

Geoduck

SPECIES

Geoduck (pronounced gooey duck) (*Panopea abrupta*)

OTHER NAMES

Elephant Trunk clam, King clam

ABOUT

The geoduck clam, a bivalve mollusc belonging to the family *Hiatellidae*, is the largest burrowing clam in its natural range throughout Alaska, British Columbia (BC), and Washington. A geoduck has a large meaty siphon or neck extending from its large oval shaped shell. Average shell size is 19.5 cm (7 inches) and average weight is 1 kg (2.2 lbs). Geoduck harvest is by dive in BC.



The siphon of the geoduck has a sweet, fresh sea flavour and crunchy texture.

STOCK STATUS

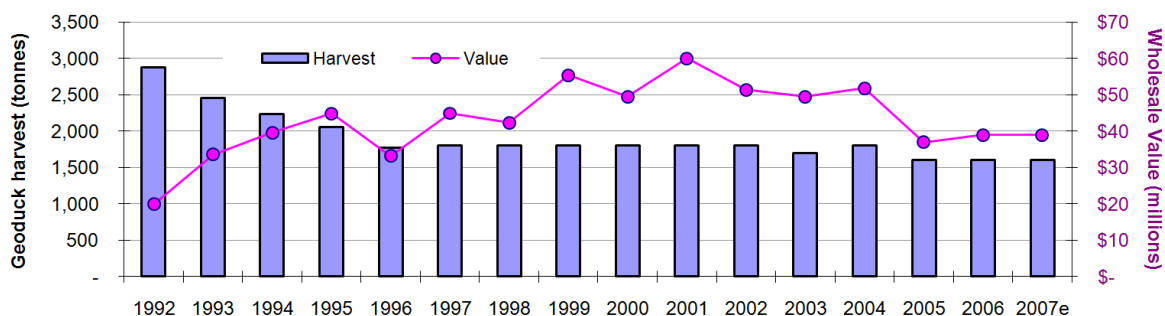
The geoduck stock appears healthy (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

MANAGEMENT

BC's geoduck fishery is managed federally by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). The fishery is managed by a combination of a total allowable catch (TAC) set at 1.2% to 1.8% of the range of current biomass, a catch verification program, and non-transferable individual licence quotas. Harvest areas are fished on a three-year rotational basis (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

PRODUCT VALUE

Harvests and wholesale values: 1,800 tonnes at \$49.5 million (wholesale) in 2000; 1,600 tonnes at \$38.6 million in 2007 (*BC Seafood Industry Year in Review*).



e: estimate

LIFE HISTORY

Geoducks - called the “elephant trunk clam” by the Chinese - are among the longest-lived animals in the world. The longest-lived specimen to date was 146 years old when harvested.

Adults stay burrowed up to a metre deep in sand, silt, gravel and other soft substrate and eat and breathe by sticking their distinctively long necks above the sand, sucking water in through one tube (to extract algae and oxygen) and spitting water out the other. Few predators other than sea otters can reach them once they are buried deep in the substrate. Sea otters extract geoducks by excavating large pits on the ocean floor, from the shallow subtidal to depths of 30 metres (90 feet).

Sexes are separate. Spawning occurs annually, mostly between June and July. The clams begin to burrow into the substrate within 40 to 50 days of birth. A geoduck grows rapidly for the first 10 to 15 years. By that time, it has grown so large that its shell cannot close around it.

PRODUCTS

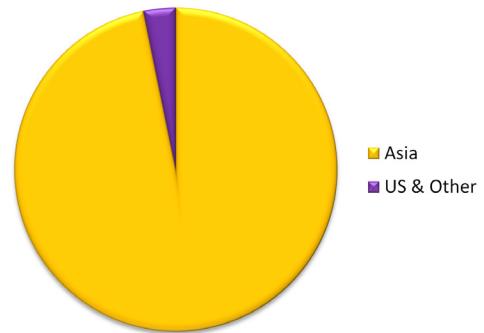
Geoducks are most popular live, but the siphon meat is also available chilled or flash-frozen and then vacuum-packed. Dried body meat is available occasionally.

PRODUCT MARKET

The majority of geoducks are exported to Hong Kong and China while a small amount is exported to the United States or sold in British Columbia.

MARKET TREND

There is increasing demand for geoduck in China and Asia.

**LINKS**

DFO - Fisheries Management Plans: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/fishmgmt_e.htm

BC Seafood Industry Year in Review: www.env.gov.bc.ca/omfd/reports/index.html

Underwater Harvesters Association (UHA): <http://www.geoduck.org/>

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA): <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/toce.shtml>

BCSeafood.ca: www.bcseafood.ca/index.php

Fish and Seafood Online: <http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/sea-mer/index-eng.htm>