

## CONSERVING OUR OCEANS

### Recommendation Summary

Long-term, stable funding is necessary to support fulfillment of Canada's domestic and international commitments to ocean conservation, and to restore federal leadership for integrated, ecosystem-based ocean management. Achieving successful co-management of Canada's oceans requires investment in governance structures and marine planning, while the completion of Canada's national network of marine protected areas is in need of funding across relevant departments and agencies. Recently restored science funding must be upheld, and additional funding is recommended to fully implement Canada's suite of fisheries management policies and legislation.

#### Investment Required:

For 2017/18:	\$146 million
Ongoing:	\$146 million per year for five years

### Background and Rationale

Healthy marine ecosystems are the foundation for economically prosperous maritime sectors, communities, and fisheries. However, there is increasing evidence in Canada and globally that our oceans are suffering as a result of climate change and harmful human activities. A comprehensive, ecosystem-based approach to integrated ocean management that guides marine spatial planning is needed to ensure that conservation and sustainable human uses are appropriately managed.

Ocean co-management, guided by new governance structures involving all levels of government – federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous – as well as marine stakeholders, will ensure that a wide variety of values and needs are considered in ocean planning as we work toward achieving Canada's marine conservation targets. Such an approach must be supported over the long term, with ongoing funding that ensures stability and certainty for government departments and stakeholders.

Evidence from around the world demonstrates that marine protected areas (MPAs) are an essential tool for conserving marine biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ocean ecosystems in the face of climate change. When designed as part of an overall bioregional approach to ocean management, MPA networks support the many ecosystem services upon which our coastal communities depend. Improving fisheries management by fully implementing existing tools will benefit both fishermen and ocean ecosystems.

The ministerial mandate letters for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change specify that the ministers were mandated to:

- Work together to increase the proportion of Canada's marine and coastal areas that

are protected – to five percent by 2017, and ten percent by 2020 – supported by new investments in community consultation and science.

Additionally, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard was mandated to:

- Restore funding to support federal ocean science and monitoring programs, to protect the health of fish stocks;
- Use scientific evidence and the precautionary principle, and take into account climate change, when making decisions affecting fish stocks and ecosystem management; and
- Work with the provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples, and other stakeholders to better co-manage our three oceans.

The budgetary measures described below would contribute to the implementation of these commitments and restore federal leadership for ocean conservation and management in Canada.

#### 1. Ocean Co-Management

Achieving real success in efforts to develop and implement marine use plans and marine protected areas networks will depend on effective, collaborative work with the provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples, and other stakeholders through co-management arrangements for Canada's oceans. Clear commitments to co-management were made through both the current government's 2015 election platform and the Mandate Letter for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. Investments in co-management will directly support the Ministerial mandate for marine conservation in Canada.

### 1a. Co-management governance

Co-management should involve the formation of new decision-making bodies, trilateral governance structures, and supporting administrative structures based in a renewed Oceans Act. Co-management will also require greater transparency, communication, engagement, and outreach with the full range of ocean interests, particularly with coastal communities.

In order to develop plans that make the best use of our marine resources and give coastal communities a central role in managing local ocean resources, additional federal funding is needed to support the creation and operation of these structures and processes beginning with each of the five priority bioregions (Northern Shelf, Western Arctic, Newfoundland-Labrador Shelves, Scotian Shelf, and Gulf of Saint Lawrence).

**Budget:** \$60 million per year, for five years

### 1b. Marine planning

Marine planning can provide certainty and a more stable investment climate for industry stakeholders, and can define thresholds and ecological limits within ocean ecosystems.

Successful marine planning requires all relevant agencies with a mandate in Canada's ocean environments to support integrated planning initiatives under a common legislative framework that also includes provincial and Indigenous government partners and accommodates a wide range of stakeholders. Participation in marine planning helps to ensure effective implementation of plans across agencies and departments. The following are examples of collaborative marine planning efforts currently underway in Canada's ocean territory:

- BC's Marine Planning Partnership (MaPP), and Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA);
- Atlantic's Regional Oceans Plan (ROP);
- Beaufort Sea Partnership's community conservation planning; and
- Nunavut's Land Use Plan.

Investing in a suite of tools to facilitate better marine planning will set the foundation for achieving both ecological conservation and sustainable resource use goals. These tools include: cumulative effects and risk assessment (with special consideration given to areas described as ecologically and biologically significant (EBSAs), sensitive benthic areas, and valued ecosystem components), Marxan analysis, human-use mapping, and valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services for incorporation into decision-making. These tools, used together, will help ensure an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to the planning, protection, management, and responsible use of marine areas and their resources.

**Budget:** \$9 million per year, for five years

## 2. Marine Protection

The Prime Minister mandated two ministers, of Environment and Climate Change and of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to work together to increase protection of Canada's marine and coastal areas to 5% by 2017, and 10% by 2020. The Prime Minister also signaled the federal government's commitment to "achieve and substantially surpass" this 2020 goal in the US-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership released in March 2016. The Government of Canada has previously committed to protecting at least 10% of our ocean territory by 2020, in accordance with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

### 2.a National network of marine protected areas

Marine protected areas make a vital contribution to Canada's \$39 billion a year ocean economy. Establishing MPA networks will help fish stocks to recover, boost nature-based tourism, buffer the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification by ensuring resiliency, and ensure that fisheries sector jobs are maintained for the future.

To enable the creation of an effective MPA network, bioregional planning should be conducted to identify an ecologically representative and well-connected network of MPAs in the broader context of ecosystem-based management. Upholding the funding allocated for marine protection in Budget 2016 (\$81.3 million over five years) is a critical base for achieving Canada's commitments; however, additional funding is needed to ensure that all federal agencies (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Parks Canada, and Environment Canada) can fully contribute to building an effective national MPA network.

**Budget:** \$60 million per year, for five years

*Note: (\$30 million per year to Parks Canada for the creation and management of National Marine Conservation Areas; \$30 million to Environment Canada for the creation and management of marine National Wildlife Areas)*

### 2.b Impact Benefit Agreements

While there is both great potential and need for marine conservation efforts in Canada's Arctic ocean, respecting Indigenous rights and upholding the government's commitment to reconciliation must be paramount in the establishment of MPAs in this region. Canada needs an equitable, consistent, and transparent financing formula for impact benefit agreements (IBAs) across all four Inuit land claim regions. These should be negotiated well in advance with Inuit representative organizations. In addition to the budgetary recommendations included here for negotiating these agreements, significant long-term financing must be secured for the settlements associated with each agreement. Long-term, stable funding is necessary to ensure progressive investment in community infrastructure, to enable communities to manage and fully benefit from marine conservation.

**Budget:** \$20 million (total) over five years, for IBA negotiations

### 3. Science

The funding restored to science in Budget 2016 (\$197.1 million over five years) was a positive and necessary step to rebuilding the scientific research capacity required for Canada to responsibly and proactively manage its ocean resources. However, Fisheries and Oceans Canada faced more than \$150 million in cuts in annual budgets in the decade between 2006 and 2015.<sup>63</sup> Annual spending on management of fisheries and ecosystems was cut by \$87 million and annual spending used to manage ecosystems and oceans science was cut by \$39.5 million. These cuts also resulted in the loss of 1900 staff members across the country. In order to realize the government's ocean mandate, it is critical that the funding committed in Budget 2016 be upheld.

Restored science funding should be directed toward the following urgent needs: applying an ecosystem approach to integrated ocean management; developing advice for addressing impacts of climate change on fish stocks and developing rebuilding trajectories over the long term; filling data gaps for MPA network planning and analysis; undertaking science to support spatial plans and decision-making under co-management frameworks; and developing a transparent system for public access to fisheries and aquaculture data.

**Budget:** Budget 2016 funding upheld

### 4. Transforming Fisheries Management

Canada boasts one of the most diverse and valuable fisheries in the world, sourced from three oceans, the Great Lakes, and many other inland lakes. These fisheries contribute an estimated \$7.9 billion annually to the Canadian economy, (accounting for commercial and freshwater fisheries, aquaculture and seafood preparation, and packing revenues)<sup>64</sup> and provide over 76,000 direct jobs. Managing Canada's fisheries sustainably and equitably is vital to the livelihoods of rural communities, and can provide enhanced food security for all Canadians.

#### 4.a Implementing existing sustainable fisheries policies

Improved fisheries management requires continued investments, including for improved implementation of existing fisheries conservation policies and laws, specifically the Sustainable Fisheries Framework, which includes the Policy for Managing the Impact of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas, Policy for Managing Bycatch, and the Guidance for the Development of Rebuilding Plans under the Precautionary Approach Framework. It will also require restoring lost protections and introducing modern safeguards into the Fisheries Act.

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/02/24/news/exclusive-science-monitoring-atrophied-after-harper-cuts-briefings-tell-tootoo>

<sup>64</sup> Canada's Fisheries Fast Facts 2015 <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/stats/facts-Info-15-eng.htm>

Implementation of these policies and laws is currently hindered by the lack of adequate catch monitoring. In addition, many species that are implicated in commercial fisheries (including Atlantic cod, American plaice, redfish, and porbeagle shark) are also currently within the listing process under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). These species require additional protections through SARA listing and by greater monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations.

Additional funding is required for DFO to implement Canada's existing sustainable fisheries policies and specific measures for at-risk marine fish through the Integrated Fisheries Management Process (IFMP).

**Budget:** \$2 million per year, for five years

#### 4.b Rebuilding fisheries

Fisheries must be rebuilt by establishing and implementing science-led conservation plans and rebuilding strategies, with targets and timelines for all depleted fish populations. This must be done through an ecosystem-level approach, and in consideration of regime changes caused by climate change.

Additional funding is required for DFO to establish meaningful harvest control rules, precautionary reference points, and updated catch monitoring approaches. Funding is also required for Canada to fulfill its obligation to provide accurate and accessible information about the state and population trends of the country's fisheries stocks.

**Budget:** \$9 million per year, for five years

#### 4.c Fisheries co-management

Investing in the capacity of fisheries associations to develop co-management plans and supporting capacity to manage processes such as supplying lobster tags, on-line licensing, at-sea monitoring, electronic logbooks, video monitoring, etc. will in the long run result in stronger and more independent fishing communities. This will enable communities to better manage their resources and ensure smarter co-management of our oceans.

**Budget:** \$1.5 million per year, for five years  
*Note: Funding should be application-based and require matching funds from the community, private sector, and other levels of government.*

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