

THISFISH 2013 - A YEAR IN REVIEW

It was a strategically important year for this ThisFish, as the seafood traceability system pioneered by Ecotrust Canada in 2008 continued to grow, diversify and mature.



A report by Tasha Sutcliffe

The Lighthouse Foundation was one of the initiative's founding funders and continued to support its development in 2013 in four key areas:

- Expansion into global fisheries, especially small-scale artisanal fisheries and fisheries in the developing world
- Technology improvements to simplify the use of the system and improve its stability and usability
- Expansion into new fisheries in Canada, including expansion into shellfish aquaculture
- Development of a restaurant and retail strategy to increase demand for traceable products.

Ecotrust Canada was able to use \$50,000 in grant funding from the Lighthouse Foundation

to help leverage more than \$150,000 in additional funding to achieve the initiatives goals, and the work done will contribute to future funding leveraged in 2014. What follows is a detailed description of the activities and impacts of the Lighthouse Foundation's contribution in the four key areas set out in the funding proposal.

[Global Fisheries Expansion](#)

In 2013, Ecotrust Canada undertook a number of activities to begin to expand the use of ThisFish into global fisheries. The activities were as follows:

- Slow Fish Partnership. Ecotrust Canada continued to develop a strong relationship with Slow Fish, specifically Michele Mesmain, the Slow Fish Campaign Director for Slow Food in Italy. As a part of this work in July of 2013, Michele went on a tour of the East and West Coast of Canada to introduce her to the unique nature of BC fisheries

and the ways in which ThisFish has the ability to improve the state of fisheries on our coasts. During this tour Michele participated in discussions around how to expand the opportunity for other fisheries in the Slow Food network to utilize the traceability system to address issues they are facing. Based on her research in July, Michele identified fisheries in Spain and Mexico that could potentially use ThisFish. Michele began to engage individual members of Slow Fish in these regions to design and pilot the traceability sys-



Dutch researchers and the Indonesian implementation team

tem. ThisFish set up the Caribbean rock lobster fishery, and Michele began working with Mexican fish harvesters to begin tagging and tracing product in 2014. Michele also plans to work with the Goede Vissers in The Netherlands to expand the use of ThisFish there with other Dutch fish harvesters. This partnership and Michele's will continue throughout 2014.

- **Global Tuna Fishery.** Ecotrust Canada worked with a group of BESTTuna researchers at Wageningen University in the Netherlands (<http://www.besttuna.org>) to launch pilot projects for traceable tuna among the handline and purse seine fisheries in Indonesia. The partnership includes Masyarakat dan Perikanan Indonesia, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the sustainability of fisheries and the prosperity of fishing communities. Most of the work in 2013 focused on developing an extensi-

ve proposal for a three-year pilot project, which was successfully funded through the Adessium Foundation. On-the-ground activities for this project began in December 2013 and January 2014.

- **Artysanal Small-Scale Certification.** Ecotrust Canada also developed a partnership with SMART (SMall-scale ARTisanal), a nonprofit organization set up by members of the Responsible Fishing Alliance and World Forum for Fish Harvesters to develop a small-scale artisanal certification and logo called "Artysanal." SMART requires chain-of-custody and traceability standards for all seafood using their small-scale certification logo. Ecotrust Canada has partnered with Artysanal to ensure that their small-boat fisheries are traceable through ThisFish. The first traceable Artysanal product is expected to come from a small-scale cod fishery in Iceland in Spring 2014. In 2013, Ecotrust Canada met with SMART to discuss an MOU, provided feedback on their draft chain-of-custody standards and helped to identify fisheries which could use the artisanal certification. Ecotrust Canada also plans to connect Artysanal with Slow Fish and our global tuna pilot project.

Technology Improvements

In 2013, Ecotrust Canada conducted work to improve the performance of ThisFish and add new features. These included:

- **Technology Development Improvements.** The Traceability Team implemented a number of significant improvements to the technological tools and processes it uses for project management. First, the team adopted the cloud-based project management software called Asana (www.asana.com) and began to implement Lean Startup methodologies (www.leanstartup.co) in how the team performs and develops technology. This technology and processes is especially important since the Traceability Team of seven staff are scattered over six locations and three time zones. These processes helped to improve the performance of the team and Development Team which resulted in a much more stable ThisFish platform that the previous year. There was only one short-lived, unscheduled downtime for the website in 2013.

- **Help Centre.** Ecotrust Canada set up a Help Centre (<http://thisfish.info/help>) on the website to provide some online training and manuals to fish harvesters and processors using the system. Overtime, Ecotrust plans to add new manuals and videos to this Help Centre.

- **Data Management Interface.** ThisFish is working to improve the data management interface on ThisFish. Users need a comprehensive table of data entries so that they can properly manage data and assess if errors have been made and codes are missing. A comprehensive list of data entries on the Dashboard interface would show them whether they have missed uploads. Programming on the Data Management Interface began in the latter part of 2013 and will be implemented with a new auto-generated lot coding system in 2014. These changes will help to simplify use of the system and improve the user experience, this will also improve accessibility of the system for some of the small scale international fisheries we have begun to work with.

- **Email Notifications for Catch Entries.** Many fish harvesters have delegated their processors and buyers to upload catch data on their behalf. However, many fish harvesters may not know which of their landings are being traced and which aren't at any given time since their processors and buyers aren't necessarily communicating this information to them. To improve fish harvester engagement, ThisFish set up an email notification so that anytime data is uploaded on behalf of a harvester an automated email notification is sent to the harvester informing them that a third party has uploaded catch on their behalf. The goal of this feature is to improve the engagement of fish harvesters and improve the integrity of the system so that a third party cannot upload data for a harvester without the harvester's knowledge.

- **Time Zones.** Ecotrust Canada added time zone configuration for users so that the database knows the local time for when product was uploaded. This is particularly important for fisheries that cross the international dateline, since the database will mistakenly believe that fish is being uploaded to the database in the future.

- **Restaurant Latest Catch Portal.** ThisFish conducted research on the restaurant sector that identified significant challenges with tracking seafood through restaurant kitchens to dinner tables. As a result, ThisFish developed a Latest Catch Portal for restaurants that will allow restaurants to log traceable codes that come into their restaurant into their online ThisFish profile. ThisFish will then display information about the latest catch in a Latest Catch Portal that can be shared with customers with a shortened URL or



Thanks to ThisFish's mobile website, it's now easier than ever to discover the story of your seafood while on the go.

QR code.

Canadian Fisheries Expansion

Ecotrust Canada launched two major fisheries expansions in Canada in 2013. These included:

- **Newfoundland & Labrador.** Through a partnership with the Fish, Food and Allied Workers of Newfoundland (FFAW), Ecotrust Canada is expanding ThisFish to some 300 to 500 lobster and halibut fish harvesters in 2014. Ecotrust Canada worked closely with the FFAW to write a multi-year proposal to get funding from the federal and provincial governments to expand traceability to a broad scale in 2014 in the province. Work began in December 2013 with training sessions in St. John's for three FFAW traceability coordinators. The FFAW has hired the coordinators to begin to sign up some 300 to 500 fish harvesters on ThisFish.

- Shellfish Aquaculture. Ecotrust Canada made some improvements to ThisFish in order to allow shellfish aquaculture products to be traced through the system. These changes were made in June and in September ThisFish launched its first traceable oysters at the International Shellfish Festival in Prince Edward Island. Ecotrust Canada also worked with shellfish growers in B.C. and hopes to begin tracing oysters from B.C. in Spring 2014.

Restaurant and Retail Strategy

In conjunction with a grant from the Lighthouse Foundation, Ecotrust Canada was able to raise \$70,000 from the Government of British Columbia's Buy Local BC program to develop a restaurant and retail strategy for traceable seafood. The project included a number of objectives. Below are the objectives and impact of the work:

1) To research and confirm the value of bringing a traceability system to B.C. seafood suppliers, restaurants and small retailers, allowing them to validate that their products are, in fact, from B.C. As a result of the research, we customized ThisFish so that B.C. shellfish growers could participate in the system. This customization was implemented in September 2009 and was a result of a number of B.C. restaurants and chefs requesting that shellfish be traceable in ThisFish. The funds were also used to develop the Latest Catch Portal for restaurants.

2) To promote sustainable B.C. seafood in restaurants and small retailers by connecting consumers directly to their B.C. fish harvesters through traceability. ThisFish engaged eight independent retailers and two retail chains (Thrifty Foods and Fresh Street Market which is part of IGA), and engaged 34 restaurants conducting in depth chain-of-custody surveys with six of these. We also worked closely with three independent fish harvesters who are engaging in direct sales to restaurants and retailers.

3) To make the B.C. seafood industry and retail and restaurant sectors world leaders and innovators in consumer-focused traceability. ThisFish implemented a Trace & Win Contest with Thrifty Foods at the beginning of the fishing season from March to May 2013. As a result of this inno-

vative campaign, the number of traces from B.C. increased by 89% over the same period in 2012. The average consumer spent 25 percent more time reading their trace results over the previous year as well. ThisFish also designed an iPad kiosk landing page and piloted an iPad kiosk in a Thrifty Foods store in Victoria. The kiosk allowed customers to trace their products at the seafood counter.

4) To increase knowledge and interest of local consumers and enhance the marketability of BC seafood.

ThisFish spent \$4,160 in kind on Google Adwords directly promoting BC seafood and fisheries increasing website visits by 3,010. We also participated in many food festivals, conferences and trade shows throughout the year to promote local traceable catch to B.C. consumers.

Period:
since May 2010

Funding 2013:
50,000 CAD

Project partner:
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