

## What we Heard:

### Lessons from Public Consultation to Select the Next Area of Interest for Marine Protected Area Designation on the Eastern Scotian Shelf

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## Outline

- Background
- Planning and preparation
- Consultation period
- Consultation results
- Lessons learned
- Next steps

## Background

- National *Health of the Oceans* Initiative included six new *Oceans Act* MPAs in Canada
- DFO Maritimes Region to create one of those new MPAs, on the Eastern Scotian Shelf
- Consulted on three candidate sites
- Selected one of those three as the Area of Interest - St Anns Bank



## MPA designation process

### Step 0: Public engagement on Area of Interest selection

- **Step 1:** Select Area of Interest (AOI)
- **Step 2:** Conduct Overview and Assessment of AOI
- **Step 3:** Develop Regulatory Intent and conduct public consultation
- **Step 4:** Develop Regulatory Documents and designate the MPA
- **Step 5:** Manage Marine Protected Area

## Planning and Preparation

- Developed a communications strategy
  - Outlined main messages, key players, and consultation approach
  - Reviewed these elements with ESSIM SAC
- Discussions with other governments, key stakeholders
  - Internal DFO conversations
  - Extensive pre-consultation with Province of Nova Scotia
  - Pre-consultation with Nova Scotia First Nations (through KMK)
  - Discussions with ESSIM SAC, Fisheries Roundtable, and others
- Developed supporting materials
  - Consultation Booklet (with Feedback Form)
  - 1-page Summary
  - Mailing list
  - Website

## Consultation Period

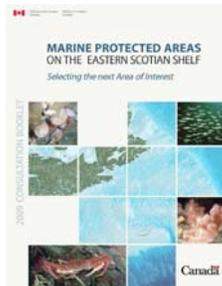
### The original plan:

- 60 days (October-December 2009)
- Circulate consultation booklets
- Post all materials on web
- Collect feedback forms (paper, web, email)
- Plan meetings with key stakeholders (e.g., ESSIM SAC, Fisheries Roundtable, fishing groups, etc) and 2 public meetings
- Accommodate meeting requests

## Consultation Period

*What information was provided?*

- Consultation booklet and website
- Background on MPAs and MPA networks
- How the 3 candidate sites were selected and what will happen next
- Ecological features of each candidate AOI
- Existing human uses
- How the sites meet the criteria for MPAs under the *Oceans Act*



## Consultation Period

Initial response:

- Fishing industry
  - Criticized the process: too short, too late
  - Asked for socioeconomic information and more info on how sites were selected
- Provinces
  - Concerns with potential economic impacts (fishing and oil and gas)
- Aboriginal groups
  - Concerns with potential economic impacts on fishing but supportive of concept
- ENGOs
  - Supportive of initiative
- Other industries
  - Very little feedback early in the process
- Broader public – not engaged at this point

## The First Meeting

- “I gotta have a smoke before I have a heart attack...”
- “Marty, I’m going to use you as an otter board / an anchor / throw you in the shrimp machine...”
- “I’ve been fishing since before your mom was wiping snot off your face...”
- “What the f\*\*\* are we protecting coral for anyway?...”

## Consultation Period

How did we respond to concerns?

- Extended consultation period to February (to 120d)
- Provided socioeconomic profiles of each site
- Extended consultation again to May (to 213d)
- Another round of meetings on the socioeconomic profiles
- Developed potential management scenarios in response to requests for more information
- Targeted academic communities – meetings held at 4 universities
- Dropped public meetings from the plan
  - Focused on sector-specific meetings and engaging wider public through newspaper ads, website, and feedback forms

## Consultation Results

Total Feedback:

- 70 meetings (half with fishing industry)
- 158 feedback forms
- 24 formal submissions
- 7 letters to the Minister
- Feedback is captured in a document entitled *What We Heard*



## Consultation Results

*The candidate Areas of Interest*

- Initially, many stakeholders were either supportive of all three or not supportive of any
- Most common concerns were about the potential negative economic impacts on commercial fishing activities and associated coastal communities
- Some stakeholders proposed other sites, particularly the Haddock Box

## Consultation Results

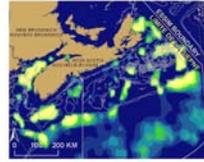
### The candidate Areas of Interest

- More concern was expressed over the Misaine Bank & Eastern Shoal and Middle Bank candidate AOIs (mostly due to commercial fishing)
- Misaine Bank & Eastern Shoal and the northern portion of St Anns Bank are considered prospective for oil and gas
- St Anns Bank received the most direct support



## Consultation Results

### MPAs and MPA networks



Results of preliminary MPA network analysis for the Maritimes Region (DFO 2011).

- Concern about potential impacts on future oil and gas investment in the region
- General concern about concentration of protected areas in eastern Nova Scotia
- Many fishing industry groups were generally opposed to MPAs and questioned their effectiveness, given other sustainability measures in the industry
- Support for MPAs and MPA networks was expressed by all ENGOs; most Aboriginal groups; most academics; certain government agencies; and a few industry groups

## Consultation Results

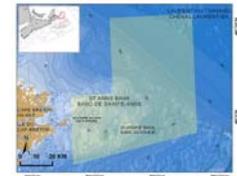
### Feedback form results

- 89% support the establishment of new MPAs in Canada
- 70% support the establishment of any of the three candidate AOIs
- 30% either oppose the selection of one of the candidate AOIs or do not support nor oppose any of the candidates.
- 66% were students, 10% were fish harvesters, and the remaining 24% comprised of retirees, academics, government workers, professionals, NGO workers and others.

## Consultation Results

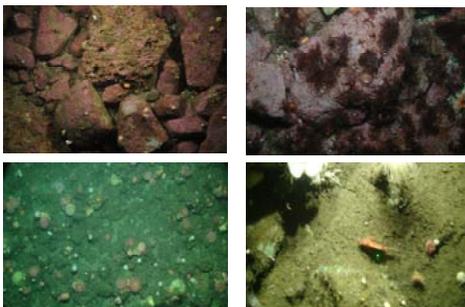
Recommended selection of the St Anns Bank candidate AOI to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

- Clear alignment with *Oceans Act* criteria for MPA establishment
  - Highly diverse
  - Important to depleted groundfish populations
  - Contains corals and sponges
  - Endangered leatherback turtle foraging area
  - Wide range of migratory fish and marine mammals
- Direct support from some First Nations, some fishing groups, academics, ENGOs, others
- Area with lowest potential economic impact



St Anns Bank Area of Interest Announced by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## The St Anns Bank AOI



## Lessons Learned

### About the consultation process

- Doing our homework helped us know our audiences and understand the context
- Need to clearly communicate the consultation process, how the feedback will be used, and next steps
- Must allow sufficient time for meaningful dialogue
  - 2-3 meetings needed with each key player (at a minimum)
- Proactively engage key players early and talk to them often
- Try to meet in a range of settings (home v. away, multi-lat v. bi-lat)
- Take into account capacity of stakeholders to participate

## Lessons Learned

### *Moving forward with MPAs and MPA networks*

- At what stage should stakeholders be involved?
  - From many, clear desire to be involved earlier in the process
  - But also, some mixed messages – why not wait until you know which site you want?
- Need to provide more clarity on “what it will mean”
- It’s all about relationships:
  - Significant time is required to build trust with influential individuals
  - Worst critics can become strongest supporters

## Next Steps

### *For the St Anns Bank Area of Interest*

- High level of interest in staying informed and involved in the AOI establishment process
- The MPA establishment process has begun, which includes establishing a multi-stakeholder advisory body
- Conservation objectives, management options, and regulatory intent are developed with advice from this group
- Broader public consultation occurs at several steps in the designation process

## Questions and discussion