

Reprint Island Tides

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Geoduck lease openings - David Steen

If the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) gets its way, the poorly regulated shellfish industry that is plaguing Denman Island could soon take hold on the rest of the southern Gulf Islands.

The DFO plans to open BC's coast, including the shorelines of Salt Spring, Galiano, Gabriola, and other major islands, to geoduck aquaculture (see map, page 2). Deadline for public comment is soon, April 19.

While the size of licensed areas would be determined by other land and water activities nearby, the DFO is promoting the geoduck as 'one of the most economically prosperous and environmentally sustainable fisheries on the west coast.' One company owner says geoduck aquaculture could become a billion dollar industry in the Salish Sea.

The geoduck is a saltwater clam that in rare cases measures up to 2 metres in length and 7.5 kilograms in weight. It sells for a reported \$150 a pound in China, its largest market.

One feature of geoduck farming is the vertical installation of 20,000 to 40,000 PVC pipes, each about 12 centimetres in diameter and 25 centimetres long, per acre into beach sediment for predator protection for the first 18 to 24 months of a 6–10 year crop cycle.

PVC pipe breaks down in a marine environment, releasing toxins absorbed by zooplanktons and bio-magnifying their harm as they move up the food chain. Vinyl chloride in PVC is a human carcinogen. Local group Gulf Islands Alliance asks how the DFO can honestly reconcile its enthusiasm for the geoduck industry with its legal duty to maintain a sustainable marine ecology and protect endangered species such as orcas?

The industry has proven highly controversial in Washington's Puget Sound—it has about a 15-year head start

over BC—because of its damage to the ecology and other facets of the economy, such as tourism. Many of the more than 225 shellfish sites there converted to commercial geoduck use without shoreline permits, public comment or environmental review.

Last fall the Gulf Islands Alliance sponsored a series of public meetings on six islands by the Association for Denman Island Marine Stewards who said DFO's rosy view of the industry ignores the damage caused by the failure of all governments to

stop the eyesore, noise, garbage and loss of biodiversity wrought by shellfish operations. Some 90% of Denman's coastline on Baynes Sound is under shellfish tenure.

The mess could be coming to a beach near you, the Denman group warns other Gulf Islanders. They complain of company vehicles driving on beaches, tons of industry debris that residents clean up each year, the disruptive berming and altering of water courses, and anti-predator netting that renders critical bird habitat unavailable to birds for feeding and can snare other wildlife.

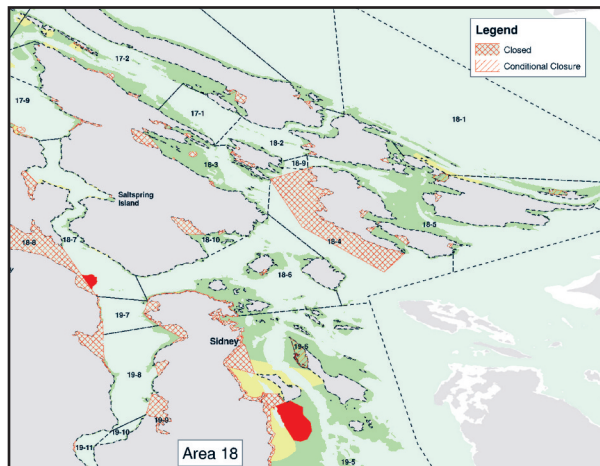
The Denman/Baynes Sound area is the second most important waterfowl habitat in BC and an important area for herring spawning and the

growth of salmonids and other fish species.

It appears that owners of existing tenures won't have to apply to the DFO to change their chosen species of cultivation. Notice to local government and the public would not be required when they switch to geoduck.

The Gulf Islands Alliance supports the Denman group's bid to have geoduck aquaculture banned in the Islands Trust Area, similar to an existing ban on fin-fish farms. It clearly violates the Islands Trust Mandate, Policy Statement, and local bylaws.

GIA urges islanders to tell their trustees and politicians at all government levels what they think of the geoduck management plan and also to respond directly to the DFO plan. Check out the



Southern Islands' geoduck aquaculture expansion map. Green areas could be open for geoduck leases. Yellow = possible limitations on applications. Red = generally not available for applications.

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DFO's detailed maps to see exact locations for possible geoduck operations. <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/aquaculture/index-eng.html>. For more information visit: www.gulfislandsalliance.ca.

Coming to a Beach Near You?



(Photos from Puget Sound, Washington)

High Pressure Hose
Liquefies Seabed

You are nearly out of time to say 'No!'

April 19, 2014 is the Deadline for Comments on
Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Draft Geoduck Management Plan

Vast areas of the BC coast, including Vancouver Island, The Gulf Islands, and the Saanich Peninsula will be opened up to industrial geoduck (gooey-duck) aquaculture - both beaches and deep water seabeds. Geoduck is produced as a luxury food, primarily for the Asian market.

Industrial geoduck aquaculture is a threat to our coastal communities that thrive on tourism, recreation, fisheries and their wild beauty.

Why Worry? To see the impacts of geoduck aquaculture in Puget Sound go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzigC1ReNRE>

Geoduck Aquaculture:

- Threatens the herring spawn, and therefore the food web of the Salish Sea
- Utilizes plastic predator netting and PVC pipes that leach toxins
- Uses high pressure hoses that liquefy the sea bed
- Renders critical habitat unavailable to migratory birds
- Does not respect local marine conservation zoning

For more information and Area Maps:

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/aquaculture/index-eng.html>.

Make your voice heard:

- Submit your opposition by email to : shellfish.aquaculture@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
- Or responses can be mailed/faxed to:
Jennifer Mollins, Senior Coordinator, Shellfish Aquaculture Management,
Fisheries Management Branch - Pacific Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada,
1965 Island Diesel Way, Nanaimo, BC V9S 5W8 | Fax: 250-754-0391

For more information on aquaculture issues go to: adims.ca

The Association of Denman Island Marine Stewards (ADIMS) • The Gulf Island Alliance (GIA)

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