



Eastern Shore Fisherman's Protective Association

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Date: May 5th, 2018

RE: Eastern Shore Islands Area of Interest

TO: National Advisory Panel on MPA Standards

The Eastern Shore Fishermen's Protective Association wish to express our appreciation for your consultations and invitation to present our observations, concerns and recommendations regarding the subject AOI.

I am writing this submission as a fourth-generation fisherman with fifty plus years' experience in the inshore fishing industry. I was born and raised in an adjacent rural NS fishing community and culture dependent on the exploitation of the natural resources for socio/economic survival. I also write this as the representative of a 190 member association of fishers affected by the designation of an MPA on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore with varied but similar backgrounds.

I observe this from economic, social and geopolitical perspectives and assure you without reservation that we all share the same goals of environmental and resource protection. We share as well the protection of communities and a "way of life" through the prosecution of our generations old fishery using methods and measures which have preserved the AOI in its natural state. I contend that allowing the continuity of the principles of the preceding stewardship, affords the best assurance of continued protection going forward. Our association has lobbied against dirty industry and destructive methods of fishing and are proactive in developing programs and research to increase egg production, in the lobster fishery for instance, and to monitor stock recruitment and the effects the fishery has on the eco system generally. Although lobster is the primary resource and the pillar of viability of fishing enterprises, sea urchin, mackerel, herring, ground fish and scallops make a considerable contribution.

I would like you to consider the following points when compiling your recommendations:

Economy:

The fishery prosecuted in the AOI employs 170 licenses which employ and sustain 400 families directly in the industry – owner/operators, crew members, industry services including fish plant owners and workers. Tens of millions of dollars in sustainable new income from the local fishery support an otherwise depressed and disadvantage rural area that only exists for and from the fishery. The fishery has to be part of the protection

strategy going forward as it represents our community's future and our community is a microcosm of the Atlantic Canada rural economy.

Protection:

The ESFPA supports the protection of the marine environment and continue to advocate for the sustainability of the resource, ecosystem, and the communities it sustains.

The hook and line, gill net and the trap fisheries prosecuted within the AOI could be considered artisanal fisheries and have negligible impact on the ecosystem. DFO must be assertive in defending their management of the marine environment and resource in question with the tools they presently employ to protect them, especially lobster which has doubled in recent times under the "present" regulatory regime and practises. Practises certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, a member of the IUCN.

As a conservation initiative our association introduced a v-notch conservation strategy 18 years ago, and 450,000 lobbs of > 110 ml female lobsters have been released to insure optimal egg production and developed in partnership with the Fishermen and Scientist Research society a catch sampling and water temperature monitoring program to contribute to the science to support the sustainability of our resource. As stewards dependent on the area, we continue to monitor and report any activity that we feel may adversely affect the area of interest.

Your panel has been instructed to use categories and protection standards developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The guideline recommends that MPAs categorized with the objectives being considered here, are at least 75 per cent "no take" zones where removal of resources is banned. 75 per cent no take zones clearly constitutes an industry closure and community devastation. Any no take zone, however modest, would cause untenable dislocation of industry management in the area, especially effort distribution, years in the making.

Aboriginal Reconciliation:

Another serious consideration of no take zones has to be the relationship between First Nations and Non Aboriginal license holders. Our Association supports the Reconciliation efforts of the DFO and the concept of a single inclusive fishery and have made all necessary accommodation to achieve that end. This effort has to date yielded considerable progress, with an aboriginal person speaking on behalf of an integrated fishery in some instances. While we can't apologize for the actions of others, the recognition of injustices and efforts to help with restitution and restoration of lost opportunity and place in the larger community has considerable value. Only time can sooth the residual emotion and permit mutual reconciliation and integration, but this process, for the benefit of all, has to continue to be supported by all those in a position to do so, While we can be optimistic about the future and recognize we have more to do, we must recognize that there is a degree of resistance to the present status, therefor any no take zone or exclusion zone or area of any kind that extends exclusive access for any purpose (especially after removal of historic occupants) which is already being anticipated would have a detrimental effect on the reconciliation process and set proponent's efforts back considerably.

Efficacy of MPA:

As proponents of environmental protection and resource sustainability and considering our experience with the effects the environment and the lack of science and law enforcement can have on both makes us question the efficacy of an MPA. Most, if not all species associated with a particular area either vacate the area frequently, passed through it occasionally, or will vacate it if environmental conditions, especially water temperature, are not compatible with their survival. In 1929, lobsters vacated the subject area and again in 1980. They went practically overnight and years later returned within the same time frame. Resource management has to have a broad application to be effective. In the shallow waters in this area, violent turbulence scours the ocean bottom every storm. Dead lobsters are found on the beach, kelp, gravel and rocks filling lobster traps. MPAs will not prevent that. Industrial fallout, such as oil spills or other contamination from outside the area will have the same effect on the area and coastline whether it is designated protected or not.

It would be our preference to manage the Canadian marine ecosystem as a whole. Good science and credible enforcement of good comprehensive law applied universally, not just for a little area of the Eastern Shore.

Motive:

Most of the MPA oceans management concept is internationally developed and driven. National governments and local environmental conservation groups feel obliged to respond to the international pressure which may not be consistent with their own objectives. While we don't know the complete membership and motives of all the members of the IUCN, two prominent members; the International Aquaculture Federation and the MSC are well known to the inshore fishing sector. The inshore owner operated fisheries have for years been the target of corporate interests through initiatives to "modernize" (read corporatize) the fishery. While one group promotes the notion that aquaculture will replace the wild fishery as a protein food source and has synergies with MPAs, the other has, in the past certified corporate fisheries using bottom trawling fishing methods that the inshore sector has long opposed as being a destructive method of fishing. Both initiatives are inconsistent with the objectives of the local conservation groups. After promising to enforce owner operator policies for the benefit of the local communities in Atlantic Canada we would expect the DFO to consider the potential consequences of agreeing to an MPA designation subject to such international influence and to signal to the local communities the commitment of our Government to help protect the local fishery in order to maintain confidence in investing in it, not only for the benefit of communities on the Eastern Shore but in other potential target areas. The fact that fisheries closures have in the past led to the opportunity for oil exploration and development must be considered in your recommendations as well.

Community:

I can't stress enough the role of the inshore fishery in the culture of our rural communities. This is a culture that can only be understood from within and attempts in the past to displace or "modernize" cultures has had serious if unintended consequences. Trying to protect these areas, done wrong, has the capacity to undermine the economic viability of

the community, the potential to divide and threaten members within the community and cause more harm or lost protection of the environment in the AOI. Past experience surely must have proved that it takes community support for successful outcomes. Local conscientious fishing interests are synonymous with, and the best prospect for compliance with, measures to protect this area, if protection is the real objective.

Jurisdiction :

Our fish harvesters have had and exercised exclusive access to this area for generations. A new designation as an MPA and the prospect of new advisory committees raises valid concerns for our members. International resources are already being employed in an attempt to take the lead on community organization and to gain influence in the advisory process for the designation and management of the area going forward. Our members have never been assured by DFO as to the benefits of an MPA or how an MPA could help protect their interests. In order to gain our support, DFO must demonstrate how they intend to protect our sovereignty and culture, that they separate political science from environmental and ecological science, distinguish between protection of areas from acquisition of areas and that they differentiate between satisfying market demands for sustainability and using sustainability to gain market control for economic advantage. The DFO must address the ambiguities and lack of clarity now. This initiative has developed too far without enough clarity. A mechanism to secure the certainty and continuity of our community fishery has to be developed. A policy of sacrificing the least productive areas of our fishery to satisfy international targets and market conditions, for the greater good, may be ill founded and set an unacceptable precedent.

Notwithstanding any of the forgoing, the ESFPA is willing to engage in an advisory process to better define the objectives and effect an MPA would have. Our participation would be subject to the process being transparent, without bias and convened under acceptable terms of reference and guiding principles.

We will enter into that process on the premise that our harvesters for generations, mostly descendent through family inheritance, have been the occupants and stewards of the AOI and have a dependency on it. It must be recognized that the fishery has to continue and evolve as conditions and circumstances dictate and permit, and that the fishery, as presently managed, has no ecological or environmental impact, in and of itself, as a prerequisite to any subsequent planning. In short, our members would withdraw any and all support for any proposal or process that negatively affects their continued use of the area to perpetuate a responsible and sustainable modern fishery.

We await in anticipation of your recommendations and look forward to achieving an acceptable resolution for the benefit of all those concerned.

Sincerely,

Peter Connors,
President ESFPA