

## Submission to DFO Advisory Committee

### SUBMISSION to the DFO National Advisory Panel on the Creation of Minimum Standards for Marine Protected Areas

A 2089 km<sup>2</sup> area on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia has been identified by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as an AOI in the process of designating a Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the Oceans Act. This area is coastal and has very different considerations than an offshore MPA. Given that Canada has relatively little experience in establishing coastal MPA's there are several lessons that can be learned from the process to date that should inform standards for MPA process, governance and management. The Eastern Shore Islands area was identified as an Ecological or Biologically Significant Area (ESBA) by DFO because of it's relatively undisturbed natural habitat, home for rare bird species, and a wide variety of marine species as well.

The Eastern Shore Islands AOI has primary conservation objectives in three areas identified by DFO : habitat, biodiversity and biological productivity. In addition to these three goals it is absolutely critical to ensure the continuance of sustainable livelihoods in this area. While this region of Nova Scotia has been economically depressed and is experiencing continued population decline, the community is not willing to have development at any cost and has demonstrated this by our continued vocal opposition to finfish farming proposals.

Current economic activities including the lobster fishery, shellfish aquaculture and low impact tourism are critical components of our economic viability but also are key components in sustaining the present near pristine nature of this area and any future conservation measures. It is the lobster fishers who have developed certain practices to protect their stock and whose local knowledge can contribute to the continued conservation and management of these waters. It is the low impact tourism industry that has been key in efforts to support the protection of the 100's of islands in this area. The tourism industry in this area has many people committed to building further on this significant terrestrial conservation effort which is also being supported by the province of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

At present there is no large scale marine based industry in this area and we feel that it is important to have protection standards as part of the MPA that include:

## Submission to DFO Advisory Committee

\*no oil and gas development. This should not have to be stated but we have a premier that has publicly stated that he sees no contradiction between oil and gas development and marine protection. Boris Worm a Marine Research Ecologist, Killam Research Professor, Dalhousie University has stated that even just the seismic testing prior to oil and gas development has harmful effects on many marine species including the tiniest of krill that are basic in the food chain of a healthy marine environment.

\*no open pen finfish farms. The people in this area have stated clearly that until it can be shown that there be no deleterious effects of this industry we feel that the risk to our present sustainable industries are too great.

\*no bottom trawling. Other low impact methods of fishing continue to be vital to this area but destructive bottom trawling could impact habitat for existing commercial species.

\* no undersea mining or gravel extraction

\* no commercial scale benthic disturbing activities such as marine based wind farms

In addition to prohibitions on the above listed activities, the communities of the Eastern Shore want the process of creating coastal MPA's to be community driven. We support the idea of a legally defined MPA where there is community involvement in the creation and implementation of a management plan. There also needs to be an ongoing Advisory Committee and a legally binding dispute resolution process.

The human component of conservation needs to be recognized especially in coastal MPA's where livelihoods are at stake. It is important to take into consideration the unique conservation goals and objectives of MPA's and therefore rigid designations of no take zones and buffer zones should not be adopted. The lobster season in this area is a 2 month season so could not a temporal rather than a

Submission to DFO Advisory Committee

spatial definition of no take zone be considered. Lobster fishers are very concerned about their continued ability to make a living if spatial no take zones are imposed. It is vital to incorporate the local knowledge of fishers in determining these zones.

Communities need to be an integral part of the creation of MPA's. It is important to have an educational component to an MPA and involving children in the area schools will ensure that the MPA has ongoing significance. The commitment to conservation efforts is strengthened when people have been part of and have an ongoing role in these efforts from the outset.

Karen Traversy

Looks excellent Wendy. I especially like the ask for a community role in MPA ...

7:34 AM (59 minutes ago)

Submission to DFO Advisory Committee

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8:13 AM (20 minutes ago)