



FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA
MARITIMES REGION
2016

REGIONAL OCEANS PLAN

SCOTIAN SHELF | ATLANTIC COAST | BAY OF FUNDY

Progress Report 2014-2016



Fisheries and Oceans
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Canada

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Implementing the Priorities of the Maritimes Regional Oceans Plan: Progress Report, April 2016

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

The Maritimes Region released its [Regional Oceans Plan](#) in 2014. The plan outlines the approach and actions that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is taking to support oceans and coastal management in the Maritimes Region. It responds to DFO's responsibilities under the Oceans Act to lead and facilitate integrated and ecosystem approaches to the management of Canada's oceans. The Oceans and Coastal Management Division (OCMD) is responsible for working with other parts of DFO and other organizations to implement the Regional Oceans Plan.

DFO committed to communicating progress on the implementation of the plan on a regular basis with other parts of DFO and with other government departments and stakeholders. The current document responds to that commitment by reporting on the plan's four implementation priorities. This document will be distributed to DFO senior managers in the region and across the Oceans sector, federal and provincial government partners via the Regional Committee on Coastal and Oceans Management, and other interested parties.

REPORT ON ACTIONS

PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017	ACTIONS TAKEN, APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016
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MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA) NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Advance MPA network development, including finalizing strategic objectives, prioritizing conservation features, finalizing inventory of existing sites, agreeing on contributory sites, examining socio-economic considerations, and developing technical guidance on network design.

Established an MPA technical working group and hosted meetings that:

- Identified conservation objectives
- Determined conservation priorities for coastal and offshore planning areas

Created an inventory of existing sites with conservation measures. Began assessment of potential contribution of those sites to Canada’s conservation targets (“other effective area-based conservation measures”).

Initiated a working paper on operational objectives and design strategies for each conservation priority. The paper will be reviewed at a Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat peer review meeting (Regional Advisory Process/RAP) in July 2016.

Contributed to national guidance documents on marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

Finalize and validate data layers to be used in analysis, including both ecological (e.g., cetaceans, benthic features, Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas etc.) and human use (e.g., fisheries, shipping, and marine energy).

Developed new and updated human use data layers, including layers on fisheries landings, fisheries value and potential cost to fisheries.

Mapped existing sites with conservation measures to contribute to an assessment of their potential contribution to Canada’s conservation targets.

Mapped important ecological features and human uses in Sensitive Benthic Areas (Jordan Basin, Corsair Canyon, Bay of Fundy) to support application of the Sustainable Fisheries Framework.

Mapped habitats important to species at risk in the Maritimes, including Critical Habitat for inner Bay of Fundy salmon and leatherback turtle.

Ran various iterations of Marxan (spatial optimization software) and produced scenario reports showing potential MPA networks.

Developed maps to portray Marxan results in stakeholder meetings.

PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017

ACTIONS TAKEN, APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016

Undertake external engagement through the development of a consultation strategy and participation in various governmental, stakeholder and industry fora.

Developed a regional consultation strategy for MPA network development.

Developed communications products for stakeholder engagement in MPA network development.

Held meetings on MPA network planning with other federal and provincial government departments, First Nations and Aboriginal groups, industry groups, environmental and other non-government organizations, and community groups. Approximately 70 external consultation meetings have been held since November 2014, most of them since the fall of 2015.

MPA ESTABLISHMENT, MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Advance the regulatory process for St. Anns Bank Area of Interest (AOI) for designation as an MPA. Advance consultation process and develop an MPA Advisory Committee.

Worked with other parts of DFO to develop the regulatory package for the St. Anns Bank MPA designation process, including drafting instructions, triage, and a draft Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement. Meetings were held with interested stakeholders to provide updates.

Supported the LFA27 Management Board Society in its efforts to develop a research and monitoring program in the St. Anns Bank AOI through a Grants and Contribution agreement. The Society will also be raising awareness of the proposed MPA among fish harvesters.

Renew five year Gully MPA Management Plan.

Drafted a revision of the Gully Management Plan (2008) and distributed it to the Gully Advisory Committee and DFO Headquarters for feedback. The final version will be released in 2016.

Hold Musquash and Gully MPA Advisory Committee meetings.

Held meetings for both sites on a regular schedule and engaged committee members frequently on priority items (e.g., activity applications). Musquash Advisory Committee meetings were held in September 2014, April and October 2015, and April 2016. Gully Advisory Committee meetings were held in December 2015 and April 2016.

**PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN
IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017**

**ACTIONS TAKEN,
APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016**

**Promote knowledge and awareness of MPAs
through education and outreach activities.**

Updated [website materials](#) for the MPA Program.

Participated in Oceans Day and Museum of Natural History events.

Provided materials and presentations to schools on MPAs.

Produced [video of Gully](#) cetaceans for public viewing.

Collected video footage for future Musquash outreach projects.

Supported the Conservation Council of New Brunswick in its efforts to expand existing education, outreach and stewardship efforts for the Musquash MPA through a Grants and Contribution agreement.

**Ensure coordination among departmental
sectors for spatial data management, analytical
methods and product development for MPA
planning and management.**

Developed a variety of spatial data products, including mapping to support designation of St. Anns Bank and to conduct research in the Gully MPA. See also other sections.

**Maintain ongoing monitoring and
implementation reporting for MPAs and
Sponge and Coral Conservation Areas.**

In collaboration with Science Branch (Virtual Data Centre), continued to provide support to DFO's Conservation and Protection program for offshore compliance monitoring in MPAs and Sponge and Coral Conservation Areas.

Provided support in investigating fisheries compliance with Coral and Sponge Conservation Areas.

Drafted and published ecosystem monitoring plans:

- [Musquash Estuary MPA Ecosystem Monitoring Plan](#)
- [Musquash Estuary MPA Progress Report \(2007-2013\)](#)
- Draft Gully Ecosystem Monitoring Plan (to be released in 2016)

Conducted and provided support for priority monitoring activities (e.g., acoustic recorder deployments in the Gully MPA, contaminant and seasonal baseline sampling in Musquash MPA).

Published a review of the [management activities of the Gully](#) (2007-2010) in 2014.

Supported Whitehead Lab, Dalhousie University, in its efforts to understand cetacean use in the Gully MPA through a Grants and Contribution agreement.

**PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN
IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017**

**ACTIONS TAKEN,
APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016**

Advance priorities under the Coral and Sponge Conservation Strategy for Eastern Canada.

Provided advice and support to Science Branch on key areas of research and field programs in priority areas for corals and sponges.

Supported Resource Management in the design and implementation of measures in areas that fall under the Sensitive Benthic Areas policy that have concentrations of corals and sponges (e.g., Corsair Canyon, Jordan Basin and Bay of Fundy sites).

**ENVIRONMENTAL PREPAREDNESS
AND RESPONSE PLANNING**

Support risk-based response planning as part of Canada's World Class Tanker Safety System, including the development of Area Response Plans for Saint John, New Brunswick and Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia and their approaches. This work is being done in partnership with the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada and Environment Canada.

Supported the Atlantic Task Force Area Response Planning process under the Marine Safety Initiative (formerly World Class Tanker Safety System).

Coordinated DFO's contributions toward the development of Area Risk Assessments and Area Response Plans for two planning areas (Port Hawkesbury, NS and Saint John, NB).

Developed contracts with commercial fishing associations to collect relevant fishing information for risk assessments and response planning.

Developed Grants and Contribution agreements with First Nation and Aboriginal organizations for the collection of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge for risk assessments and response planning.

Developed a Grants and Contribution agreement with the Applied Geomatics Research Group (AGRG) to conduct Lidar surveys of portions of each project area to validate existing data about geography, infrastructure, and environmental sensitivities relevant to oil spill response.

Collate and provide departmental data and mapping products on ecological, economic, human use and cultural sensitivities and priorities for each Area Response Plan

Produced various geospatial products in support of the Marine Safety Initiative, including maps of commercial fisheries landings, fisheries effort and vessel presence.

Provided technical support to ongoing mapping projects under the Marine Safety Initiative.

Partnered with the Nova Scotia Community College Centre of Geographic Sciences to identify and map marine tourism uses in the region.

Developed a DFO GIS inventory in collaboration with Science Branch.

**PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN
IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017**

**ACTIONS TAKEN,
APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016**

Develop response plan and protection strategies for the Musquash Estuary MPA.

In collaboration with the Canadian Coast Guard and the Atlantic Emergency Response Team (ALERT), initiated the development of a response protocol for inclusion in the revised MPA management plan.

Ensured that the Musquash MPA is priority area of focus in Area Response Planning, regional preparedness activities, and review of the Energy East pipeline and marine terminal project.

Maintain and coordinate departmental program for environmental incident notifications, preparedness and response, including:

- **Supporting lead agencies in responding to environmental incidents (e.g., Coast Guard, Environment Canada and Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board), and**
- **Developing and applying risk assessment and decision-support tools for environmental response measures.**

Participated in oil spill exercises, working with Response Organizations and providing GIS information for decision support.

Shared OCMD data products on fishing activity, ecological and biological sensitivity, and spatial management measures with other agencies to support decision making (e.g., Transport Canada, Canadian Coast Guard, National Energy Board, Marine Security Operations Centre, Canadian Wildlife Service, Nova Scotia Department of Energy, Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Nova Scotia Community College, CANUSLANT Joint Response Team, World Wildlife Fund, Shell, Stantec, Dalhousie University, etc.).

Provided support through fisheries and ecological sensitivity mapping and communication to the fishing industry during the SS Arrow oil spill response and recovery in the Isle Madame area in 2015.

Participated in CANUSLANT planning meetings on environmental preparedness in the Gulf of Maine.

IMPLEMENTING OCEANS AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES USING A RISK-BASED APPROACH

Apply risk-based approaches to determine priority ocean and coastal management issues and needs for departmental action.

Worked with Oceans program representatives from across the country to develop guidance on risk assessment and the use of risk-based approaches in the Oceans program.

Used a systematic, risk-based approach to identify Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) that are a high priority for planning and management in the region.

Develop operational guidance and site profiles for priority bioregional EBSAs to inform planning, management and decision making.

Worked with Oceans program representatives from across the country to develop guidance for planning, management and decision making for EBSAs.

Developed a draft EBSA profile for Canso Ledges. Initiated the development of several other EBSA profiles.

**PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN
IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017**

**ACTIONS TAKEN,
APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016**

Develop accessible knowledge products to provide validated and consistent information for departmental advisory and decision-making activities.

Completed multiple requests for geospatial data products from other DFO staff and external groups, including other federal agencies, the Province of Nova Scotia, academics and private sector consulting companies.

Provided decision support through GIS knowledge products (e.g., statistics, maps).

Updated the region-wide fisheries mapping series with 2010-2014 commercial logbook data.

Contributed to national GIS initiatives.

Liaise and track ocean use developments and coordinate departmental involvement in development and activity reviews, such as offshore oil and gas exploration and development, renewable energy, marine terminals and cable installations.

Tracked ocean use developments (e.g., Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board call for bids and prospective areas, Beothuk offshore wind energy, Black Point quarry, Canaport marine terminal for Energy East pipeline).

Facilitated advice and communications between Hibernia Networks, TE Subcom and the commercial fishing sector to mitigate impacts of the Canada Express submarine telecommunications cable deployment on the Scotian Shelf and the Grand Banks.

Maintain partnership arrangements for the State of the Gulf of Maine and State of the Scotian Shelf report series.

Maintained partnership arrangements so that the [State of the Gulf of Maine](#) and [State of the Scotian Shelf](#) reports remained available in user-friendly formats.

Participate in intergovernmental governance processes, including the Regional Committee on Coastal and Ocean Management (RCCOM) and associated mechanisms with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board.

Supported intergovernmental collaboration through the RCCOM process:

- Provided Secretariat services to RCCOM (2014-2016).
- Shared data with other government departments (Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture, Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board) to support intergovernmental collaboration.
- Participated in a coastal remote sensing workshop.

Maintained joint work plan development and implementation with the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board and ECCC under respective MOU arrangements.

Renewed Memorandum of Understanding with New Brunswick on marine resources planning in Southwest New Brunswick.

PRIORITY AND ACTIONS LISTED IN IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES, 2014-2017

ACTIONS TAKEN, APRIL 2014 TO APRIL 2016

Participate in sub-regional ocean and coastal management initiatives, including:

- **Gulf of Maine Council (GOMC) and working groups**
- **Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI)**
- **Southwest New Brunswick Marine Advisory Committee (MAC)**
- **Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BOFEP)**

GOMC: Participated in the Gulf of Maine Council working group and council. Contributed to the GOMC's organizational assessment. Participated in the EcoSystem Indicator Partnership (ESIP) Steering Committee, including the development of a photo monitoring program in the Gulf of Maine. Co-chaired the Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Committee.

Bras d'Or CEPI: Participated in the Bras d'Or CEPI Steering Committee, Management Committee and Senior Council. Contributed to planning a community based conference on sustainable economic development in the watershed, scheduled for 2016. Initiated discussions on MPA opportunities in the Bras d'Or with the CEPI groups.

SWNB MAC: Co-chaired the Southwest New Brunswick Marine Advisory Committee Secretariat and provided support to the MAC. Five meetings of the MAC were held between April 2014 and April 2016. Supported the marine debris initiative that was launched in southwestern New Brunswick as a result of the work of the MAC. Supported the work of the MAC MPA working group. Provided funding for and participated in an evaluation of the MAC process, which recommended that the MAC be continued.

BOFEP: Participated in the BOFEP Steering Committee and the Ocean Health Index working group.

Advance priorities under the Sustainable Fisheries Framework, including providing support for:

- **implementation of the Sensitive Benthic Areas Policy**
- **development and maintenance of Integrated Fisheries Management Plans**
- **information and advice for the regional fisheries eco-certification processes**

Supported DFO's Resource Management program in the design and implementation of measures under the Sensitive Benthic Areas Policy, with a focus on Corsair Canyon, Jordan Basin and Bay of Fundy sites.

Participated in and provided advice for Marine Stewardship Council certification and audit processes for eleven Maritimes Region fisheries.

OCMD STAFF, APRIL 2014 - APRIL 2016 (not all staff present for the entire period):

Jana Aker*, Heather Breeze*, Sean Butler*, Alison Caines*, Kattie Calleja*, Scott Coffen-Smout, Penny Doherty, Derek Fenton, Tim Hall*, Glen Herbert, Daniel Houlihan*, Marty King, Tanya Koropatnick, Hillary MacDonnell*, Melanie MacLean*, Paul Macnab*, Jason Naug*, Rose Anne O'Reilly-Shrum*, Gary Pardy*, Anna Serdynska*, Mike Wambolt*, Maxine Westhead, Elise Will*

*Not present for entire period.



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