



The Fish That Made Waves in Oregon's Sustainable Fishing Industry

Misha Robertson

Marine Studies Initiative at Oregon State University & Local Ocean Seafood



INTRODUCTION

Rockfish are commonly found off the coast of Newport, Oregon. They are a large family made up of over 100 different species of fish. Fisherman can catch rockfish year-round, unlike other types of fish that have seasons. However, only 20-25% of what could be sustainably harvested is being landed by local fisherman due to low economic incentives. Proper communication to consumers about the economic and personal health benefits of rockfish could lead to an increase in sales. This allows the customer to receive a high-quality product, fisherman to have a constant, sustainable catch, and for our personal sales of rockfish to increase.

BACKGROUND

Rockfish fall under the US West Coast Groundfish Fishery. In the mid 1960's, the market was considered profitable and unregulated. This led to overfishing certain fish stocks, including these were the Canary, Yelloweye, and Darkblotched rockfish. By the 90's the fishery was declared a federal disaster. Thanks to effective fishery management, scientific stock assessments, and fishermen; today all but one of the nine previously overfished species have been restored to healthy levels.

Unfortunately, only 20-25% of what could be harvested is being landed by our fisherman. We could be feeding more people with this system that has been meticulously built. Rockfish aren't being sold to consumers in high enough numbers to make it beneficial for fishermen. By 2050, the worlds population is predicted to rise to 9 billion people. Finding and communicating sustainable ways of feeding the growing population is going to be important for the future of agriculture.

The goal of this project was to create a marketing package around rockfish. Contributing to the public education of the west coast groundfish fishery and rockfish. Our goal was to sell more rockfish. Our aims were to figure out what the best message could be to sell this product and how could we create more avenues of purchase.

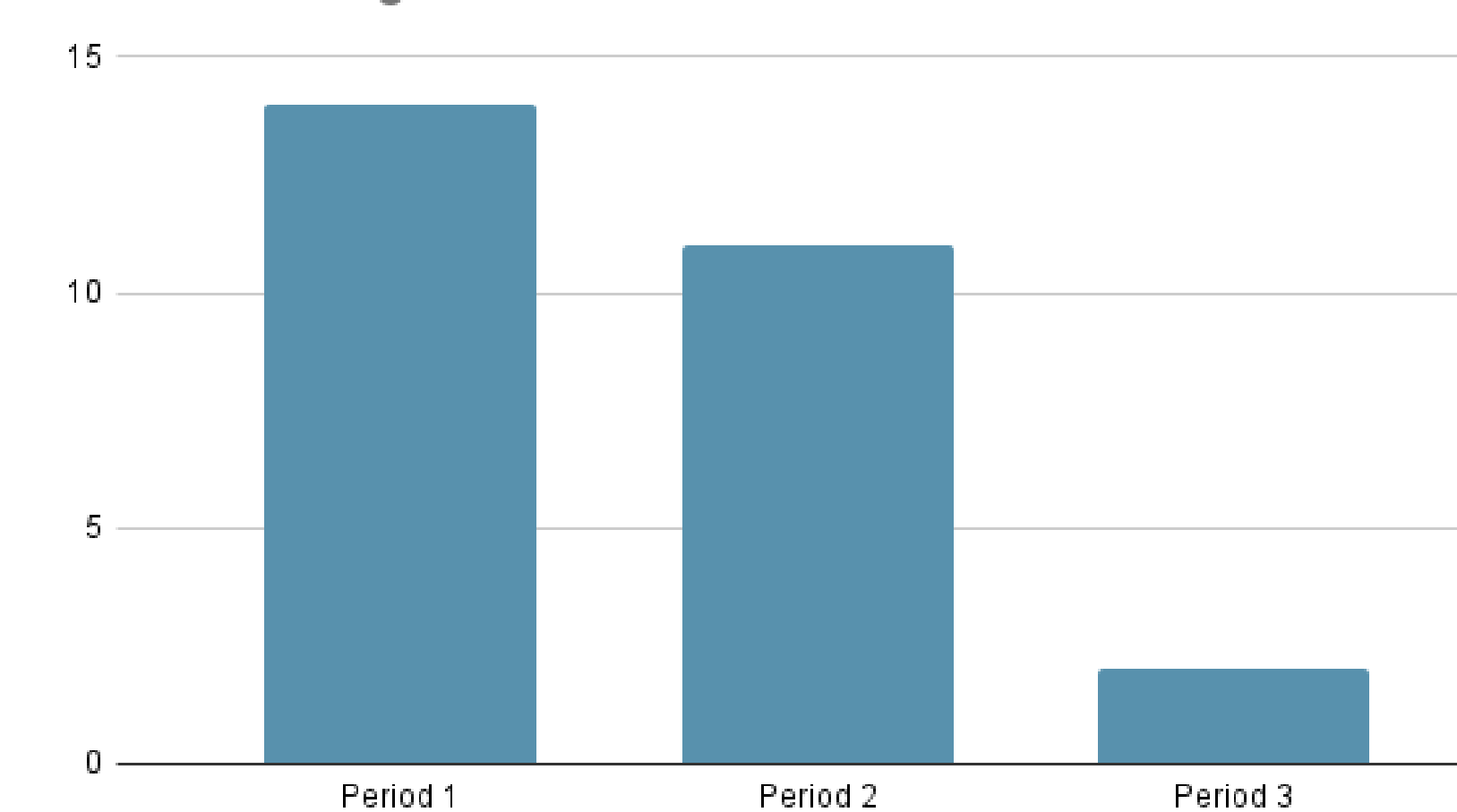
METHODOLOGY

Messaging to our consumers was done via social media and email newsletters. We made three different types of social posts: information about the fishery (Period 1) , culinary aspects (Period 2), and a personal interview (Period 3). The information was spread between different social media (Instagram and Facebook) posts over the course of three weeks. The information provided in these posts was later sent out in newsletter emails as another avenue of communication.

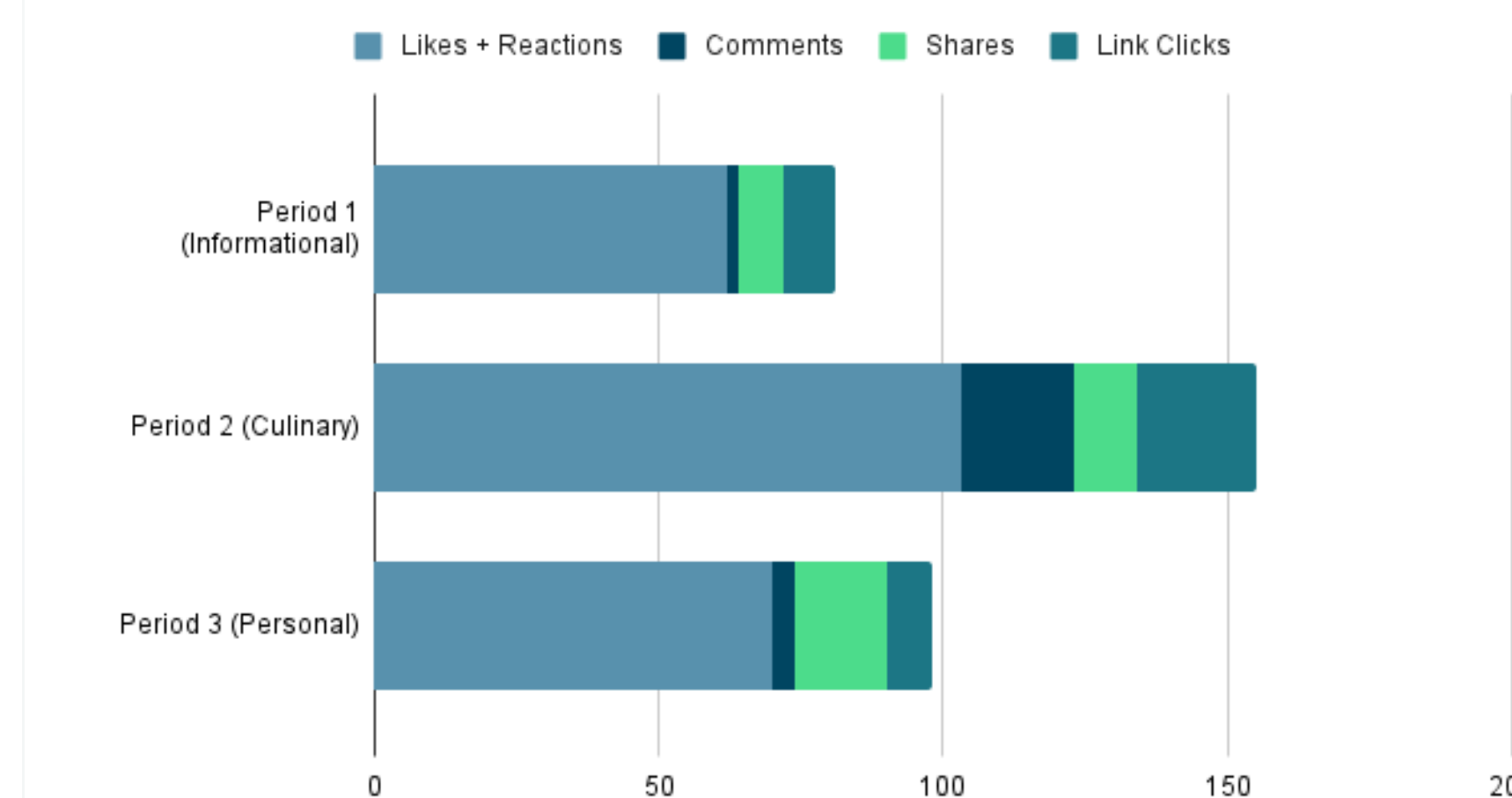
As we educated consumers about rockfish, we also made it easier to buy in our services. The main way we tracked our sales of rockfish was via the DockBox food ordering service. Customers could place an order for rockfish to have it delivered fresh to their homes. This service is available throughout Washington and Oregon. This was a limited time offer we ran. In order to make a more long-lasting avenue we experimented with selling rockfish fillets out of the grab and go case at the Local Ocean storefront. Sales data for the fish case will not be counted in any results but is a way to maintain longevity of product sales.

RESULTS

Sales Following Each Social Media Announcement



Social Media Engagement



From July 17th – August 16th we sold 27 units through DockBox. Each unit contained 1.5 pounds of boneless, skinless rockfish fillets.

DISCUSSION

The sales data we gathered aligns with trends that Local Ocean has observed before. With the period 1 post being the best at driving sales and the following posts steadily declining.

When we look at the social engagement, Period 2 did not lead to as many direct sales, but it did have the highest user engagement with likes & reactions. The fact that period 2 was the post that focused on a culinary aspect also aligns with prior observed trends. As we compare the two graphs to the other periods, we can see that period 3 had the highest number of shares but it did not necessarily lead to higher sales. Customers were more engaged in content that were focused on culinary and personal aspects. Even if that did not drive them to buy, it is important to keep in the mind for future marketing campaigns.

This data shows that the culinary post was the most effective message of communication. If I could replicate this in the future I would lead with the culinary post as the initial announcement toward the product.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank Oregon State University's Marine Studies Initiative, Local Ocean Seafood, and Seabird Scientific for sponsoring this internship and providing an enriching experience. I'd like to thank my mentors Issie and Laura as well as my advisors at Hatfield Ichung and Cynthia. I'd also like to thank all the other interns in the MSI program. Thank you for the summer.