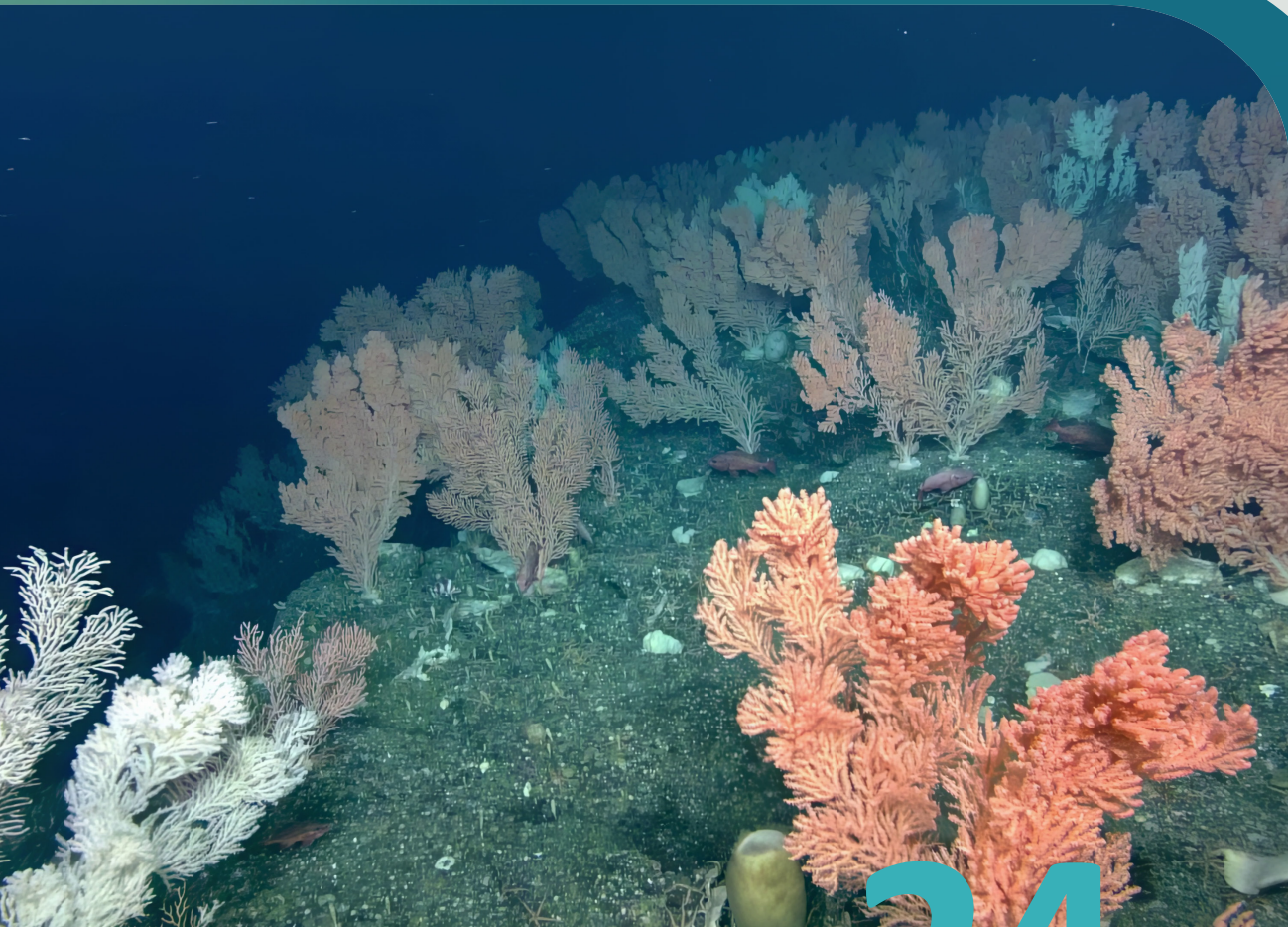


**SGáan Kínghlas-Bowie Seamount**  
Marine Protected Area



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2024**

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## Canada's Oceans Act Marine Protected Areas

- |   |                          |                         |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. SGáan Kínghlas-Bowie Seamount                          | 5. Anguniaqvia Niqiqyuam | 10. Banc-des-Américains |
| 2. Hecate Strait/Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs | 6. Tuvaijuittuq          | 11. St. Anns Bank       |
| 3. Tang.ᑭwan – ᕿačxwiqak – Tsigis                         | 7. Gilbert Bay           | 12. Basin Head          |
| 4. Tarium Niryutait                                       | 8. Eastport              | 13. The Gully           |
|   | 9. Laurentian Channel    | 14. Musquash Estuary    |

## At-a-glance

### Date of designation

1997: *Xaads Siigee t'l'a damaan t'l'a k'ing giigangs*  
*Haida Marine Protected Area*

2008: *Oceans Act* MPA

### Size

6,103 km<sup>2</sup>

### Contribution towards the marine conservation targets

0.11%

### Location

This MPA is located 180 km west of Haida Gwaii in the Offshore Pacific Bioregion; Pacific Ocean.

### Co-managed by

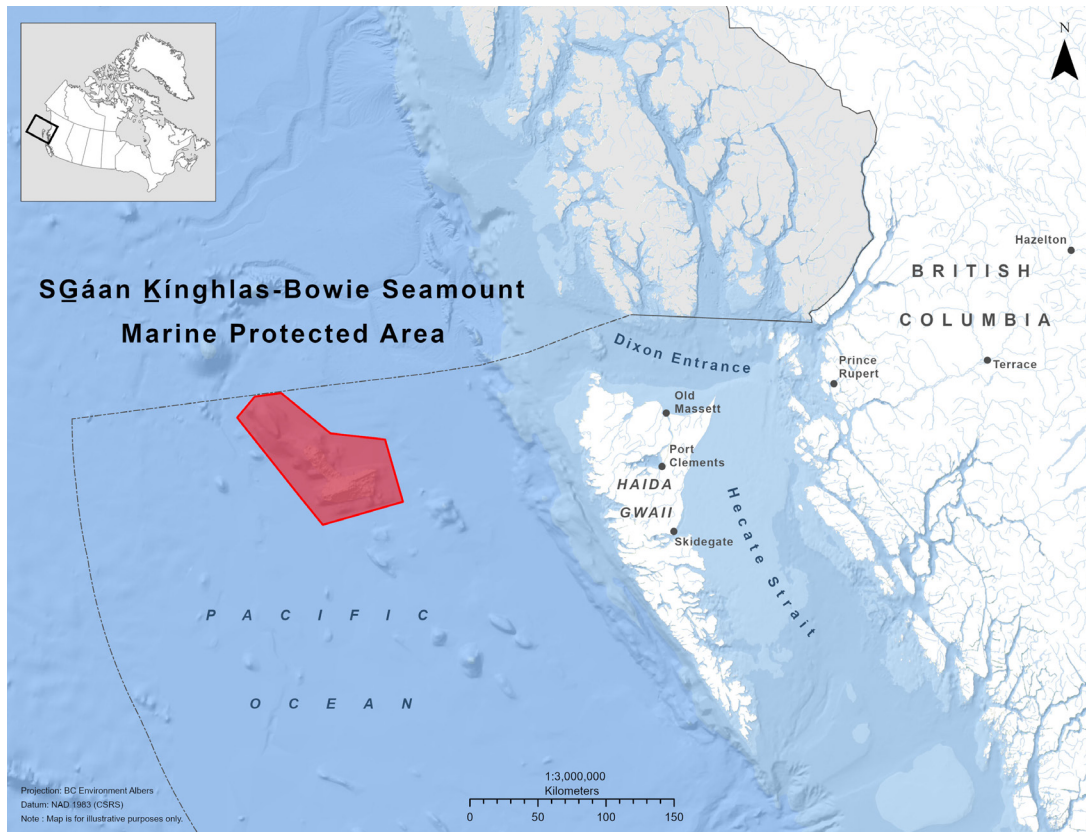
Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

### Acknowledgement

This MPA is located within the territory of the Haida Nation.

### Zones

This MPA does not have any zones within its boundaries.



Map of SGÁAN KÍNGHLAS-BOWIE SEAMOUNT Marine Protected Area.

## Conservation objectives

Conserve and protect the unique biodiversity and biological productivity of the area's marine ecosystem, including seamounts and the surrounding waters, seabed and subsoil.



Diverse invertebrates covering the seabed. Photo credit: 2024 NEPDEP expedition partners and the Canadian Scientific Submersible Facility - Remotely Operated Platform for Ocean Sciences.

## Management and governance

The ongoing management and governance of this MPA is led by the SK-B Management Board. The management board is comprised of 4 representatives including 2 from CHN and 2 from DFO. In 2024, 2 foundational documents continued to guide the management and governance of the MPA, including the:

- terms of reference (2012), which refines the roles, responsibilities and procedures of the SK-B Management Board
- [Gin siigée tl'a dámaan kínggangs gin K'áalaagangs | Marine Protected Area Management Plan](#) (2019), which outlines the guiding principles, goals and objectives of the MPA

In 2024, one activity plan was submitted and approved for the SK-B MPA. This activity plan was for a scientific research expedition in the MPA, which took place in August 2024. This multi-disciplinary joint expedition was the [Northeast Pacific Deep-sea Exploration Project \(NEPDEP\)](#), which is a partnership between:

- DFO
- CHN
- the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council
- Ocean Networks Canada
- Royal BC Museum
- University of Victoria

In 2024, the SK-B Management Board met once. It was a virtual meeting on November 14, 2024. In addition to this management board meeting, the SK-B Technical Team met on a bi-weekly basis throughout 2024. The SK-B Technical Team supports the ongoing management and governance of the MPA and provides management recommendations to the management board. The Secretariat of Haida Nation currently receives funding through an [Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management \(AAROM\)](#) collaborative management agreement to co-manage the SK-B MPA.



CHN staff directing a dive aboard the John P Tully during the 2024 NEPDEP expedition. Photo credit: Toby Hall (DFO).

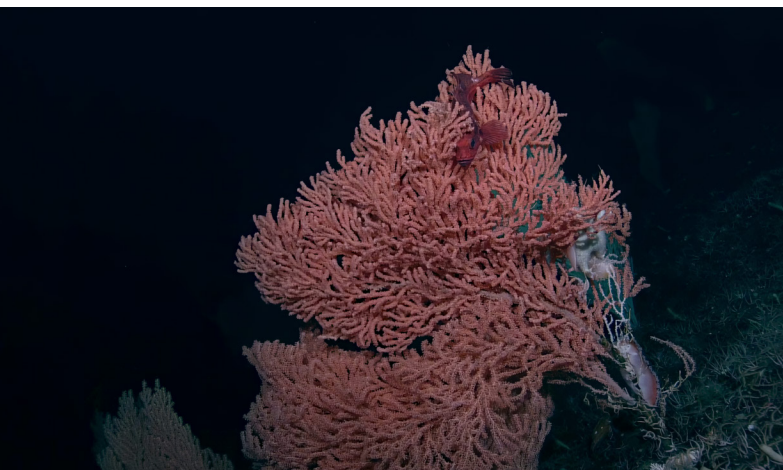


## Feature creatures

Sablefish or Black cod, Skíl (Old Masset dialect) and Skil (Skidegate dialect) play an important role in the SK-B MPA. They migrate between deep and shallow waters, linking different parts of the SK-B ecosystem. Haidas have traditionally fished for Skíl/ Skil using special hooks and continue to fish for Skíl/ Skil to this day. Since Skíl/ Skil are highly migratory, tracking their recovery is difficult. SK-B MPA provides protection which may support population recovery but due to their migratory nature, broader management is important.



The Haida art of Skíl / Sablefish / Black Cod (*Anoplopoma fimbria*) was shared by Iljuuwaas Tyson Brown, from the SGáan Kínghlas-Bowie Seamount Marine Protected Area management plan (CHN and DFO 2019).



A rockfish (*Sebastes* sp.) and *Trintonia nudibranchs* (sea slugs) in a Red Tree Coral (*Primnoa pacifica*). Photo credit: 2024 NEPDEP expedition partners and the Canadian Scientific Submersible Facility - Remotely Operated Platform for Ocean Sciences.



## Research and monitoring

In 2024, the CHN and DFO published a co-authored [Monitoring Framework for SGáan Kínghlas-Bowie Seamount Marine Protected Area](#). This framework offers a high-level overview of monitoring options for the MPA's ecological conservation objectives, linking the objectives outlined in the MPA management plan to relevant indicators, protocols and strategies. It will support the SK-B MPA Management Board in determining the most suitable monitoring approach for the development of a monitoring plan.

In 2024, DFO scientists published results of their investigation into ocean current flow around SGáan Kínghlas-Bowie Seamount. By using the orientation of ancient corals to trace prevailing flow patterns, the authors challenge the conventional understanding of current flow direction in the deep waters of the Northeast Pacific ocean.

DFO scientist (Dr. Cherisse Du Preez) continued to provide supervisory support for 3 graduate students in 2024, whom are:

- investigating how climate change will affect the distribution of invertebrates (Megan Davies)
- looking at the relationship between water chemistry and animal abundance (Pandora Gibb)
- monitoring cold-water coral and sponge diversity over time (Lindsay Clarke)

The 2024 NEPDEP expedition surveyed the ecology, oceanography and geology of the seamounts within the SK-B MPA. In 2024, the team returned to several long-term monitoring sites that were established in 2018. The time series data from these sites are indicating significant effects of climate change on the fauna of these seamounts, such as decreasing oxygen and more acidic waters, despite the data only covering 6 years. For example, at one of the long-term monitoring sites, monitoring efforts

have documented a 28% and 33% reduction in healthy and alive corals and sponges, respectively (Du Preez et al. in prep). Together, these 2024 initiatives advanced scientific understanding and monitoring capacity within the SK-B MPA providing critical insights to better inform adaptive management for:

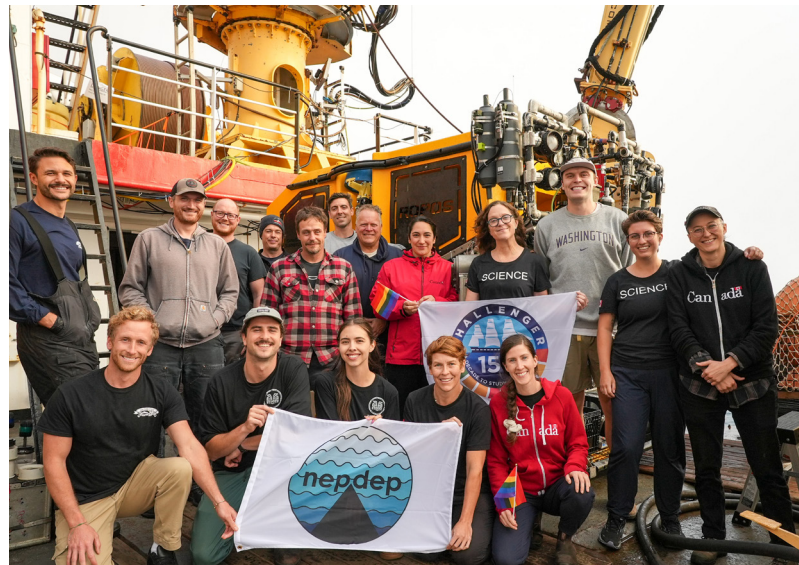
- ecosystem change
- oceanographic processes
- impacts of climate change



Crew aboard the John P Tully ensuring the safe deployment of ROPOS during 2024 NEPDEP Expedition. Photo credit: Toby Hall (DFO).

Together they:

- carried out a long-term ecological monitoring expedition
- increased public awareness by live-streaming videos and hosting online community interactions with the expedition team
- documented the expedition using the [Remotely Operated Platform for Ocean Sciences \(ROPOS\)](#)



Group photo on the NEPDEP expedition 2024. Photo credit: Toby Hall (DFO).



## Collaborations and partnerships

In 2024, CHN and DFO scientists undertook a series of collaborative actions to promote and study the SK-B MPA via the NEPDEP. The [2024 NEPDEP expedition](#) was endorsed by the [United Nations Decade of Ocean Science](#) and [Challenger 150](#).

For this expedition, CHN and DFO partnered with several organizations, including the:

- Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council
- Ocean Networks Canada
- Royal BC Museum
- University of Victoria
- University of Calgary



## In the spotlight: benefits

### Ecological

The SK-B MPA protects 3 seamounts that provide diverse habitats across a large range of depths. This MPA is protecting the high biodiversity that is driven by unique oceanographic conditions, including:

- open ocean species (e.g., migratory whales)
- deepwater species (e.g., squat lobsters)
- shallow water species (e.g., mussels, kelp)

## Socio-cultural

The area holds historical, cultural, and spiritual significance to the Haida Nation. In Gaw Tlagée Xaad kíl, the Old Massett Haida language dialect, SGáan Kínghlas means Supernatural Being looking upwards. Haida oral histories holds innumerable stories related to the ocean, including SGáan Kínghlas, at the time when it was an island. In addition to the important historical significance of the area, ongoing activities such as the 2024 NEPDEP expedition are increasing ocean literacy and stewardship through deep-sea exploration live-streams, and by connecting scientists to community events.

## Economic

For over 10 000 years, Haidas have been connected to and have relied on SGáan Kínghlas for fishing and wealth. There was formerly commercial whaling (1905-1967) and fishing (1950-2018). Today, key activities in the MPA include scientific monitoring and vessel traffic. Research contributes to the province's economy through expenditures on provisions, vessel maintenance and more. As a highly biodiverse refuge and nursery, the SK-B MPA may also provide future economic benefits outside its boundaries through supporting fisheries in nearby waters.



## Surveillance and enforcement

Since 2019, CHN has partnered in the Oceans Protection Plan pilot project for Enhanced Maritime Situational Awareness System (EMSA) to monitor vessel traffic. EMSA provides near real-time automatic identification system (AIS) data via the Department of National Defense's fused satellite and terrestrial feed. In 2022, the

SK-B Management Board endorsed the technical team's use of EMSA to track vessel activity within the SK-B MPA and a 50-nautical-mile radius of the seamount pinnacle.

Due to the MPA's offshore location, DFO's Conservation and Protection Officers patrol the MPA remotely. In addition, the Fisheries Aerial Surveillance and Enforcement (FASE) Program was able to conduct an aerial surveillance patrol over the MPA for a total of 0.83 hours.

Monitoring efforts to support ongoing surveillance and enforcement of the MPA have been enhanced by satellite Radar Satellite II (RSII) coverage in domestic waters. Polar Epsilon Operations at MDA Space generate DFO MPA reports with vessel contacts and associations for our Marine Security Operations Center – West (MSOC-W). Analysts at MSOC-W monitor these Reports and analyze the acquisitions and detections with AIS associations. In 2024, there were 25 RSII contacts near or inside this MPA and 24 of those were identified by their AIS as fishing vessels. Vessels exhibiting fishing behaviour were triaged for follow-up by a Conservation and Protection Officer.

No fisheries violations were detected from audits to electronic monitoring data aboard fishing vessels.



The John P Tully ship while at sea during the 2024 NEPDEP expedition. Photo credit: Toby Hall (DFO).



## Outreach and engagement

Outreach and engagement activities continue to be guided by the communications protocol and strategy that was developed by the SK-B Management Board to increase MPA awareness in 2020.

In 2024, several outreach and engagement activities occurred on Haida Gwaii to raise awareness of the MPA. These included community events such as:

- Hospital Days
- Skidegate Days
- Tlell Fall Fair
- Edge of the World Music Festival

There was also an episode of [Live It Earth](#), an online educational series, where both CHN and DFO shared their knowledge of SK-B, deep-sea ecosystems and expeditions with students from Haida Gwaii and around Canada.

During the 2024 NEPDEP expedition, CHN and DFO conducted valuable research in the MPA and shared those findings with local, national and international communities. In addition to live-streaming all the dives, the partners hosted Ship2Shore events that connected the at-sea team with communities on Haida Gwaii, including G̱aw Tlagée Old Massett and Hḻgaagilda Skidegate.



Team members during a live outreach event on the 2024 NEPDEP expedition. Photo credit: Toby Hall (DFO).

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