

## The Maritime Fishermen's Union

The Maritime Fishermen's Union (MPU) is an organization that represents more than 1,250 independent inshore fishermen in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Since the beginning of the MFU in 1977, the organization has worked to improve the socio-economic conditions of fishermen and their coastal communities. One of its first struggles was for resource fairness in the herring fishery, and two decades later it was the case again with snow crab resource. In addition, MFU members have been visionaries of a sustainable lobster resource by participating in projects to stop poaching in the fishery, as well as promoting healthy fishing practices across the fishery. More recently, the organization has successfully implemented a fleet rationalization program that has increased economic viability for members remaining in the lobster fishery. In addition, the organization continues to advocate for the advancement of conservation measures such as increasing the minimum legal size for lobster and sound management of all species related to the inshore fishery (e.g. herring, scallop rock crab, etc.). Another creation of the UPM was Homarus Inc. in 2001, its research and development department, which is today a major leader in lobster research. Its resource and habitat enhancement projects, as well as raising awareness amongst fishermen on the benefits of increasing the minimum legal size of lobster, have helped to increase the lobster resource to historical levels in our region.

## MFU's position on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

The MFU recognizes the importance of conserving marine habitats to ensure the sustainability the marine resources on which fishermen depend for maintaining sustainable fisheries. On a global scale, science has effectively demonstrated that well-selected and managed marine protected areas can help preserve ecosystems and marine organisms, restore fish stocks and create new opportunities for economic development. Thus, the MFU supports the federal government's initiative for the creation of a network of well managed marine protected areas.

## Recommendations for standards for the creation of MPA's

As practical recommendations for the creation of standards for marine protected areas in Canada, we recommend the following:

1. On the selection of MPA's, we strongly recommend the inclusion of fishermen groups from the beginning and throughout any process of creating MPAs in Canada. These are the primary custodians of marine habitat and the resources. If included early in the process, they will be a source of important traditional and practical knowledge. In addition, their inclusion and active participation in the shaping and setting up of MPAs will make them long-term promoters of such

projects. However, their non-inclusion in the process will have the opposite effect and fishermen buy-in may be very difficult for new MPA's.

2. With regards to the management of MPAs, following their establishment, it would be reasonable to think that these same fishermen's associations could play a role in the management and evaluation of MPA conservation objectives.
3. With regards to the selection of MPA objectives, we recommend that clear conservation objectives be identified with specific measurable parameters. For example, if a site is identified as an MPA for its ecological importance as a scallop reproduction area, the conservation objective could be to maintain or increase the productivity of the site at specific levels / percentages of productivity for that specie.
4. Do not exclude fishing activities with low ecological impacts (eg trap fishing for lobster and crab, longline fishing, supervised gill net fishing), unless there is clear scientific evidence that these activities may have a negative impact on MPA conservation targets.
5. For oil and gas exploration and development within MPAs, for several obvious and perceptual reasons, these activities should be removed completely from any MPA initiative.