

# The Eastern Shore Islands

## Update on the ecological risk assessment

Initial drafts of a number of ecological risk assessments for the Eastern Shore Islands Area of Interest, including for aquaculture and marine transportation have been completed. This set of assessments will help determine which activities pose risk to the environment and the local economy.

Together with information from the consultations which will commence in the near term, these assessments will provide a foundation for community engagement moving forward.

### Our preliminary results

#### Lobster Fishing

- Lobster harvesting in the Eastern Shore is fully compatible with a Marine Protected Area, should one be established.

- **No new restrictions would be considered for the lobster fishery.**

#### Fisheries

- Fisheries that are undergoing the ecological risk assessment are lobster pot, hagfish pot, herring gillnet, herring and mackerel bait gillnet, and groundfish longline.

- While most preliminary risk levels are low to moderate, industry input and assistance is needed with some fisheries to better understand the potential impacts on the environment and options to address these.

- Bottom-trawling is not allowed in new Marine Protected Areas.

#### Marine Transportation

- Although the Eastern Shore experiences a relatively low level of marine traffic compared to other areas in Nova Scotia, several preliminary risk scores have come out as moderately high and potentially requiring further mitigation.

- We will need to consult with stakeholders and to discuss with Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard in reviewing and validating the information.

#### Aquaculture

- The preliminary risk levels for finfish aquaculture range from low to high.

- The highest scores are associated with potential interactions with the Southern Upland population of Atlantic Salmon, which is listed as Endangered under the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

- Most preliminary risk levels for shellfish aquaculture are low to moderate.

- The next step is review from additional subject matter experts and provincial regulators to validate information and identify options to address risk as well as to discuss with and receive feedback from local stakeholders.

#### Moving Forward

In completing the risk assessments we will be working with the fishing industry, local stakeholders and subject matter experts, including the provincial government, in a review process which should be complete in late fall 2019.

With respect to more general consultative activities going forward: DFO will be engaging a community facilitator to engage all local stakeholders in a discussion on conservation and priorities going forward. This will very much focus on how we can strengthen local communities and local conservation efforts.

For more detailed information visit our site at

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/aoi-si/easternshore-ilescoteest-eng.html>

