo Global (SEG) moved from its previous location in Brussels to Barcelona a few years back although, again, this year's is the first to actually take place because the previous two years expos were cancelled due to COVID. There were no doubt a number of reasons for the move, but perhaps none so pertinent as the old business adage on what drives success in business (i.e. location, location, location). As a city on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, it is hard to beat the weather in March, and as an historical European city it is hard to beat the attractions, services and amenities the city offers. The city also has a lot of experience, and expertise, in hosting large international trade events and their modern facility, the Fira Barcelona Gran Via, provides room to grow, and evolve. The facility for the show is expansive, as can be seen in the registration hall picture below, modern and easy to access by public transit. There are a number of hotels nearby which allow for easy access on foot to the venue, though the preferred historical areas and tourist amenities are located closer in to the city centre to the east.







**Figure 13:** Fira Barcelona Gran Via overhead view. Red star is approximate location of Canadian Pavilion. Note: Hall #'s 6, 7 and 8 were not used this year but are apparently available for expansion.

I am not sure how attendance at the show was crowd-wise in comparison to the 2019 version in Brussels, but the projections from the organizers called for about 1600 exhibitors from some 76 countries. National pavilions were again in good supply, with some countries going all in with multiple sites dispersed around the show. The show, as in Boston, was kind of spread out and dotted with quite a few rest areas so it did not ever get the feeling of being really crowded, except perhaps at the entry first thing in the morning when everyone was coming in. There were a good number of food service facilities around and just generally lots of things to see, taste and try out.







The BC booth was again included as part of the Canadian Pavilion, as can be seen in the picture above, along with the representatives from the Maritime Provinces, Quebec, the Freshwater Institute and the Government of Canada. BC was kind of behind the curve on coming to the show in large part because of uncertainties due to COVID, but there were a few things we could have done better.

The booth in previous years included a cooking station for Nathan Fong, a celebrity chef from Vancouver who prepared samples of the seafood on offer from BC companies attending. This year - not so much. I am still including a picture of him here though because he was a steady presence at the BC booth at all the shows and his skills and enthusiasm were always a great hit. He passed away in late March 2020 so not only continues to be missed by many BC exhibitors among others who had the pleasure of knowing him, but his absence from the booth and the planning process also affected the effectiveness of the booth as a marketing tool for provincial companies. I mention this because the BC booth at both shows we have attended this year, the Seafood Expo North America (SENA) and the Seafood Expo Global (SEG) were kind of basic and. I believe, missed the mark in large part because we did not have a food sampling component.



Nathan Fong 1959 - 2020 RIP

The thing about these events is that there are a lot of companies, countries and products competing for visitors attention and the problem in our case is that we did not have anything to attract their eyeballs other than some pretty basic backlit pictures and, of course, our smiling friendly faces and personae, which are of course great but not really likely to take us very far. As we have found at previous shows, having moving light, as in a fairly large video or TV screen is good for getting their initial attention and providing an opening, maybe a little bit awkward but an opening nonetheless to initiate a dialogue.



It was not a total loss of course as we did manage to draw in some interest and people and have some good dialogue with new potential customers and establish a presence for ourselves at this show, quite possibly the only real global show that will be available for the next few years. China continues to pursue its “Zero COVID” policy and is not likely to remove restrictions on foreign travellers for a while yet, and that is assuming that the currently rising hostility levels between it and western countries abates.



Another key that we have discovered over our years of doing this is having product on display so people can see for themselves what is on offer so they can again just start asking questions and naturally enter into a dialogue. When you buttress that with samples that they can taste, interest rises by orders of magnitude and turns the whole booth, if not the whole pavilion, into a “Happening Place”. One for which word can get out so people divert to come over and visit. Of course, many other booths even within the Canadian Pavilion are using the same strategies to draw attention to themselves so the better we can do it the more successful participants at the booth will be.



Another of the booth features that held us back was the presence of a “post” right in front of our information counter. This limited our visibility a bit but also our ability to capture and hold people’s attention as they moved past. There is that old expression that one should make lemonade when handed a bunch of lemons- and in this case the Irish booth was kind of inspirational. They had a post at the corner of their booth wrapped with a video display surface of some type, probably an organic LED, that they then displayed underwater footage on as a wrap around. It was very cool, and it was something that struck me as definitely in the realm of the possible for BC diver fisheries as there just has to be a bunch of really good underwater footage in guys’ private collections simply because of the nature of the job and the spectacular vistas they witness on at least some days. This is the kind of stuff we should be using to build awareness of the fisheries.

The exceptionally slow traffic we experienced at the show is illustrated possibly best by the number of give-aways we went through over the 3 days of the show. We had a variety of brochures to distribute- English, French, Spanish and Simplified Mandarin for both the urchins and the cukes, but the uptake was disappointing. The following table tracks the results.

#### Brochures and other give-aways SEG 2022

Item	Requested	Supplied	Plus	Day1	Day2	Day3	Used	Returned
PUHA Brochures: traditional*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUHA Brochures: simplified*	25	25	0	2	1	0	3	22
PUHA Brochures: English	75	75	0	2	1	0	3	72
PUHA Brochures: French	50	50	0	2	0	1	3	47
PUHA Brochures: Spanish	75	75	0	0	1	1	2	73
Uni samples (grams)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smoked salmon (g)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PSCHA Brochures: simplified	50	50	0	0	1	1	2	48
PSCHA Brochures: English	50	50	0	0	1	1	2	48
PSCHA Brochures: French	50	50	0	1	1	2	4	46
PSCHA Brochures: Spanish	75	75	0	1	1	1	3	72
Company Brochures		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B'cards (100 for MF and GK)		1,000	0	not	tracked			
Pens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Despite that disappointing catalogue, the number of visitors and the discussions we had were somewhat better than might be expected. The number of visitors was indeed low compared to what we are generally used to, as can be seen in the following table providing a comparative summaries of all the shows we have attended since 2014. While the number is low the quality of the visitors remains competitive with previous outings, possibly even a bit better than prior outings at the SEG. Recall that the “score” is assigned by yours truly after reviewing the business particulars of the visitor (including potential for new business opportunities or ideas), materials exchanged (business cards, brochures), information provided (including email, website, shared knowledge), comments accompanying the contact in the catalogue as well as any results found while verifying the veracity of the website and other information that can be easily tracked on line. A full listing of the contact cards collected is provided on the next page in a summary table.

Visitor Totals and Averages		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022
<b>SEA</b>	Number	126	93	105	84	83		
	Score	5.5	5.38	5.52	5.09	5.35		
<b>CFSE</b>	Number	71	102	74	92	62		
	Score	4.84	5.2	4.49	4.6	4.53		
<b>SENA</b>	Number			53	45	64	56	42
	Score			5.89	5.00	4.58	4.69	4.57
<b>SEG</b>	Number				55	38		19
	Score				4.68	4.47		4.7

A lot of people who stopped by were well aware of the limits on uni processed using a standard “alum” containing recipe as far as EU regulations on food additives go (i.e alum is not an approved food additive s any foods prepared using it are prohibited. There were a couple of people though lamenting the closed urchin fishery in Italy and the limited availability of urchin and quite a bit of interest in non-alum products.



Table of all contacts from whom we collected cards over the three days of the 2022 SEG

Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Website	Comment(s)
USA	Topsfield MA	e-tail	Aalex	Gryska	Seatrade	5	<a href="http://www.myseafood.com">www.myseafood.com</a>	
Spain	Vigo	trader	Jose Fernandez	Pineiro	Jose Fernandez Pineiro s.l.	4	<a href="http://www.ifpineiro.es">www.ifpineiro.es</a>	
Italy		trader	Pedol	Marco	Interseafish	4	<a href="http://www.interseafish.nl">www.interseafish.nl</a>	Italian- reports a severe shortage of urchin in Italy because of abundance issues
Latvia	Riga	Gov't of Canada	Irena	Cirule	Gov't of Canada, Embassy in Riga	5	<a href="http://www.latvia.gc.ca">www.latvia.gc.ca</a>	
Hungary	Budapest	Gov't of Canada	Gergely	Morvai	Gov't of Canada, Embassy in Belgrade	5	<a href="http://www.kanada.hu">www.kanada.hu</a>	
Greece	Athens	trader	Peter	Famelis	International Seafood Trading	4		
Greece	Athens	trader	Panos	Famelis	International Seafood Trading	4		
USA	Houston TX	distributor	Danial	Ohh	Lifewood USA Co. Ltd.	5	<a href="http://www.lifewoodco.com">www.lifewoodco.com</a>	looking for urchin
Spain	Madrid	trader	Javier	Taboada	Pesca de la Reina	5	<a href="http://www.pescadelareina.com">www.pescadelareina.com</a>	
Austria	Vienna	Gov't of Canada	Verena	Wasenegger	Gov't of Canada, Embassy in Vienna	5	<a href="http://www.kanada.at">www.kanada.at</a>	
France	Perpignan	recruiter	Laetitia	Tricaud	Aquaculture Talent	3	<a href="http://www.aquaculturetalent.com">www.aquaculturetalent.com</a>	
China	Hong Kong	financing	Khaled	Chaabouni	Leo-Progress International Ltd.	3	<a href="http://www.leo-progress.com">www.leo-progress.com</a>	
UK	London	quality certification	Takeshi	Yamagishi	Quality Seafood London Ltd.	6	<a href="http://www.ikejimequality.com">www.ikejimequality.com</a>	
Italy	Sardinia	supplier and distributor	Emilio	Piras	Smeralda	6	<a href="http://www.smeralda.com">www.smeralda.com</a>	Sardinia is probably a really nice place to visit.
Poland	Gdansk	distributor	Michalina	Wenckowska	Kuchnie Swiata S.A.	6	<a href="http://www.kuchnieswiata.com.pl">www.kuchnieswiata.com.pl</a>	sushi supplier for Poland and looking for product (directed to Fraser)
Norway	Ulestenwik	tech innovators	Dagny-Elise	Anastassiou	Tu Tech Sustainable Seabed Harvesting	6	<a href="http://www.tautech.no">www.tautech.no</a>	adopting ROV tech from oil/gas to benthic seafood harvest
Spain	Barcelona	trader	Maria	Goita	Arrom Barcelona	4	<a href="http://www.arrombarcelona.com">www.arrombarcelona.com</a>	interested in frozen uni so provided info for GHMP
UK	London	Gov't of BC	Melissa	Arsenault	BC Int'l Trade & Invest Office- Europe	5	<a href="http://www.britishcolumbia.ca">www.britishcolumbia.ca</a>	fresh delivery services, Korean convenience foods
Japan	Tokyo	marketing	Dai "Bear"	Kumazawa	Godak marketing Corp.	5	<a href="http://www.godak.co.jp">www.godak.co.jp</a>	supplier distributor of quality seafood in Japan, but no uni

As in Boston, many people seemed to be happy getting out and about but there was still a bit of crowd aversion apparent. Note however that there are very few visitors from Asia, one fellow from Tokyo on the last day and another from Hong Kong whom we have met at just about every show we have attended. Japan and South Korea both had pavilions at the show, but few were seen walking the show. The same might be said for us but in my case at least it seemed more important to have someone manning the station just in case. The absence of Asians at this point is not real surprising as much of that part of the world is still (or again) locked down because of resurgent COVID numbers and/or subject to strict travel regulations. International travel to or from China is still problematic and they are not looking like any relaxation is coming any time soon. Asian population densities are generally higher than those we see in many parts of North America and Europe and they seem to focus on the risks of viral contagion more than many of us in the west so they quite possibly not travelling just out an abundance of caution.

We discussed the “slow” situation on a number of occasions with advisors around the pavilion. One tip we got was that using social media to send out advance notices 2-3 weeks prior to the show is a pretty good way to build interest. Of course it is best if we have customers also planning to attend and since our customers are for the most part in Asia, that was not the case this year.

There was some question as to whether BC would be taking space again at the show in the Canadian Pavilion next year. There was a pretty solid consensus among all at the booth that it is imperative that BC products are represented at this show but it would pay great dividends if we could have some action footage showing on a screen somewhere and some sort of facility to display our products and offer samples. There was sufficient room in the booth footprint that a food preparation area and a display chiller could have been accommodated, even though it may well have tightened things up a bit.

Building on our presence here will help our market diversification and product promotion efforts and may well be key to continuing prosperity for the BC fishery sector in an era of rising geopolitical tensions. The European market is very sophisticated and European cuisine very diverse with a strong seafood heritage to it. It is also a rich western market willing to pay very good prices for products that meet their stringent quality requirements. There are also reports that ex-pat communities of Asian descent are growing in the area as is interest from Asian tourists in seeing the sights of the world, both of which lend further support to the idea that there is indeed potential in even niche markets to be found.