



Fisheries Council of Canada welcomes Fisheries Committee Report on Marine Protected Areas

OTTAWA, June 12, 2018 – The Fisheries Council of Canada (FCC) welcomes the House of Commons Committee on Fisheries and Oceans Report on Marine Protected Areas, which was tabled in Parliament yesterday.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report, entitled [*Healthy Oceans, Vibrant Coastal Communities: Strengthening The Oceans Act Marine Protected Areas' Establishment Process*](#), clearly concludes that the process to establish marine protected areas and other marine conservation measures can be improved. The Committee concluded, “failing to incorporate social, economic and cultural considerations into the MPA establishment process can lead to significant conflict, loss of trust, resistance, and in some cases, the creation of MPAs that may not be as effective as they could be. Therefore, including Indigenous and coastal communities in decision-making processes that impact their access to adjacent marine spaces is imperative.”

Paul Lansbergen, FCC President, said “Clearly, the Committee heard a recurring theme that the process can be improved. I am pleased by the fulsomeness of the report and its series of recommendations.” He continued, “Our primary concern is how Canada balances the desire to conserve and protect our precious ocean ecosystem while still generating much needed economic benefits from our fish resources.”

FCC made three recommendations that recognize and build on existing elements of the processes for establishing individual MPAs and a broader network. However, the driver for these recommendations is to enhance the effort to strike the appropriate balance between conservation and socio-economic benefits. The three recommendations were:

1. Use science-based decision making which recognizes the role of the fisheries sector in sustainable fisheries management and contributing to a healthy ocean ecosystem;
2. Incorporate the socio-economic consideration which recognizes the economic importance of the fisheries sector and other users; and,
3. Take a flexible approach in selecting the right conservation tool for the situation – regardless of it being under the Oceans Act, Fisheries Act, or other authority.

“I see our recommendations reflected in a number of the recommendations by the Committee. I wish to thank the Members of Parliament for their work on this important topic. And I look forward to working with DFO as it continues to work towards Canada’s 2020 marine conservation target”, Lansbergen said.

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The Canadian seafood industry creates 80,000 direct jobs, mainly in coastal and rural communities, and accounts for \$6.6 billion in exports. Two-thirds of Canada's wild capture seafood production (80 per cent by value) is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council. This puts Canada among the leaders globally when put in the context of only about 10% of the world's fisheries being certified.

Since the Council was established in 1915, the Fisheries Council of Canada has been the national voice for Canada's commercial fisheries. Our members include small, medium and larger-sized companies along with Indigenous enterprises that harvest fish in Canada's three oceans and inland waters. Member companies are also processors who process the majority of Canada's fish and seafood production. FCC members take pride in being key employers in their communities, providing jobs and creating an economic base for other local businesses.

For further information: Fisheries Council of Canada, info@fisheriescouncil.org