

# Eastern Shore Islands Area of Interest Community Newsletter

Fall 2018



Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

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Canada

Canada 

# 01. INTRODUCTION

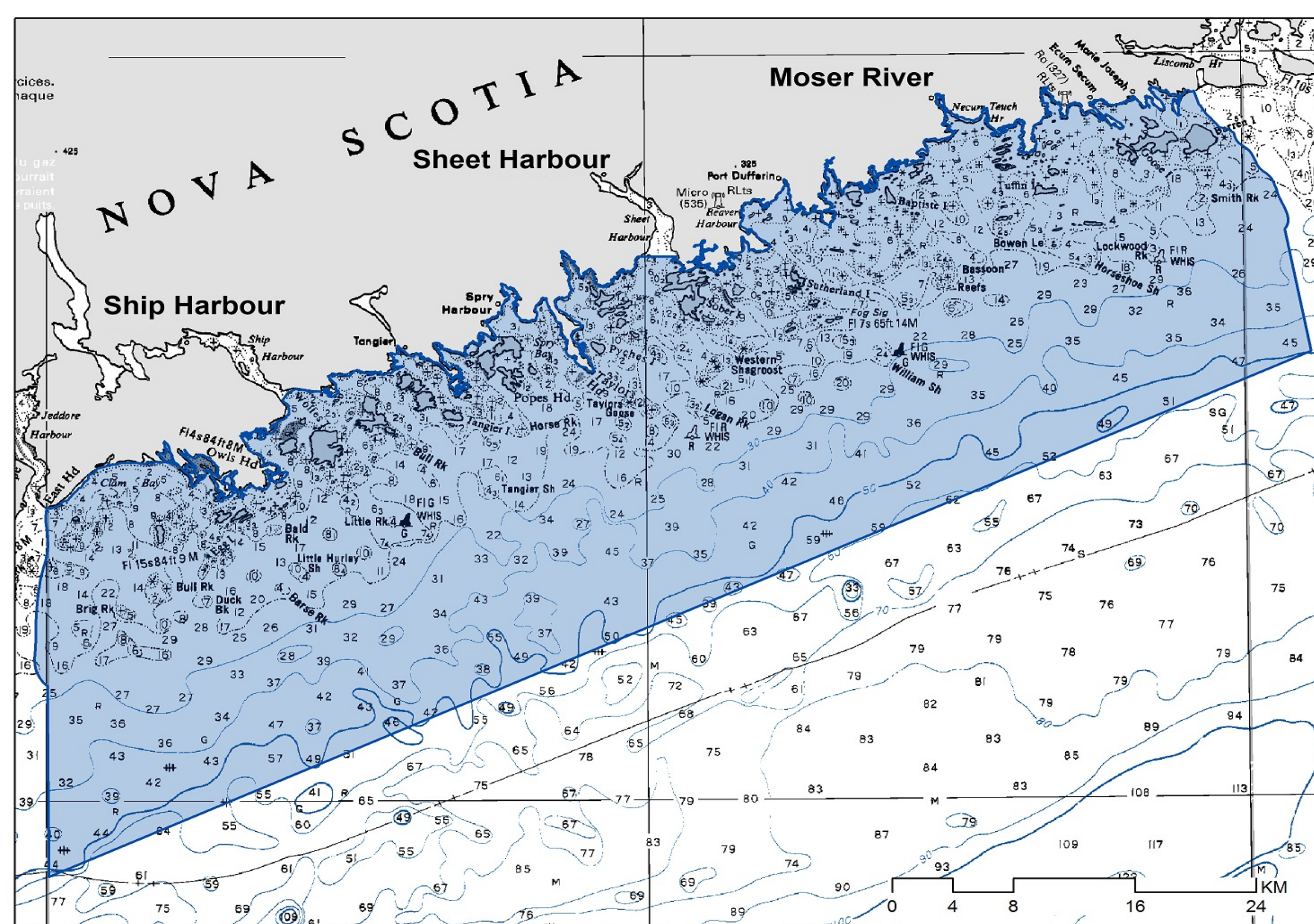
## EASTERN SHORE ISLANDS AREA OF INTEREST

In addition to information on our Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) website, we have now created a seasonal, community newsletter for the Eastern Shore Islands Area of Interest (AOI). Here you will find all the latest information on the Area of Interest.



### Eastern Shore Islands *Area of Interest*

On March 22, 2018, following meetings with First Nations, the Province of Nova Scotia, local fishing associations, and community groups, the Government of Canada announced the Eastern Shore Islands as an Area of Interest (AOI) for possible Marine Protected Area (MPA) designation under the *Oceans Act*. The announcement marks the beginning of a process to evaluate this area as a potential MPA. Consultation with the local community and resource users is an essential part of the process. The Eastern Shore Islands AOI includes the coastal waters surrounding the dense group of islands that stretches from Clam Bay near Jeddore Harbour to Barren Island near Liscomb Point and extends approximately 25 kilometres offshore from the mainland.



# 02.

## BACKGROUND

### What is an MPA?

An MPA is a part of the ocean that is managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature. MPAs can be put in place to protect unique or special areas of the ocean; including areas with diverse or abundant marine life, areas that are highly sensitive to disturbance, and areas that are important for endangered species. It is important to note that *Oceans Act* MPA boundaries stop at the low tide line so they only apply to the marine environment.

### Why is Canada creating MPAs?

The world's oceans are under increasing pressure from current uses, expanding industrial activities and climate change. Canada – along with nearly 200 other countries – committed in 2010 to increasing the protection of its coastal and ocean waters to 10 percent by the year 2020. This is being done through the creation of new protected areas across Canada. The ultimate goal is a national network of MPAs that will conserve the health of our waters and support sustainable fisheries, coastal communities and other ocean activities. A network of MPAs is a collection of many types of MPAs that work together to protect special natural areas and marine biodiversity as a whole.

### How was Eastern Shore Islands selected?

The Eastern Shore Islands AOI was identified through a DFO-led planning effort. This process looked at available science, local and traditional knowledge, commercial activities and cultural values of the waters off Nova Scotia and included consultations with First Nations, the Province of Nova Scotia, local fishing associations, and community groups. See “why protect the Eastern Shore Islands” below to find out why this area was chosen as an AOI!

# 03.

## WHY PROTECT THE EASTERN SHORE ISLANDS?

### A special place

The Eastern Shore Islands are a unique and highly natural archipelago surrounded by coastal waters that support a diversity of marine life as well as the economy, traditions and culture of the local community.

Many of the hundreds of islands provide important nesting and feeding grounds for sea and shorebirds. The seafloor surrounding the islands has been described as a ‘patchwork quilt’ of habitat types that includes rich seagrass beds, dense kelp forests, dramatic rock ledges, as well as patches of gravel, sand and mud. Each of these habitats host a distinct community of marine life. The area also includes groundfish nurseries, a herring spawning area and important coastal habitat for the endangered Atlantic Salmon. Creating an MPA would help protect this special marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

### Maintain the balance

The waters of the Eastern Shore Islands have supported sustainable commercial fisheries, recreational hunting and angling, and other outdoor activities for centuries. These activities have helped shape the local culture of the Eastern Shore.

The local fishing industry and communities take great care of the islands and the waters that surround them. Creating an MPA in this area could help preserve traditional activities and the close connection between the community and the sea.

### Maximize opportunities

The Eastern Shore Islands has become an area of focus for new scientific research since it was announced as an AOI. This presents opportunities for collaboration with the community, industry and First Nations. New science can contribute to the effective management of lobster and other fisheries.

An MPA could also enhance opportunities for sustainable tourism and recreational activities that could support the local economy.





Eastern Shore Islands  
Nick Hawkins

# 04.

## WHERE ARE WE IN THE MPA PROCESS?

Every MPA is different, and there are clear steps that need to be followed before an MPA can be established. Choosing and announcing an AOI is just the beginning. The size, shape, and allowable activities will be determined as we work through the process. Key steps include gathering available ecological, human use and cultural information, identifying conservation priorities, assessing the ecological risks posed by activities, determining the boundaries, zones, and allowable activities, and developing the regulations under the *Oceans Act*. Consultation is essential at each of these steps.

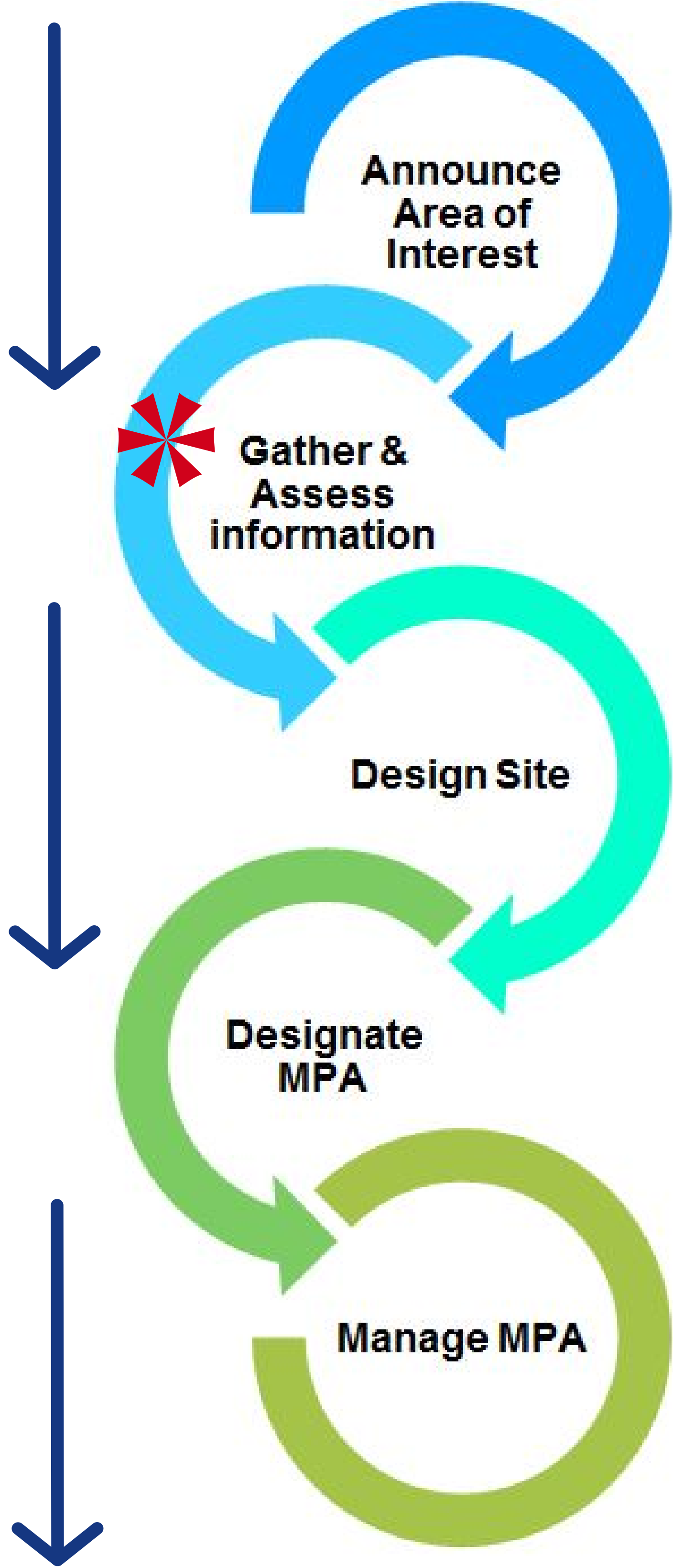
Since the March announcement, DFO has held a science process to look at available data and information on the ecology and special natural features of the area. DFO economists have also created a socio-economic profile focusing on the importance of the fishery within the area. An Indigenous knowledge and use study is also underway.

DFO has also been actively engaging with interested stakeholders and community members. Meetings have been held with the fishing industry, other industries (e.g., aquaculture, marine plants), environmental and conservation groups, and various community groups. The intent of these initial meetings was to explain the process and identify potential members for the Eastern Shore Islands AOI Advisory Committee, which is created to share information, exchange views, and provide guidance throughout the process. These activities are in addition to the ongoing consultation with First Nations, Indigenous groups and the Province of Nova Scotia.

2018 → 2020 →

## WHERE ARE WE IN THE MPA PROCESS? CONT'D

### Consultation



On September 13th, we held our first Eastern Shore Islands AOI Advisory Committee meeting in Ship Harbour. There was a great turn out with over 30 representatives from various sectors. It was important to hear the different opinions and perspectives around the table at the start of this process. We expect to hold our second meeting of this Committee before the end of the calendar year.

Commercial fishing is the main economic activity for the Eastern Shore. To complement the Advisory Committee work and to allow for broader fishing industry input, a working group made up of the membership of the Eastern Shore Fisherman's Protective Association has been established, and this group has met with DFO several times. A fisheries mapping project is underway with this working group and we look forward to gaining valuable information through this collaboration.

DFO also recognizes the importance of engaging the broader community in the MPA discussion. Public events, including information sessions and workshops will be held in Eastern Shore communities to provide an opportunity for everyone to get involved. See below for details on up-coming public events.

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## 05.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Based on what we've heard so far, below are answers to several commonly asked questions about a future Eastern Shore Islands MPA:

**Question: Has DFO already decided what a future Eastern Shore Islands MPA will look like and what activities will be restricted?**

Answer: No. Every MPA is different. Size, shape, and allowable activities are determined through a process that starts after the AOI has been identified. During the MPA site design process, all *Oceans Act* MPAs undergo an ecological risk assessment to determine which activities that occur within the AOI may pose risks to the natural features that make the site special. The risk assessment, in combination with information gathered through consultation, serves as the basis for discussions regarding allowable activities, zones and boundaries for the future MPA. Recommendations for a final MPA design are developed at the multi-sector Advisory Committee table.

**Question: What benefits can an MPA offer to the local community?**

Answer: MPAs can help protect special places like the Eastern Shore Islands while also helping to ensure that local communities can continue to enjoy and use the area into the future. There are many potential benefits to the local community. These range from continued healthy local fisheries and new tourism opportunities, to ensuring the long-term health of the waters and local marine life. MPAs provide a focus for scientific research, and present opportunities for collaborative work with First Nations, fishing industry, academia, and others on projects of interest to the users of the area.

**Question: Will the MPA shut down fisheries on the Eastern Shore?**

Answer: No. DFO is working closely with the local fishing industry to ensure there will be no impacts to jobs or the ability to make a living along the Eastern Shore. All activities are subject to the ecological risk assessment, but based on experience with similar MPAs, DFO is confident that lobster and other traditional fixed-gear fishing (herring gillnet, groundfish longline), dive fisheries, recreational fisheries, and Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries will be allowed to continue within a future Eastern Shore Islands MPA.

**Question: Do all MPAs need to have a "no take zone"?**

Answer: No, MPAs do not require "no take zones" in order to be effective. Although these types of zones are commonly used in protected areas around the world, there are also examples of effective MPAs that do not include such measures. DFO is working closely with the fishing industry and others on the design of a potential MPA to ensure effective protection while also avoiding economic impacts to communities.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT'D

**Question: Will the MPA restrict hunting, clamming and rockweed harvesting? Will other land-based activities be impacted?**

Answer: No. Oceans Act MPAs only extend to the low tide line so land-based and intertidal (between low tide and high tide lines) activities like hunting, clamming and rockweed harvesting would occur outside of the MPA boundary. Likewise, an MPA would not impact property ownership, or maintenance activities such as private wharf repairs.

**Question: How can I have a say in the design of the Eastern Shore Islands MPA?**

Answer: DFO is using multiple approaches to fully involve First Nations, Indigenous groups, the community, industries, and other governments in the MPA establishment process, such as:

- An Advisory Committee has been created and will be a key platform for multi-sector discussion and to provide advice on the MPA design prior to designation.
- A working group, consisting of the membership of the Eastern Shore Fishermen's Protective Association has been established to ensure the fishing industry has a strong voice in this process.
- Community events will be held to provide opportunities for DFO to share information, answer your questions and hear your views. Please watch the DFO website for upcoming events.
- All Canadians have an opportunity to provide their input into the MPA design during the public comment period once the draft regulations are developed and posted on the Canada Gazette (<http://www.gazette.gc.ca/accueil-home-eng.html>).

**Question: Can an MPA be changed once the Regulations are finalized?**

Answer: Yes. The design of an MPA is determined collaboratively through a process that involves information gathering, assessment, and extensive consultations. Once the MPA design is ready, the boundaries, zones and allowable activities are described in draft regulations. The draft regulations are then posted on the Canada Gazette for all Canadians to review for a 30 day public comment period. These comments are then considered in developing the final Regulations.

Once an MPA is established, the Advisory Committee continues to provide input into the on-going management of the site. Management plans are reviewed regularly, new science is considered, and the overall MPA effectiveness is looked at to determine whether changes are required.

Changes to MPA Regulations are infrequent. However, in the event that a major change is required (for example a zoning change or new allowable activity), consultations with First Nations, Indigenous groups, other governments, industry stakeholders and the community would take place to help inform the changes. Just like with the establishment of the MPA, such changes to the Regulations would also require a public review and comment period through the Canada Gazette (described above).

06.

## QUARTERLY FEATURE

## You might have seen...

Last month, our scientists visited the Eastern Shore Islands to check the health of eelgrass beds near Cable Island. They retrieved instruments that were deployed in these eelgrass beds to measure currents, temperature, and light penetration in different depths of the water. It's important to study these areas because eelgrass supports high biodiversity and provides key habitat for many fish and invertebrates.



Did you know eelgrass helps filter the water, protect shorelines and stabilize sediments? It also supports high biodiversity.

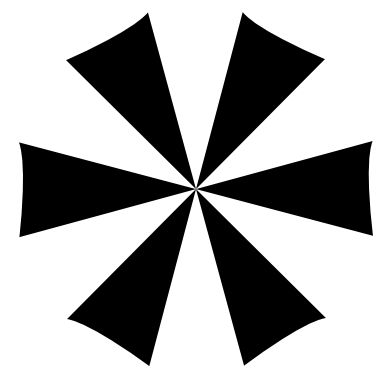
07.

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

Over the next several months, we will continue to meet with First Nations, Indigenous groups, the Province, the Eastern Shore Fisherman's Protective Association working group, and the Advisory Committee to identify and begin to address key issues. Progress will be shared through opportunities such as this newsletter and on our website.

## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

DFO will be hosting two public events this fall on the Eastern Shore. These open houses are designed to share information about the Eastern Shore Islands AOI and MPA establishment process, and are an opportunity to learn more about what the communities of the Eastern Shore value. These events will be drop-in style and family-friendly. Please check our website for upcoming dates.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions, are wondering how an MPA in the Eastern Shore Islands area might affect you, or want to be added to our email distribution list, please contact us at:

**MaritimesMPAs@dfo-mpo.gc.ca** or **902-426-9919**.

Also, please visit our website regularly for updates or follow us on social media:

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/aoi-si/easternshore-ilescoteest-eng.html>

Photo: Nick Hawkins

