



Cole Gomez-Leishman

Cole Gomez-Leishman was 19 years old when he joined Uu-a-thluk as a fisheries intern in the spring of 2015, but when he completed a 9-month contract last month, it was as a fisheries technician. His experience is a great example of the growth that can occur within the marine-based career opportunities Uu-a-thluk provides; opportunities

the department is currently recruiting for.

“The field work was the most enjoyable part,” said Gomez-Leishman when asked about his time spent as a technician, though the sentiment holds true for his internships as well. A member of the Tseshaht First Nation, with ties to Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, he describes joining the biologists for early morning fish surveys with a smile on his face because it often meant catching a beautiful sunrise in the process. Travel is a large part of the technician position, as surveys take place throughout the territories of a number of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. Gomez-Leishman loved the fact that he got paid to drive to these locations, all the while taking in stunning mountain views.

Individual job experiences can vary, but Gomez-Leishman’s trajectory with Uu-a-thluk went something like this; after completing a foundation year in the Criminal Justice Program at Camosun College, he applied for the fisheries internship and was chosen as the successful candidate. His 4-month experience would include fisheries enforcement and compliance monitoring, riding along with the Nations’ fisheries departments and DFO fisheries officers, and the monitoring and assessment of salmon, groundfish, crab, prawn and gooseneck barnacles. There was a component of data processing and writing, and all of these tasks were accompanied by regular performance feedback from Uu-a-thluk’s biologists.

Gomez-Leishman enjoyed the placement so much he returned for a second fisheries internship from May to November, 2016. Then, in July 2017, he joined Uu-a-thluk for a third stint, but this time as a fisheries technician. “We were happy to see Cole return for multiple employment opportunities and to see him gain skills and certification in fisheries-related areas,” said Michelle Colyn, Capacity Building Coordinator for Uu-a-thluk.

The certification Colyn is referring to is comprised of a rather impressive list. Uu-a-thluk and Nuu-chah-nulth Employment and Training Program (NETP) work together to provide training opportunities for fisheries interns that can include lifetime certifications such as Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP), Marine Emergency Duties A3 (MED-A3), Restricted Operator Certificate – Maritime (ROC-M) and the Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC). Other renewable training and certifications can include Marine Basic First Aid, Swiftwater Rescue Technician (SRT), Incident Command System and fish and shellfish ID training/monitor training.

Gomez-Leishman feels closer to his Nuu-chah-nulth cultural identity as a result of his fisheries training and experiences, and says he has retained considerable knowledge of fish. “I would

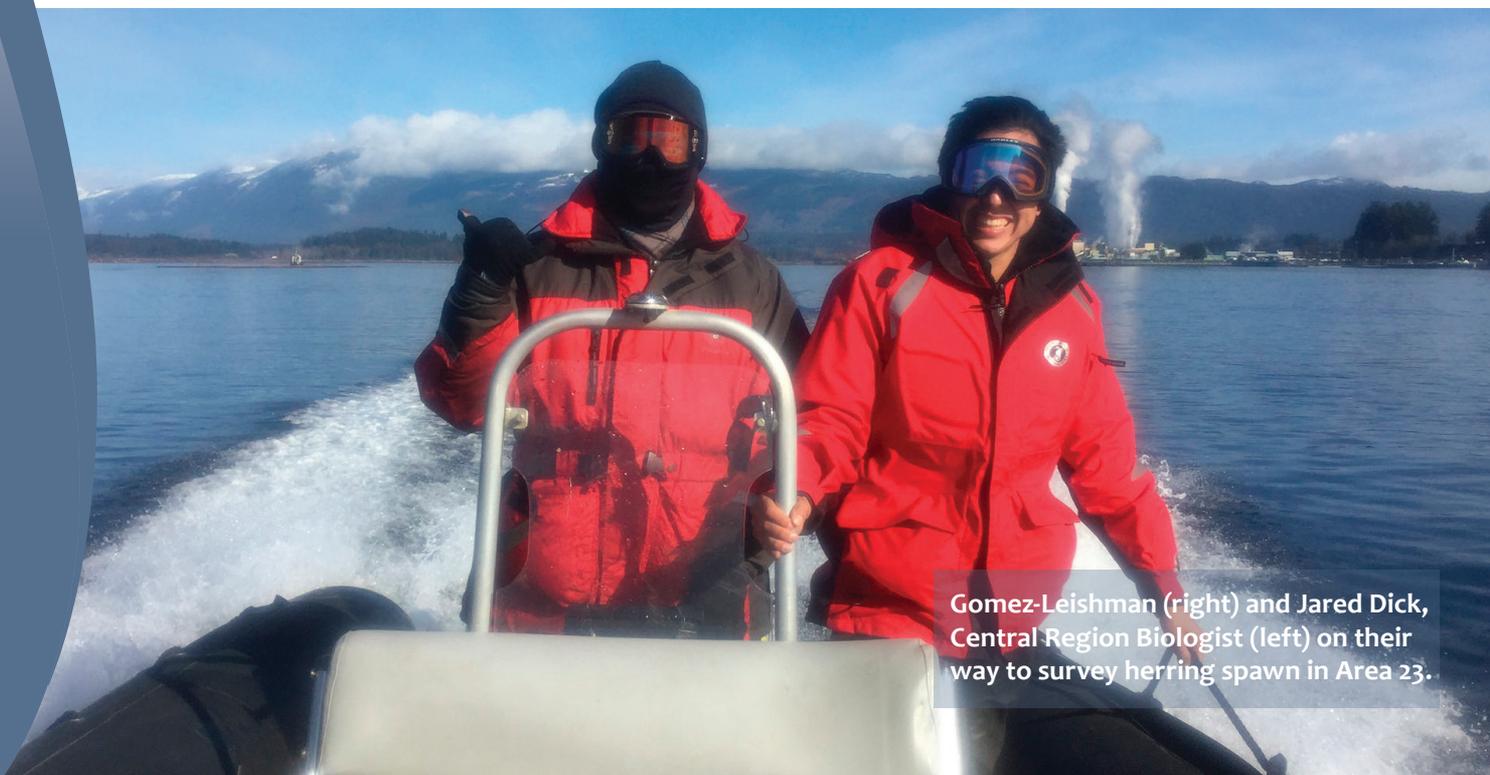


*I would recommend the experience to others*

recommend the experience to others,” he said, and added that working with his Uu-a-thluk colleagues felt like home due to the tight-knit nature of the team. According to Gomez-Leishman, his experiences have opened doors for him in future fisheries employment, and he feels the time spent was worthwhile.

Uu-a-thluk is currently in the process of hiring our next fisheries intern, and applications are being accepted until April 27. We are looking for someone who was registered as a full-time student in the previous academic year, and who intends to return to post-secondary school on a full-time basis in the next academic year. A full description of the job requirements can be found on page 17 of this issue.

The opportunity to spend time outdoors, on boats and in wetsuits, is one you will not want to pass up. For more information, please visit the ‘opportunities’ page on our website ([www.uuathluk.com](http://www.uuathluk.com)), or check out our Facebook page (@uuathluk).



Gomez-Leishman (right) and Jared Dick, Central Region Biologist (left) on their way to survey herring spawn in Area 23.