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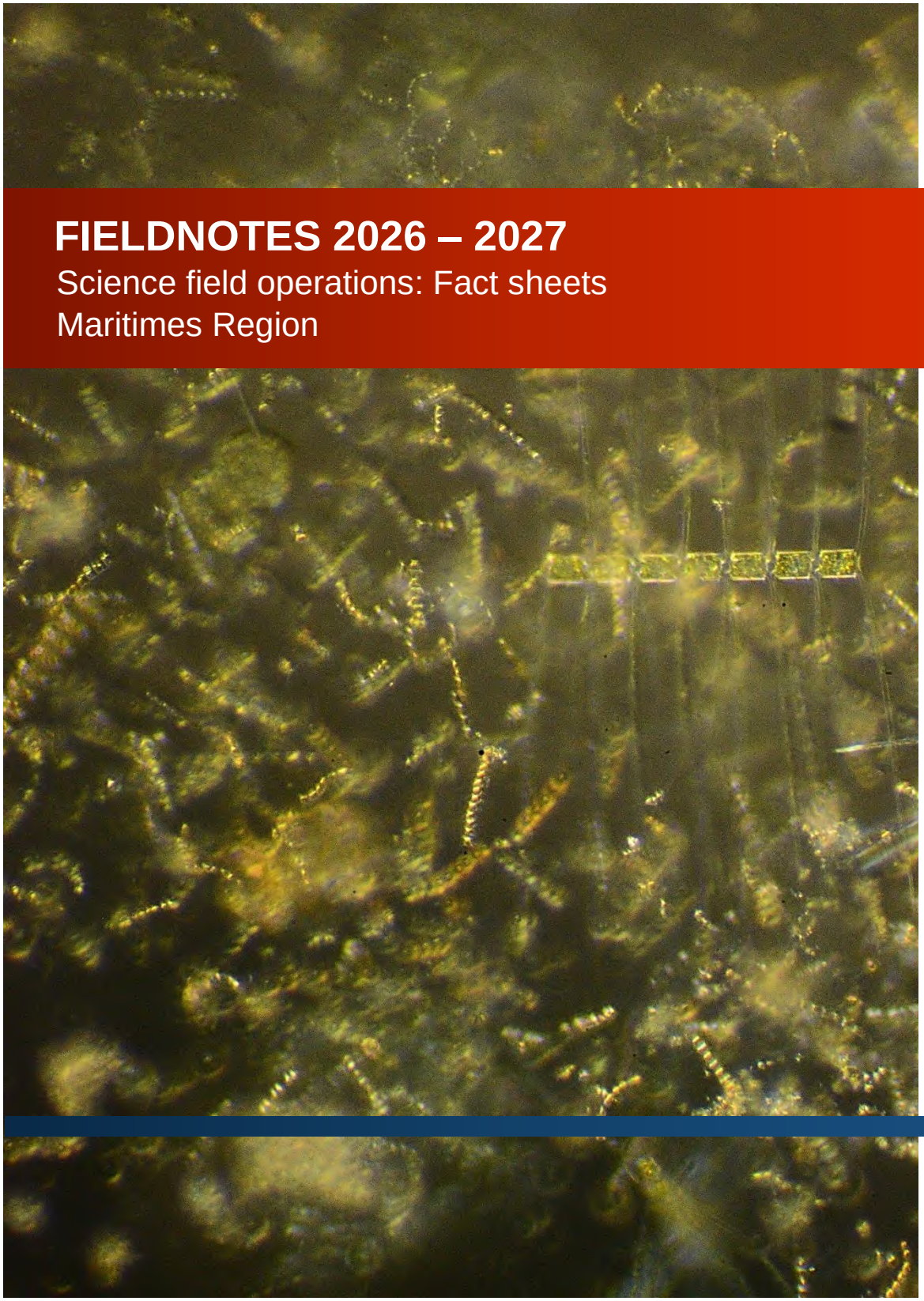

FIELDNOTES 2026 – 2027

Science field operations: Fact sheets
Maritimes Region

Canada

Cat. No. Fs141-7E-PDF ISSN 2816-5268

Cover illustration: Diatom bloom in Bedford Basin NS, *Chaetoceros spp.* and *Thalassiosira spp.*

Photo credit: Emmanuel Devred (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

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Table 1. Maritimes Region field operations sorted by category, then Unique ID.

CATEGORY	UNIQUE ID	TITLE	PAGE
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	MAR_OESDOMOS_45	Underwater glider monitoring: coastal ocean glider program	3
	MAR_OESDOMOS_61	Atlantic off-shelf monitoring program: Labrador Sea	4
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Marine debris accumulation on sandy beaches

Atlantic coastline of Nova Scotia

UNIQUE ID
MAR_CESDHES_92

CATEGORY
Human Impacts

DATES
June 1 to 30, September 1 to 30, December 1 to 31, 2026; March 1 to 31 2027

START YEAR
2024

RECURRENCE
Annually

LOCATIONS
South shore: Cherry Hill beach, East Berlin beach, Kingsburg beach; Eastern shore: Martinique beach, Clam Harbour beach

EMAIL
noreen.kelly@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Survey transects on Martinique beach.
© Noreen Kelly (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Debris items recovered from Clam Harbour beach.
© Noreen Kelly (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

DESCRIPTION

Since June 2024, marine debris has been surveyed every three months at four sandy beaches along Nova Scotia's Atlantic coast. From March to November, one of these beaches is also sampled monthly. At each site, surveys are conducted along two fixed 100-metre transects, where all human-made items larger than 0.5 cm are collected, categorized, counted, and measured by their longest dimension. These measurements provide baseline information on the sources, accumulation rates, transport, and exposure of coastal habitats to marine debris.

OBJECTIVES

1. Survey marine debris on multiple beaches along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia.
2. Estimate accumulation rates of marine debris to shorelines.
3. Identify most common sources of marine debris and compare quantities to potential thresholds of environmental status.
4. Understand the relationship of debris presence to environmental and anthropogenic variables through modelling.

COLLABORATORS

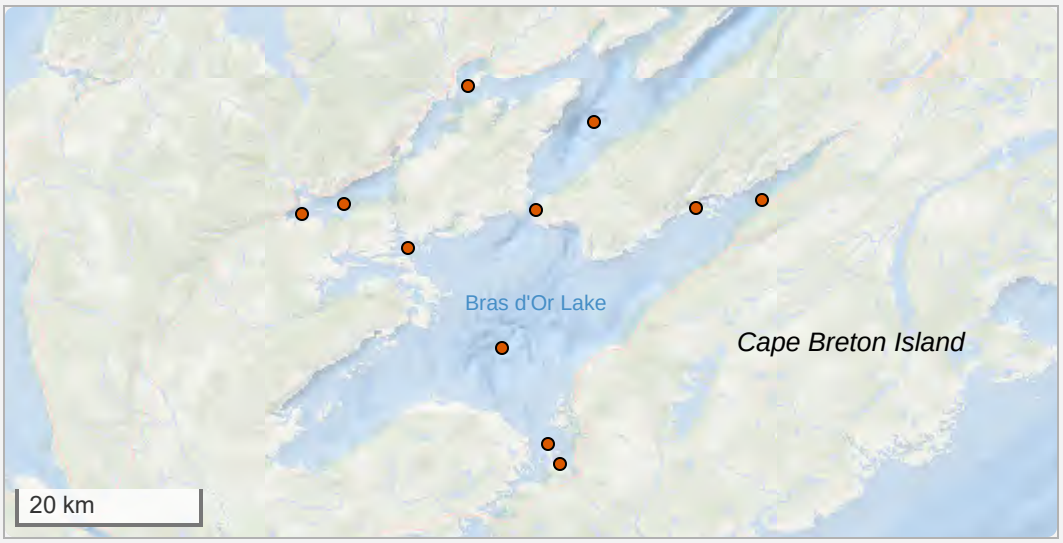
Marine Environmental Quality program (DFO Maritimes)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Effects of marine debris on Atlantic Canadian species and ecosystems

Applying Etuaptumumk to Water Monitoring

Cape Breton



UNIQUE ID
MAR_OESDOMOS_22

CATEGORY
Hydrographic and Oceanographic

DATES
April 1 2026 to March 31 2027

START YEAR
2022

RECURRENCE
Annually

LOCATIONS
Bras d'Or Lake

VESSEL
The Uncle Simon

EMAIL
melanie.hardy@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

EFWC vessel, The Uncle Simon.
© Melanie Hardy (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

DFO Science staff and Indigenous partners with a CDT-rosette.
© Emmanuel Devred (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

DESCRIPTION

The Bras d'Or Lake is a unique body of water, historically referred to as Pitu'paq by the Mi'kmaw. This project aims is to inform on the health of the Bras d'Or Lake, a UNESCO Nature Reserve. All aspects of the project are co-developed with the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR), and will integrate in situ sampling and satellite imagery of ocean color guided by Mi'kmaq principles: Netukulimk and Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing). The deliverables of the project will support management of the Bras d'Or Lake ecosystem including both Western science and Indigenous Knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about the biological and physical status of the Bras d'Or Lake.
2. Design methods to address questions arising from Indigenous Knowledge.
3. Quantify temporal changes resulting from anthropogenic activities.
4. Develop tools that will be used beyond the project's lifecycle.
5. Develop a long-term partnership with Indigenous organizations and communities in the Bras d'Or Lake area.

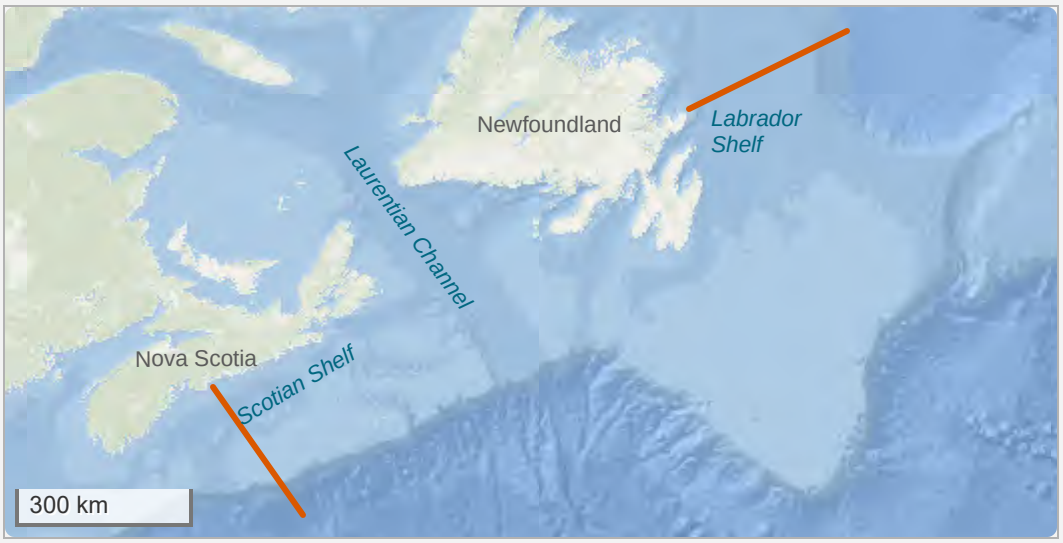
COLLABORATORS

Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UINR Aquatic Research & Stewardship

Underwater glider monitoring
Coastal Glider Program



UNIQUE ID
MAR_OESDOMOS_45

CATEGORY
Hydrographic and Oceanographic

DATES
April 1 2026 to March 31 2027

START YEAR
2018

RECURRENCE
Annually

LOCATIONS
Scotian Shelf and Slope, off Halifax;Newfoundland and Labrador Shelf,off Bonavista

EMAIL
melany.belzile@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Seaexplorer underwater glider.
© Alseamar-Alcen

Seaexplorer glider being recovered.
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

DESCRIPTION

In 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada invested in new technology to enhance monitoring programs. The Coastal Ocean Glider Program uses underwater glider technology to collect continuous, high-resolution data for ocean monitoring, prediction and other research purposes. Gliders can be operated without vessels and in all weather conditions. Data are collected as frequently as possible along two glider monitoring lines (Halifax Line and Bonavista Line) and are available in near real-time.

OBJECTIVES

1. Quantify the changes in ocean physical, chemical and biological properties.
2. Increase DFO's capacity to understand, describe and forecast the state of the marine ecosystem.
3. Improve understanding of understudied boundary currents on the Scotian slope.
4. Address gaps in oceanographic monitoring between ship surveys.

COLLABORATORS

Canadian Coast Guard, Defence Research and Development Canada, National Defence, Dalhousie University, Ocean Tracking Network

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Glider Program at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography

Atlantic Zone Off-Shelf Monitoring Program
Labrador Sea

UNIQUE ID
MAR_OESDOMOS_61

CATEGORY
Hydrographic and Oceanographic

DATES
May 20 to 8 June, 2026

START YEAR
1990

RECURRENCE
Annually

LOCATIONS
The Atlantic Repeat Hydrography Line 7 West line (AR7W)

VESSEL
RRS James Cook

EMAIL
marc.ringuette@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

The RRS James Cook.
© Glasgow Science Centre

CDT-Rosette (conductivity, temperature, depth) Sampling instruments being deployed.
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

DESCRIPTION

For more than 30 years, this survey has examined physical, chemical, and biological oceanographic properties along an 800 km transect across the Labrador Sea (AR7W). It improves our understanding of interannual and interdecadal ocean variability and supports climate change research, including this year's collaboration with Transforming Climate Action (TCA). New technologies, such as Argo floats, acoustic moored instruments and ocean-color satellites, enable monitoring of seasonal and short-term changes over larger areas, while at-sea work supports their maintenance and calibration.

OBJECTIVES

1. Collect data on physical oceanographic, and biological conditions in the Labrador Sea.
2. Quantify the uncertainties of carbon pathways, as well as its transport and storage.
3. Understand the causes of oceanic variability at various scales and its relationship to climate change.
4. Provide adequate data to support the sound development of ocean activities.
5. Provide high precision data for the ground truthing of remote sensing instrumentation.

COLLABORATORS

Transforming Climate Action

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Atlantic Zone Off-Shelf Monitoring Program

Davis Strait Observing System

Moorings and hydrographic survey

UNIQUE ID
MAR_OESDOMOS_132

CATEGORY
Hydrographic and Oceanographic

DATES
September 1 to December 31, 2026

START YEAR
2004

RECURRENCE
Intermittent

LOCATIONS
Davis Strait, Baffin Bay, Northern Labrador Sea

VESSEL
CCGS Amundsen

EMAIL
Kumiko.Azetsu-Scott@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

CCGS Amundsen.
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Mooring operation.
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

DESCRIPTION

Davis Strait is an important gateway connecting the Arctic and the North Atlantic. This monitoring program contributes to understanding of climate change impacts in Canadian and global oceans. An interdisciplinary observing system combines complementary techniques, including a large mooring program and recurring hydrographic surveys that measure temperature, salinity, carbon, tracers, oxygen and nutrients.

OBJECTIVES

1. Monitor the propagation of changes from the Arctic into the Northwest Atlantic and the intrusion of the warm and saline Atlantic water into Baffin Bay.
2. Monitor ocean acidification and its influence on ecosystem change.
3. Advance understanding of the role of Arctic and sub-Arctic interactions in the climate system.

COLLABORATORS

University of Washington, Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, Technical University of Denmark, Environment and Climate Change Canada, ETH Zurich

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Davis Strait Observing System

Monitoring Conservation Areas with acoustic telemetry

Atlantic Maritimes Marine Conservation Network

UNIQUE ID
MAR_CESDHES_72

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
April 1 to October 31, 2026

START YEAR
2023

RECURRENCE
Annually

Acoustic telemetry receivers on mooring lines.
© Susan Heaslip (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Retrieval of an acoustic telemetry receiver.
© Lindsay Beazley (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

LOCATIONS
St. Anns Bank MPA, Gully MPA, Eastern Shore Islands AOI, Musquash MPA, Northeast Channel Coral Conservation Area, Fundian Channel-Browns Bank AOI

VESSEL
CCGS M. Perley, R/V Packcat

EMAIL
harri.pettitt-wade@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

DESCRIPTION

To protect our oceans, Canada has set ambitious conservation targets requiring efficient long-term monitoring of multiple areas. Connectivity is a key component of conservation networks, linking sites through animal movement. We use acoustic telemetry to track tagged aquatic species within and among a network of conservation areas in the Atlantic Maritimes. Applying a shared technology consistently across this network enables a standardized, network-scale assessment of connectivity, supporting reproducible and long-term monitoring.

OBJECTIVES

1. Utilize the Ocean Tracking Network data hub to facilitate open data sharing and link with other tracking projects.
2. Establish a reproducible collaborative workflow for connecting with external projects and examine network connectivity.
3. Summarize fish detections and associated biological data for each conservation area.
4. Analyze and map MPA network connectivity based on acoustic telemetry data.
5. Build capacity and relationships with partners through workshops and collaborative projects.

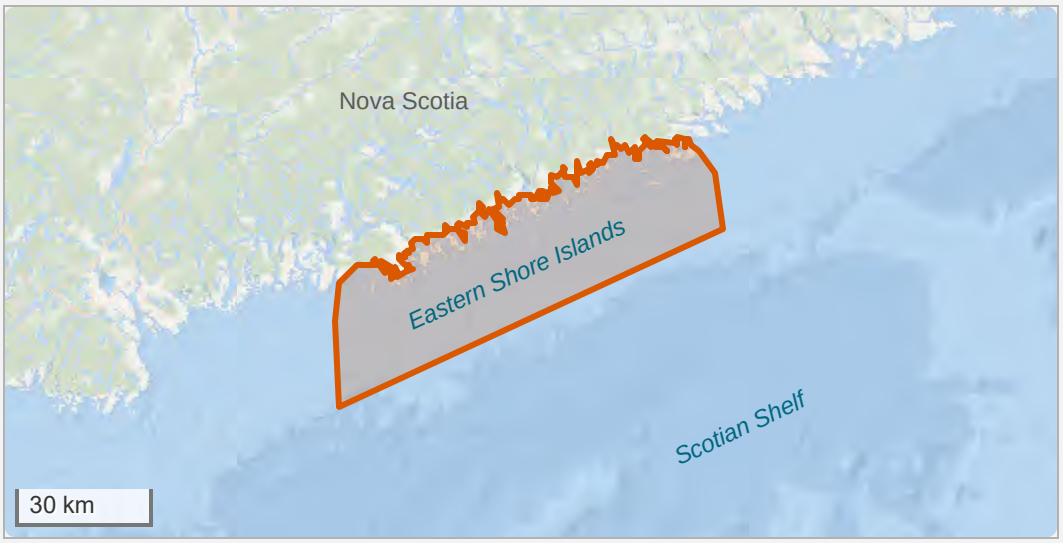
COLLABORATORS

Ocean Tracking Network - Dalhousie University

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Marine Conservation Research Group GitHub page

Long-term coastal biodiversity monitoring
Coastal Nova Scotia



UNIQUE ID
MAR_CESDHES_76

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
May 1 to 31, July 1 to August 31, and October 1 to 31, 2026.

START YEAR
2022

RECURRENCE
Annually

LOCATIONS
Eastern Shore Islands Area of Interest

EMAIL
Nick.Jeffery@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

The team setting a beach seine net by boat in the Eastern Shore Islands.
© Nick Jeffery (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

A warm water fish species (Priacanthidae) caught beach seining.
© Nick Jeffery (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

DESCRIPTION

This project conducts baseline biodiversity assessment of coastal sites in Nova Scotia including the Eastern Shore Islands Area of Interest (ESI AOI). Sampling is conducted at three sentinel sites in the AOI and at selected sites in other areas of conservation interest. At each site, we complement juvenile fish diversity surveys (e.g., beach seining and scuba) with paired samples of environmental DNA (eDNA) from water samples. Associated environmental data, such as water temperature and salinity, are also collected, providing a suite of baseline information for each site.

OBJECTIVES

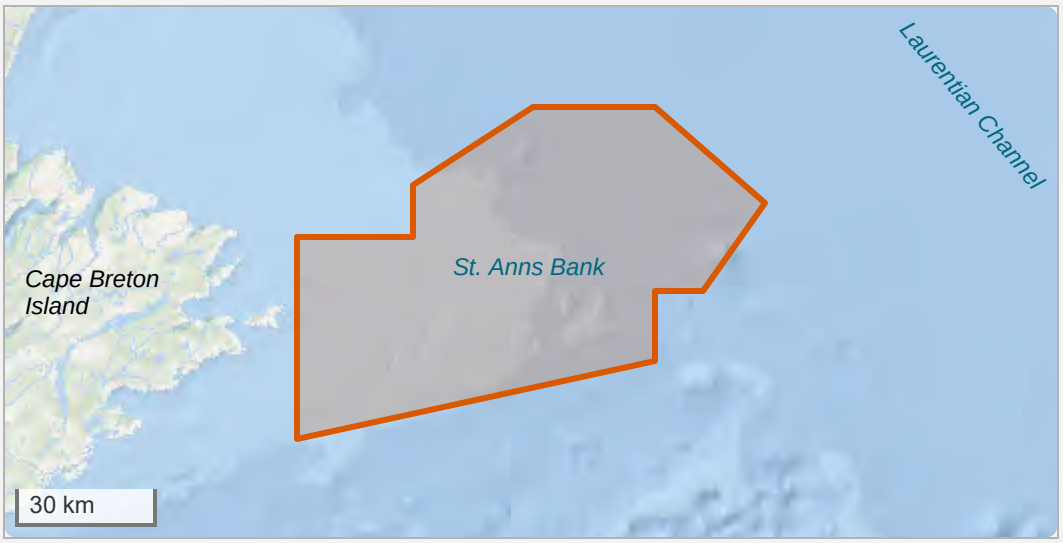
1. Conduct water sampling for environmental DNA at coastal conservation sites including Areas of Interest for future protection.
2. Conduct beach seine net and scuba surveys paired with the eDNA sampling at coastal marine sites in Nova Scotia.
3. Sample water temperature and salinity paired with biodiversity monitoring.
4. Summarize and produce reports on seasonal and annual biodiversity patterns from paired sampling methods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Marine Conservation Research Group GitHub page

Monitoring offshore protected areas with environmental DNA

eDNA metabarcoding St. Anns Bank



UNIQUE ID
MAR_CESDHES_81

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
July 1 to September 30, 2026

START YEAR
2020

RECURRENCE
Annually

CCGS M. Perley.
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Scientists filter seawater samples for eDNA.
© Ryan Stanley (Fisheries and Oceans)

LOCATIONS
St. Anns Bank Marine Protected Area

VESSEL
CCGS M. Perley

EMAIL
Nick.Jeffery@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

DESCRIPTION

St. Anns Bank is a 4,364 km² Marine Protected Area (MPA) east of Cape Breton/Unama'ki, designated in 2017. It supports high benthic diversity and serves as a migration corridor between the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of St. Lawrence. Environmental DNA (eDNA) is sampled annually at targeted sites, providing a non-invasive, comprehensive approach to detect fish and invertebrate diversity. From this baseline, we can track changes in species composition and diversity through time, supporting the long-term monitoring and management of this important area.

OBJECTIVES

1. Collect, extract, and sequence DNA from water samples.
2. Produce Biodiversity maps depicting the species and assemblage distributions.
3. Produce technical reports and peer-reviewed manuscripts on eDNA detailing the findings of the eDNA survey.
4. Create an eDNA time series for monitoring fish diversity using baseline data from fish monitoring surveys.

COLLABORATORS

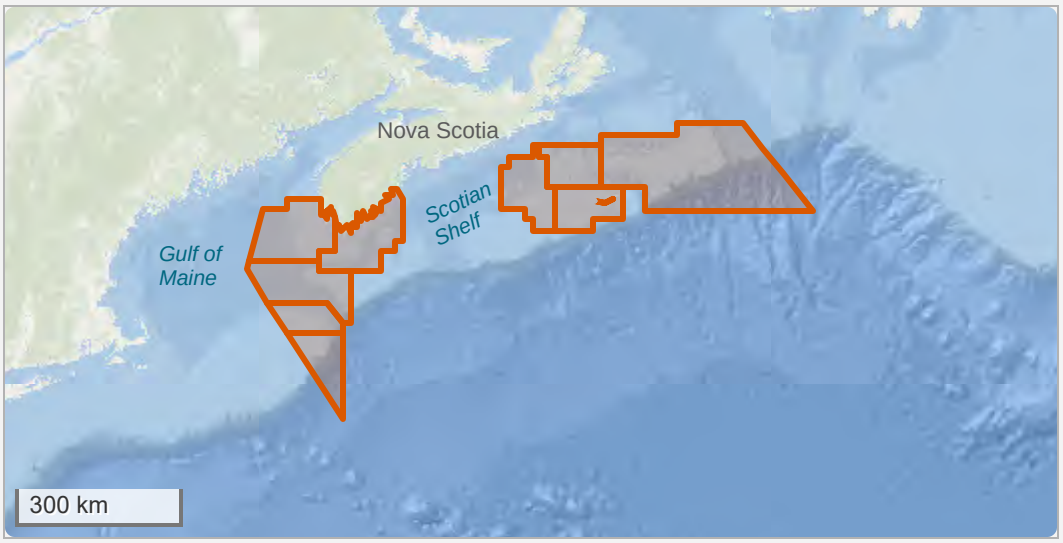
Unamaki Institute of Natural Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Review of St. Anns Bank Marine Protected Area Monitoring 2024

Offshore Scallop Survey

Scotian Shelf and Georges Bank (Canadian waters)



UNIQUE ID
MAR_PEDISRS_24

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
May 1 to June 30 and August 1 to 31, 2026

START YEAR
1984

RECURRENCE
Annually

A typical offshore scallop survey vessel.
© Clearwater Seafoods

Sea scallops (Placopecten magellanicus).
© Freya Keyser (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

LOCATIONS
Scallop Fishing Areas 25 (Sable, Middle and Banquereau Banks), 26 (Browns Bank North and South, and German Bank), and 27 (Georges Bank 'a' and 'b')

EMAIL
Freya.Keyser@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

DESCRIPTION

DFO Science and the Offshore Scallop fishery conduct a scientific survey of all offshore scallop stocks in the Maritimes region to collect data on the abundance, distribution and population structure of the scallop stocks in Scallop Fishing Areas (SFA) 25–27. The survey data inform yearly scallop assessments, which are used by DFO Resource Management to set annual harvest levels (total allowable catch; TAC), as well as various research projects on topics related to scallop biology, ecology, and population dynamics.

OBJECTIVES

1. Collect data on scallops at over 340 stations on the eastern and western Scotian Shelf over 27 days in May and June.
2. Collect data on scallops at approximately 230 stations on Georges Bank over 15 days in August.
3. Ensure quality control and storage of all resulting data in DFO Oracle databases.
4. Deliver science advice on scallop stock status and trends through presentations, meetings, and CSAS documents.

COLLABORATORS

Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia, Offshore Scallop Fishing Companies

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Assessment of Stock Status for Offshore Scallop (2025)

Lake Utopia Rainbow Smelt monitoring and assessment
Small-Bodied Population

UNIQUE ID
MAR_PEDISRS_25

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
April 1 to May 31, 2026

START YEAR
2025

RECURRENCE
Intermittent

LOCATIONS
Spawning streams at the northern end of Lake Utopia (NB): Second Brook, Smelt Brook, Unnamed Brook.

EMAIL
liza.tsitrin@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Collecting Lake Utopia Rainbow Smelt for tagging.
© Jeremy Broome (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Setting up the streamside PIT tagging station.
© Jeremy Broome (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

DESCRIPTION

Cellular-enabled cameras are installed at spawning streams to allow remote monitoring of the start and duration of the spawning run for small bodied Rainbow Smelt.
During night-time surveys, small-bodied Rainbow Smelt are captured using dip-nets, tagged using a PIT tag, and released. One hour later, a second fish collection is done, and the proportion of marked individuals recaptured is used to estimate the species' population abundance. The results of the field data collection are used to update recovery objectives for this population, which is listed as threatened under the Species at Risk Act.

OBJECTIVES

1. Determine the start of the spawning season of Lake Utopia small-bodied Rainbow Smelt.
2. Estimate the abundance of Lake Utopia small-bodied Rainbow Smelt in three streams where they are known to spawn.

COLLABORATORS

Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc. (PRGI)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Population Abundance and Allowable Harm Estimate

Atlantic Whitefish monitoring and recovery
Collection and conservation supplementation

UNIQUE ID
MAR_PEDISRS_26

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
April 1 to June 30, 2026

START YEAR
2018

RECURRENCE
Annually

LOCATIONS
Petite Rivière, Minamkeak Lake, Milipsigate Lake, Hebb Lake.

EMAIL
Jeremy.Broome@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Rotary Screw Trap used to collect juvenile Atlantic Whitefish.
© J. Broome (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Wild adult Atlantic Whitefish captured in spring 2025 monitoring.
© A. Russell (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

DESCRIPTION

Atlantic Whitefish larvae and juveniles are monitored using rotary screw traps and fyke nets.
Juveniles are collected for conservation supplementation. They are held in short-term care in a streamside rearing facility with natal water. Fish are then either reared further as future broodstock at specialized facilities, or acclimated and released, including via in-lake soft-release enclosures. Data collected include growth, survival, and water quality. Transport, release, and tagging (PIT, VIE, small fin clip) are refined to monitor and maximize post-release survival and anadromy.

OBJECTIVES

1. Prevent extinction of this endemic Canadian and Nova Scotian species within its only remaining global habitat.
2. Collect wild juvenile Atlantic Whitefish to develop to broodstock in captivity.
3. Supplement the surviving population with captive spawned individuals.
4. Monitor the presence & abundance of larval and juvenile Whitefish at monitoring locations in the Petite Riviere lakes.

COLLABORATORS

Coastal Action, Dalhousie University - Aquatron Research Facility, Dalhousie University - Marine Gene Probe Lab - Dr. Paul Bentzen, Dalhousie University - Ocean Tracking Network - Dr. Rob Lennox

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Recovery Strategy for the Atlantic Whitefish (Coregonus huntsmani) in Canada

Alewife and Blueback Herring stock assessment
Mainland Nova Scotia

UNIQUE ID
MAR_PEDSSAS_67

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
April 1 to June 30, 2026

START YEAR
1982

RECURRENCE
Annually

Tusket River Sampling.
© Mark Billard (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Alewife.
© Mark Billard (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

LOCATIONS
White Rock Ladder on the Gaspereau River, Nova Scotia, and the Vaughan Dam Ladder on the Tusket River, Nova Scotia.

EMAIL
Mark.Billard@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

DESCRIPTION

Gaspereau (alewife and blueback herring) are a traditionally, ecologically, and economically important group of anadromous fish that are harvested commercially in many rivers and are impacted by hydroelectric dams. We conduct sampling on two main index rivers to provide science advice for the management of commercial gaspereau fisheries, and we provide advice to the Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program regarding the effects barriers including hydroelectric facilities and associated infrastructure on gaspereau populations.

OBJECTIVES

1. Conduct a population assessment of gaspereau in two index rivers: Gaspereau River and Tusket River.
2. Provide science advice for the in-season and year-to-year management of gaspereau fisheries region-wide.
3. Update reference points for the Gaspereau River alewife stock.
4. Evaluate techniques to measure fishway efficiency for alewife and blueback herring passage.

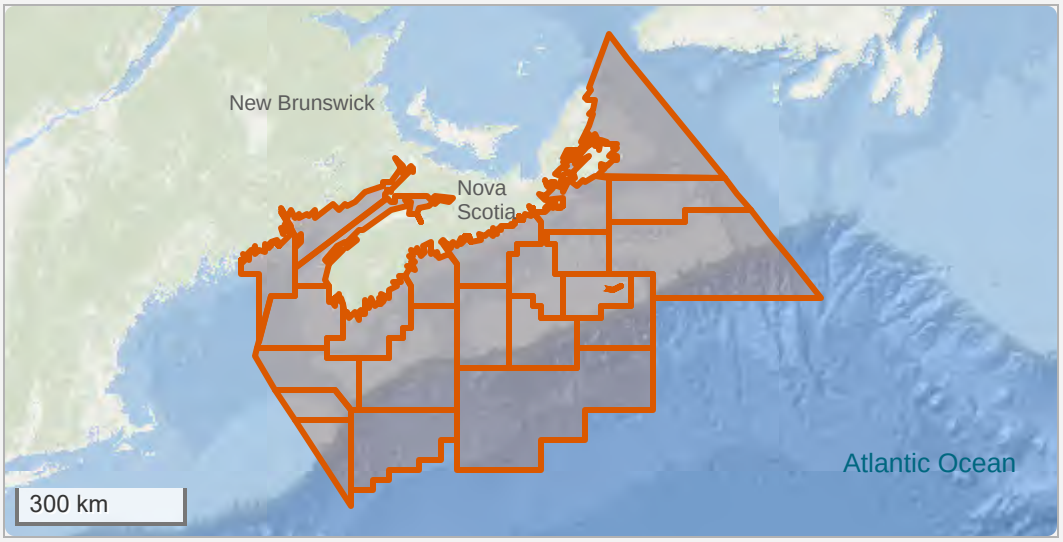
COLLABORATORS

Nova Scotia Power Incorporated (NSPI)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

A Framework for the Assessment of the Status of River Herring Populations and Fisheries

Summer ecosystem monitoring program
Scotian Shelf, Bay of Fundy, Georges Bank



UNIQUE ID
MAR_PEDSSAS_75

CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
June 25 to August 15, 2026

START YEAR
1970

RECURRENCE
Annually

CCGS Captain Jacques Cartier.
© Ryan Martin (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

Sorting and identifying fish and invertebrate species.
© Brent Wilson (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

LOCATIONS
Georges Bank to Laurentian Channel in NAFO Areas 4VWX5YZ

VESSEL
CCGS Capt Jacques Cartier

EMAIL
Ryan.Martin@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

DESCRIPTION

Ecosystem survey that consists of bottom trawling, Conductivity/ Temperature/ Depth (CTD) profiles, vertical plankton tows, water sampling, seabird and marine mammal counts, and hydroacoustic data collection. Samples are collected for a variety of programs at DFO and universities in Canada and internationally. Data are used to inform stock assessment and fisheries management, ecosystem assessments, species at risk, and marine conservation monitoring.

OBJECTIVES

1. Collect biological data for indices of abundance and biomass for benthic and some pelagic fish and invertebrate species.
2. Collect hydrographic data to be used in climate change and ecosystem assessments.
3. Collect monitoring data for sea birds and marine mammals.
4. Collect monitoring data for marine conservation, species at risk, fisheries management, and various research projects.
5. Collect hydroacoustic data for indices of abundance and biomass for pelagic fish and invertebrate species.

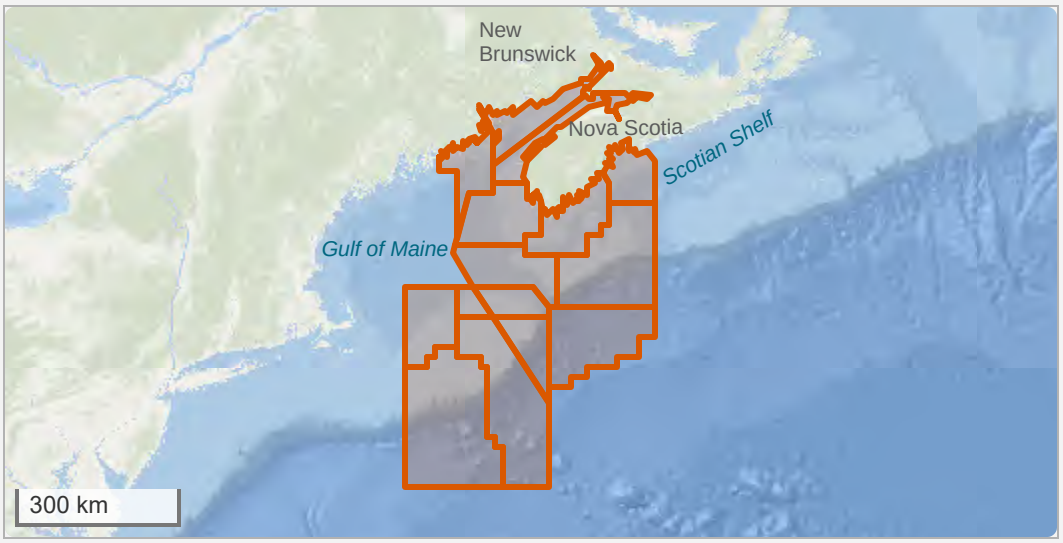
COLLABORATORS

Northeast Fisheries Science Centre (USA), Environment and Climate Change Canada, Dalhousie University

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Summer ecosystem research survey trends on the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy

Winter ecosystem monitoring program
Georges Bank, Gulf of Maine, Bay of Fundy



UNIQUE ID
MAR_PEDSSAS_77

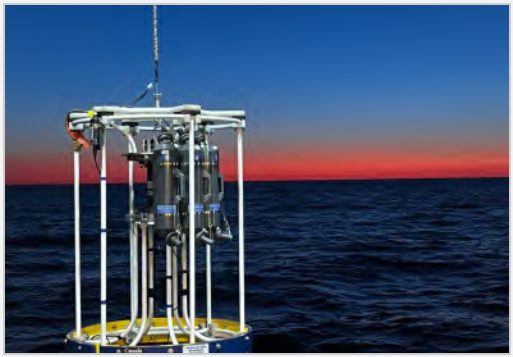
CATEGORY
Population and Ecosystem Assessments

DATES
February 20 to April 5, 2026

START YEAR
1986

RECURRENCE
Annually

CCGS Capt Jacques Cartier.
© Ryan Martin (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)



Deploying a CTD-Rosette for oceanographic and eDNA sampling.
© Ryan Martin (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

LOCATIONS
Georges Bank (Canadian and USA waters), Western Scotian Shelf, Gulf of Maine and Bay of Fundy

VESSEL
CCGS Capt Jacques Cartier

EMAIL
Ryan.Martin@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

DESCRIPTION

This ecosystem survey includes bottom trawling, Conductivity/ Temperature/ Depth (CTD) profiles, vertical plankton tows, water sampling, seabird and marine mammal counts, and hydroacoustic data collection. Samples are collected for a variety of programs at DFO and universities in Canada and internationally. Data are used to inform stock assessment and fisheries management, ecosystem assessments, species at risk, and marine conservation monitoring.

OBJECTIVES

1. Collect biological data for indices of abundance and biomass for benthic and some pelagic fish and invertebrate species.
2. Collect hydrographic data to be used in climate change and ecosystem assessments.
3. Collect monitoring data for marine conservation, species at risk, fisheries management, and various research projects.
4. Collect monitoring data for sea birds and marine mammals.
5. Collect hydroacoustic data for indices of abundance and biomass for pelagic fish and invertebrate species.

COLLABORATORS

Northeast Fisheries Science Centre (USA), Environment and Climate Change Canada, Dalhousie University

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Maritimes winter research vessel survey trends on Georges Bank

© George Nau (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)