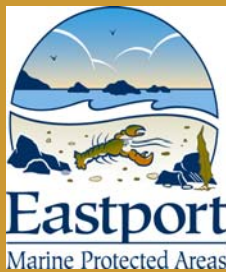




More snow please!



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The Coastal Current

A Newsletter to Keep You Current on Marine
Protected Areas Issues in Your Community

Volume 8, Issue 1

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Science RAP an Important “Check-Up” for Eastport MPAs

On January 27 in St. John’s the Science Branch of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (NL Region) will hold a Regional Advisory Process (RAP) meeting to discuss and peer review the science work that has been done for the Eastport MPAs for the past several years.

Participants will include representatives from DFO Science Branch, DFO Oceans Branch, DFO Fisheries and Aquaculture Management, the Provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Memorial University, Eastport MPA Advisory Committee and local harvesters. The meeting will be chaired by Nadine Templeman, who is Science Branch’s Advisor/Coordinator.

The overall objectives of the meeting are to: (1) Determine if the indicators, protocols and or strategies identified by science are appropriate to monitor the Eastport lobster

population against the MPAs’ conservation objectives, and (2) If current indicators are found appropriate, assess the resulting data to characterize the status and trends for the local lobster population as it relates to the Eastport MPAs conservation objectives.

Specifically, four proposed indicators related to the Eastport lobster population will be assessed, and advice to accept and/or improve the various indicators will be developed.

The four indicators proposed for use in monitoring the Eastport lobster population are:

1. Commercial Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE)
2. Population and size distribution (commercial)
3. Population structure and size inside and adjacent to the MPAs
4. Fecundity

Advice to improve the four indicators for their relevance to the conservation objectives will consider major sources of uncertainty and potential for improvement, as well as new sources of information.

DFO Science has provided support and advice on the Eastport MPAs since the area first came under consideration to become a protected area, but this will be the first time that our science methods and results are thoroughly scrutinized by a panel of scientists.

The RAP report will be an important document for the Eastport MPAs. Hopefully, the process will validate our results and give us the go-ahead to base our future planning upon them. On the other hand, if there are problems, or room for improvement, the report will give us the direction we need to make necessary changes.

A New Lobster Biologist at DFO



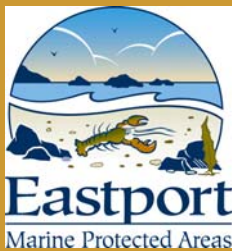
William Coffey

DFO Science Branch has a new lobster biologist to fill a gap left last year when Roanne Collins took a position with Habitat Management. William Coffey is a fisherman’s son from Angel’s Cove, Placentia Bay. His childhood enjoyment of his family’s fishing and farming activities led to a love of nature and an interest in science. He did his undergrad and graduate work at Memorial University, concentrating mainly on marine invertebrates. His career has included working with snow crab at DFO and as a dive technician for Memorial University, developing his main areas of interest and expertise—lobster, snow crab and sea urchins. Coincidentally, William worked on closed lobster areas around the province with Jennifer Janes back in 2004. We are glad to have William onboard and look forward to working with him to make the world a better place for lobsters and lobster harvesters!

We're on the Web!



www.gilbertbay.com



www.eastportmpa.com

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Gilbert Bay Consultations Inform Management Plan Review

An updated management plan for the Gilbert Bay Marine Protected Area is now in the final stages and will soon replace the plan implemented in 2007. Work on the new plan started early last year with a review of science results to assess the status of the genetically distinct Golden Cod stocks in Gilbert Bay.

The MPA monitoring program, on-going since 1998, shows a steep decline in Gilbert Bay cod, particularly the large (commercial size) cod. Tag tracking indicates that large cod move outside the MPA into Alexis and Gilbert Bays during the summer to feed, and return to the MPA to spawn and over-winter. The decrease in numbers and biomass inside the MPA corresponds to increasing fishing effort outside the MPA.

The committee arranged four public meetings to gather as much local wisdom as possible on this issue. The hope is that

by discussing the science in detail and seeking input from all stakeholders, any action (or lack of action) following from the new management plan will be undertaken with the full knowledge and support of the stakeholders who live and work in the Gilbert Bay area.

Consultations were held in Port Hope Simpson, Williams Harbour, Charlottetown and Mary's Harbour from Oct 18-21. Attendees included inshore and offshore commercial fish harvesters, Sentinel Program harvesters, representatives from youth, development and aboriginal organizations, scientists from MUN and DFO, the MPA Biologist and the Community Coordinator for the Gilbert Bay MPA.

Participants reported patchy aggregations of cod, and delayed arrival inshore, except in Alexis Bay near the MPA where significant aggregations were reported in mid-summer. Participants expressed general

satisfaction with the current MPA boundary and prohibitions. It was suggested that an earlier and shortened Aboriginal gillnet fishery for trout within Zones 1 & 2 could reduce by-catch of GB cod while allowing improved enforcement, without negative impact to the trout fishery.

Gilbert Bay cod migration patterns and fishing mortality were identified as key data gaps, with enhancement to the tracking, genetics (fin clip collection), and tag reward programs recommended.

The success of the MPA is thought to be closely tied to the level of local support and community involvement, including research, monitoring, educational programs and community coordination. There was general agreement that other funding sources and more partnerships are required to support these types of programs.

From the MPA Photo Album.....



Eastport MPAs were invited to join in the Annual Eastport Peninsula Agricultural Exhibition parade in October '09. Many thanks to Kay King who loaned the boat, Wade Turner for the traps, and Audrey Moss for the trailer. The banner reads "Eastport Marine Protected Areas, Conserving Habitat to Support a Sustainable Fishery".

Photo: Kay King



And your smile for the day... If this little cutie looks familiar, it's because she strongly resembles her mom, MPA Biologist Jennifer Janes. Elizabeth Anne Janes was born September 14, 2009, coming into the world at 7 lb. 14 oz, and measuring 54 cm. Jennifer reports that Elizabeth Anne was strong and lively right from the get-go, and that they are both thoroughly enjoying Jennifer's maternity leave. Congratulations Lee and Jennifer, and welcome to the MPA community, Elizabeth Anne! Are you coming out in boat next summer?

Photo: Lee Janes