

Happy New Year
to All!



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The Coastal Current

A Quarterly Newsletter Keeping You Current on
Marine Protected Areas Issues in Your Community

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MUN Lobster Research in Eastport



A settlement tray going
into the water. *MUN photo*

Memorial University scientists are "crunching the numbers" collected from the 2007 lobster research season. At the end of October, researchers took in 49 settlement trays from all around Round Island, White Island and Little Harbour. The trays were put out in late July in hopes of collecting "baby" lobsters as they made their transition from newly-hatched larvae floating in the water column to tiny lobsters settling on the bottom. Researchers also used an airlift suction

sampler to "vacuum" 74 samples (.5 m² quadrats) from the ocean floor. The aim was to get an estimate of the numbers of first-year lobsters and to see if there are any "hotspots" where lots of babies can be found. No newly-settled lobsters were found at the sites sampled. This was a bit disappointing, but not surprising, because the sample sites were a very small percentage of all the possible settlement areas in Newman Sound. Hopefully, research on settlement will
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We Have A New MPA Biologist!

At last—the Marine Protected Areas Biologist position has been filled! Our "new" biologist is already well-known to many of us—Jennifer Janes (originally a Whalen) from Western Bay, NL. Jennifer has been associated with the Eastport MPAs since 2001 when she mapped changes in fishing grounds for a project related to her graduate work. After achieving her master's degree, Jennifer worked as a technician in lobster boats all around the province. This was the beginning of her fascination with lobsters—and her appreciation for the knowledge, skills and hospitality of the Eastport Peninsula fishing community. Since then, Jennifer has processed and analyzed all the data from the Eastport lobster tagging and sampling programs. For the past two years, she's been working in the Oceans Division at DFO, acting in the MPA Biologist's position and assisting other acting MPA Biologists, so she's all trained-in and up to date on Eastport and Gilbert Bay MPA issues. She tells us she is really looking forward to meeting new friends and colleagues in the Gilbert Bay area and continuing to help both MPAs fulfill their potential.



Gilbert Bay Update—Fieldwork and Meetings



2007 was a very productive year for research in Gilbert Bay. In October, MUN researcher Joe Wroblewski carried out research on Iceland Scallop in Gilbert Bay with the assistance of Marilyn Parr-Penney and Redgeway Russell, captain of the *Little Shell*. Research on scallop recruitment, growth rate, and

reduction by sea stars has taken place over the last couple of years. Results from 2006 and 2007 show that scallops are smaller in the outer region of Gilbert Bay where fishing effort has been concentrated for the past two decades. Logbooks returned by scallop fishers are also part of the data collection effort. MUN researchers Trevor Bell and Evan Edinger, with

research assistants Allison Copeland and Philippe LeBlanc, carried out Phase III of their habitat mapping project in Gilbert Bay (Zone 1B) during October. Detailed substrate and biotic composition data were collected to classify seafloor substrate and habitat types in two areas of Gilbert Bay—The Shinneys and River Out.

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www.gilbertbay.com



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Lobster Research in Eastport, *continued from page 1*

continue next year. Although no post-larval lobsters were found last summer and fall, the research does help us understand which sites in Eastport may act as “sources” or “sinks” for baby lobsters. A “source” site produces great numbers of larvae which may then be carried away by currents. A “sink” area is one where the lobsters settle to the bottom and grow. MUN scientist Kate Jones will visit the Eastport Peninsula sometime this winter to present the results from the 2007 fieldwork.



Neuston tow specimens include larval lobster, so we know they are out there! *MUN photo*



...but we don't know yet where they settle. Kate Jones examines a settlement tray. *VH photo*

Gilbert Bay Update, *continued from page 1*

Status of Cod Population

Dr. John Green, Andy Green, and Corey Morris continued to monitor cod in Gilbert Bay in May, June and August of 2007. Plankton tows, tagging, and sonic tracking were conducted to monitor length frequencies, movement and distribution, and age classes of Gilbert Bay cod. Findings show that individual fish continue to grow and there are larger fish in the population than there were several years ago.

Sampling in August pointed to low recruitment in some year classes and the movement of most fish larger than 40 cm from The Shinneys during the summer. Corey Morris says that although recruitment is low, the population is doing well. He added that protection of the large cod (the spawner biomass) should continue, as this can improve recruitment.

Steering Committee Meets

An MPA Steering Committee meeting was held in Port Hope Simpson in November, 2007. Discussions centered around enforcement in the MPA, the research updates, public awareness, broadening the steering committee mandate and adding some new members. Three new members are being welcomed to the committee—Corey Morris, Wayne Russell and Brad Pye. We are very happy to have their expertise and perspective.



Acting MPA Biologist Elizabeth Bennett meets with the Gilbert Bay MPA Steering Committee in Port Hope Simpson. *DFO Photo*

Public Meeting

A public information session was also held at the Alexis Hotel the same evening. Acting MPA Biologist Elizabeth Bennett presented an update on recent research and the status of the cod population in the Gilbert Bay Marine Protected Area. Residents were informed of the activities that have taken place and discussed future plans.

NL Hydro Funds Signage

The MPA Steering Committee is very pleased to announce that **Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro** is donating \$5000 for signage to mark the boundaries of the Gilbert Bay MPA. A big “Thank You!” goes out to **NL Hydro** for this generous sponsorship! The signs will be produced over the winter months and placed throughout Gilbert Bay MPA in the spring of 2008.

Enforcement for the MPAs

Over the past few years, both Gilbert Bay and Eastport MPAs have wished for an increased enforcement presence, especially at critical times of year (fall / winter in Gilbert Bay and sampling season in Eastport). Through a Service Level Agreement between Oceans Division and Conservation and Protection Division, we will be seeing an increase in C&P patrols in both MPAs. The agreement will be renewed annually, based on operational requirements. This is welcome news—thanks to all the DFO staff who made it happen!