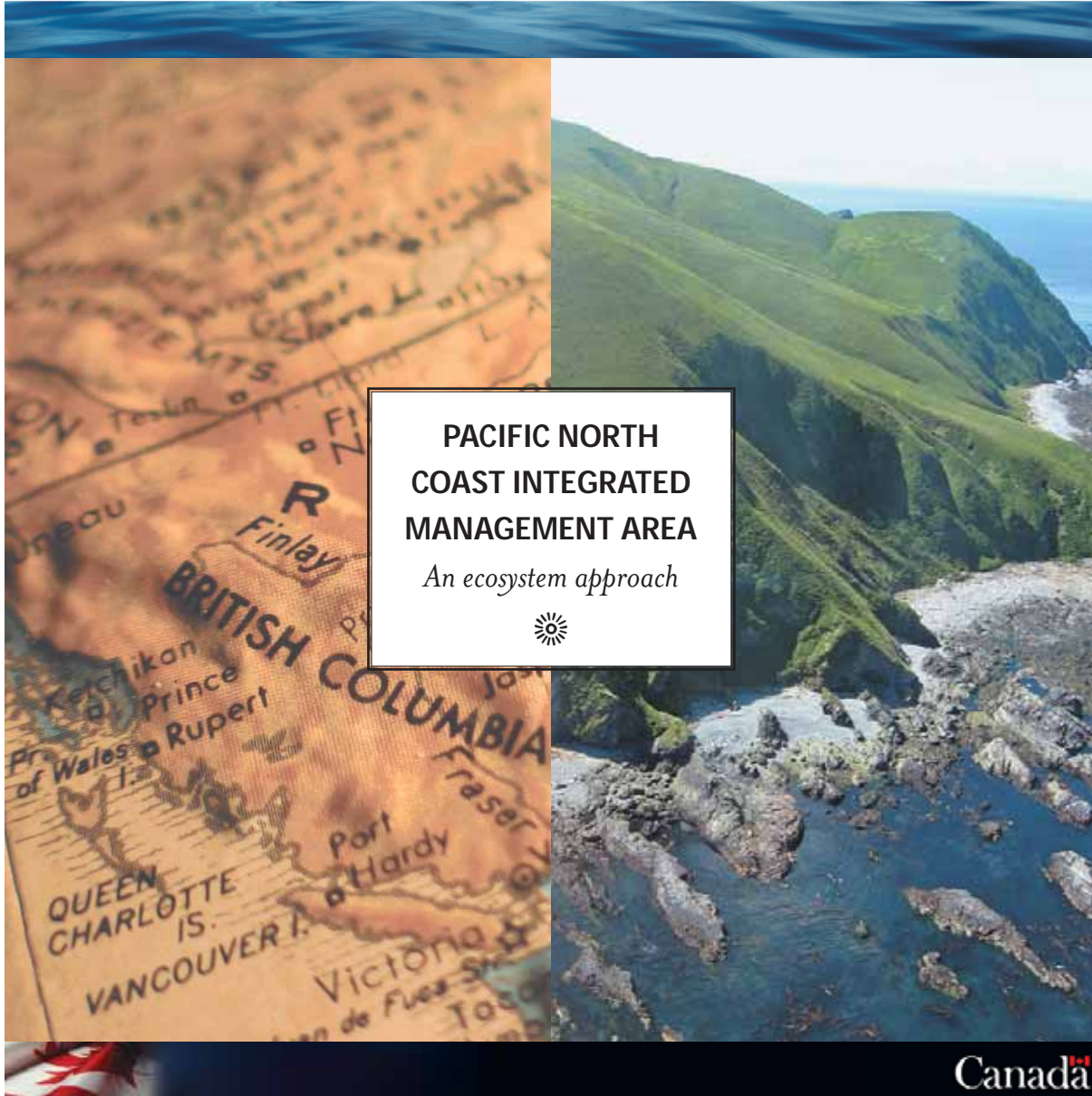




Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

Pêches et Océans  
Canada



Canada




Photo by Lyme Yamataka

Concern is growing that the current state of the oceans requires immediate action and attention. Many scientists and policy experts believe that solutions based on an integrated, ecosystem approach hold the greatest promise for delivering effective results.

An area in the Queen Charlotte Basin is the focus of a new approach to planning and managing human activities in the marine and coastal environments. This new approach – integrated, ecosystem-based management – will bring together First Nations, all levels of government, coastal communities and stakeholders in making decisions and considering issues.

The Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area, or PNCIMA, has been determined by Fisheries and Oceans Canada using ecological criteria – such as ocean currents, water depth and ocean floor topography – and jurisdictional boundaries. PNCIMA encompasses the coastal waters from the Canada/Alaska border in the north, to Quadra Island in the south, and extends from the coastal and estuarine waters in the east to the foot of the continental shelf on the west.

*managing activities in m*



The Queen Charlotte Basin was identified in 2004 by the Government of Canada as one of five priority areas for integrated planning. Integrated planning is one of the four pillars of the *Oceans Action Plan* supporting the sustainable development of Canada's oceans, offshore and coastal areas.

The PNCIMA initiative, as the major focus of the *Oceans Action Plan* in the Pacific Region, marks a shift toward a broader ecosystem approach to resource management. This is consistent with the Government of Canada's overall direction and with Fisheries and Oceans Canada's new *Wild Salmon Policy*.

arine environments



Photo by Jacob Joslin

^ Fog shrouds commercial fishing vessels at Port Edward.

## The ecosystem approach

An ecosystem approach is an integrated or holistic approach to resource management that aims to maintain an entire ecosystem in a healthy, productive and resilient condition. Ecosystem-based management differs from past approaches that have focused on a single species, sector, activity or concern; it considers the cumulative impacts of different sectors.

Integrated management incorporates social, cultural, environmental and economic values into the development and implementation of plans to guide and coordinate human activities. The ultimate goal is to reach general agreement on the best mix of conservation, sustainable resource use and economic development for oceans and coastal areas. Thus, ecosystem-based management – integrated with human activities, interests and impacts – will provide the basis for sustainable ocean resources for Canadians.



Photo by Jacob Joslin

## Four pillars of the Oceans Action Plan

- Effective international leadership, sovereignty and security to advance Canadian and global interests.
- Action to address health of the oceans.
- Integrated oceans management in:
  - Queen Charlotte Basin (BC)
  - Beaufort Sea (North)
  - Gulf of St. Lawrence (Quebec and Atlantic)
  - Scotian Shelf (Nova Scotia)
  - Placentia Bay/ South Coast (Newfoundland)
- Oceans technology innovation.

*maintaining a healthy ecosystem*



## Involving all interests and considering multiple issues

PNCIMA is a rich and diverse area. Integrated planning will consider First Nations interests; fisheries and other marine uses such as aquaculture development, oil and gas exploration, shipping and recreation; designation of marine protected areas; and scientific knowledge.

The plan will be developed through a collaborative, inclusive and consensus-based planning process that includes participation by First Nations, all levels of government, stakeholders and coastal communities. The goal is to develop a plan that is accepted by First Nations and stakeholders, endorsed by regulatory authorities and coordinated under the *Oceans Act* by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.



Photo by Tom Hlavac

### Participants in integrated management will aim to:

- Protect, maintain and rehabilitate, where feasible, marine resources.
- Manage marine resources on an ecosystem basis.
- Respect and protect First Nations fishing rights.
- Support a precautionary approach to management.
- Consolidate information by integrating First Nations expertise and traditional knowledge with western science.
- Create inclusive management, protection and restoration arrangements.
- Foster sustainable opportunities for First Nations and all coastal communities within the context of the wider BC and Canadian economy.



Photos by Jacob Joslin



- ^ A cruise ship docks at Atlin Terminal in Prince Rupert.
- > A catch of prawns gets checked to count the number of females caught.



Photo by Tom Hlavac

^ Children vie for the biggest bullhead at the Seafest in Prince Rupert.

## A coordination role

While not intended to provide a detailed prescription for all measures required to achieve its objectives, PNCIMA will function as an umbrella for various ocean management processes. The aim of the integrated management plan is to augment or enhance existing decision-making processes and link sector planning and management to an overarching set of management objectives and targets. Regulatory authorities will continue to remain responsible and accountable for implementing management policies and measures within their mandates and jurisdictions. Rather than building an entirely separate process, the goal of PNCIMA is to build references and linkages to existing management strategies and actions.



Photo by Jacob Joslin

**The kinds of actions that are consistent with integrated, or ecosystem-based, management, include:**

- Integrated planning that involves multiple stakeholders and considers the cumulative impacts of multiple human activities on ecosystems, as well as the effects of long-term environmental changes such as global warming.
- Zoning regions of the ocean by designating areas for particular allowable uses, including networks of marine protected areas, capable of protecting biodiversity and habitats.

*enhancing existing strategies*



## Building the foundation

Activities are underway to lay a solid groundwork for PNCIMA by collecting and cataloguing data and relevant information. This includes three key documents:

- *Ecosystem overview assessment* – will provide a comprehensive look at the ecosystem of the area.
- *Marine use analysis* – will provide information on the political, jurisdictional, socio-cultural and economic activities of the area. This overview will map identified activities and resource uses.
- *Ecologically and biologically significant area map* – will provide information necessary to identify sensitive areas that may need to be given special consideration.

These products will help produce a future ecosystem assessment for PNCIMA, which will identify and assess areas of ecological stress and potential conflict. All these documents will become publicly available and serve as key reference materials to guide future planning decisions.

∨ The Ridley Island coal and grain port, with the Watson Island pulp mill in the background.



Photo by Margaret Butscher

### Actions consistent with integrated, or ecosystem-based, management, include:

- Co-management that encourages governments and diverse stakeholders to share the responsibility for management and stewardship.
- Adaptive management that allows learning from management actions through scientific evaluation, testing of alternative management approaches and readjustment as new information becomes available from monitoring.
- Long-term ocean and coastal monitoring and research to continuously collect and integrate relevant biogeophysical, social and economic data.



### For more information:

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Photo by Mike Jakubowski



^ Fish are counted for stock assessment at a Nisga'a fish wheel on the Nass River.



Photo by Trevor Gray

## First Nations collaboration

The participation of First Nations in integrated planning will be critical to achieving the sound economic, social and cultural development of the many coastal Aboriginal communities that are inextricably tied to the marine environment. The *Oceans Act* (1997) calls for involvement of all stakeholders and First Nations in integrated management.

Along the central and northern coasts of BC, Aboriginal peoples make up almost half of the total coastal population. Existing case law outlines the legal rights of First Nations to be consulted on decisions that might affect any present or future Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is working with coastal First Nations to develop a framework and collaborative process to help First Nations become involved in integrated marine-use planning in PNCIMA and to ensure that they have the capacity and support required to actively participate.

*collaboration & participation*