

Fisheries Science Initiatives

Cod was the most important species in the Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) commercial fishing industry for over 400 years. However, several key groundfish stocks off NL, including cod, declined to low levels during the 1980's and early 1990's. In 1992, the Northern cod fishery was placed under a directed fishing moratorium. This was followed by closures of cod fisheries on the south coast of NL, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and on the Grand Banks.

To address this issue, the Canada-NL Action Team for Cod Recovery was formed in 2003 by the Governments of Canada and NL. In 2005, the Action Team published a cod recovery strategy entitled *A Strategy for the Recovery and Management of the Cod Stocks in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Federal-Provincial Approach*. The report discussed potential factors affecting rebuilding stocks, specific goals and objectives toward rebuilding, and management strategies and research priorities.

In 2006, the Government of NL announced an annual budget of \$300,000 for cod recovery initiatives to be administered by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DFA). In 2008, the annual budget was increased to \$450,000. Through this initiative, a number of projects have been funded and several collaborations have been initiated, with almost \$2 million in funding provided to date. Funding has primarily been provided for research focusing on NL cod stocks. However, recognizing the importance of other key fish stocks to the province's fishing industry, the initiative expanded in 2010 to include research on other commercially harvested species and is now referred to as the Fisheries Research Grant Program. These projects have enhanced our understanding of fish stocks off NL, thus contributing to the sustainable management of our fisheries resources.

Overview of Major Projects Funded in 2010 and 2011

Smith Sound Acoustic Surveys

Acoustic surveys to monitor Northern cod in Smith Sound, Trinity Bay, are carried out by Dr. George Rose and his research team at the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland. This research provides information on the distribution, growth, health, and movement of this inshore cod population.

Northern cod and Gulf of St. Lawrence cod

Research projects on Northern cod and Gulf of St. Lawrence cod are being carried out by DFO in partnership with the Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW). Under the Northern Cod Research Program, a nearshore survey measures the abundance and distribution of Northern cod over its historical range, and a migration and mortality study provides insight on migration patterns and mortality rates. Under the Northern Gulf Cod Science Program, research provides information on the reproductive potential, condition, and distribution of Northern Gulf cod.

Cod Stock Identification

Several projects involving research pertaining to cod stock identification, tagging and acoustic analysis are being carried out by the Marine Institute's Centre for Fisheries Ecosystems Research (CFER). Two of the projects will provide information on the spawning origin and migration history of cod off NL. The third, an acoustic analysis project, will identify and classify cod and other species such as capelin.

Fisheries Stewardship Program

The Fisheries Steward Program, administered by the FFAW, has promoted integrated fisheries management and provided harvesters with an opportunity to participate in activities that help to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry.

Fisheries Improvement Project for 3Ps cod

A Fisheries Improvement Project for 3Ps (Southern NL) cod, which is being administered by the World Wildlife Fund in partnership with Icwater Seafoods and DFA, aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of 3Ps cod, including compliance with the standards of the Marine Stewardship Council.