



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada



2023-24



Departmental Plan



Canada 

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Table of Contents

From the Minister	1
Plans at a glance	3
Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks	7
Fisheries	7
Aquatic ecosystems.....	21
Marine navigation	35
Marine operations and response	41
Internal services: planned results	50
Planned spending and human resources	61
Planned spending	61
Planned human resources.....	63
Estimates by vote	64
Future-oriented condensed statement of operations	65
Corporate information	67
Organizational profile.....	67
Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do.....	67
Operating context	67
Reporting framework	68
Supporting information on the program inventory	69
Supplementary information tables	69
Federal tax expenditures.....	69
Organizational contact information.....	69
Appendix: definitions.....	71
Endnotes	75

From the Minister

As Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, I am pleased to present the 2023–24 Departmental Plan, which shows how our Department will manage and develop the blue economy in a way that is socially, economically, and environmentally beneficial to all Canadians.

Together, with our many partners, we are determined to address the challenges facing our ocean and freshwater ecosystems and the species that call them home. This is especially crucial in light of climate change and its impact on marine life and essential biodiversity, as well as the coastal, rural, and Indigenous communities that depend on them.

Oceans also present an important opportunity through investing in ocean-based climate solutions. By restoring aquatic ecosystems rich in carbon, such as kelp beds or eel grass, we can sequester carbon while helping rebuild the diverse sea life that depends on this habitat.

Domestically, Canada’s ocean economy is in the midst of transitioning to a low-carbon and climate resilient future that is more sustainable, prosperous, innovative, diverse, and inclusive. On a variety of international issues, Canada continues to be a global leader in fighting illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, safe navigation, and leveraging technology to better understand the waters.

Our ongoing commitment to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is at the heart of everything we do. We recognize that fisheries, oceans, aquatic habitat, and marine waterways hold tremendous social, cultural, spiritual, and economic importance, and we are committed to building renewed Nation-to-Nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

The 2023–24 Departmental Plan outlines several priorities to help Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard progress on these goals in the years ahead. With the help of our many partners, we will:

- Conserve 25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025, and 30 per cent by 2030, and champion this goal internationally;
- Work closely with Indigenous partners through ongoing co-design, co-development, and co-delivery of programs, to manage Canada’s ocean resources and to meet our conservation objectives;
- Grow Canada’s ocean and freshwater economy, support the long-term sustainable growth of our fish and seafood sector, and make sure we are well positioned to succeed in the global ocean sectors of the blue economy;
- Tackle illegal and unauthorized activities such as overfishing on the high seas and unreported cash sales on the wharves to support conservation and catch integrity; and
- Renew the Canadian Coast Guard fleet through the National Shipbuilding Strategy, so personnel have the equipment they need to carry out critical services to Canadians while simultaneously revitalizing a world-class marine industry that supports Canadian



technological innovation and brings jobs and prosperity to many communities across the country.

I invite all Canadians to learn about the priorities set out in this Departmental Plan and the actions we are taking in 2023–24 that will help secure a more environmentally sustainable and economically prosperous future for all.

The Honourable Joyce Murray, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

Plans at a glance

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) are responsible for a wide range of activities including promoting habitat restoration and marine protection, protecting species and stocks, ensuring safe and accessible waterways, and supporting fishery workers and businesses. DFO and CCG work with other federal departments, other levels of government, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders to grow Canada's ocean and freshwater economy, support the long-term sustainable growth of Canada's fish and seafood sector, and protect the safety of mariners in Canadian waters and Canada's marine environment, ensuring Canada is positioned to succeed in the fast-growing global ocean sectors while advancing reconciliation, conservation, and climate objectives. As part of its ongoing work to improve these services and ensure they are delivered by a workforce that is representative of the peoples and communities being served, the Department will continue to foster diversity and inclusion among its employees. Across all activities, DFO and CCG continue to prioritize reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and the recognition of rights related to fisheries, oceans, aquatic habitats, and marine waterways. The following sections highlight some of this year's key departmental initiatives that will support Government of Canada priorities and mandate commitments.

Fisheries

To ensure the protection of Canada's species and stocks, the Department will continue to strengthen management regimes to help rebuild long-term abundance and support biodiversity. In addition, the Department will support the ongoing implementation of the modernized *Fisheries Act*, which restores lost protections, rebuilds fish populations, considers Indigenous Knowledge, and incorporates modern safeguards so that fish and their habitats are protected for future generations.

Canada also has the opportunity to be a global leader in sustainable, next-generation aquaculture in British Columbia. To advance innovation and support the ecological sustainability of the salmon aquaculture sector in B.C., DFO is taking the next step to transition from open-net pen aquaculture in the province's coastal waters. The transition will require a strong plan for proceeding in a way that greatly minimizes or eliminates risk to wild salmon, while also taking into account social, cultural, and economic factors. Following extensive engagement with the provincial government, First Nations, local governments, industry, and conservation organizations, a transition plan will be released in summer 2023.

The Department will also develop rebuilding plans for depleted stocks, in a manner that is in line with the best available scientific advice, and advance reconciliation objectives. Consistent with these efforts, DFO will also continue clean-up efforts to address lost and abandoned fishing gear and ocean plastics and advance reconciliation objectives. Complementing our domestic work, DFO will support global and regional efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing as well as to reduce the number of overfished stocks internationally, working through regional fisheries management organizations and similar arrangements.

Aquatic Ecosystems

The protection and restoration of our freshwater, oceans, and coasts will be a focus of DFO's work. This, in turn, will support the rebuilding of the long-term abundance of our aquatic biodiversity and of the resources that they provide. DFO will continue to work with partners to

conserve 25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030. To ensure the long-term effectiveness of our conservation approaches, DFO will also work with key partners to continue to implement protection standards, announced in 2019, for federal marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

DFO will advance the implementation of the Pacific Salmon Strategy and will work closely with partners to develop an approach for restoring and rebuilding wild Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats. These collective efforts will support salmon, which have social, cultural, and economic significance for many Canadians and their communities.

DFO will also implement the renewed Oceans Protection Plan, including the continued enhancement of the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Fund, which undertakes projects to restore aquatic habitat in coastal and marine areas.

The Department will advance the implementation of the new *Fisheries Act*, which improves the protection of Canada’s fisheries and their ecosystems. The Act reinstates lost protections by providing comprehensive protection for all fish and fish habitat and restores the previous prohibition against the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat.

Marine Navigation, Operations and Response

Working in close collaboration with other federal departments, DFO will work to ensure Canada is prepared to proactively mitigate and respond to emerging incidents and hazards. To this end, DFO will advance the renewal of the Canadian Coast Guard fleet, which will ensure that CCG has the marine assets needed to support coastal communities and ensure safe, accessible, and secure waters.

DFO will also work with other federal departments to support recovery efforts following Hurricane Fiona in Atlantic Canada and Eastern Quebec. The Department’s efforts will be focused on addressing the hurricane’s impact to critical infrastructure, including small craft harbours that were damaged or destroyed by the storm.

Reconciliation

Through all its core responsibilities, DFO and CCG are committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through renewed, Nation-to-Nation, government-to-government, and Inuit-Crown relationships based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership as the foundation for transformative change. In 2023-24, the Department will support Indigenous leadership and collaboration in marine conservation stewardship and restoration activities, continue to implement Indigenous commercial and collaborative programs, and ensure that Indigenous Peoples are partners in decision-making and play a meaningful role in the management of waterways through the Oceans Protection Plan.

DFO/CCG integration

DFO and CCG work together to provide services to Canadians. For example, CCG vessels and expertise enable DFO scientists to conduct research and fishery officers to monitor fishing activity. To enhance service delivery and efficiencies in 2023–24 and beyond, DFO and CCG will ensure operations and services are leveraged and fully integrated across a range of platforms and activities such as science, conservation and protection, environmental response, partnerships with stakeholders and Indigenous communities, and internal services.

For more information on DFO's plans, priorities, and planned results, see the [Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks](#) section of this plan.

Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks

This section contains information on the Department’s planned results and resources for each of its core responsibilities. It also contains information on key risks related to achieving those results.

Fisheries

Description

Manage Canada’s fisheries, Indigenous fisheries programs, aquaculture activities, and support commercial fishing harbours while applying relevant legislation.



Planning highlights

The Fisheries core responsibility is focused on advancing the following Departmental Results:

- Canadian fisheries are sustainably managed
- Canadian aquaculture is sustainably managed
- the commercial fishing industry has access to safe harbours
- fisheries, oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are protected from unlawful exploitation and interference
- scientific information on fisheries resources is available to inform management decisions
- enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people

The indicators used to measure progress towards these results appear in the [Planned results for Fisheries](#) table beginning on page 18.

Key priorities for 2023–24 and beyond include the following commitments from the [Minister’s mandate letter](#)ⁱ:

- work to support sustainable, stable, prosperous fisheries through the continued implementation of the modernized *Fisheries Act*, which restores lost protections, rebuilds fish populations, and incorporates modern safeguards so that fish and fish habitats are protected for future generations and Canada’s fisheries can continue to grow the economy and sustain coastal communities
- continue working with business, academic institutions, non-profits, provincial and territorial governments, and Indigenous partners to grow Canada’s ocean and freshwater economy and support the long-term sustainable growth of Canada’s fish and seafood sector, ensuring Canada is positioned to succeed in the fast-growing global ocean sectors of the blue economy and advancing reconciliation, conservation and climate objectives
- work in close collaboration with provincial and territorial authorities, Indigenous partners, fishing and stewardship organizations and implicated communities to implement the Pacific Salmon Strategy
- make new investments and develop a conservation strategy to restore and rebuild wild Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats
- expand the Ghost Gear Program to continue efforts by fishers and others to retrieve and address abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear and ocean plastics
- work with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions

- advance consistent, sustainable, and collaborative fisheries arrangements with Indigenous and non-Indigenous fish harvesters
- continue to work with the province of British Columbia and Indigenous communities on a responsible plan to transition from open-net pen salmon farming in coastal British Columbia waters by 2025 and work to introduce Canada’s first-ever Aquaculture Act
- continue to support improvement in small craft harbours and work to ensure our investments in harbours are resulting in climate-resilient infrastructure that serves the needs of the fishing industry and local residents

DFO works to support conservation and healthy and sustainable fishing and aquaculture sectors. Programs in the Fisheries core responsibility ensure that fisheries, aquaculture, and the seafood industry are well-managed; that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected and Indigenous interests are supported (including enhanced access in recognition of rights); that safe commercial harbours support the industry; and that fish are harvested and farmed in a safe, orderly, and sustainable manner. On top of these ongoing activities, in 2023–24, the Department has plans, discussed below, for whales, salmon, Hurricane Fiona recovery, and more.

Blue Economy Strategy

DFO plans to publish Canada’s Blue Economy Strategy (BES). The Strategy will set out the whole-of-Government plan for transforming Canada’s ocean sectors from a traditional ocean economy toward a sustainable blue economy. This will include examining how to grow Canada’s ocean and freshwater economy and support the long-term sustainable growth of Canada’s fish and seafood sector, which will ensure that Canada is positioned to succeed in the fast-growing blue economy sector, as well as advancing reconciliation, conservation, and climate objectives. Technology, innovation, and ecosystem restoration will drive renewed prosperity and opportunity for Canadians, particularly for Canada’s coastal and Indigenous communities, by bolstering the capacity of our oceans and coasts to support marine life, protect against climate impacts, reduce carbon emissions, and feed Canada and the world.

Sustainable fisheries

In 2022, the Fish Stocks provisions (FSP) of the modernized *Fisheries Act* introduced new legally-binding obligations to develop and implement rebuilding plans for major fish stocks that have declined to or below their limit reference point (LRP, the line between the cautious and critical zones) to restore the stock to a level above the LRP. This work, which contributes to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to implement the modernized *Fisheries Act*, will restore depleted fish stocks, which will have socio-economic and cultural benefits for Canadians. DFO plans to increase the development of rebuilding plans to meet the requirements of the FSP, which will help restore and rebuild more fish stocks and help ensure sustainable fisheries for future generations. There are currently 30 fish stocks subject to the FSP and, of these, 14 are below their LRP and require a rebuilding plan, which will be completed by the end of 2023–24 to meet the regulatory timelines. By March 2024, DFO aims to add a second, larger batch of stocks, as determined by regulation, to the list of those subject to the FSP.

The Department is developing a more streamlined and nationally-consistent approach to **fisheries science and stock assessment advisory processes**. This transformation will ensure more timely provision of fisheries science advice to inform resource management decisions. The renewed process, along with the new template and guidance documents, will be implemented in 2023–24.

DFO is also piloting **an ecosystem approach to fisheries management** to incorporate ecosystem variables (including climate, oceanographic, and ecological factors) more broadly into management decisions.

DFO will coordinate the implementation of the **G7 Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities**. The global ocean has no true boundaries, so impacts in other regions of the world can have an effect on sustainability in Canada. Canadian efforts focus on the sustainable management of internationally-managed fish stocks through regional fisheries management organizations and bilateral and multilateral fisheries arrangements, addressing marine plastic pollution, and promoting greater ambition in expanding marine conservation (which is further discussed in the Aquatic Ecosystems core responsibility below). DFO will work on tackling illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing by working to negotiate measures that advance rules-based order in regional fisheries management organizations and enforcing these through the ongoing surveillance of dark vessels (vessels on which location transmitting devices have been switched off) in the South Pacific and off the coast of Ecuador. Beginning in 2023–24, DFO will work with Global Affairs Canada to implement the Shared Ocean Fund, an initiative announced under [Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy](#)ⁱⁱ, which will champion sustainable and healthy oceans through improved international ocean governance, work to strengthen and enforce the rules-based order in the region, and support Indo-Pacific states' blue economy potential. This will include engagement in regional fisheries management organizations in the Pacific, with the objective of Canada taking a more prominent role in strengthening the rules-based international order, and increased enforcement activity. The Strategy will include funding to support regional enforcement capacity-building initiatives with like-minded partners and expand the capabilities of DFO's Dark Vessel Detection platform. More information on DFO's work under the Blueprint and the Indo-Pacific Strategy can be found below in core responsibility 2: Aquatic Ecosystems, below.

Training will play a key role in some of the Department's other 2023–24 work to detect and disrupt IUU fishing. Under a new partnership with the Atlantic Police Academy training facility in Prince Edward Island, DFO will train and equip **90 new fishery officers, including new instructors**. This is part of the Department's work to better support its patrol operations in areas of strategic importance in Canada. DFO will also host the **Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop** in Halifax in August 2023, which will include participants from over 70 countries and will support the capacity of fishery officers from developing countries.

In response to the Minister's mandate letter commitment to expand the **Ghost Gear Program** to continue efforts by fishers and others to clean up lost and abandoned fishing gear and ocean plastics, DFO will enhance the program through improvements to data collection, lost and retrieved gear reporting systems, a regulatory review, and promotion of sustainable gear and best practices. In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Fiona in Atlantic Canada, [a call for proposals](#)ⁱⁱⁱ to support ghost gear efforts was launched in November 2022. DFO will provide up to \$28.4 million in funding through the Ghost Gear Fund to support 2023–24 projects targeting action in the affected areas. Reduction in ghost gear contributes to economic stability for fish harvesters, the protection of marine mammals and other species at risk, the creation of jobs in coastal and rural communities, and healthier coastal communities.

Healthy populations of whales in the wild are important culturally, socially, and economically in Canada, possessing an intrinsic value to Canadians as well as economic benefits through tourism and other activities. DFO's work on **Whales** includes a range of departmental activities related to the understanding and management of whales in Canadian waters, with a concentration on endangered populations. This work focuses on three endangered species and populations: Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) in British Columbia, the St. Lawrence Estuary Beluga (SLEB) in Quebec, and the North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW) in the Atlantic. The initiative supports the ministerial mandate letter commitment for having a world-leading plan to protect marine species at risk. In 2023–24, the initiative will

- develop integrated rebuilding programs and conservation plans for an initial group of prioritized Pacific salmon stocks by spring 2023. The ongoing development, approval, and initiation of these plans by March 2026 will rely on engagement with Indigenous groups as well as other partners and stakeholders
- include adaptive management measures, such as triggered area-based fishing closures, to address the key threats to SRKW related to prey availability and acoustic and physical disturbance
- expand the Marine Mammal Response Program to add more trained and equipped response teams to safely respond to incidents

In 2022–23, DFO led a [Horizontal Evaluation of the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program](#)^{iv}. The goal of the program, which is jointly delivered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, DFO, and Environment and Climate Change Canada, is to provide reasonable assurance that molluscan shellfish are safe for consumption as food by controlling the harvesting of all molluscs within the tidal waters of Canada. The evaluation found that, despite some challenges and issues, the program is achieving its intended results where it is delivered, specifically the objective of minimizing health risks and ensuring shellfish safety and quality is being met. This enables Canada to maintain trade with export markets. However, the evaluation identified gaps due to lack of clarity about program scope and priorities and found that key sources of information are lacking for operational decision-making and risk management, as well as for measuring and reporting on program performance. As outlined in the [management action plan](#)^v, in 2023–24, program partners will work to provide clear and timely information about the program design and delivery to staff and to stakeholders and will review, update, and communicate the program's priorities and goals. This work, as well as updates to decision-making processes and governance, will be reflected in up-to-date strategies to improve the performance of the program.

Sustainable aquaculture

Wild Pacific salmon are an iconic species that have high environmental and cultural value both to Indigenous Peoples and to all people of British Columbia, but are facing historic threats. In response to the Minister's mandate letter commitment and in collaboration with partners, including the Province of British Columbia and First Nations communities, DFO will finalize a responsible plan to transition from **open-net pen salmon aquaculture** in coastal B.C. waters by summer 2023. Following the completion of the plan, DFO will further engage with First Nations, the Province of B.C., and stakeholders on implementation. This work follows on the July 2022 discussion framework, which outlined the next steps in the transition process and whose four-phased process runs until June 2023. The proposed vision of this open-net pen transition plan is to advance innovation and growth in sustainable aquaculture in B.C. that progressively minimizes or eliminates interactions between marine open-net pens and wild salmon, while also taking into account social, cultural, and economic objectives. In 2023–24, the Department will also work alongside provincial aquaculture authorities to assess risks and management

measures related to interactions between farmed and wild salmon in Atlantic Canada, particularly the interbreeding of escaped farm fish with wild salmon, including the presence of European genetic material in farmed salmon.

Pacific and Atlantic salmon

Climate change, habitat loss, and fishing pressures have negatively affected Pacific salmon populations. In response to the Minister's mandate letter commitment, work is underway in close collaboration with provincial and territorial authorities, Indigenous partners, fishing and stewardship organizations, and implicated communities to implement the **Pacific Salmon Strategy**. The **Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative** (PSSI)^{vi} is being implemented as a coordinated response to ongoing declines in prioritized Pacific salmon stocks to ensure that they are protected and restored through targeted action in collaboration with partners. This transformative initiative, launched in 2021, includes Pacific salmon activities across multiple programs in the Department, including the Salmonid Enhancement Program and the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. Key activities will be delivered under four pillars: Conservation and Stewardship, Salmon Enhancement, Harvest Transformation, and Integration and Collaboration.

In 2023–24, the Department will advance PSSI implementation by focusing on a number of key areas:

- The development of integrated rebuilding programs and conservation plans for an initial group of prioritized Pacific salmon stocks. The development, approval, and initiation of these plans by March 2026 will rely on engagement with Indigenous groups as well as other partners and stakeholders.
- The approval of projects for the second phase of the renewed British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund.
- The launch of the Salmon Restoration Centre of Expertise (COE), which represents an initiative to provide consistent and coherent Pacific salmon habitat restoration across the Pacific region, including developing habitat restoration tools and restoration plan frameworks and developing regional strategies and policies to guide Pacific salmon habitat restoration by DFO and restoration partners. In addition, the COE will develop and implement a process to enhance relationships and capacity to respond to natural disaster events (such as flooding) that require habitat restoration.
- Foundational work toward the development of a new Pacific enhancement policy framework and broader modernization of Pacific salmon hatchery programming and infrastructure, which includes early project planning towards a small number of new community-based and DFO hatcheries (site identification, engagement with First Nations partners, technical assessments, and early project approvals); retrofitting existing hatchery capacity to better support PSSI priorities (including stock rebuilding and conservation); strengthening hatchery science capacity and linkages; and improving fish health and biological and technical support for DFO and community-based hatchery programming.
- The identification of a location for the first of four new community-based hatcheries.
- Full implementation of the **Pacific Salmon Commercial Licence Retirement Program**^{vii}, **Pacific Salmon Indigenous Communal Commercial Alternation Program**^{viii}, and **Derelict Vessel Mitigation and Gear Disposal Program**^{ix}.
- Continued engagement on the design and implementation of new collaborative processes with First Nations and the B.C. Government, and leveraging existing governance structures in the Yukon.
- Advancing the implementation of a mass marking and mark-selective fisheries strategy. Mass marking removes the adipose fin from fish raised in hatcheries before they are

released to the wild (which creates a visual “mark”). Mark-selective fisheries are fisheries that target the harvest of these marked fish.

Overall, the Department will advance activities with external partners, increase science capacity, and restore habitat to support conservation and rebuilding of Pacific salmon. This work will also support sustainable fisheries, including advancing toward the modernization of harvest management approaches across all three harvesting sectors (Indigenous, commercial, and recreational) as one key component of PSSI.

Also, in response to the [Evaluation of DFO’s Activities in Support of Pacific Salmon^x](#), the Department will make the following improvements: develop a strategic direction and vision for Pacific salmon, implement a coordinated approach for transfer payments, implement tools and methodologies to track resources, implement a performance measurement strategy, and clearly define the governance framework. For more information, please see the [management action plan^{xi}](#). This work will support the overall integration and coordination of PSSI. Upon completion of these activities by the end of 2023–24, DFO will be significantly better equipped to manage, track, and evaluate progress on Pacific salmon-related programs and activities.

Atlantic salmon populations have declined to historic lows, which has resulted in significant impacts to recreational, subsistence, and food, social and ceremonial fisheries across their range. Despite these declines, Atlantic salmon remain socially, culturally, and economically important to many coastal communities across Atlantic Canada and Quebec. The Department is taking action through the development of Canada’s first-ever Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Strategy (WASCS), which will be published in 2023. Recognizing the social and cultural importance of this species, the WASCS will be developed collaboratively. From its earliest stages of development, the Department has listened and learned from the experience and expertise of Indigenous people, Indigenous organizations, partners, and stakeholders. Engaging for over a year to inform the strategy, DFO has hosted [more than 60 meetings^{xii}](#) with Indigenous Peoples, partners, and stakeholders representing over 75 Indigenous communities and organizations, as well as partner and stakeholder organizations, and has received over 450 responses through its online engagement platform. The WASCS will realize the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy and will prioritize and direct conservation activities aimed at restoring and rebuilding populations guided by the principles outlined in the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy. Once completed, the WASCS will also be implemented collaboratively, by providing a common vision and direction for conservation actions that include all of those who want to contribute to Atlantic salmon conservation. This work supports the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to make new investments and develop a conservation strategy to restore and rebuild wild Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats.

Small craft harbours

Small craft harbours are critical to the commercial fishing industry and to the Government’s Blue Economy Strategy, and offer a primary opportunity for supporting Indigenous, rural, and northern communities where fishing activities dependent on local small craft harbours are often the major source of employment. DFO is responsible for keeping its vast network of harbours safe, accessible, and in good repair, including by clearing out abandoned vessels, divesting lower-priority harbours, and building new harbours where they are needed, such as those underway in Clyde River and planned in Arctic Bay in Nunavut. Recognizing the importance of supporting a broader user base and responding to new and emerging needs, DFO will analyze the potential benefits of expanding strategic investments in community harbour infrastructure to support aquaculture, ecotourism, climate change priority areas, and Indigenous interests. Specifically, **aquaculture** currently represents a small portion of users of the Department’s

harbours, but is the world’s fastest growing food production sector. DFO will support the Government of Canada’s focus on reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples by expanding existing infrastructure to provide Indigenous communities with opportunities to participate in the blue economy as well as providing economic benefits to their communities.

Since 2007, DFO’s Newfoundland and Labrador Region has been carrying out **scientific studies on coastal marine infrastructure**, such as wharves and breakwaters, to assess their impacts on nearshore marine habitats. These studies, now completed, strongly indicate that with mitigations and changes to construction methods, marine infrastructure in certain areas may have no negative impact on fish and fish habitat. In some cases, a positive impact was observed. DFO intends for these studies and their planned publications to form the basis of a regional code of practice for certain coastal marine infrastructure. Codes of practice are designed to protect fish and fish habitat while providing for efficient regulatory review of projects by supplying procedures for future activities, leading to improved protection for fish and fish habitat, as well as regulatory certainty and clear guidance for partners in the marine infrastructure industry. This work supports the Minister’s mandate letter commitments related to the modernized *Fisheries Act* and small craft harbours.

DFO will also focus on its continued commitment to **climate change resiliency** and adapting harbour facilities in response to climate change. According to a [2019 report](#)^{xiii} by the Council of Canadian Academies to the Treasury Board, physical infrastructure and coastal communities are two of the top six areas of climate change risk facing Canada. Harbour infrastructure is particularly vulnerable to climate change as the increased frequency of storms, increased salinity of sea water (which causes corrosion), and sea-level rise all contribute to faster degradation, and ultimately higher costs of repairs. This was clearly demonstrated during Hurricane Fiona, when 142 out of 180 DFO harbours in the path of the storm were damaged. Early analysis shows that harbour infrastructure that was recently upgraded or regularly maintained suffered less damage than infrastructure that was not, so it will be critical to ensure that infrastructure is properly maintained throughout its lifecycle. Harbour infrastructure will be designed and planned using a variety of tools to ensure that assets are built using the best information on climate resilience currently available. DFO will incorporate climate change adaptation tools into infrastructure design to ensure that all new investments in harbour infrastructure are climate resilient. Existing climate change adaptation tools include coastal studies; the Canada Extreme Water Level Adaptation Tool; the Coastal Infrastructure Vulnerability Index; and engineering teams using experience, inspection data, local knowledge, and environmental conditions.

In response to **Hurricane Fiona** in Atlantic Canada and Eastern Quebec, DFO will administer part of the Hurricane Fiona Recovery Fund, which includes two years of funding of \$100 million for small craft harbours and ghost gear recovery efforts in affected areas. The funding will help ensure that small craft harbours impacted by the storm are operational for users and are made more resilient against future extreme weather, in addition to ensuring safe navigation so harvesters can get back on the water. Continuing in 2023–24, the program will also help clean up, dredge, and continue the needed repairs and rebuilding of critical infrastructure at harbours impacted by the hurricane. The program will also further assess structural damages and losses and will pursue a long-term capital asset management plan to ensure that infrastructure is built stronger and better, and will be resilient against climate change going forward.

Reconciliation

Under the Fisheries core responsibility, in response to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to work with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into

planning and policy decisions, DFO will implement the **Action Plan for the Renewal and Expansion of DFO’s Indigenous Programs**^{xiv} through ongoing co-development, co-design, and co-delivery with Indigenous organizations and communities. The Action Plan outlines the Department’s multi-year strategy to respond to the recommendations of the Indigenous Program Review (IPR, a collaboration with the National Indigenous Fisheries Institute) to strengthen DFO’s commercial and collaborative Indigenous programs and bring them into greater alignment with Indigenous definitions of success. The Action Plan also highlights cross-cutting recommendations to influence implementation of the broader **DFO-CCG Reconciliation Strategy**^{xv}. In 2023–24, DFO will introduce new and innovative program support structures built on the IPR principles of co-design, co-development, and co-delivery with Indigenous partners. This includes the establishment of an Indigenous-led Capacity Development Team that will offer trusted third-party advisory services to more than 160 collaborative program participants, as well as a dedicated Indigenous Training and Skills Development hub that will improve and coordinate access to relevant training opportunities and career path development for all communities and organizations engaged in DFO’s Indigenous fisheries programs. These newly-established structures will ensure that Indigenous definitions of success are embedded in its programs. The Department will also continue to implement a pilot Indigenous Engagement Initiative in the Maritimes, focusing on continued proactive relationship-building and implementation of Indigenous perspectives in membership training.

This work is being done in part as a result of the 2021 **Evaluation of the Indigenous Commercial Fisheries (ICF) Program**^{xvi}. In response to the evaluation, the **management action plan**^{xvii} committed to clarifying accountabilities and key milestones for the implementation of the Indigenous Program Review (IPR) Action Plan and determine how progress on the IPR action plan will be integrated into departmental reporting on key priorities. Implementation of the management action plan will contribute to more effective and efficient delivery on departmental commitments under the IPR Action Plan.

In response to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to advance consistent, sustainable, and collaborative **fisheries arrangements** with Indigenous and non-Indigenous fish harvesters, the Department will work in partnership with Indigenous communities through negotiations and consultations to recognize and implement Aboriginal and treaty rights, including the right to pursue a moderate livelihood (i.e. Supreme Court of Canada’s *Marshall* decision). DFO will also work to enhance opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous partners in fisheries, notably through DFO’s Indigenous programs, treaty and other rights recognition mechanisms, and through the use of legislative tools that enable collaboration and coordination of fisheries management processes and decision-making. DFO will seek to take meaningful steps to design and implement opportunities that move toward joint, equal, or shared decision-making with Indigenous partners in fisheries, consistent with commitments in DFO’s Reconciliation Strategy and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For example, in 2023–24, DFO will work in close collaboration with 35 Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Peskotomuhkati Nations in Eastern Canada to develop the next phase of implementing the right to fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood that will better reflect their unique visions of the fishery as well as broader economic reconciliation objectives. This will result in enhanced collaboration on the management of fishing activity, both for food, social, and ceremonial purposes and for commercial purposes, with roles and responsibilities articulated through formal arrangements and agreements. This will bring more predictability and stability to fisheries management as a whole and allow Indigenous communities to participate in the decision-making process.

DFO will develop a web-based portal to highlight research and monitoring pertaining to Canada’s aquatic ecosystems that bridge multiple knowledge systems to amplify collaborative research, foster awareness of diverse approaches to research, and strengthen partnerships. In addition, through an iterative co-design and refinement process with Indigenous partners, the portal will strive to reflect important values (e.g. ethical research practices), needs (e.g. access, usability), and concerns (e.g. Indigenous data sovereignty).

Gender-based analysis plus



The Department is conducting a gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) study to identify potential barriers that affect the progression of a researcher in relation to the Department’s application of the **Research Scientist Career Progression Framework**. This analysis is aimed at focusing on improving gender equity for female research scientists. Through data analysis and consultation with other science-based departments and agencies, DFO expects to identify the internal policies and programs that represent opportunities for adjustment to enhance equitable progression of a researcher’s career.

GBA Plus considerations inform the Department’s **outreach and engagement** activities that showcase the work of scientists. This is achieved by creating and promoting videos that show the diversity of science and scientists working from coast to coast to coast. These outreach activities encourage and facilitate the participation of DFO scientists in livestreamed youth engagement sessions and highlight scientists through engagement activities and social media campaigns (e.g. on special days such as Women and Girls in Science Day, International Women’s Day, People in STEM).

One of the goals of the **Blue Economy Strategy** is to engage Canadians as stewards and beneficiaries of a just and equitable blue economy by supporting clear pathways for participation of coastal communities and underrepresented groups and supporting Indigenous communities to advance blue economy projects, labour, skills and training development, and enhanced ocean literacy. DFO will work to generate sustainable and inclusive growth, create high-quality middle class jobs and prosperity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous coastal regions and communities, and restore, conserve, and protect the health of our three oceans.

The development of the **Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Strategy (WASCS)** will actively seek to understand and better reflect the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and women, whose voices have typically been quieter in the field of Atlantic salmon conservation. The WASCS is also envisioned as a tool to support better Nation-to-Nation relations, given the importance of this species to Indigenous Peoples across Atlantic Canada and Quebec. For example, the WASCS will prioritize Indigenous-led research, monitoring, and conservation activities for the Atlantic Region, as well as promote the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge and values across the Atlantic salmon conservation landscape.

United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by Canada and all 193 United Nations member states in 2015, is a global framework centred around an ambitious set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering the interconnected economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

DFO's work under the Fisheries core responsibility support Canada's efforts to address the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The activities that will help the Department attain the SDGs include plans to

- ensure aquaculture operators' [compliance with environmental standards](#)^{xxviii}, which will contribute to SDG Target [2.4](#)^{xxix} and help protect Canada's aquatic environment. The Department supports aquaculture's sustainable development by ensuring that an efficient regulatory framework under the *Fisheries Act* is in place to govern and protect public interest while streamlining the number of regulatory authorizations required from industry.
- expand the [Ghost Gear Fund](#)^{xx}, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.1](#)^{xxi} and encourage Canadians to take actions to reduce plastic in the marine environment, including the removal of abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), also known as ghost gear.
- ensure the future of our fisheries through [sustainable](#)^{xxii} and responsible [fisheries management](#)^{xxiii} decisions, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.4](#)^{xxiv}. This work will be supported by sound [fisheries science](#)^{xxv} advice, the implementation of the Fish Stocks provisions, the application of the [Sustainable Fisheries Framework](#)^{xxvi}, the [precautionary approach](#)^{xxvii}, the development of [integrated fisheries management plans and rebuilding plans](#)^{xxviii}, and the [enforcement](#)^{xxix} of the *Fisheries Act* and other legislation and regulations.
- provide financial support through [Canada's fisheries funds](#)^{xxx} and provide commercial fish harvesters and other users with safe and accessible [Small Craft Harbours](#)^{xxxi}, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.B](#)^{xxxii} and the [Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda](#)^{xxxiii} horizontal crosscutting objective of leaving no one behind. This work will help keep our fish and seafood sector sustainable and innovative while meeting the growing demands of a worldwide market.
- [work with international partners](#)^{xxxiv} to support sustainable fisheries around the world, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.C](#)^{xxxv} and the [Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda](#)^{xxxvi} horizontal crosscutting objective of ensuring coherence within Canada's international efforts, and between international and domestic efforts, to support the advancement of the SDGs. The Department is committed to making management decisions based on sound scientific advice while combatting [illegal, unreported, and unregulated](#)^{xxxvii} fishing and supporting [Regional Fisheries Management Organizations](#)^{xxxviii} and international fishing agreements.
- strengthen our domestic and international ocean science partnerships to ensure a strong Canadian contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and advance innovative, solution-based science to support policy and decision-making, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.a](#)^{xxxix}.

For additional information on how the Department is advancing the UN SDGs and supporting the UN 2030 Agenda, please refer to DFO's [2020–2023 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)^{xl} and the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals Supplementary Information Table](#)^{xli}.

Innovation



The **British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund**, under its innovation, infrastructure, and science partnerships pillars, will support projects that drive innovation through modernized approaches and technologies to ensure the fish and seafood sector is resilient to the impacts of changing economic and environmental conditions, including climate change. In 2023–24, BCSRIF will work with new and existing program recipients to implement projects that focus on research and development of new processes and technologies, pilot projects and testing of new innovations,

support the establishment of partnerships or networks that will undertake innovative activities in the fish and seafood sector, and work to conserve and restore wild Pacific salmon. As wild stocks decline, it is critical to invest in the research, development, and testing of new innovations that will support the modernization of regional fisheries to ensure that fishing in all sectors (commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial fishing) can be conducted in an efficient, sustainable manner that affords crucial economic opportunities while limiting impacts on non-target fish stocks.

DFO conducts **aerial surveys** to estimate the size of different marine mammal populations. In recent years, aerial photographs generated by these surveys were manually analyzed to identify animals of interest, a time-consuming and labour-intensive process. To help address this challenge, the Department is currently piloting the use of artificial intelligence to detect the presence of marine mammals in the High Arctic alongside a Canadian innovator through the **Innovative Solutions Canada**^{xiii} program. The use of artificial intelligence will significantly reduce the time needed to analyze aerial photographs and help to provide timely advice on marine mammal stocks. The results from aerial surveys will also provide information about marine mammal distribution, informing the Department's spatial management and conservation plans.


To ensure the provision of the best possible science advice that meets the Government of Canada's changing needs and priorities, the Department will launch the implementation of a **web-based registry for external scientific experts** to self-identify their areas of expertise relevant to the mandate of the Department. This open and accessible registry will allow for greater inclusion of external experts, with a diversity of expertise and perspectives, to be selected for participation in the Department's scientific peer review process. This innovative mechanism will further enhance the provision of robust science advice generated through the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat by encouraging healthy debate, open discussions, and ensuring the integrity of science.

Key risk(s)

A variety of risks impact this core responsibility as it is linked to the work of several regions and sectors across the Department. One is **financial risk**, where short-term funding has led to challenges performing sound, sustainable, long-term program planning. In response to this, some programs, such as the Small Craft Harbours program, are looking to other funding options within the Department. Another predominant risk is related to **advancing Indigenous partnerships**, which are a high priority of the Government of Canada and of DFO. To manage this risk, the Department is enhancing coordination with Indigenous partners to encourage engagement and collaboration. Similarly, there is a risk for the delivery of some programs that rely on effective **relationships with other partners and stakeholders**, like the Ghost Gear Program, which depends on the support of the fishing industry to contribute to reporting on lost gear. To mitigate this risk, the Department will continue to work to improve communication and outreach with the fishing industry to facilitate open and productive lines of communication. DFO will monitor these risks and will adjust its strategies in response to any changes.

Planned results for Fisheries

The following table shows, for Fisheries, the planned results, the result indicators, the targets and the target dates for 2023–24, and the actual results for the three most recent fiscal years for which actual results are available.

 Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Actual results
Canadian fisheries are sustainably managed	Percentage of key fish stocks that have limit reference points and harvest control rules	At least 52% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 46% ¹ 2020-21: 48% ² 2021-22: 50%
	Percentage of decisions for fisheries on key fish stocks where harvest control rules were followed	Exactly 100% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 100% 2020-21: 98% ³ 2021-22: 99%
	Percentage of key fish stocks in the cautious and healthy zone	At least 55% by March 31, 2026	2019-20: 48% ⁴ 2020-21: 46% ⁵ 2021-22: 44%
Canadian aquaculture is sustainably managed	Percentage of aquaculture farms that are compliant with the <i>Fisheries Act</i> regulations	At least 90% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 99% 2020-21: 95% 2021-22: 99%
	Level of Canadian aquaculture production	At least 170,000 tonnes by December 31, 2023	2019-20: 191,259 tonnes 2020-21: 187,026 tonnes 2021-22: 170 805 tonnes
The commercial fishing industry has access to safe harbours ⁶	Percentage of core harbours that are in fair or better condition	At least 87% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 92% 2020-21: 91% 2021-22: 92%
Fisheries, oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are protected from unlawful exploitation and interference	Percentage of inspection activities that have resulted in compliance actions	At most 60% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: N/A 2021-22: 57%

Note: N/A in the “Actual results” column indicates that the performance indicator was not in effect at that time, and therefore, historical data may not be available. In cases where historical data is available, past results are presented.

¹ Despite a large number of stocks being added and having a default status of “uncertain,” DFO’s performance has improved, indicating an upward trend in the development of Limit Reference Points and Harvest Control Rules, and a stabilization in the number of major stocks.


² The 2020–21 result is higher than previous years due to a combination of a stabilization of the number of stocks in the survey and progress in the development of harvest control rules and limit reference points.

³ For 2020–21, the Department used a two-year average to set the total allowable catches in two areas. This was to account for fluctuations in the total allowable catches for the fishery but was not in line with the harvest control rule. The harvest control rule will be followed for 2021–22.

⁴ Due to a large number of stocks being added and having a default status of “uncertain,” the percentage of stocks in the cautious and healthy zone has declined. DFO continues the work needed to identify reference points for all the stocks in the survey.

⁵ Due to a large number of stocks being added and having a default status of “uncertain,” the percentage of stocks in the cautious and healthy zone has declined. DFO continues the work needed to identify reference points for all the stocks in the survey.

⁶ The Small Craft Harbour indicator is currently under review and in particular the calculation method for generating results. Any adjustments to this are expected to have an effect on future results and baselines.


	Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Actual results
	Scientific information on fisheries resources is available to inform management decisions	Percentage of approved requests to the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) for peer-reviewed science advice on fisheries completed each year	At least 90% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 75% ⁷ 2020-21: 79% ⁸ 2021-22: 69% ⁹
		Percentage of sustainable aquaculture research projects which provide information and/or advice to policy and decision-makers ¹⁰	At least 90% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 96% 2020-21: 92% 2021-22: 84%
	Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people	Number of agreements / arrangements involving Indigenous groups	At least 556 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: 388 2021-22: 457
		Number of Indigenous people trained through agreements / arrangements*	At least 921 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: 639 2021-22: 524
		Number of Indigenous people employed through agreements/ arrangements*	At least 5,319 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: 4,727 2021-22: 5,183

Note: N/A in the “Actual results” column indicates that the performance indicator was not in effect at that time, and therefore, historical data may not be available. In cases where historical data is available, past results are presented.

*These targets also includes people employed/trained under Indigenous-led activities funded by agreements if the program cannot validate individuals’ Indigenous status.

Planned budgetary spending for Fisheries

The following table shows, for Fisheries, budgetary spending for 2023–24, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

	2023–24 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2023–24 planned spending	2024–25 planned spending	2025–26 planned spending
	1,096,513,781	1,096,513,781	935,586,158	893,277,580

⁷ Some of the planned advisory processes were deferred due to COVID-19 challenges and restrictions, science capacity issues, and, in some cases, at the request of the client.


⁸ Some of the planned advisory processes were deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions and other challenges or were withdrawn.

⁹ Additional advice was provided early in 2022–23 and some planned processes were deferred based on consultations with clients and operational challenges.

¹⁰ This indicator was expanded in 2021–22 to include aquaculture research projects under additional programs.

Planned human resources for Fisheries

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the Department will need to fulfill this core responsibility for 2023–24 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

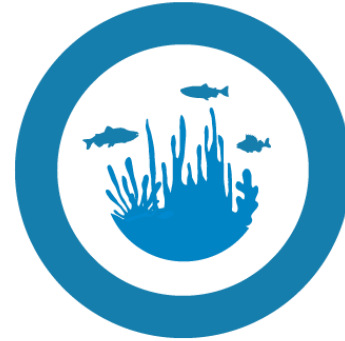
	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents	2024–25 planned full-time equivalents	2025–26 planned full-time equivalents
	3,724	3,771	3,759

The financial, human resources and performance information for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ Program Inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#)^{xliii}.

Aquatic ecosystems

Description

Conserve and protect Canada’s oceans and other aquatic ecosystems and species from human impact and invasive species.



Planning highlights

The Aquatic Ecosystems core responsibility is focused on advancing the following Departmental Results:

- negative impacts on Canada’s oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are minimized or avoided
- scientific information on Canada’s oceans and other aquatic ecosystems is available to inform management decisions
- enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people

The indicators used to measure progress towards these results appear in the [Planned Results](#) table beginning on page 33.

Key priorities for 2023–24 and beyond include the following commitments from the [Minister’s mandate letter](#)^{xliv}:

- work to support sustainable, stable, prosperous fisheries through the continued implementation of the modernized *Fisheries Act*, which restores lost protections, rebuilds fish populations and incorporates modern safeguards so that fish and fish habitats are protected for future generations and Canada’s fisheries can continue to grow the economy and sustain coastal communities
- work in close collaboration with provincial and territorial authorities, Indigenous partners, fishing and stewardship organizations and implicated communities to implement the Pacific Salmon Strategy
- make new investments and develop a conservation strategy to restore and rebuild wild Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats
- continue to work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and partners to ensure Canada meets its goals to conserve 25 per cent of our lands and waters by 2025, and 30 per cent of each by 2030, working to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 in Canada, achieve a full recovery for nature by 2050 and champion this goal internationally... ensure that this work remains grounded in science, Indigenous Knowledge and local perspectives
- renew and expand the Coastal Restoration Fund to restore aquatic habitats
- support community shoreline and oceans plastic cleanup efforts
- in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, continue to implement commitments made under the Oceans Protection Plan, and support the Minister of Transport in launching the next phase of the Oceans Protection Plan to continue efforts to deliver world-leading marine safety systems, increase protection for marine species and ecosystems and create stronger partnerships with Indigenous and other coastal communities, while strengthening marine research and science
- work with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions
- make new investments in coastal and ocean areas that have a high potential to absorb and store carbon, like tidal wetlands, seagrass meadows and riparian habitats

- modernize the *Oceans Act* to explicitly consider climate change impacts on marine ecosystems and species in regional ocean management, ensuring the Act provides for measurable progress indicators and objectives, and create a national, interdisciplinary working group focused on climate-resilient ocean conservation planning
- expand climate vulnerability work to better inform marine conservation planning and management
- work with the Minister of Public Safety, the President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Health, among other colleagues, to ensure the Government of Canada continues to be prepared to proactively mitigate, and respond to, emerging incidents and hazards

DFO has a significant responsibility to protect the health of Canada’s oceans and aquatic ecosystems. Programs in the Aquatic Ecosystems core responsibility work to protect fish habitats and species at risk, manage aquatic invasive species, and perform scientific research to support decision-making. Below are some of the Department’s 2023–24 activities related to coastal protection and restoration, the implementation of the *Fisheries Act*, the *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations*, the *Species at Risk Act* including the Enhanced Nature Legacy Initiative, and more.

Marine and fish habitat conservation

On behalf of Canada, DFO has a responsibility to maintain health and biodiversity in marine ecosystems along the world’s largest coastline, to develop a robust blue economy, and to strengthen the ecosystem’s abilities to resist, recover from, or adapt to disturbances, such as those caused by overexploitation or climate change. Work in response to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to **conserve 25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025, and 30 per cent by 2030**, along with almost a billion dollars in funding shared with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Parks Canada Agency, Natural Resources Canada, Transport Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada over five years starting in 2021, shows the Government’s commitment to this responsibility. In 2023–24, DFO will establish new, and effectively manage existing, marine protected areas (MPAs) and [other effective area-based conservation measures](#)^{xlv} (OECMs). The Department will monitor established marine conservation areas to ensure protection measures are respected and to confirm they achieve their conservation objectives. This will include scientific collaborations under new agreements with partners such as the Marine Institute of Memorial University. DFO will also advance conservation objectives, along with socio-economic and cultural objectives, through a marine spatial planning process, as discussed below.

DFO will work with federal partners to advance new opportunities for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, based on an innovative funding model called **Project Finance for Permanence** (PFP). The catalyst for this work is the \$800 million dollars in new federal funding recently announced to support up to four PFPs across Canada. A form of public-private partnership, conservation PFPs work by gathering together funding commitments from a variety of different sources, public as well as private. The announcement of new federal funds to support future PFP initiatives in Canada is a significant opportunity to mobilize complementary investments from the private sector, including philanthropic institutions and other charitable organizations.

DFO cohosted the **fifth International MPA congress** (IMPAC 5) in Vancouver in February 2023 and will serve in a leadership role into 2023–24 as a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s international steering committee for future IMPAC conferences,

ensuring transition to the next country host of IMPAC6, and issuing a final report on outcomes of the Congress.

One of the Department’s key tools for identifying areas for marine conservation is **marine spatial planning** (MSP). Similar in some ways to how urban planning is used to help organize the development of cities (for example, setting aside green spaces while also allowing for housing developments or other uses), it provides a forward-looking approach to ensuring effective use of our ocean spaces. MSP is a process that brings together federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments, as well as other stakeholders, to better coordinate how we use and manage our oceans to achieve ecological, economic, cultural, and social objectives. While some activities can happen in the same ocean space, others are incompatible; MSP identifies which activities can happen where, within existing authorities. Marine spatial plans provide an overview of activities and uses in an area, and include both economic and conservation considerations. This work also supports the Government of Canada’s reconciliation and climate change objectives by advancing renewable energy where it can be done in a sustainable manner. DFO is working to ensure this planning is informed by science and Indigenous knowledge. In 2023–24, the first generation of marine spatial plans in four initial planning areas (Scotian Shelf, and Bay of Fundy, Newfoundland, and Labrador Shelves) will be completed or, in the case of the Pacific North Coast, will transition to network planning and broader marine spatial planning. For Pacific South Coast (southern B.C.), subject to program renewal, an anticipated main milestone is the development of a first-generation marine spatial plan.

As discussed above in core responsibility 1: Fisheries, DFO will continue to coordinate the implementation of the **G7 Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities**. The Department will participate in the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Ocean Observation, which contributes to improved and coordinated understanding of the trends seen in ocean conditions globally. DFO will also invest in mitigating marine pollution, both domestically and internationally, which are seen as leading efforts to clean up the ocean. DFO will represent Canada in its increasingly active role in the UN Decade of Ocean Science, including as a member of the Ocean Decade Alliance, which will help to catalyze support for the Decade and promote the delivery of necessary, coordinated scientific research to support policy goals for oceans. Lastly, the Department’s participation in the Global Ocean Alliance and in an active role in the development of a post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework will promote increased marine conservation around the world, which will complement domestic efforts to conserve 25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030. This work supports the mandate letter commitment to implement the Ocean Plastics Charter and the G7 Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities, as well as the mandate commitment and departmental priority to ensure Canada meets its goals to conserve 25 per cent of our lands and waters by 2025, and 30 per cent of each by 2030, working to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 in Canada, achieve a full recovery for nature by 2050, and champion this goal internationally.

Beginning in 2023–24, DFO will work with Global Affairs Canada to implement the Shared Ocean Fund, an initiative announced under [Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy](#)^{xlvi}, as discussed above in core responsibility 1: Fisheries. The Fund will champion sustainable and healthy oceans through improved international ocean governance, work to strengthen and enforce the rules-based order in the region, and will support Indo-Pacific states’ blue economy potential. The Strategy will include capacity-building funding to support developing states’ efforts to ensure the sustainable use of the ocean environment in their own jurisdictions. DFO will also lead regional collaboration with the United States, Mexico, Chile, and Jamaica, as members of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel), to advance the implementation of

priority actions from the Ocean Panel’s flagship document *Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy: A Vision for Protection, Production and Prosperity*. Lastly, DFO will work with partners to develop and implement a workplan to deliver the commitments made in the *Americas for the Protection of the Ocean* declaration, endorsed by nine governments during the ninth Summit of the Americas. This workplan will strengthen marine conservation cooperation along the Pacific coast of the Americas.

In 2023–24, as part of DFO’s actions to maintain and improve the health of Canada’s marine environment, the Department and other federal partners will advance work on addressing gaps in federal coordination and management of **underwater ocean noise** by engaging on recommendations from the forthcoming whole-of-government draft Ocean Noise Strategy. Work on the study and management of marine noise will also include the assessment of risks to marine animals from noise in Placentia Bay in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as work to update the national guidance on minimizing impacts on marine life set out in the [Statement of Canadian Practice with respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment](#)^{xlvii}. Another important area of focus in 2023–24 and beyond with respect to **marine environmental quality** will be increasing coordination, supporting partners, and developing *Oceans Act* measures that address other marine stressors (e.g. nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, marine debris). This work is expected to support increased collaboration and evidence-based decision-making that will enhance marine protection and conservation.

In response to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to **implement the modernized Fisheries Act**, DFO will provide updates to the online *Fisheries Act* registry on the Government’s [Common Project Search website](#)^{xlviii}. The registry provides project-specific information on fish and fish habitat authorizations of works, undertakings, or activities in or near water that have been issued since the amended *Fisheries Act* came into force in 2019. The Department will publish this project-specific information and will increase transparency, access to information, and accountability in decision-making by increasing the amount of information made available. The Common Project Search website allows Canadians to search through projects and assessments submitted to multiple Government of Canada departments. Additional guidance for the regulatory reviews of proposed development projects that may have impacts on fish and fish habitat is made available on DFO’s [Projects Near Water](#)^{xlix} website.

DFO will also work on the development of **new program tools**, such as regulations, codes of practice, policies, and guidance. Codes of practice, for example, are specific procedures or work practices for avoiding the death of fish or the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat. These different tools will help the Department to implement the renewed protections in the modernized *Fisheries Act* and make its requirements easier to understand and navigate for project proponents. As part of tool development, DFO has been making proposals publicly available and engaging with Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders, and other interested parties through the [Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program Engagement Platform](#)^l website.

One of the proposed tools is the **Prescribed Works and Waters Regulation**. This regulation could create a new exception to the prohibitions in the *Fisheries Act* against harmful alteration, disruption, and destruction of fish habitat or death of fish (by means other than fishing), allowing defined classes of works to proceed without the need for site-specific project review, as long as they meet the project description and can be conducted in accordance with standard conditions as described in the regulation. Classes of works currently proposed for the regulation include certain shoreline stabilization projects, aquatic habitat rehabilitation projects, and agricultural drain maintenance in Ontario. In 2023–24, DFO will advance this work, considering

the input received during engagement, with the aim of developing a draft regulation for publication in the *Canada Gazette, Part I*.

In 2023–24, the Department will expand on these efforts, including by engaging on a draft policy for offsetting impacts to fish and fish habitat, draft guidelines for [habitat banking](#)^{li}, and additional codes of practice.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of restorative actions to improve ecosystem health and has made various international commitments (which include targets) for ecosystem restoration (e.g. [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Targets](#)^{lii}). DFO will establish priorities for **fish habitat restoration**, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, provinces/territories, and stakeholders, which will enhance the coordination of restoration planning and improve decision-making for aquatic resources across Canada. DFO will also work to improve information sharing with the restoration community to help address the growing challenges of habitat loss and degradation and will foster strategic action towards these restoration goals. The restoration community includes partners from all levels of government including Indigenous Peoples, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, academia, and others that collaboratively support and carry out restoration initiatives.

DFO aims to provide a consistent, prioritized, and coordinated approach to restoration in aquatic ecosystems through the development of a **national restoration framework** that will guide the identification of regionally specific restoration strategies. In 2023–24, as a follow up to the publication of the national Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities, DFO regions will engage with Indigenous Peoples, provinces/territories and stakeholders to develop fish habitat restoration priorities that identify important species, places, and ecosystem functions; describe current regional fish habitat restoration (the partners, activities, locations, and species); and articulate restoration goals. The resulting regional plans are expected to be published in 2024. This work will help organizations that wish to undertake restoration of aquatic habitat to understand regional restoration priorities and will help to guide and prioritize restoration funding decisions.

In support of the Minister’s mandate commitment to continue to protect and restore our oceans and coasts by renewing and expanding the **Coastal Restoration Fund** to restore aquatic habitats, DFO will support projects under the [Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund](#)^{liii}, a five-year \$75 million extension of the Coastal Restoration Fund that was launched in fall 2022. This Fund will support projects that help to restore aquatic ecosystems and mitigate human impacts on Canadian coastal and marine environments.

In support of the Minister’s Mandate letter commitment to make new investments in coastal and ocean areas that have a high potential to absorb and store carbon, like tidal wetlands, seagrass meadows, and riparian habitats, DFO will prioritize the restoration of such coastal areas that have the potential to support **blue carbon sequestration**. In 2023–24, DFO will work on the identification of restoration priorities and distribution of restoration-directed grants and contributions. In 2023–24, DFO will also continue to engage scientific experts to improve our understanding of aquatic system components of the carbon cycle.

The complexity and urgency of the challenges affecting Pacific salmon, such as climate change and habitat degradation, emphasize the importance of strengthened collaboration between DFO and partners to identify and prioritize strategic actions to support healthy salmon ecosystems. The **Integrated Planning for Salmon Ecosystems** program under the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative is spearheading this effort by piloting collaborative planning processes at an

aggregate watershed scale with the Government of B.C., the Yukon Territorial Government, First Nations, municipal governments, stewardship organizations, and other partners. These planning processes will consider physical, biological, and ecological processes, climate change, and human use with the goal of maintaining healthy salmon ecosystems. Through these planning processes, the interests of Indigenous groups, partners, and stakeholders will be considered, and Indigenous Knowledge and science-based information and advice on salmon and their ecosystems will be incorporated. The outcome of the planning processes will be Integrated Salmon Ecosystem Plans that identify threats and pressures facing salmon and targeted actions that can be undertaken to benefit Pacific salmon and their ecosystems.

In support of the Minister's mandate letter commitment to continue to strengthen marine research and science and implement Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) commitments in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and working with Transport Canada, DFO will develop partnerships in 2023–24 for science activities to improve science-based evidence and national expertise to strengthen Canada's **oil-spill preparedness and response** system under the OPP.

Aquatic invasive species

Invasive species can change and harm native habitats, and one of DFO's responsibilities is to prevent and mitigate their presence in Canadian waters. Along with ongoing work to manage species such as Asian carps and sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, in 2023–24, DFO will **implement the Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations (AIS Regulations)** from an operational standpoint through the development of guidelines, policies, and other materials, and through the training of federal, provincial, or territorial officials who administer and enforce the AIS Regulations. The building of new, and the strengthening of existing, partnerships with other federal departments, provinces, and territories, and various stakeholders will be central in the delivery and the success of the program across the country. In 2023–24, DFO will also work on an amendment to the *AIS Regulations* to address a regulatory gap relating to deactivating agents, reactants, and agents to remove taste and odors, with a goal of publication in 2024–25.

The Government of Canada announced in its 2022 **Fall Economic Statement** that it will be investing \$37 million over five years, starting in 2022–23, to expand DFO's Aquatic Invasive Species Program. With this new funding, DFO will be able to ensure that Canada is better protected from the introduction, establishment, and spread of AIS.

DFO will review the results of the **Overland Watercraft Transportation Protection Pilot**, performed at the Emerson Port of Entry in Manitoba in 2022–23 where DFO, in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency, operated a watercraft inspection and decontamination station to address risks associated with land transit of watercraft coming to Canada that may be carrying aquatic invasive species (e.g. zebra mussels). The pilot tested the effectiveness of the current procedures and tools for border agents and fishery officers using the *AIS Regulations* at international borders, and further enhanced them through standardized watercraft inspection methods being used by Western Canadian Provinces. This review will inform the development of a decision-making support tool or framework to improve biosecurity at international borders.

DFO will actively work with provinces, territories, partners, and the Canada Border Services Agency and international stakeholders on the management of the spread of **quagga and zebra mussels** in Canada. Once established, these invasive mussels quickly take over, posing a serious threat to Canada's aquatic ecosystems by altering food webs, damaging habitats, and out-competing native species for food. They also have the potential to cause millions of dollars in damage by clogging intake structures in power stations and water treatment plants, as well as damaging watercraft and agriculture irrigation systems. In 2023–24, DFO will work with partners

to assess the scope and scale of zebra mussel distribution in the Saint John River watershed. This will support planning and decision-making to implement early detection, prevention, response, and control management initiatives.

In 2019, DFO accepted the recommendations of the [Audit Report from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development \(CESD\)](#)^{iv} on aquatic invasive species (AIS), which identified gaps in **AIS prevention** in Canada's waters, and immediately started addressing them. Similar recommendations were made by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study, [Aquatic Invasive Species: A National Priority](#)^{lv} in the same year. As of 2023–24, DFO will have four commitments remaining from the Management Action Plan to fully address, after making great progress in addressing the rest. . DFO will develop and finalize a strategy to help guide its allocation of resources, launch a strategy for the enforcement of the *AIS Regulations*, and review findings from the Ontario and Prairie Region watercraft inspection and decontamination station deployed in the summer and fall of 2022–23. DFO will present its proposed response plan for potential detections related to the trade of aquatic organisms, with a focus on species that are subject to import prohibitions under the *AIS Regulations*. The Department will also finalize a policy statement for the management of invasive aquatic plants.

Budget 2022 provided DFO with an additional \$44.9 million over five years and \$9 million ongoing in support of Canada's binational commitment to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. This will include increases in **sea lamprey** control and increased collaboration with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and American partner agencies (the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S Geological Survey, along with provincial and state agencies) to deploy the binational Sea Lamprey Control Program.

Species at risk

DFO has a leadership role in managing aquatic species at risk in Canada to maintain biodiversity and habitat resiliency for generations to come, and in response to commitments under the International Convention on Biological Diversity. The Nature Legacy for Canada Initiative was announced in Budget 2018 and was expanded on in Budget 2021 under the **Enhanced Nature Legacy Initiative**, the largest investment in nature conservation in Canada's history. The initiative set out a roadmap to protect Canada's biodiversity through the protection of lands and waters and the conservation of species at risk through the application of multi-species, place, and threat-based approaches. Protecting nature, including the protection of key species, working with partners to protect lands and waters, and Indigenous-led conservation are key components of the initiative. In 2023–24, DFO will develop a Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation, intended to guide the application of multi-species approaches to the protection and recovery of aquatic species at risk, where it makes sense to do so. In addition to the [online engagement platform](#)^{lvi} for this framework, virtual discussions with interested Indigenous groups, provinces and territories, non-governmental conservation organizations, and industry associations are planned. The Nature Legacy for Canada and Enhanced Nature Legacy Initiatives are examples of how Canada demonstrates its commitment to nature conservation in response to the global biodiversity crisis and continuing threats to natural ecosystems and landscapes, to ongoing responsibilities for species at risk, and to collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

The Nature Legacy for Canada Initiative (2018) led to the creation of the **Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk (CNFASAR)**. CNFASAR aims to build relationships with Indigenous Peoples, provinces and territories, industry, and other partners for aquatic species at risk by supporting stewardship actions through the implementation of multi-species approaches to recovery and protection. In 2021, through the Enhanced Nature Legacy Initiative, CNFASAR

stewardship funding was increased by \$29.5 million over five years (2021 to 2026), resulting in new projects being funded across Canada. In 2023–24, CNFASAR will continue to provide funding for 21 new projects that benefit over 30 aquatic species at risk.

To identify opportunities for greater efficiency and to support timely decision-making, where possible, DFO will review the process for listing aquatic species at risk to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*, the **List of Wildlife Species at Risk**. This work will include conducting an internal analysis of streamlining strategies in an effort to reduce delays in providing advice on the listing of aquatic species at risk and to advance the process for species currently awaiting a listing decision. Policies and guidance documents that support the listing process will be reviewed and updated, as required, as streamlining efforts are identified and implemented.

In 2021–22, DFO performed an **Evaluation of Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s Activities in Support of Aquatic Species at Risk**^{vii} that focused on the activities of the Department’s Species at Risk Program, which is responsible for delivering on DFO’s complex *Species at Risk Act* responsibilities. The evaluation found that DFO allocates a significant amount of time and resources to protect and recover aquatic species at risk, but there are opportunities to improve effectiveness and efficiency through better-defined roles and responsibilities, to strengthen governance and accountability for species at risk activities, to improve guidance for the development and implementation of recovery documents, and to explore the use of alternative legislative tools to protect and recover species at risk. By the end of 2023, DFO will complete all remaining activities in response to the evaluation, including implementing strengthened internal species at risk governance structures, developing new guidance material to support greater clarity and efficiency in the listing and recovery processes under the *Species at Risk Act*, reassessing financial and accountability processes, and reviewing opportunities to use legislative tools outside of the *Species at Risk Act*.

For example, DFO will perform new research on the major threats that are impeding the recovery of **Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW)**, with the goal of better understanding the effects of those threats on the species. Using innovative techniques, activities will focus on understanding how increased vessel noise and reduced prey accessibility are impacting whales individually. The new research will further enhance current advice provided for management decisions which has been focused at a very spatially-discrete scale, tied to killer whale behaviour and foraging patterns. It will explore the interactions between whale behaviour and small vessel presence as well as tanker traffic, the overlap between whale presence and the timing and distribution of their preferred prey, and understanding underwater noise levels and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. This research will strengthen the Department’s decision-making to protect and support the recovery of SRKW and will inform the ongoing development of management measures to address threats to SRKW recovery. This research will support the Government’s commitment to address the major threats to the protection and recovery of this population.

Reconciliation

In 2023–24, DFO will perform work that contributes to actions under the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to work with Indigenous partners to better integrate Traditional Knowledge into planning and policy decisions through the **Indigenous Habitat Participation Program (IHPP)**. The program provides funding to Indigenous Peoples to support their participation in engagement during the development of policy, program, and regulatory initiatives; to support consultation on authorization decisions, habitat banking arrangements, and regulations; and to support capacity building and collaborative initiatives for the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat. As much flexibility as possible is provided to ensure that recipients can

undertake their initiatives. Since its launch, almost 200 proposals have been approved for contribution funding, and almost 100 grants provided to support consultation. DFO will use the remaining funds of the program, which ended in 2022–23, to support consultation and engagement activities in 2023–24.

For 2023–24, in response to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to **implement the modernized *Fisheries Act***, DFO has developed guidance for staff to apply the Indigenous Knowledge provisions of the *Fisheries Act*. The *Fisheries Act* requires the consideration of Indigenous Knowledge, when provided, when an authorization may be issued for a project that results in impacts on fish and fish habitat. These provisions ensure that Indigenous Knowledge is always considered when offered by Indigenous Nations/communities in decisions that may affect them. In addition, the Act also clarifies when confidential Indigenous Knowledge can be shared. DFO will train its staff to apply its recently-developed guidance on how to apply these provisions so that there are opportunities for Indigenous Nations/communities to provide their Indigenous Knowledge and that DFO staff work with Nations/communities to consider that knowledge in a respectful and appropriate manner.

DFO has committed to enhance relationships and external capacity with Indigenous communities as part of its **Regional Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plans**. For example, in the Ontario and Prairie Region, the Department will increase opportunities for the involvement of Indigenous communities in the identification, detection, and response to Asian carps, an invasive species. DFO will release its next video in the series Perspectives on Asian Carp Prevention in Canada, which will feature Indigenous fish harvesters’ perspectives. DFO will also engage in open and transparent communication to increase the Great Lakes Indigenous communities’ understanding of, and role in, the control of sea lamprey populations, including in streams within First Nations’ territorial waters.

Gender-based analysis plus



In 2023–24, DFO will support **increased involvement of Indigenous Peoples** by exploring a new approach to collaborative management as part of the area-based aquaculture management initiative in British Columbia. This initiative is being piloted in distinct geographic areas in partnership with Indigenous and other governments so that existing unique jurisdictional, ecological, social, cultural, and economic values are considered.

The federal Government’s policy agenda and the analysis of gender and other demographic factors also influenced the design and are influencing the delivery and implementation of the **Enhanced Nature Legacy**, including, but not limited to, the new Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk, and Indigenous engagement, communications, and recruitment. Species at risk in aquatic environments sometimes occur in the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples. These communities regularly confront the consequences of species becoming at risk, especially for numerous species of cultural, food, and socio-economic importance (e.g. salmonids, sturgeons, eulachon, American eel, and others). Indigenous Peoples also have the traditional knowledge to support recovery efforts and the interest, sense of obligation to future generations, and commitment to sustainability that makes them a natural partner for DFO. In addition, the collection of demographic information regarding participants in Indigenous environmental monitoring activities could assist in providing data to support future GBA Plus reviews. However, reporting burdens and confidentiality issues can arise when asking Indigenous communities or band-owned enterprises for employee information. Going forward, relevant DFO staff will work with experts in the *Access to Information Act* and *Privacy Act* to develop methods to collect and protect sensitive data to further analyses.

Following a GBA Plus assessment for **Marine Conservation Targets** program renewal that looked at several program areas (e.g. Indigenous Guardians and Stewardship programs, opportunities for local and Indigenous participation in science monitoring efforts and associated capacity-building, participation in ongoing governance mechanisms and associated capacity-building), DFO will perform an ecosystem valuation study to assess the dollar value of ecosystem services generated by biodiversity protection, which will be linked to site-specific job impact assessments. This initiative will compare global trends against site-specific pilot projects and will be one way of demonstrating benefits of marine conservation to Canadians. Additional data to inform future GBA Plus analysis will be sourced from socio-economic data collection that informs the development of marine conservation operational policy, the establishment of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), marine spatial planning, monitoring of established MPAs, and the contribution of ocean industries to the economy of a bioregion.

Departments are required to collect information on Inuit employment through provisions on Inuit Employment Plans under the **Nunavut Agreement**, and this data will be used to supplement the information collection efforts discussed above.

Following the update to the **Oceans Management Contribution Program** and the corresponding GBA Plus analysis in 2022–23, DFO will collect more disaggregated data and report more accurately on the target population for the contributions, leading to improved engagement and inclusion in Indigenous employment and training opportunities that are created by the projects supported by the program.

All of this information and analysis will be used to understand how various identity factors can affect people's access to, and experience of, government programs, and to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies and programs.

United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

DFO's efforts under the Aquatic Ecosystems core responsibility support Canada's efforts to address the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The activities that will help the Department attain the SDGs include plans to

- [study the impacts of climate change](#)^{lviii} on fisheries, ecosystems, and coastal infrastructure, which will contribute to SDG Target [13.2](#)^{lix}. This research provides both decision makers and Canadians with the information they need to plan and adapt to a changing climate
- work with partners to understand the effects of [microplastics](#)^{lx} on aquatic ecosystems, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.1](#)^{lxi}. While researchers are still learning about the effects of microplastics on aquatic life, many agree that the amount of harm likely depends on the characteristics of the plastic pieces, including size, shape, and chemical makeup. The amount of harm will also vary for the type of animal, including its size and stage of life
- bring federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners together to develop open and transparent plans for the sustainable use of our oceans via [marine spatial planning](#)^{lxii}, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.2](#)^{lxiii} and the [Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda](#)^{lxiv} horizontal crosscutting objective of advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Marine spatial planning is an internationally recognized process that will enable the Government of Canada to plan and coordinate ocean activities in collaboration with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments. This will allow the Department to grow the oceans economy to create jobs and opportunities for coastal communities while advancing conservation objectives

- implement [measures to protect fish and fish habitat](#)^{lxv} while supporting the [restoration of aquatic ecosystems](#)^{lxvi}, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.2](#)^{lxvii}. This work will help to restore aquatic ecosystems and mitigate human impacts on Canadian coastal and marine environments
- monitor [changing ocean chemistry](#)^{lxviii} and ocean acidification to assess the state of coastal and offshore waters, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.3](#)^{lxix}. This work will help to better understand and predict the future state of Canada’s oceans and the interaction of ocean acidification with other climate stressors, such as deoxygenation
- [establish and manage marine protected areas](#)^{lxx} (MPAs) and marine other effective area-based measures, such as marine refuges, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.5](#)^{lxxi} and the [Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda](#)^{lxxii} horizontal crosscutting objective of advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. This work will be done in consultation with other orders of government, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders to identify ocean areas that contain important species and habitats and establish regulations to protect those areas under the *Oceans Act*. It will also contribute to reaching the goal of conserving [25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025](#)^{lxxiii} and 30 per cent by 2030. Working with domestic and international partners to advance [ocean and aquatic ecosystems science](#)^{lxxiv}, develop and share knowledge, build infrastructure, and foster relationships to ensure a sustainable and healthy ocean will contribute to SDG Target [14.A](#)^{lxxv} and the [Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda](#)^{lxxvi} horizontal crosscutting objective of ensuring coherence within Canada’s international efforts and between international and domestic efforts to support the advancement of the SDGs
- support the protection and recovery of [aquatic species at risk](#)^{lxxvii}, including by providing support for stewardship actions under the [Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk](#)^{lxxviii} for [priority threats, species and places](#)^{lxxix}, which will contribute to SDG Target [15.5](#)^{lxxx}
- support the prevention, control, or eradication of [aquatic invasive species](#)^{lxxxii}, which will contribute to SDG Target [15.8](#)^{lxxxii}. Aquatic invasive species threaten biodiversity and habitat quality and endanger native species
- strengthen domestic and international ocean science partnerships to ensure a strong Canadian contribution to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and advance innovative, solution-based science to support policy and decision-making, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.a](#)^{lxxxiii}

For additional information on how the Department is advancing the UN SDGs and supporting the UN 2030 Agenda, please refer to DFO’s [2020–2023 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)^{lxxxiv} and the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals Supplementary Information Table](#)^{lxxxv}.

Innovation



Under the **Enhanced Nature Legacy Initiative**, DFO will improve the way that Canada’s biodiversity is protected by implementing multi-species, place, and threat-based approaches, where possible. By focusing on common threats and geographical areas where biodiversity loss and conservation can be most effectively addressed, DFO aims to better support ecosystems as a whole, and to protect more species more effectively. DFO is also working to identify efficient, effective, and innovative approaches to streamline decision-making under the *Species at Risk Act* and to eliminate the backlog of species requiring listing decisions.


DFO is embarking on a new approach regarding the effective and streamlined provision of expert science advice for **Impact Assessments**. The Department will introduce a novel approach for the provision of timely, informed, and nationally-consistent scientific advice to fulfill the regulatory requirements under the *Impact Assessment Act*. To this end, the Department will implement a new tiered process for the review of requests for science advice from the Impact Assessment Agency. The new approach will triage requests by their complexity with the intention of introducing efficiencies to the current process and to expedite the delivery of science advice and information to the Agency within required timelines. DFO will support the Agency in delivering high-quality impact assessments that examine all aspects of potential projects and will contribute to informed decision-making on major projects in support of sustainable development in Canada.

Key risk(s)

Under this core responsibility, the Department may encounter risks in attracting and retaining qualified staff who reflect Canada's diversity to meet deliverables and achieve targets given the Department's ambitious policy agenda. Some sectors within the Department have faced challenges in attracting and retaining **skilled staff** with multidisciplinary experience. However, targeted staffing initiatives will continue to seek qualified candidates on a permanent basis to help mitigate this risk. In addition, lengthy closures and previous delays from COVID-19 continue to pose a risk for the Department's expected completion dates for program commitments. Engaging stakeholders and leveraging their economic interests to further encourage engagement are examples of mitigation approaches to reduce this risk. Another risk is a lack of **long-term funding**, which jeopardizes the credibility and commitment of various efforts with partners and stakeholders, as well as their ability to carry out certain projects. To mitigate the risk, long-term funding strategies are being developed to provide stability and predictability for partners and stakeholders. There is also a risk that DFO may not have the ability to plan, prioritize, and adjust its services, and programs at a pace that will allow it effectively adapt to environmental change. The Department will establish governance processes and mitigation strategies for climate change risks. DFO will monitor all of these risks continually and adjust its risk mitigation strategies to respond accordingly.

Planned results for Aquatic Ecosystems

The following table shows, for Aquatic Ecosystems, the planned results, the result indicators, the targets and the target dates for 2023–24, and the actual results for the three most recent fiscal years for which actual results are available.

	Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Actual results
Negative impacts on Canada's oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are minimized or avoided		Percentage of Canada's oceans that are conserved	At least 25% by December 31, 2025	2019-20: 13.81% 2020-21: 13.81% 2021-22: 13.90%
		Percentage of development projects occurring in or near water that effectively avoid, mitigate or offset impacts to fish and fish habitat	At least 100% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 93% ¹¹ 2020-21: 95% ¹² 2021-22: 96%
		Percentage of aquatic species / populations at risk listed under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> for which a recovery strategy / management plan is completed	At least 80% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 81% 2020-21: 86% 2021-22: 87%
		Percentage of approved requests to the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) for peer-reviewed science advice on aquatic invasive species completed each year	At least 90% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 67% ¹³ 2020-21: 67% ¹⁴ 2021-22: 50% ¹⁵
Scientific information on Canada's oceans and other aquatic ecosystems is available to inform management decisions		Number of science products related to aquatic ecosystems that are available	At least 100 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 60 2020-21: 60 2021-22: 60
		Percentage of approved requests to the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) for peer-reviewed science advice on aquatic ecosystems completed each year	At least 90% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 77% ¹⁶ 2020-21: 77% ¹⁷ 2021-22: 69% ¹⁸

¹¹ A total of 69 site visits identified a compliance or effectiveness issue that was unresolved as of March 31, 2020, though this does not necessarily indicate a permanent or irreversible impact to, or loss of, fish or fish habitat. Corrective actions may be ongoing and DFO provides guidance where needed.

¹² Of the 613 projects monitored, 31 projects were assessed as having compliance and effectiveness measures that were not adequate.

¹³ Performance declined due to delays related to COVID-19 mitigation measures late in the fiscal year, and the work was completed shortly after the target date.


¹⁴ Some of the planned advisory processes were deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions and other challenges or were withdrawn.

¹⁵ A number of requests were deferred to 2022–23 and an additional advisory process was undertaken early in 2022–23.

¹⁶ Seven scheduled science advisory processes were delayed. Processes were deferred due to changing client sector requirements and issues related to Science capacity and data availability. Steps are in place to improve the prioritization and definition of requirements.

¹⁷ Some of the planned advisory processes were deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions and other challenges or were withdrawn.


¹⁸ Additional processes were deferred due to operational challenges.

	Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Actual results
		Number of agreements / arrangements involving Indigenous groups	At least 238 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: 52 2021-22: 297
	Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people	Number of Indigenous people trained through agreements / arrangements	At least 208 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: Data not available 2021-22: Data not available
		Number of Indigenous people employed through agreements / arrangements	At least 2 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: Data not available 2021-22: : Data not available

Note: N/A in the “Actual results” column indicates that the performance indicator was not in effect at that time, and therefore, historical data may not be available. In cases where historical data is available, past results are presented.


Planned budgetary spending for Aquatic Ecosystems

The following table shows, for Aquatic Ecosystems, budgetary spending for 2023–24, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

	2023–24 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2023–24 planned spending	2024–25 planned spending	2025–26 planned spending
	374,158,739	374,158,739	349,593,907	340,638,239

Planned human resources for Aquatic Ecosystems

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the Department will need to fulfill this core responsibility for 2023–24 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents	2024–25 planned full-time equivalents	2025–26 planned full-time equivalents
	1,499	1,503	1,457

The financial, human resources and performance information for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ Program Inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#)^{lxxxvi}.

Marine navigation

Description

Provide information and services to facilitate navigation in Canadian waters.

Planning highlights

The Marine Navigation core responsibility is focused on advancing the following Departmental Results:

- mariners safely navigate Canada’s waters
- a Canadian maritime economy that is supported by navigable waters
- enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.



The indicators used to measure progress towards these results appear in the [Planned Results](#) table beginning on page 39.

Key priorities for 2023–24 and beyond include the following commitments from the [Minister’s mandate letter](#)^{lxxxvii}:

- in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, continue to implement commitments made under the [Oceans Protection Plan](#)^{lxxxviii}, and support the Minister of Transport in launching the next phase of the Oceans Protection Plan to continue efforts to deliver world-leading marine safety systems, increase protection for marine species and ecosystems and create stronger partnerships with Indigenous and other coastal communities, while strengthening marine research and science
- work with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions
- work with the Minister of Public Safety, the President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Health, among other colleagues, to ensure the Government of Canada continues to be prepared to proactively mitigate, and respond to, emerging incidents and hazards

DFO and CCG are responsible for ensuring that Canada’s waters are safe and navigable for mariners through the charting and management of waterways, as well as the management of marine communications and traffic services, aids to navigation, and icebreaking services. Information on the Department’s plans, including updates to technical and hydrographic services, are found below.

Oceans Protection Plan Renewal

In July 2022, the Government of Canada announced the renewal of the Oceans Protection Plan (“OPP Renewal”), with Budget 2022 committing to provide \$2 billion over nine years. OPP Renewal builds on the historic \$1.5 billion investment made in 2016 under the first phase of the OPP, expanding and continuing initiatives that have helped to make Canada’s oceans safer, healthier, and cleaner.

In collaboration with federal partners and Indigenous and coastal communities, DFO will support the implementation of initiatives under OPP Renewal, such as the following:

- strengthen marine traffic management by applying new technologies and partnerships to make marine shipping more efficient and reduce negative impacts on marine ecosystems

- ensure the safe movement and navigation of large and small vessels to improve on-water safety and limit risks to our marine ecosystems
- offer new opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities to partner in decision-making and play a more meaningful role in the management of waterways

The Department is responsible for supporting the safety of navigation through the provision of **nautical charts and related publications**, which require accurate, timely, and complete hydrographic survey data. The renewal of the OPP enables the Department to accelerate efforts to improve modern hydrographic services in the Arctic, where maritime traffic has been increasing over recent years. This trend of increasing traffic is expected to continue with longer ice-free seasons. The Department will undertake hydrographic surveys and work to integrate this information into modern nautical charts and products. New technologies such as autonomous survey vessels and satellite-based remote sensing will be leveraged, offering important new tools to meet the challenges of Arctic hydrography. This initiative allows the Department to strengthen relationships with community partners across the Arctic and elsewhere in Canada. By sharing new technologies with communities, this will in turn enable them to develop the capacity to collect and use hydrographic data to support their requirements for understanding the seafloor in local waters, and to share best practices on how to collect, manage, and share this information.

For more information on OPP Renewal, please see the [Marine Operations and Response](#) core responsibility.

Ocean science

DFO's **digital transformation** will modernize traditional hydrographic products and services and will deliver high-quality data and digital services to our users. DFO will work with partners and the international community to implement new standards for a new digital era of marine navigation. In addition, in April 2023, Canada, represented by DFO, will complete its successful term as the Chair of the International Hydrographic Organization Council from 2020 to 2023.

Through the Department's efforts to support the **United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development** (2021–2030), DFO is actively engaging all members of the Canadian ocean community, including Indigenous partners. Under the Ocean Decade, DFO is working to advance ocean science projects in collaboration with Indigenous partners, with appropriate consideration and integration of Indigenous Knowledge into all aspects of project design and delivery.

Technical navigation support

In support of program readiness, CCG will develop a **modernization strategy for marine navigation programs and safety services**. Following international trends to digitalize marine navigation tools and services, CCG will transform its service mechanisms to provide timely and standardized information to mariners on safety, environmental data, ice and weather conditions, vessel traffic, channel depths, speed restrictions, and marine protected areas. The current e-Navigation Roadmap will guide the Department's investments in digitalizing the marine navigation programs, including Aids to Navigation, Icebreaking Services, Marine Communication and Traffic Services, and Waterways Management. This work will position CCG to deliver modern navigation and safety services into the future for the benefit of maritime safety and security and for the protection of the marine environment. This will improve service delivery to marine clients and increase the efficiency of maritime transportation, particularly in the Arctic. The proposed way forward will also ensure that services adapt to changing technology and requirements to better serve Canadians. This work will support the Minister's

mandate letter commitments related to the Blue Economy, the fish and seafood sector, and the Oceans Protection Plan. CCG also continues to support the protection of the North Atlantic Right Whale and the Southern Resident Killer Whale on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, respectively, by informing mariners of vessel slow-down measures, sharing information with Transport Canada in the event that mariners contravene the measures, and sharing whale sighting information with whale conservation groups.

Shore-based assets

In 2020, DFO completed an **evaluation of the Shore-based Asset Readiness program**^{lxxxix} to examine the performance and efficiency of the program from 2014–15 to 2018–19, including its ability to maintain the required service level provided by shore-based assets (such as buoys, towers, and systems like radar). The evaluation resulted in recommendations to improve asset performance data, establish targets for service availability, increase availability and reliability of asset inventory data, and improve the procurement process. While progress has already been made in response to the recommendations, the program will work on standardizing asset condition assessment, implementing updated service-level agreements, and applying a nationally-consistent methodology for prioritizing the maintenance of shore-based assets and tracking progress against performance targets. The program will also work on the development of a plan to include missing asset management data in the system. Lastly, CCG will improve the procurement processes, tools, and support for the life-cycle management of assets by identifying any capacity gaps. All of this work will help ensure that these assets are available, capable, and reliable to support the delivery of CCG programs.

Gender-based analysis plus



CCG is completing an engineering study for **cabin reconfiguration** on the new Offshore Fisheries Science Vessels (OFSV). The new OFSVs, CCGS *Capt. Jacques Cartier*, CCGS *John Cabot*, and CCGS *Sir John Franklin*, are all part of the OFSV cabin-reconfiguration study and that study will also be aligned with gender-based analysis plus priorities for the Government of Canada. It is anticipated that this study will be complete before the end of 2023–24 with configuration changes to be completed in upcoming refit and maintenance periods, where possible. Cabin reconfiguration supports inclusive programs and services that affect the well-being of all Canadians.

DFO will advance gender considerations in **ocean science** through bilateral and multilateral initiatives such as the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, our participation as a Champion under the Commonwealth Blue Charter, and as a member of the International Hydrographic Organization, among others. In addition, DFO, on behalf of Canada, is demonstrating domestic and international leadership in promoting gender considerations in ocean science by providing financial support for collaborative projects to inspire youth and early career professionals, support Indigenous Peoples, and advance gender equity in ocean science. Results include tools, strategies, and resources to advance and promote GBA Plus considerations in ocean science and oceans governance, as well as information and educational resources available to the public regarding gender equity in ocean science.

United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Department's efforts under the Marine Navigation core responsibility support Canada's efforts to address the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Activities that will help the Department attain the SDGs include plans to

- ensure that Canada’s waters are safe and navigable for mariners, which will contribute to SDG Target 9.1^{xc}. This includes the work of the [Canadian Hydrographic Service](#)^{xci} in charting and managing of waterways, as well as CCG’s management of [marine communications and traffic services](#), [aids to navigation](#)^{xcii}, and [icebreaking services](#)^{xciii}.
- strengthen our domestic and international ocean science partnerships, including in hydrography, to ensure a strong Canadian contribution the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), and advance innovative, solution-based science to support policy and decision-making, which will contribute to SDG Target 14.a^{xciv}.

For additional information on how the Department is advancing the UN SDGs and supporting the UN 2030 Agenda, please refer to DFO’s [2020–2023 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)^{xcv} and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals Supplementary Information Table](#)^{xcvi}.

Innovation

CCG is optimizing the design of plastic **navigational buoys** by using a new modular format that will remove materials (such as polystyrene plastic) that are difficult to recycle. This format will allow the buoy to be repaired, reused, and recycled much more easily. This unique CCG design results from knowledge gained over 30 years of using plastic buoys. Another aspect of this project is to develop a circular economy. The new modular buoys will have their plastic parts made from buoys that are broken or that have reached their end of life. This approach will help recycle existing plastic, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, CCG will achieve operational and maintenance savings by reducing the cost of new buoy parts, by using recycled material, and by recovering and reusing existing buoy parts such as internal radar reflectors.


CCG is conducting a pilot project to consolidate and link technical information on CCG and DFO databases for the CCGS *Sir John Franklin* to one single platform, using the 3D model as a base. The platform is meant to support **vessel maintenance and life cycle management** activities and will provide shipboard personnel with digital access to technical data such as drawings, manuals, equipment, and material information through 3D representation. The pilot project, set to be complete by end of 2023–24, aims to improve operational efficiencies, increase asset reliability, and support the Government of Canada’s greening initiatives. It is expected to inform decision-making for efficient vessel-maintenance digital solutions for CCG Fleet assets.

Key risk(s)

The major risks in the Marine Navigation core responsibility relate to the modernization of the **Marine Navigation Program** and advancing surveying and charting in the Arctic. Some of the risks identified for the Marine Navigation Program include insufficient ongoing resources, leading to the inability to meet international obligations, such as the International Hydrographic Organization’s requirement that states, including Canada, have a subset of prioritized **S-100 products**^{xcvii} in operational use for mariners by January 1, 2026. CCG will continue efforts to implement e-navigation and the modernization of marine navigation programs. In addition, CCG will work to mitigate these risks through continued collaboration with federal partners and national industry partners. Risks associated with performing **Arctic surveying and charting** include the uncertainty of fuel costs and vessels availability for bathymetric data collection. The Department will mitigate these risks by using several approaches to collect data, including contracting out some data collection as well as investigating the potential to charter a non-CCG vessel. DFO will monitor these risks continually and adjust its risk mitigation strategies to respond accordingly.

Planned results for Marine Navigation

The following table shows, for Marine Navigation, the planned results, the result indicators, the targets and the target dates for 2023–24, and the actual results for the three most recent fiscal years for which actual results are available.

	Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Actual results
Mariners safely navigate Canada's waters		Rate of marine incidents versus vessel movements	At most 1% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 0.02% 2020-21: 0.03% 2021-22: 0.02%
		Number of official navigational products created and/or updated per year, from incorporation of new and modern hydrography and/or navigationally significant information	At least 200 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 669 2020-21: 673 2021-22: 895
A Canadian maritime economy that is supported by navigable waters		Rate of marine incidents versus vessel movements	At most 1% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 0.02% 2020-21: 0.03% 2021-22: 0.02%
		Percentage of ship ice escort requests south of the 60 th parallel north that are delayed beyond level of service response time standards	At most 0% by July 1, 2024	2019-20: 1.4% ¹⁹ 2020-21: 4% ²⁰ 2021-22: 4.8% ²¹
		Average time (in hours) beyond level of service response time standards for ice escort requests south of the 60 th parallel north	Exactly 0 (hours) by July 1, 2024	2019-20: 6.23 ²² 2020-21: 33.03 ²³ 2021-22: 13.29 ²⁴
Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people		Number of agreements / arrangements involving Indigenous groups	At least 6 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: Data not available 2021-22: 8
		Number of Indigenous people employed through agreements / arrangements	Not applicable to 2023-24	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: Data not available 2021-22: N/A

Note: N/A in the "Actual results" column indicates that the performance indicator was not in effect at that time, and therefore, historical data may not be available. In cases where historical data is available, past results are presented.

¹⁹ Four escort missions were delayed due to operational requirements, icebreaker redeployed for search and rescue, and environmental factors including ice severity and movement of ice.

²⁰ Of the 161 escort requests received in 2020–21, 6 were delayed.

²¹ Of the 415 ice escort requests received, 20 were delayed beyond the level of service response time standards.


²² The icebreaking program experienced four delays out of 284 requests. CCG achieved a high rate of success this year, given the challenging operational environment, and in comparison to previous years.

²³ There were a total of six delays totaling 198.17 hours beyond levels of service (79.18 hours in Atlantic, 0.62 hours in St-Lawrence, 118.37 hours in Great Lakes), for an average time of 33.03 hours.

²⁴ Twenty requests were delayed, totaling 265.97 hours beyond levels of service response time standards (43.5 hours in Atlantic, 69.68 hours in St. Lawrence, 152.79 hours in Great Lakes), for an average time of 13.29 hours.


Planned budgetary spending for Marine Navigation

The following table shows, for Marine Navigation, budgetary spending for 2023–24, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

 2023–24 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2023–24 planned spending	2024–25 planned spending	2025–26 planned spending
315,198,978	315,198,978	311,114,793	294,092,755

Planned human resources for Marine Navigation

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the Department will need to fulfill this core responsibility for 2023–24 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

 2023–24 planned full-time equivalents	2024–25 planned full-time equivalents	2025–26 planned full-time equivalents
2,068	2,061	2,062

The financial, human resources and performance information for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ Program Inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#)^{xviii}.

Marine operations and response

Description

Provide marine response services and operate Canada’s civilian maritime fleet.

Planning highlights

The Marine Operations and Response core responsibility is focused on advancing the following Departmental Results:

- CCG has the capability to respond to on-water incidents
- Canada’s civilian fleet has the capability to meet established service standards for clients
- enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous Peoples



The indicators used to measure progress towards these results appear in the [Planned Results](#) table beginning on page 48.

Key priorities for 2023–24 and beyond include the following commitments from the [Minister’s mandate letter](#)^{xcix}:

- in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, continue to implement commitments made under the Oceans Protection Plan, and support the Minister of Transport in launching the next phase of the Oceans Protection Plan to continue efforts to deliver world-leading marine safety systems, increase protection for marine species and ecosystems and create stronger partnerships with Indigenous and other coastal communities, while strengthening marine research and science
- work with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions
- continue working with the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, with the support of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, to renew the CCG fleet, advance the shipbuilding industry, including the process to add a third Canadian shipyard as a strategic partner to the National Shipbuilding Strategy, create middle class jobs and ensure Canada has the modern ships needed
- work with the Minister of Public Safety, the President of the King’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Health, among other colleagues, to ensure the Government of Canada continues to be prepared to proactively mitigate, and respond to, emerging incidents and hazards

More information on the Department’s plans to achieve these results and deliver on these commitments can be found below.

CCG provides search and rescue services, supports maritime security in collaboration with other federal departments and agencies, responds to marine pollution spills, contributes to maritime domain awareness²⁵ in the Arctic, and operates Canada’s civilian maritime fleet. CCG needs specialized skilled and trained staff to perform these important duties, and will continue to work

²⁵ Maritime domain awareness involves having an effective and comprehensive understanding of all factors associated with the maritime domain that could affect security, safety, the economy, or the environment.

to ensure that its people have the support and training needed for a strong fleet today and in the future.

Long-term strategy

CCG marked its 60th anniversary by launching the development of the Agency’s first ever Long-term Strategy to guide the course for the future. The Strategy will articulate the Agency’s vision to 2050 and beyond to ensure CCG is positioned to continue supporting Canada’s on-water safety, security, scientific, and sovereignty objectives. CCG will engage publicly on the Strategy in 2023–24.

Oceans Protection Plan Renewal

In July 2022, the Government of Canada announced the renewal of the Oceans Protection Plan (“OPP Renewal”), with Budget 2022 committing to provide \$2 billion over nine years. OPP Renewal builds on the historic \$1.5 billion investment made in 2016 under the first phase of the OPP, expanding and continuing initiatives that have helped to make Canada’s oceans safer, healthier, and cleaner.

CCG’s operations and response-related goals for OPP Renewal include the following:

- expand Canada’s marine emergency prevention, preparedness, and response approaches to handle types of marine pollution beyond oil spills
- advance marine incident response capacity by enhancing the tools, equipment, and infrastructure required for effective incident management
- increase the number of trained and resourced responders to a marine incident; for example, by growing the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary
- offer new opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities to partner in decision-making and play a more meaningful role in the marine safety system, including search and rescue missions, environmental monitoring, and emergency spill response
- develop and implement risk methodologies, frameworks, and response plans that integrate scientific data and Indigenous knowledge

CCG’s key contribution to OPP Renewal is the **Coastal Marine Response Network**, a broad plan to further support ocean sectors and coastal economies while protecting Canadian waters by establishing and/or strengthening networks of emergency responders from multiple levels of government and community and volunteer organizations. The network will augment existing marine response capacity, particularly in isolated or remote communities, and create opportunities to advance reconciliation and support self-determination in Indigenous communities. This work also supports the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to partner with Indigenous Peoples to continue to implement commitments made under the Oceans Protection Plan, and support the Minister of Transport in launching the next phase of the Oceans Protection Plan to continue efforts to deliver world-leading marine safety systems, increase protection for marine species and ecosystems, and create stronger partnerships with Indigenous and other coastal communities while strengthening marine research and science.

DID YOU KNOW?



CCG is leading a group of Canada’s security departments and agencies in the development of the Arctic Maritime Security Strategy to address the opportunities and challenges created by a more accessible Arctic. These challenges include increased competition, search and rescue, environmental protection, law enforcement, and disaster mitigation.

For more information on OPP Renewal, please see the [Marine Navigation](#) core responsibility.

Fleet renewal

CCG owns and operates the federal government’s civilian fleet and provides key maritime services to Canadians, covering an operational range of approximately 5.3 million square kilometres of ocean and inland waters, along 243,000 kilometres of coastline. However, CCG’s large fleet of vessels is on average 41 years old. Vessels are becoming more costly to maintain and are more frequently taken out of operation for unscheduled repairs, placing further strain on the remaining fleet. As the Department experiences increasing pressure for on-water work, the need to replace the vessels has never been more important, so CCG, through the National Shipbuilding Strategy and in response to the Minister’s mandate letter commitment to renew the fleet, will continue to build large and small ships over the coming decades to meet the evolving needs of mariners. The 2023–24 milestones include taking delivery of four search and rescue lifeboats, awarding contracts for the design of one polar icebreaker and the construction engineering of another, establishing the ancillary contract followed by contract design award for the Program Icebreaker, finalizing the design and entering into the construction contract for a new Near-shore Fishery Research Vessel, awarding the construction engineering contract for the Multi-purpose Vessel project, and beginning the construction of an Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship (CCG variant). One of the key principles of fleet renewal is to prioritize flexible capabilities in the new vessels. These modern and modular new vessels will allow CCG to continue the delivery of its programs to Canadians and to meet the evolving challenges driven by climate change. At the same time, to maintain continuity of service, the Department will continue its work on vessel life extension to ensure that older active vessels are safe, reliable, and able to continue providing essential services to Canadians until new ships are built and ready for operations.

As discussed in the [Government’s response to the Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Arctic Waters Surveillance^c](#), renewal of the CCG fleet will also support CCG’s work to improve marine domain awareness and surveillance in the Arctic.

Greening government

As part of CCG’s role in ensuring the safety of mariners, protecting Canada’s marine environment, and supporting economic growth through maritime trade, it will be essential to identify effective adaptation and mitigation measures in the face of evolving climate change-related challenges. CCG is taking action to increase its resilience to **climate change** to help ensure the continuity of key maritime services. This is a critical time, as the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly evident and the potential impacts on the maritime sector are expected to be extensive in the coming years, including from

- increased navigational and weather-related hazards and risks for regular operations
- changing ecosystem dynamics, which can impact shipping routes
- marine assets and infrastructure becoming more vulnerable
- more frequent delays in the delivery of maritime services
- increased and more challenging search and rescue operations

CCG will complete a **Roadmap to Climate Resilience** in 2023–24. It will provide a framework to coordinate adaptation and mitigation initiatives in the organization that will ultimately increase the climate resilience of the Agency.

The Government of Canada has committed to net-zero emissions by 2050. To meet this commitment, CCG is developing an operational fleet decarbonization plan. As part of this work, CCG will conduct a **biodiesel fuel** trial with a blend of 20 per cent biodiesel and 80 per cent conventional marine diesel on the CCGS *Caribou Isle*. CCG will test the emissions and compare them to those on an unaltered vessel, and expects that the new fuel will show a CO₂ emissions

reduction of approximately 18 per cent. Following the trial, CCG will review and assess the results and develop viable options to support and meet our emissions reduction commitments. In 2023–24, CCG will also work towards trialing 100 per cent biodiesel fuel on the CCGS *Caribou Isle* while continuing to monitor emissions reductions and operational impacts. In addition, CCG will work with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories to evaluate fuel suitability, emissions comparisons, and operational impacts and performance on biodiesel blends to expand the trial in the CCG Fleet.

CCG is committed to adhering to the [Greening Government Strategy](#)^{ci} and the [Policy on Green Procurement](#)^{cii} for the procurement of our large and small vessel fleets, including low carbon fuels, where availability, affordability, and operational feasibility allow. The renewal of CCG's small vessel fleet is an ideal proving ground for greener technologies. The **Near-Shore Fishery Research Vessel**, which will include a hybrid propulsion system, will be CCG's first vessel capable of all-electric operations. The construction contract is expected to be awarded in 2023, with the design to be finalized in partnership with the selected shipyard. CCG anticipates this will measurably reduce the vessel's greenhouse gas emissions without sacrificing the capabilities CCG needs. All elements of this vessel's procurement and future operation will be a learning experience for the Department and will set a pathway for the acquisition of more low-emission vessels in the future.

Personnel

With the expansion of CCG's capacity in upcoming years through OPP, fleet renewal, and expansion initiatives (i.e. the Fleet Sustainability Initiative and National Shipbuilding Strategy), it is imperative that CCG ensure that it has the right people with the right skillset to support this growth from both a fleet and program perspective. This will include incorporating lessons learned through the 2022 All Hands on Deck recruitment pilot project to build processes and systems that can sustain the volume of staffing needed throughout this growth period.

A coordinated approach to attract an **agile and resilient workforce** for the fleet will be more important than ever. The data collected on seagoing employees indicate that strategies need to be implemented to ensure CCG has qualified personnel to fill current and future fleet positions over the short, medium, and long term. In addition, 22.48 per cent of fleet employees will be eligible to retire in the next five years. The data also shows that 86.15 per cent of fleet employees identify as male in comparison to 13.85 per cent who identify as female. CCG's workforce is not yet representative of the Canadian population and efforts to improve representation will include targeted outreach to employees of equity groups, including Indigenous Peoples, and assessing gender parity throughout CCG on a yearly basis to support its objectives.

Coast Guard College

The **Coast Guard College Modernization Project** outlines a five-year strategic plan to ensure that the College remains a world-leading bilingual institution while CCG develops and updates the training that its personnel require to save lives, protect the environment, ensure safe shipping, and maintain the best marine communications systems possible. The project spans a host of upgrades and modernizations to numerous components of the teaching resources and campus services facilities to support modern and effective learning platforms, both physical and virtual. In 2023–24, CCG will finalize a number of modernization projects at the College. The Marine Communications and Traffic Services radio and traffic simulators will be fully modernized and in use by the end of the first quarter. In addition, the John Adams Library renewal project will be completed, including information technology infrastructure upgrades that support the effective delivery of training material to operational personnel and that will help ensure that

learning is more accessible from coast to coast to coast. Training will also be finalized for the small and large fleet command courses as well as Wartsila engine training for Marine Engineers.

Response

CCG OPP renewal seeks to increase Indigenous co-development, co-management, and co-implementation of initiatives designed to protect Canadian coastal waters and inland waterways. The **Coastal Marine Response Network** and **Integrated Marine Response Planning** seek to empower Indigenous coastal communities' ability to protect culturally important and sensitive sites through grants and contribution funding support mechanisms providing various levels capacity, training and/or equipment.

Coast Guard Auxiliary

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) is national network of volunteer organizations funded by CCG through contribution agreements to augment maritime **Search and Rescue response capacity**. Auxiliary units are strategically located in remote areas and where marine risks are highest. As CCG moves toward the establishment of community response networks to enhance on-water response to all marine incidents, leveraging existing Auxiliary volunteer partners will be key to bolstering response capacity and saving critical time in the event of a marine incident. This network of over 4,000 volunteers, operating more than 1,000 vessels, is critical to ensure a rapid response to marine emergencies. Under OPP Renewal, CCG will increase core funding to the CCG Auxiliary Contribution Program to allow Auxiliary non-profit organizations to sustain and grow their on water response capacity. In 2023–24, the Auxiliary organizations will receive a much-needed increase to their core operating budgets, supporting their training, exercising, insurance coverage, and response activities.

Gender-based analysis plus



Gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) considerations inform the ongoing development of the **Coastal Marine Response Network (CMRN)**, CCG's main contribution to the Oceans Protection Plan Renewal. The majority of projects under the CMRN initiative directly aim to support Indigenous participation in the marine safety system and increased capacity in Indigenous communities. These include the Indigenous Community Boat Volunteer Program, coastal marine response teams, Indigenous search and rescue training and exercising, the Heiltsuk Marine Emergency Response Team, and improving environmental response community caches in the Arctic. These initiatives are part of a broad effort to expand the marine safety system with partner organizations, provide more opportunities in the marine sector for underrepresented groups (i.e. Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, and northerners), and work towards reconciliation. Programs are being co-developed and co-implemented through engagement processes with Indigenous communities and partners. Program activities include, for example, supplementing crews with local Indigenous postsecondary students in Rankin Inlet as part of the Enhanced Arctic Marine Response Station project, which will facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer and increase future employment potential. The programs will prioritize hiring local Indigenous people, which could lead to longer-lasting career opportunities. The development of a strong community-based marine response capacity will support self-determination and enhance protection for the environment, and this protection will ensure that marine ecosystems are safe and healthy and can be relied on as sources of food and employment for Indigenous communities.

GBA Plus considerations are increasingly integrated in new CCG **vessel designs** to enable a diverse workforce in a user-friendly environment. For example, sightlines are being re-assessed in the design of the newest class of Search and Rescue vessels as part of accessibility and

ergonomics improvements. CCG is also incorporating an increased number of single-occupancy cabins, wherever possible, into the layouts of new ships. These are intended for individuals of all ranks and will allow for more crewing flexibility. Another design element being reviewed is the incorporation of more single-occupancy and all-access washrooms on ships. As a result of this change, bathrooms can take up as little as half the space and be closer to more working areas while ensuring flexible and inclusive access to all employees.

CCG uniforms include two distinct orders of dress: formal and work, and the work uniform design is under revision. Prototype testing will be conducted in a way that is inclusive of all genders and by employees ranging from ship’s crew to executives in diverse work environments. This will lead to uniform design that offers multiple size and fit options without the need to be identified to a specific gender and integrates functionality needs based on area of work (e.g. moisture wicking clothing for shipboard environments).

United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Department’s efforts under the Marine Operations and Response core responsibility support Canada’s efforts to address the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The activities that will help the Department attain the SDGs include plans to

- reduce the impact of marine pollution spills on public safety, the economy, the environment, and culturally significant sites through the [Canadian Coast Guard Environmental Response](#)^{ciii} program, which will contribute to SDG Target [9.1](#)^{civ}
- work with partners to provide maritime [search and rescue](#)^{cv} services and assist people, vessels, and aircrafts that are in imminent danger, which will contribute to SDG Target [9.1](#)^{cvi}
- work towards the goal of net-zero CCG emissions by 2050 through a combination of measures such as direct reductions, drop-in fuels, and greenhouse gas removal credits. An ongoing biodiesel testing project launched in fall 2022 will assess the operational feasibility and technological compatibility of greener fuel options. The new large vessel fleet will include, where feasible, technology to help reduce fuel usage. The renewal of CCG’s small vessel fleet is considered an ideal proving ground for the adoption of greener technologies; the Near-shore Fishery Research Vessel project, for example, is anticipated to deliver CCG’s first vessel capable of all-electric operations, which will measurably reduce the vessel’s greenhouse gas emissions without sacrificing operational capability. This work will contribute to the achievement of SDG Target [13.2](#)^{cvi}
- strengthen Canada’s domestic and international ocean science partnerships, including in hydrography, to ensure a strong Canadian contribution the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), and advance innovative, solution-based science to support policy and decision-making, which will contribute to SDG Target [14.a](#)^{cvi}.

For additional information on how the Department is advancing the UN SDGs and supporting the UN 2030 Agenda, please refer to DFO’s [2020–2023 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)^{cix} and the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals Supplementary Information Table](#)^{cx}.

Innovation



An evidence-based approach to forward planning is one of the three core themes of the **Coastal Marine Response Network (CMRN)**. The initiatives included in this OPP Renewal theme will increase CCG’s capacity to undertake risk analysis and develop risk methodologies, frameworks, and response plans that are informed by

Indigenous and coastal community knowledge. One of these initiatives is the expanded Risk-Based Analysis of Maritime Search and Rescue Delivery. This initiative will increase internal search and rescue data validation, reporting, and analysis capacity to support the cyclical process of reviewing marine risks. The impact and effectiveness of this initiative includes meaningful engagement with partners and stakeholders and will increase internal search and rescue data validation, reporting, and analysis capacity to support the cyclical process of reviewing marine risks. The impact and effectiveness of this initiative will be evaluated through metrics for CMRN, such as the number of search and rescue areas reviewed using the risk-based analysis methodology, and the percentage of search and rescue responses that meet established standards.


Key risk(s)

While carrying out this fundamental core responsibility, the Department may encounter delays in the delivery of **new large vessels**. Funding for renewal of the CCG fleet was secured for effective delivery of the Department's programs. The Department is investing in Vessel Life Extension (VLE) to extend the life of its fleet and acquired four interim vessels to fill in the operational gaps while vessels are in VLE. In response, the National Shipbuilding Strategy has a robust governance system in place to address any risks that may affect ongoing or upcoming shipbuilding projects as they arise.

In the context of **Oceans Protection Plan (OPP)** the Department will require increased capacity, through hiring and retention, to implement initiatives in a time where the workforce is experiencing shortages. The Department will take a proactive and innovative approach to staffing and will monitor the risks and employ the necessary mitigation measures.

Planned results for Marine Operations and Response


The following table shows, for Marine Operations and Response, the planned results, the result indicators, the targets and the target dates for 2023–24, and the actual results for the three most recent fiscal years for which actual results are available.

 Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Actual results
Canadian Coast Guard has the capability to respond to on-water incidents	Percentage of responses to environmental incidents that meet established standards	Exactly 100% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 100% 2020-21: 100% 2021-22: 100%
	Percentage of search and rescue responses that meet established standards	At least 99% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 98% ²⁶ 2020-21: 99% 2021-22: 99%
Canada's Civilian fleet has the capability to meet established service standards for clients	Operational days delivered vs. operational days planned	At least 90% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 97% 2020-21: 96% 2021-22: Data not available ²⁷
	Percentage of operational days lost due to crewing and logistical issues	At most 3% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 0.6% 2020-21: 1% 2021-22: Data not available ²⁷
	Percentage of operational days lost due to unplanned maintenance	At most 3% by March 31, 2024	2019-20: 4.35% ²⁸ 2020-21: 3% 2021-22: Data not available ²⁷
Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people	Number of agreements / arrangements involving Indigenous groups	At least 5 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: Data not available 2021-22: 51
	Number of Indigenous people trained through agreements / arrangements	At least 24 by March 31, 2024	2019-20: N/A 2020-21: Data not available 2021-22: N/A

Note: N/A indicates that the performance indicator was not in effect at that time, and therefore, historical data may not be available. In cases where historical data is available, past results are presented in the "Actual results" column.

Planned budgetary spending for Marine Operations and Response

The following table shows, for Marine Operations and Response, budgetary spending for 2023–24, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

 2023–24 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2023–24 planned spending	2024–25 planned spending	2025–26 planned spending
1,740,894,591	1,740,894,591	1,754,807,526	2,173,446,288


²⁶ Search and rescue responses were impacted by various factors, such as environmental conditions (including ice conditions, etc.).

²⁷ Results for 2021–22 are not available due to ongoing issues with CCG-specific software.

²⁸ Until newer vessels come into service and older vessels can be retired, exceeding this target is expected to continue for the immediate future.

Planned human resources for Marine Operations and Response

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the Department will need to fulfill this core responsibility for 2023–24 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents	2024–25 planned full-time equivalents	2025–26 planned full-time equivalents
	4,459	4,307	4,279

The financial, human resources and performance information for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Program Inventory is available on [GC InfoBase^{cx}](#).

Internal services: planned results

Description

Internal services are the services that are provided within a department so that it can meet its corporate obligations and deliver its programs. There are 10 categories of internal services: Management and Oversight Services; Communications Services; Legal Services; Human Resources Management Services; Financial Management Services; Information Management Services; Information Technology Services; Real Property Management Services; Materiel Management Services; and Acquisition Management Services.



Planning highlights

DFO/CCG is a large department with a wide variety of activities and responsibilities, and internal services support all programs to ensure that they have the resources needed to provide effective services to Canadians. A focus on employee engagement and retention through mental and physical well-being and diversity, along with professional development and training and the necessary information technology tools needed to do work efficiently and effectively is essential. Internal services also ensure that the Department's work is done in a fiscally responsible manner that effectively manages Canadian taxpayers' dollars, and in a sustainable manner that protects Canada's environment.

Reconciliation

Meaningful acts of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada ensure that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other subsequent inquiries and findings, including the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, is respected by the Government of Canada. The 2021 Speech from the Throne stated that "Reconciliation requires a whole-of-government approach, breaking down barriers, and rethinking how to accelerate our work." In keeping with this statement, DFO/CCG will work on its **Reconciliation Strategy** (the Strategy), a roadmap for advancing reconciliation and a framework for rethinking how to accelerate whole-of-portfolio reconciliation efforts. The Strategy establishes a vision, concrete actions, principles to guide the implementation of the actions, and a results management framework to advance reconciliation throughout the Department's extensive responsibilities. As an evergreen document, the Strategy will evolve over time, adapt to challenges as they are encountered, and build on successes as they are achieved. In 2023–24, the Department will work to improve and refine reconciliation-focused accountability measures to gauge progress, assess challenges and barriers, and facilitate a better understanding of what reconciliation means to Indigenous partners in the context of DFO and CCG. The Department will build from its partnership with the National Indigenous Fisheries Institute (NIFI) to develop best practices and guidance to facilitate Indigenous input and inclusion and to create a process to more readily include Indigenous perspectives and voices, specifically in the reconciliation strategy. The Strategy is an important guidepost and tool for advancing departmental reconciliation efforts in line with *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, which creates a lasting and action-oriented framework to advance the federal implementation of the Declaration in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

The Department has also committed to enhanced relationships with Indigenous Peoples through a **Reconciliation Action Plan**. Each region and headquarters directorate has developed actions that increase the Department's cultural competency and increase capacity and opportunities for Indigenous partners to participate in the marine safety regime. For each of the actions, DFO/CCG has identified concrete milestones that lay out the steps it is taking towards reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit partners. For example, the Department is committed to breaking down barriers around recruitment and procurement, and is prioritizing Indigenous candidates and vendors in each process. DFO/CCG is also working directly with Indigenous communities in a variety of arenas, including response planning, notification protocols, and the naming of vessels.

DFO/CCG recently implemented the **National Indigenous Relations Strategic Framework**, which creates tangible processes to capture and organize reconciliation-related activities undertaken by DFO/CCG; sets annual organizational priorities to aid in work planning; identifies gaps in process, policy, programs, and resources; and seeks and incorporates input and feedback from Indigenous partners. The Department will build off its partnership with NIFI to develop effective practices and guidance to facilitate Indigenous input and inclusion. The intent of this work is to establish a process to more readily include Indigenous perspectives and voices on both the Department's Reconciliation Strategy and the National Indigenous Relations Framework. Respectful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives on these two national initiatives will be a meaningful next step in advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

DFO/CCG is committed to the implementation of the newly-enacted ***United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*** and to continued adherence to Canada's principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration supports Indigenous self-determination and socio-economic development, and its implementation will enhance Canada's marine safety capacity through commitments to Indigenous marine safety capacity. This represents a significant and unprecedented next step in DFO/CCG's relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. This work will also support mandate letter commitments on continuing to implement the Oceans Protection Plan in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and working with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions. The implementation of the Declaration is a priority for DFO/CCG and an opportunity to work in cooperation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit partners to ensure that the Department has a respectful, robust framework to guide these important relationships, including the ongoing collaboration with NIFI. In addition, the Assembly of First Nations, Transport Canada, and DFO/CCG continue to collaborate on the assessment of OPP initiatives, which will evaluate OPP priorities, contributions, and effective collaborations from a First Nations' perspective.

Greening government and climate resiliency

DFO/CCG is preparing for the possibility that **climate change** may damage its sites or trigger new infrastructure needs. The Department has been conducting climate risk and vulnerability assessments for its key assets. Going forward, Real Property staff in regions are expected to identify the need for future climate risk and vulnerability assessments in their building management plans. In addition, the Department will continue to expand the use of its Coastal Infrastructure Vulnerability Index tool by implementing a version that includes both coastal and inland sites.

The **Greening Government Strategy**^{cxii} aims to transition the Government of Canada to net-zero carbon and climate-resilient operations, while also reducing environmental impacts beyond carbon, including on waste, water, and biodiversity. In support of this aim, DFO/CCG will take the following steps when replacing its motor vehicles. All new executive vehicle purchases and 75 per cent of new light-duty unmodified administrative vehicles will be **zero-emission vehicles or hybrid vehicles**. DFO/CCG will also analyze data on a wide range of parameters, including vehicle location, engine diagnostics, and vehicle operation to identify opportunities to optimize its vehicle fleet and identify operational suitability and cost effectiveness of available zero-emission or hybrid vehicles. Together, these actions will reduce emissions and help ensure Canada is a global leader in government operations that are net-zero, resilient, and green.

Under the 2022 renewal of the federal horizontal program on **zero plastic waste** led by Environment and Climate Change Canada, DFO/CCG is working to improve solid waste and plastic management at buildings and harbours managed by the Department. It is estimated that, around the world, an average of 8 million tons of plastic waste enters the oceans from land every year. In 2023–24, DFO/CCG will evaluate potential risk mitigation strategies, including site infrastructure expansion, waste management service expansion, education campaigns, historical waste removal, and integrated collection systems. By the end of 2023–24, each region will complete waste management gap analyses to identify challenges that need to be managed. The main objective of the project is to address on-site waste, but there could be indirect benefits to the broader community, such as improved recycling and waste management for the area. This project will also contribute towards the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and Greening Government Strategy commitments to reduce the environmental impact of waste by diverting at least 75 per cent by weight of non-hazardous operational waste (including plastics) from landfills by 2030.

A five-year work plan on **Plastics Circular Economy planning**, which aims to eliminate plastic waste through alternative solutions like reuse and recycling, is being developed in Newfoundland and Labrador to establish waste management plans at coastal locations, including harbours, laboratories, and CCG sites. In 2023–24, the Department will complete gap analyses for between 10 and 15 sites. The findings of the analyses will inform the next steps in the coming three-to-four years, potentially including the creation of waste management plans, new receptacle infrastructure, plans for cleanup of historic waste, and improved waste collection opportunities.

Also, in support of the Government’s Greening Government Strategy and the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, the Department will implement more **energy efficiency infrastructure** improvements and expand the number of energy efficiency studies to better plan for future improvements. The following are some examples of this work.

- The installation of solar photovoltaic power (generating electricity from light, as with solar panels) at various sites in the Gulf Region will contribute to energy consumption reduction of around 40 per cent at these sites, based on existing installations.
- Building envelope (outer walls and windows) replacement project designs will be prepared in 2023–24 for at least five sites in the Gulf Region, including the Canadian Coast Guard College (“the College”), and construction is expected to begin in 2024–25. These upgrades will reduce energy use and heat loss by improving building insulation.
- Going forward, DFO/CCG also intends to develop a decarbonization plan for the College in 2024–25 following completion of the HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) and

dry sprinkler system improvement project. The decarbonization plan will allow the Department to get an accurate assessment of greenhouse gas emissions emitted at the facility to compare with baseline figures.

Real property

As a result of investments identified in budget 2018 and the creation of Laboratories Canada^{cxiii}, **world class, innovative, and collaborative research** centres that support cutting-edge research with state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure have become a top priority for the Government of Canada. In its regional offices across Canada, the Department has focused on investments in multi-purpose facilities to support stronger and more collaborative federal science, such as the following:

- The Atlantic Science Enterprise Centre (ASEC) is being modernized and expanded to become a multi-disciplinary science facility that will deliver on the Department’s research priorities. While ASEC is being modernized, the existing laboratory facilities at the St. Andrews Biological Station (SABS) will be upgraded to include a climate change aqualab, a laboratory designed for live-animal research that will support the ASEC science plan and act as a satellite site for ASEC.
- Special-purpose space for fisheries science at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography will be modernized to create the Facility for Intelligent Marine Systems, a multi-departmental, collaborative facility that will bring together science and technology from DFO/CCG, the Department of National Defence, and Natural Resources Canada. On completion, it will encourage collaborative, interdepartmental use of state-of-the-art uncrewed surface and underwater data collection platforms and nurture the development and testing of new systems to observe Canada’s marine environment.

In response to the National Accommodation Space Review and budget reductions in Budget 2022, DFO/CCG will continue to monitor and update **regional accommodation strategies** and plans to review the space use rates across the country. It is the Department’s intention to implement **GCWorkplace**^{cxiv}, where feasible, over the next several years. DFO/CCG will move toward these new types of workplaces and will develop accommodation plans with regions to define and prioritize projects. Where full GCWorkplace implementation is not feasible, or in locations where it will be implemented only over the medium-to-longer term, it will be important to offer employees a more modern place to work by implementing a hybrid approach, integrating as many components of the GCWorkplace standard as possible and to offer employees a variety of work points and collaborations areas. DFO/CCG will also pursue opportunities to use space differently by moving to unassigned seating. A better usage of space will reduce expenses for real estate across Canada, and modernization of space according to new standards will provide employees with a more modern and flexible place to work.

Recruitment and workforce

DFO and CCG are committed to enabling a **healthy, diverse, and inclusive workforce** that is more representative of the Canadians we serve. In support of the Government of Canada’s commitment to increase diversity and foster inclusion in the public service, the Department will implement targeted measures to recruit and retain employees who identify as Indigenous, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and women in non-traditional occupations. In addition to fleet-specific recruitment activities discussed above in core responsibility 4: Marine Operations and Response, the Department will address the challenges and barriers to employment identified in its 2022 Employment Systems Review and advance the diversity and

inclusion agenda through the implementation of the 2022–2027 Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and the 2022–25 Accessibility Action Plan. The Department will also pursue the implementation of the *Pay Equity Act* (which came into force on August 21, 2021) by 2024 to create an inclusive public service where women receive equal pay for work of equal value. In addition, department-specific harassment and violence prevention training, reflecting DFO/CCG’s needs and unique operational requirements, will be implemented, further reinforcing a healthy workplace culture that is free of harassment and in which all employees feel included and safe.

In the Arctic Region, DFO and CCG are committed to increasing the participation of Inuit, First Nations, and Métis Peoples, as well as northerners and other employment equity groups in the workforce, and are working to develop a **Joint Northern Recruitment and Retention Strategy**. Increasing the number of Inuit, First Nations, and Métis employees is not only critical as part of Canada’s overall efforts toward reconciliation and increasing diversity in the public service, it is essential to delivering quality programs by a workforce that is representative of the peoples and communities being served in the Arctic Region. Inuit, First Nations, and Métis Peoples remain central to decision-making and policy building in the Arctic Region and their participation in the implementation of the strategy will be critical to ensuring a more representative public service. The strategy also aims to

- address barriers to recruitment and retention
- coordinate outreach and communications with Inuit, First Nations, and Métis governments, organizations, and communities on potential opportunities in the Arctic Region
- increase the level of awareness of, and interest in, jobs and careers with DFO and CCG’s Arctic Region
- provide greater opportunities for learning, development, and advancement for Inuit, First Nations, and Métis employees
- further establish a culturally aware, sensitive, and respectful workplace

Engagement on this strategy with Inuit, First Nations, and Métis partners began in 2022–23. In 2023–24, the Department will work with its partners to co-develop a distinctions-based strategy, with separate implementation plans for recruiting and retaining Inuit, First Nations, and Métis employees that reflect the unique priorities and needs of each of these communities. The final strategy and implementation plan is expected to be completed by December 31, 2023.

Financial management

The Department will pursue a **long-term plan** using accrual budgeting to enable the management of DFO/CCG’s capital assets and infrastructure according to their lifecycle (useful life), as opposed to a project-based approach that focuses on shorter (e.g. five-year) periods. This will provide the stable and predictable long-term capital funding required to enable a whole-of-portfolio asset management, contribute to a greater strategic lens on investment decisions, and improve the stewardship of public funds. It will reduce the Department’s reliance on temporary funding and increase its flexibility to better meet Government of Canada priorities. As such, this approach is expected to underpin a cleaner, healthier, more resilient future. In particular, this will positively impact Canada’s coastal communities where the majority of the Department’s assets are located. This initiative is expected to positively impact every region of the country. It will ensure that the infrastructure is in place to keep Canadians safe in the face of climate change, and will protect the resilience of our economy as extreme weather

intensifies. In addition, the procurement processes that will arise from this initiative will be leveraged to promote reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Data and digital innovation

The Department will advance its support for the Government's **National Action Plan on Open Government**^{cxv} through efforts focused on management of data as a strategic asset, open release of data for innovation and economic growth, and prioritizing the release of data of greatest importance to Canadians. This information is foundational to understanding Canada's oceans and freshwater environments and their impacts on coastal communities and the livelihoods of Canadians. The Department's Data Strategy is an internal service initiative that continues to take steps to improve data availability, quality, management, and use across the Department to strengthen evidence-based decision-making, performance assessment, and reporting on results. The strategy is designed to support all departmental core responsibilities through improved use of data to deliver on results.

The Department will advance **electronic monitoring tools** such as **electronic logbooks**^{cxvi}, which will provide alternatives to paper-based data capture with modern digital services. This approach will allow for real-time reporting and streamline data-capture requirements for key industry stakeholders. Access to this type of data is vital to the proper management of Canada's fisheries resources.

DFO/CCG will work on the development of a streamlined **information management system for managing grants and contributions**, replacing the seven distinct programs that are currently in use, and that will be compatible with the Department's up-to-date financial software. One department-wide solution for grants and contributions management will increase efficiency and transparency, help to standardize reporting data, and make available better information to support decision-making. The work will also contribute to the Government's National Action Plan on Open Government by making data easy to access, use, and understand while increasing transparency about spending.

In support of the Government's Roadmap for Open Science, DFO/CCG will continue to advance its **Open Science Action Plan**. To promote knowledge equity and science literacy, the Department will leverage modern digital tools to more easily share DFO/CCG's code and scientific data with the Canadian public and enable scientists to publish their research in open access journals.

DFO/CCG aims to increase adoption of digital technologies and leverage data to improve service delivery. The second phase of the **Enterprise Data Hub (EDH)** will bring the Department further into alignment with the Government of Canada's Digital Standards and deliver robust data governance, modern data-quality tools, and clear guidance for employees. Built on a solid foundation of cloud infrastructure, it will contribute to increased data literacy and competency, as well as effective evidence-driven decision and policy making across DFO/CCG. Supporting alignment with the National Action Plan on Open Government, the EDH will provide improvements to cataloguing tools and processes. It will also support richer publication processes, effectively and securely protecting the large volumes of irreplaceable data that DFO/CCG acquires through program activities, and providing integration tools, such as Application Programming Interface, which allow the exchange of information, currently in silos, across organizational boundaries to all stakeholders.

The new cloud-based **Canadian Fisheries Information System** will replace, integrate, and streamline over 64 outdated licensing, quota, and catch monitoring systems to enable agile, efficient, effective, timely, and cost-effective licensing program decisions necessary for sustainable fisheries. This system will align with the [Government's Digital Ambition Plan 2022](#)^{cxvii} and the [National Action Plan on Open Government](#)^{cxviii}, supporting the delivery of programs for Canadians in the digital age and supporting DFO/CCG's departmental priorities and mandate commitments to sustainably manage fisheries. DFO/CCG will also test the effectiveness of new, efficient automation for data collection, including information from gear tag suppliers and on harvest quota processes.

Gender-based analysis plus



The **Enterprise Data Hub** project discussed above will enhance gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) and support the departmental commitment to strengthening policies and decision-making processes by ensuring that GBA Plus assessments are conducted during the development of new or renewed policies and program proposals. These assessments will provide thorough decision-making information and minimize unintended GBA Plus differentiated impacts of departmental activities.

Following a national summary of stand-alone washrooms in DFO and CCG facilities in 2016, the Department has committed that, where possible, in new designs and re-fits, accessible **all-access single stall washrooms** (also known as “all-gender” or “gender-neutral” washrooms) should be provided for use by any employee who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, to improve inclusivity and support for 2SLGBTQI+ staff. In addition, similar considerations are being given to locker room facilities and sleep accommodations for fisheries officers. After successful implementation in a new office for CCG staff in Ottawa, an all-access washroom that could double as a locker room is being planned at the CCG College D'Iberville wellness centre facility located in Cape Breton in 2023–24. In the Maritimes Region, all-access washrooms will be constructed at the regional headquarters starting in fall 2023. Designs are also underway for future redesign of the Ontario and Prairie Region Freshwater Institute's signage and washrooms.

DFO/CCG will work on the implementation of the Department's **Accessibility Action Plan 2022–25** by addressing barriers in the workforce relating to seven priority areas (employment, information and communication technologies, communication, design and delivery of programs and services, procurement of goods and services, transportation, and built environment) to develop a more accessible organization. DFO/CCG will also continue to address the recommendations identified in the **2022 Employment Services Review**, which looked at all policies, procedures, and processes related to employment in the organization to identify and address potential barriers that may influence representation in the Department among the four designated employment equity groups. In addition, DFO/CCG will pursue the implementation of the **Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan**- discussed above, ensuring that its people management practices, policies, and directives account for a variety of lived experiences, are free of systemic barriers to employment, and are conducive to an enabling, safe, and healthy work environment. This work will lead to improved engagement and collaboration in the development of people management policies through the co-creation of initiatives, through seeking advice from employees and employee networks with lived experience, and increased representation from members of employment equity and equity-seeking groups in our workforce.

United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Department's work under the Internal Services core responsibility support Canada's efforts to address the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The activities that will help the Department attain the SDGs include plans to provide funding and support to mitigate human health and ecological risks associated with [contaminated sites](#)^{cxix} while reducing federal financial liability, which will contribute to SDG Target 12.4^{cxix}. A contaminated site is one at which substances occur at concentrations that exceed levels specified in policies and regulations or that are above background levels and either pose or are likely to pose a hazard to human health or the environment.

For additional information on how the Department is advancing the UN SDGs and supporting the UN 2030 Agenda, please refer to DFO's [2020–2023 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)^{cxxi} and the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals Supplementary Information Table](#)^{cxix}.

Innovation




The Department will continue to collaborate with Shared Services Canada in support of the Government of Canada's efforts to explore a future **human resources and pay solution** and ensure that the complex nature of DFO/CCG's requirements are taken into account. Specifically, the Department will participate in the various **NextGen pilot projects** to establish requirements and test proposed future systems to ensure that any new solutions will adequately support a widely-dispersed and highly-operational workforce. Meanwhile, DFO/CCG will continue to work with Public Services and Procurement Canada on pay stabilization and backlog reduction efforts to ensure reliable and accurate pay for employees to prepare for a future transition to NextGen.

Key risk(s)

A significant risk in Internal Services is not having adequate capacity to support programs due to a lack of either **financial or human resources**. Following a bench-marking exercise with other departments of similar scope and size, it is clear that DFO/CCG invests fewer resources in the delivery of its people management program than the Public Service-wide average. This smaller overall investment can signal an increased risk that the Department does not have the required resources to deliver on the people management mandate and commitments. To mitigate this risk, the Department is leveraging best practices from other government departments and piloting the use of automation to increase efficiency and accuracy in its programming. On the financial front, many sectors and regions will take a proactive approach to reviewing their funding and prioritizing projects to ensure they have adequate financial resources to meet priorities. To manage its overall workforce risk, the Department will work closely with talent management to identify future skill requirements and create competitions and talent pools accordingly. The Department will regularly assess these risks and modify risk mitigation measures as necessary.

Planning for Contracts Awarded to Indigenous Businesses

	Total percentage of contracts with Indigenous businesses		
	2021–22 actual % achieved	2022–23 forecasted % target	2023–24 planned % target
	1.7%	4.5%	4.2%

DFO/CCG is assigned to the third phase of the Government’s implementation plan with a targeted five per cent achievement required by no later than 2024–25. Performance against the five per cent objective is regularly monitored through departmental procurement management frameworks that include governance, planning, and reporting requirements.

As part of departmental procurement planning processes and in response to the Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services' call letter to Deputy Ministers in early 2022, the Department’s sectors and regions were requested to submit their annual [Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business](#)^{cxxiii} procurement plans for the next two years. DFO/CCG regions and sectors identified the following targets:


- \$47 million for 2022–23
- \$43 million for 2023–24

As part of the Department’s efforts to advance reconciliation and achieve the five per cent target by 2024–25, DFO/CCG is planning to

- increase employee awareness of Indigenous procurement by conducting regular training sessions and publishing information letters
- leverage lessons learned and best practices from internal DFO/CCG stakeholders as well as from other government departments
- modify internal contracting templates and forms to emphasize Indigenous procurement considerations and to remove barriers where possible
- collaborate with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Procurement Assistance Canada to encourage Indigenous suppliers to register on the [Indigenous Business Directory](#)^{cxxiv}
- work in partnership with ISC to conduct a spend and market analysis to identify how Indigenous supplier capacity aligns with DFO/CCG business needs
- participate in a ‘Reverse Trade Show’ for small and medium suppliers in Atlantic Canada (including Indigenous suppliers) in 2023–24 to encourage greater Indigenous procurement participation


Planned budgetary spending for Internal Services

The following table shows, for internal Services, budgetary spending for 2023–24, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

	2023–24 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2023–24 planned spending	2024–25 planned spending	2025–26 planned spending
	584,584,257	584,584,257	605,295,815	563,255,990

Planned human resources for Internal Services

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the Department will need to carry out its Internal Services for 2023–24 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents	2024–25 planned full-time equivalents	2025–26 planned full-time equivalents
	2,211	2,215	2,205

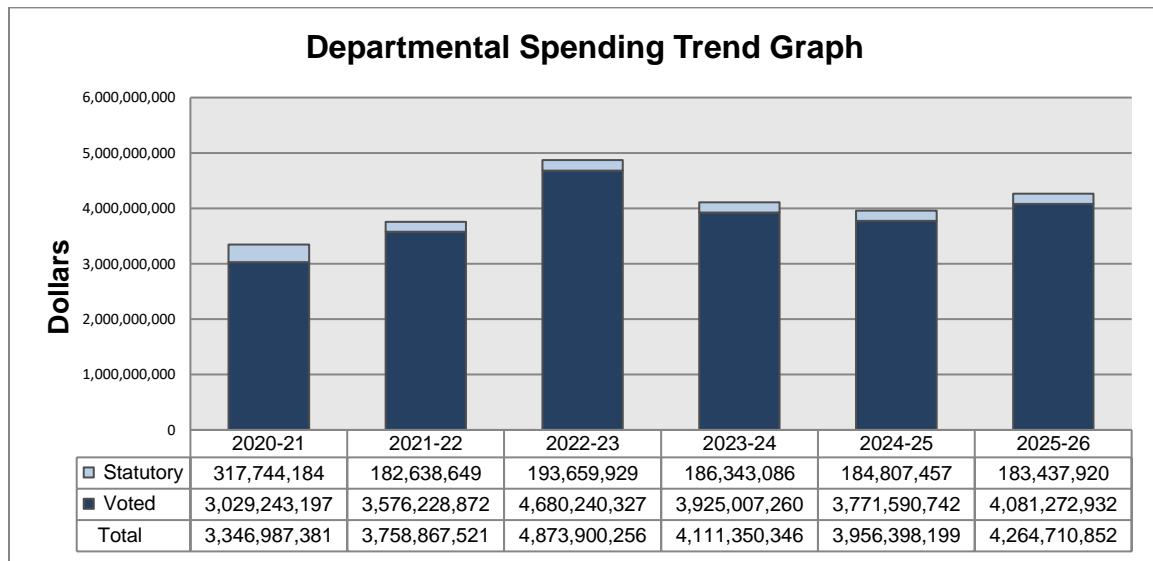
Planned spending and human resources

This section provides an overview of the Department’s planned spending and human resources for the next three fiscal years and compares planned spending for 2023–24 with actual spending for the current and the previous year.

Planned spending

Departmental spending 2020–21 to 2025–26

The following graph presents planned spending (voted and statutory expenditures) over time.



The variance between the 2022-23 forecast spending and the 2023-24 through 2025-26 planned spending is mainly attributable to Supplementary Estimates and operating and capital budget carry forwards, which have been included in the 2022-23 forecast spending but are not yet known for the 2023-24 through 2025-26 fiscal years.

Spending analysis

The \$412 million increase in expenditures from 2020-21 to 2021-22 is primarily related to spending on Indigenous programs and the Canadian Coast Guard fleet renewal programs.

The \$1,115 million increase from the 2021-22 expenditures to the 2022-23 forecast spending is primarily related to incremental funding for:

- renewing the Canadian Coast Guard fleet;
- the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative;
- the Small Craft Harbours program;
- Indigenous programs; and
- the Aquatic Invasive Species program.

Spending plan for 2023–24 to 2025–26

The decreasing trend is attributable to planned changes in funding profiles as projects approach or arrive at their completion.

The (\$763) million decrease in planned spending from 2022-23 to 2023-24 is primarily related to:

- Planned changes to Indigenous programs to reflect the ongoing nature of negotiations and planned completion of associated agreements;
- Planned changes to the Small Craft Harbours program due to the ramp-down of Budget 2021 funding;
- Planned changes in funding for the Trans Mountain Expansion project based on specific annual deliverables; and
- Planned changes in funding related to modernizing of the Fisheries Act.

The (\$155) million decrease in planned spending from 2023-24 to 2024-25 is primarily related to:

- Planned changes in funding associated with initial recovery efforts and resilience planning following Hurricane Fiona; and
- Planned changes in funding for the Trans Mountain Expansion project based on specific annual deliverables.

The \$308 million increase in planned spending from 2024-25 to 2025-26 is primarily related to:

- Planned changes in funding for Canadian Coast Guard fleet projects.

Budgetary planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services (dollars)

The following table presents information on spending for each of DFO's core responsibilities and its internal services for 2023–24 and other relevant fiscal years.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2020–21 actual expenditures	2021–22 actual expenditures	2022–23 forecast spending	2023–24 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2023–24 planned spending	2024–25 planned spending	2025–26 planned spending
Fisheries	988,392,191	1,245,671,518	1,701,464,235	1,096,513,781	1,096,513,781	935,586,158	893,277,580
Aquatic Ecosystems	354,805,497	359,215,413	490,443,661	374,158,739	374,158,739	349,593,907	340,638,239
Marine Navigation	285,902,876	323,346,970	371,821,481	315,198,978	315,198,978	311,114,793	294,092,755
Marine Operations and Response	1,160,540,295	1,276,897,457	1,610,082,829	1,740,894,591	1,740,894,591	1,754,807,526	2,173,446,288
Subtotal	2,789,640,859	3,205,131,358	4,173,812,206	3,526,766,089	3,526,766,089	3,351,102,384	3,701,454,862
Internal Services	557,346,522	553,736,163	700,088,050	584,584,257	584,584,257	605,295,815	563,255,990
Total	3,346,987,381	3,758,867,521	4,873,900,256	4,111,350,346	4,111,350,346	3,956,398,199	4,264,710,852

2023–24 budgetary gross and net planned spending summary (dollars)

The following table reconciles gross planned spending with net planned spending for 2023–24.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2023–24 gross planned spending	2023–24 planned revenues netted against spending	2023–24 planned net spending
Fisheries	1,096,513,781	-	1,096,513,781
Aquatic Ecosystems	374,158,739	-	374,158,739
Marine Navigation	355,209,978	(40,011,000)	315,198,978
Marine Operations and Response	1,740,894,591	-	1,740,894,591
Subtotal	3,566,777,089	(40,011,000)	3,526,766,089
Internal Services	584,584,257	-	584,584,257
Grand Total	4,151,361,346	(40,011,000)	4,111,350,346

For certain services, CCG collects service fees to ensure that, where appropriate, the entire cost of delivering the service is not borne by taxpayers. Fees for icebreaking, marine navigation, and dredging support the safe navigation of Canadian waters.

Planned human resources

The following table presents information on human resources, in full-time equivalents (FTEs), for each of DFO's core responsibilities and for its internal services for 2023–24 and the other relevant years.

Human resources planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services

Core responsibilities and internal services	2020–21 actual FTEs	2021–22 actual FTEs	2022–23 forecast FTEs	2023–24 planned FTEs	2024–25 planned FTEs	2025–26 planned FTEs
Fisheries	3,245	3,693	3,780	3,724	3,771	3,759
Aquatic Ecosystems	1,607	1,763	1,996	1,499	1,503	1,457
Marine Navigation	1,826	1,733	1,783	2,068	2,061	2,062
Marine Operations and Response	4,348	4,462	4,719	4,459	4,307	4,279
Subtotal	11,026	11,651	12,278	11,750	11,642	11,557
Internal Services	2,231	2,433	2,354	2,211	2,215	2,205
Total	13,257	14,084	14,632	13,961	13,857	13,762

Note: Because of rounding, figures may not add to the totals shown.

Full-time equivalents (FTE) analysis

The 827 FTE increase between 2020-21 and 2021-22 is primarily attributed to additional funding related to Marine Conservation Targets, Nature Legacy, Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, Small Craft Harbours and the Bligh Island Marine Pollution Incident.

The 548 FTE increase between 2021-22 and 2022-23 is primarily attributed to additional funding related to Oceans Protection Plan Renewal and the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative.

FTE plan for 2021-22 to 2024-25

A decreasing trend is projected, which is attributable to planned changes in the funding profile as projects near and meet their completion.

The 671 FTE decrease between 2022-23 and 2023-24 is primarily attributed to planned reductions across the department, specifically the *Fisheries Act*, Nature Legacy, the Canadian Coast Guard's Fleet Renewal, and ramp-down of Small Craft Harbours Budget 2021 funding.

The 104 FTE decrease between 2023-24 and 2024-25 is primarily attributed to planned reduction in funding for the Trans Mountain Expansion project, planned decrease for initial recovery efforts and resilience planning following Hurricane Fiona, and additional reductions in funding across various other programs.

The 95 FTE decrease between 2024-25 and 2025-26 is primarily attributed to further planned reduction in funding for the Trans Mountain Expansion project and Federal Contaminated Sites, as well as additional reductions in funding across various other programs.

Estimates by vote

Information on DFO's organizational appropriations is available in the [2023-24 Main Estimates](#)^{CXXV}.

Future-oriented condensed statement of operations

The future oriented condensed statement of operations provides an overview of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's operations for 2022–23 to 2023–24.

The forecast and planned amounts in this statement of operations were prepared on an accrual basis. The forecast and planned amounts presented in other sections of the Departmental Plan were prepared on an expenditure basis. Amounts may therefore differ.

A more detailed future-oriented statement of operations and associated notes, including a reconciliation of the net cost of operations with the requested authorities, are available on [Fisheries and Oceans Canada's website^{cxvii}](#).

Future-orientated condensed statement of operations for the year ending March 31, 2024 (dollars)

Financial information	2022–23 forecast results	2023–24 planned results	Difference (2023–24 planned results minus 2022–23 forecast results)
Total expenses	3,906,504,567	3,287,804,697	(618,699,870)
Total revenues	(40,011,000)	(40,011,000)	0
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	3,866,493,567	3,247,793,697	(618,699,870)

The Net Cost of Operations in 2023-24 is projected to be \$3,247.8 million, a decrease of \$618.7 million compared to \$3,866.5 million in 2022-23. This decrease is mainly attributed to an overall decrease in authorities available for spending (excluding Capital vote) of \$672.5 million (\$2,729.7 million in 2023-24 compared to \$3,402.2 million in 2022-23) and a net increase of \$53.8 million in the total estimates for items not affecting authorities, such as amortization expense and contingent liabilities.

Total revenues are projected to remain stable at \$40 million.

Authorities available for spending in 2023-24 do not include items such as Supplementary Estimates and carry forwards.

Corporate information

Organizational profile

Appropriate minister:

The Honourable Joyce Murray, P.C., M.P.

Institutional head:

Annette Gibbons, Deputy Minister

Ministerial portfolio:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Enabling instruments:

- *Oceans Act*^{cxxvii}
- *Fisheries Act*^{cxxviii}
- *Species at Risk Act*^{cxxix}
- *Coastal Fisheries Protection Act*^{cxxx}
- *Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act*^{cxxxi}
- *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*^{cxxxii} (Transport Canada-led)
- *Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act*^{cxxxiii} (Transport Canada-led)

Year of incorporation / commencement:

1979

Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do

Information on DFO's raison d'être, mandate and role is available on [Fisheries and Oceans Canada's website](#)^{cxxxiv}.

Information on the Department's mandate letter commitments is available in the [Minister's mandate letter](#)^{cxxxv}.

Operating context

Information on the operating context is available on the [Fisheries and Oceans Canada website](#)^{cxxxvi}.

Reporting framework

DFO's approved Departmental Results Framework and Program Inventory for 2023–24 are as follows.

Departmental Results Framework

 <p>FISHERIES</p>	 <p>AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS</p>	 <p>MARINE NAVIGATION</p>	 <p>MARINE OPERATIONS AND RESPONSE</p>
<p>Canadian fisheries are sustainably managed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of key fish stocks that have limit reference points and harvest control rules Percentage of decisions for fisheries on key fish stocks where harvest control rules were followed Percentage of key fish stocks in the cautious and healthy zone <p>Canadian aquaculture is sustainably managed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of aquaculture farms that are compliant with <i>Fisheries Act</i> regulations Level of Canadian aquaculture production <p>The commercial fishing industry has access to safe harbours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of core harbours that are in fair or better condition <p>Fisheries, oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are protected from unlawful exploitation and interference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of inspection activities that have resulted in compliance actions <p>Scientific information on fisheries resources is available to inform management decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of approved requests to the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) for peer-reviewed science advice on fisheries completed each year Percentage of sustainable aquaculture research projects which provide information and/or advice to policy and decision-makers <p>Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agreements/arrangements involving Indigenous groups Number of Indigenous people trained through agreements/arrangements Number of Indigenous people employed through agreements/arrangements 	<p>Negative impacts on Canada's oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are minimized or avoided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of Canada's oceans that are conserved Percentage of development projects occurring in or near water that effectively avoid, mitigate or offset impacts to fish and fish habitat Percentage of aquatic species/populations at risk listed under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> for which a recovery strategy/management plan is completed Percentage of approved requests to the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) for peer-reviewed science advice on aquatic invasive species completed each year <p>Scientific information on Canada's oceans and other aquatic ecosystems is available to inform management decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of science products related to aquatic ecosystems that are available Percentage of approved requests to the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) for peer-reviewed science advice on aquatic ecosystems completed each year <p>Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agreements/arrangements involving Indigenous groups Number of Indigenous people trained through agreements/arrangements Number of Indigenous people employed through agreements/arrangements 	<p>Mariners safely navigate Canada's waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of marine incidents versus vessel movements Number of official navigational products created and/or updated per year, from incorporation of new and modern hydrography and/or navigationally significant information <p>A Canadian maritime economy that is supported by navigable waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of marine incidents versus vessel movements Percentage of ship ice escort requests south of the 60th parallel north that are delayed beyond level of service response time standards Average time (in hours) beyond level of service response time standards for ice escort requests south of the 60th parallel north <p>Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agreements/arrangements involving Indigenous groups Number of Indigenous people employed through agreements/arrangements 	<p>Canadian Coast Guard has the capability to respond to on-water incidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of responses to environmental incidents that meet established standards Percentage of search and rescue responses that meet established standards <p>Canada's civilian fleet has the capability to meet established service standards for clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational days delivered versus operational days planned Percentage of operational days lost due to crewing and logistical issues Percentage of operational days lost due to unplanned maintenance <p>Enhanced relationships with, involvement of, and outcomes for Indigenous people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agreements/arrangements involving Indigenous groups Number of Indigenous people trained through agreements/arrangements

Legend:

- CORE RESPONSIBILITY**
- Departmental Result
- Departmental Result Indicator

Program Inventory

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fisheries Management Aboriginal Programs and Treaties Aquaculture Management Salmonid Enhancement International Engagement Small Craft Harbours Conservation and Protection Fish and Seafood Sector Aquatic Animal Health Biotechnology and Genomics Aquaculture Science Fisheries Science Economics and Statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Aquatic Invasive Species Species at Risk Marine Planning and Conservation Aquatic Ecosystem Science Oceans and Climate Change Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Icebreaking Services Aids to Navigation Waterways Management Marine Communications and Traffic Services Shore-based Asset Readiness Hydrographic Services, Data and Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search and Rescue Environmental Response Maritime Security Fleet Operational Capability Fleet Maintenance Fleet Procurement Canadian Coast Guard College
Internal Services			

Supporting information on the program inventory

Supporting information on planned expenditures, human resources, and results related to DFO's Program Inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#)^{cxxxvii}.

Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on [DFO's website](#)^{cxxxviii}.

- Details on transfer payment programs
- Gender-based analysis plus
- Horizontal initiatives
- Up-front multi-year funding
- United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals

Federal tax expenditures

DFO's Departmental Plan does not include information on tax expenditures.

Tax expenditures are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance. The Department of Finance Canada publishes cost estimates and projections for government-wide tax expenditures each year in the [Report on Federal Tax Expenditures](#)^{cxxxix}. This report provides detailed information on tax expenditures, including objectives, historical background and references to related federal spending programs, as well as evaluations, research papers and gender-based analysis plus.

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Appendix: definitions

appropriation (crédit)

Any authority of Parliament to pay money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

budgetary expenditures (dépenses budgétaires)

Operating and capital expenditures; transfer payments to other levels of government, organizations or individuals; and payments to Crown corporations.

core responsibility (responsabilité essentielle)

An enduring function or role performed by a department. The intentions of the department with respect to a core responsibility are reflected in one or more related departmental results that the department seeks to contribute to or influence.

Departmental Plan (plan ministériel)

A document that sets out a department's priorities, programs, expected results and associated resource requirements, covering a three-year period beginning with the year indicated in the title of the report. Departmental Plans are tabled in Parliament each spring.

departmental result (résultat ministériel)

A change that a department seeks to influence. A departmental result is often outside departments' immediate control, but it should be influenced by program-level outcomes.

departmental result indicator (indicateur de résultat ministériel)

A factor or variable that provides a valid and reliable means to measure or describe progress on a departmental result.

departmental results framework (cadre ministériel des résultats)

A framework that consists of the department's core responsibilities, departmental results and departmental result indicators.

Departmental Results Report (rapport sur les résultats ministériels)

A report on a department's actual performance in a fiscal year against its plans, priorities and expected results set out in its Departmental Plan for that year. Departmental Results Reports are usually tabled in Parliament each fall.

full-time equivalent (équivalent temps plein)

A measure of the extent to which an employee represents a full person-year charge against a departmental budget. Full-time equivalents are calculated as a ratio of assigned hours of work to scheduled hours of work. Scheduled hours of work are set out in collective agreements.

gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) (analyse comparative entre les sexes plus [ACS Plus])

An analytical tool used to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs and other initiatives. GBA Plus is a process for understanding who is impacted by the issue or opportunity being addressed by the initiative; identifying how the initiative could be tailored to meet diverse needs of the people most impacted; and anticipating and mitigating any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative. GBA Plus is an intersectional analysis that

goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences to consider other factors, such as age, disability, education, ethnicity, economic status, geography, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

government-wide priorities (priorités pangouvernementales)

For the purpose of the 2023–24 Departmental Plan, government-wide priorities are the high-level themes outlining the Government’s agenda in the 2021 Speech from the Throne: building a healthier today and tomorrow; growing a more resilient economy; bolder climate action; fight harder for safer communities; standing up for diversity and inclusion; moving faster on the path to reconciliation and fighting for a secure, just, and equitable world.

high impact innovation (innovation à impact élevé)

High impact innovation varies per organizational context. In some cases, it could mean trying something significantly new or different from the status quo. In other cases, it might mean making incremental improvements that relate to a high-spending area or addressing problems faced by a significant number of Canadians or public servants.

horizontal initiative (initiative horizontale)

An initiative in which two or more federal organizations are given funding to pursue a shared outcome, often linked to a government priority.

non-budgetary expenditures (dépenses non budgétaires)

Net outlays and receipts related to loans, investments and advances, which change the composition of the financial assets of the Government of Canada.

performance (rendement)

What an organization did with its resources to achieve its results, how well those results compare to what the organization intended to achieve, and how well lessons learned have been identified.

plan (plan)

The articulation of strategic choices, which provides information on how an organization intends to achieve its priorities and associated results. Generally, a plan will explain the logic behind the strategies chosen and tend to focus on actions that lead up to the expected result.

planned spending (dépenses prévues)

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in the Main Estimates.

A department is expected to be aware of the authorities that it has sought and received. The determination of planned spending is a departmental responsibility, and departments must be able to defend the expenditure and accrual numbers presented in their Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports.

program (programme)

Individual or groups of services, activities or combinations thereof that are managed together within a department and that focus on a specific set of outputs, outcomes or service levels.

program inventory (répertoire des programmes)

An inventory of a department's programs that describes how resources are organized to carry out the department's core responsibilities and achieve its planned results.

result (résultat)

An external consequence attributed, in part, to an organization, policy, program or initiative. Results are not within the control of a single organization, policy, program or initiative; instead, they are within the area of the organization's influence.

statutory expenditures (dépenses législatives)

Expenditures that Parliament has approved through legislation other than appropriation acts. The legislation sets out the purpose of the expenditures and the terms and conditions under which they may be made.

target (cible)

A measurable performance or success level that an organization, program or initiative plans to achieve within a specified time period. Targets can be either quantitative or qualitative.

voted expenditures (dépenses votées)

Expenditures that Parliament approves annually through an *Appropriation Act*. The vote wording becomes the governing conditions under which these expenditures may be made.

Endnotes

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