



Fisheries Council of Canada  
Conseil Canadien des Pêches



# MARINE CONSERVATION

## Overview

The Canadian fisheries industry has a high standard of sustainability, ranking in the top 5 of Marine Stewardship Council certifications in the world. Fishermen and women have a vested interest in the long-term sustainability of their livelihood, and are some of the most knowledgeable stewards of the oceans.

The United Nations predicts global demand for sustainable blue foods to double by 2050 as the population and demand for healthy proteins continues to climb. As well, 75,000 Canadians in rural, coastal and Indigenous communities rely on fishing for their income, and fisheries contribute \$9 billion annually in GDP to Canada's economy.

It is important to ensure our oceans remain healthy for generations to come. But it is possible to balance marine conservation with sustainable use of fisheries resources, if decisions are made based on sufficient science. However, Canada is not following best practices in process or outcomes. Transparency, consultation and consideration of how to mitigate lost access are critical to a successful outcome.

## Objective

**Ensure industry involvement in consultations on marine conservation, to make certain that all decisions are based on sufficient science and balance conservation with sustainable use.**

## Key Messages

1. **Canada has a responsibility to balance marine conservation with science-based sustainable use of fisheries resources to support the food supply chain.**
2. **The Canadian fisheries industry has a high standard of sustainability, ranking in the top 5 of Marine Stewardship Council certifications in the world.**
3. **Sustainable fisheries contribute to biodiversity, and certain fisheries management measures can be more effective at conservation than full restrictions.**



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## Background & Facts

The Canadian fisheries industry is a world leader in sustainability. Canada ranks in the top 5 in the world in rates of Marine Stewardship Council sustainability certifications, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada reports that 95% of fisheries are harvested at sustainable levels. Beyond that, Canadian fishing companies are constantly investing in industry-led science and innovation to create improved harvesting gear, practices and processing techniques to make fishing even more sustainable.

As Canada works towards implementing its commitments under the Global Biodiversity Framework, the Fisheries Council of Canada is advocating with several departments for marine conservation that balances sustainable use. In a 2020 paper by Ray Hilborn et al., it was shown that area- and gear-based effort regulations can provide the high levels of biodiversity most no-take areas strive for. In many instances there are certain fishing gears that do not impact the conservation goal for specific area and therefore can still be used while achieving the desired ecological integrity of the area.

We need to make informed marine conservation decisions that consider mitigating lost fisheries access. The BC Northern Shelf Bioregion Action Plan is a failed exercise that will unnecessarily cost \$95 million in annual economic activity. Moreover, marine conservation is becoming more complicated and intertwined with Indigenous Reconciliation, including the establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conservation Areas.

Canadian fish and seafood is an important link in a food supply chain that is increasingly reliant on sustainable blue foods for protein as the population grows. It is important that we consider human well-being in tandem with marine conservation as we strive to make the world a better place.

Fish and seafood can have some of the lowest GHG emissions per unit of protein produced of all protein sources, up to 250 times less than beef. A stronger fish and seafood industry and more seafood consumption could help Canada reach its GHG targets.

FCC has begun regular engagement with senior DFO and Parks Canada officials to share our questions/concerns/recommendations and to collaborate towards mutually beneficial solutions. For more information, see FCC's website for its position paper, *Balancing Marine Conservation with Sustainable Use*, that explores the pathways to creating healthy fisheries within healthy oceans.