

FISHERY AUDIT

2019

UNLOCKING CANADA'S
POTENTIAL FOR
ABUNDANT OCEANS



2019

Oceana Canada's third annual *Fishery Audit* assesses the current state of Canada's fisheries and fisheries management, evaluates progress over the past year and offers recommendations for the year ahead to meet federal policy commitments and restore abundance to Canada's oceans.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3	RECOMMENDATIONS	18
The 2019 Scorecard	4	To-Do Checklist	19
HOW WELL ARE CANADA'S FISHERIES MANAGED?	6	TAKE ACTION	19
Overall Assessment	6		
Science Indicators	8		
Catch Monitoring Indicators	11		
Management Indicators	12		
A MODERNIZED FISHERIES ACT COULD LEAD TO MAJOR CHANGE	14		
FROM COAST TO COAST	16		
PROGRESS REPORT ON 2018 FISHERY AUDIT PRIORITIES	18		

Published in November 2019 by Oceana Canada
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DOI: 10.31230/osf.io/q38ez

UNLOCKING CANADA'S POTENTIAL FOR ABUNDANT OCEANS

Healthy fish populations are critical to healthy ecosystems: they feed communities, support economies and are essential to our survival. But our oceans are facing growing threats and greater uncertainty. Overfishing, climate change, habitat destruction and pollution are degrading the underwater world and putting the marine life we all depend upon at risk.

Much is at stake, as the status quo is demonstrably not working. The number of stocks in the healthy zone has decreased since Oceana Canada released its 2018 *Fishery Audit*, and the number in the critical zone has increased — including crab and shrimp stocks. This is particularly worrying if the depletion of crustaceans becomes a trend, as the value of Canada's seafood industry depends heavily on them.

Progress on implementing rebuilding plans remains slow and many critically depleted stocks, including northern cod, are still without a plan. As well, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has not yet indicated how and by when it will collect adequate catch monitoring information, needed to measure and manage bycatch (the incidental catch of non-target fish) in all Canadian commercial fisheries. Meanwhile, only two of the 11 recommendations from the 2018 *Fishery Audit* have been implemented.

DFO has made some progress since the last *Fishery Audit* was released. In 2019, DFO published more information to help assess fish stock health, and some elements of fishery monitoring became more transparent. DFO also implemented some of the recommendations from the 2016 Auditor General report on sustainable fisheries, including developing timelines and priorities for rebuilding plans for depleted fish populations.

Most importantly, a modernized *Fisheries Act* became law in June 2019. For the first time in the *Act's* history, rebuilding plans are now required for depleted fish populations. The government has committed more than \$100 million¹ over five years to assess and rebuild fish stocks. This brings Canada into the group of nations with modern fisheries laws and could signal a historic turning point in the health of Canadian fisheries.

The impact of the new *Act* will depend on the strength and pace of regulations, currently under development. The regulations will outline what rebuilding plans must include, and Oceana Canada is advocating that, at a minimum, they should specify a timeline and target, aimed at rebuilding stocks to healthy levels.

In the year ahead, the federal government must develop strong and effective regulations to support the rebuilding provisions in the *Fisheries Act* and accelerate the implementation and enforcement of existing policies. Fortunately, there is a strong base of support for new regulations to rebuild stocks, new funding commitments and much-needed increases in DFO's science capacity to get the job done.

We have the tools needed to modernize Canada's approach to fisheries management and rebuild fish populations, and Canadians want to see this happen. In a recent Abacus Data market research survey, 98 per cent of Canadians said it was important that the federal government work to rebuild abundant fish populations.

If the government fails to take these actions, we can expect the number of healthy stocks to continue to decline and depleted populations will fail to recover, impoverishing the oceans and the coastal communities who depend on them.

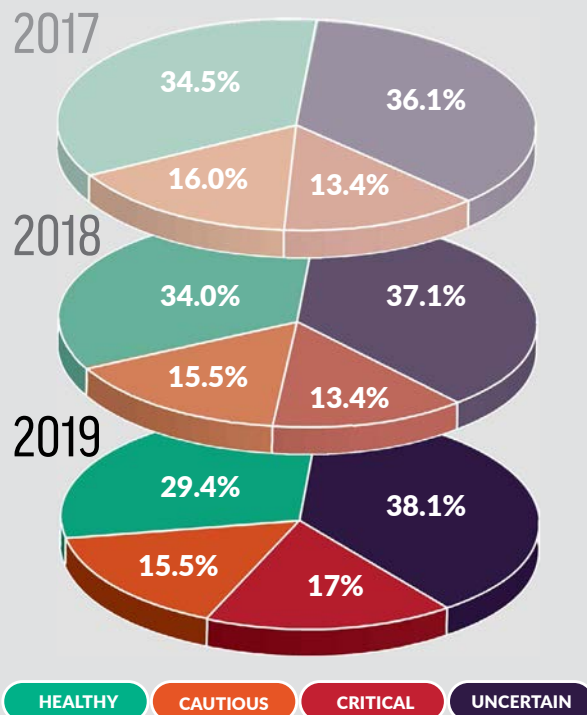
¹ <https://oceana.ca/en/press-center/press-releases/oceana-canada-applauds-government-investment-rebuilding-canadas-fish>

THE 2019 SCORECARD²

Overall Stock Health Status

Downward Trends

To ensure an abundant ocean and thriving fishing industry, stock health trends must improve. Instead, since Oceana Canada's first *Fishery Audit* was released in 2017, the number of stocks in the critical zone has increased and the number in the healthy zone has decreased. Meanwhile, the status of more stocks is uncertain due to insufficient data.



Sustainably harvesting seafood without degrading the health of the ocean requires a strong investment in science, monitoring and management. Several indicators for each of these elements, outlined in the following sections, provide insights into the health of Canada's fisheries and how they are being managed.

Science

Some Gains, but Gaps Remain

Good management decisions rely on good data. Although DFO has made important investments in fisheries science, a significant proportion of stocks continue to lack key data.

STOCKS WITH SUFFICIENT DATA TO ASSESS THEIR HEALTH STATUS



STOCKS WITH RECENT BIOMASS ESTIMATES



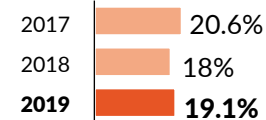
STOCKS WITH LIMIT REFERENCE POINTS (LRPs) ESTABLISHED



STOCKS WITH UPPER STOCK REFERENCE POINTS (USRs) ESTABLISHED



STOCKS WITH FISHING MORTALITY ESTIMATES



STOCKS WITH NATURAL MORTALITY ESTIMATES*



SCIENCE PUBLICATIONS RELEASED ON TIME*



*New indicator in 2018.

² Minor adjustments have been made to a few of the indicator percentages published in the 2017 *Fishery Audit* due to further analysis and the incorporation of additional sources of information.

Monitoring

Still Waiting for a National Policy

Monitoring catches using logbooks, dockside monitoring or at-sea monitoring allows fisheries scientists to estimate how much of each species is caught and how much is discarded. This information is essential to determine the number of fish that can be sustainably harvested.

2019 brought greater clarity in the use and levels of catch monitoring in Canada. However, DFO must complete and implement its National Fishery Monitoring Policy and ensure there are specific and measurable catch monitoring objectives in all Integrated Fisheries Management Plans and that there is a standardized approach to the selection of monitoring tools and coverage levels targeted.

SOME LEVEL OF AT-SEA OR ELECTRONIC MONITORING



SOME LEVEL OF MANDATORY LOGBOOKS



SOME LEVEL OF DOCKSIDE MONITORING



Management

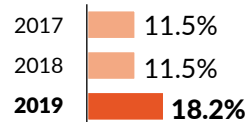
Good Progress on Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMPs)

IFMPs provide the framework for conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources. Over the past year, the overall percentage of stocks included in IFMPs increased. The percentage of critically depleted stocks with rebuilding plans also went up, although the number remains small.

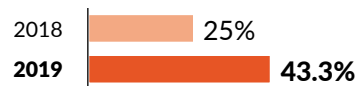
STOCKS INCLUDED IN IFMPs



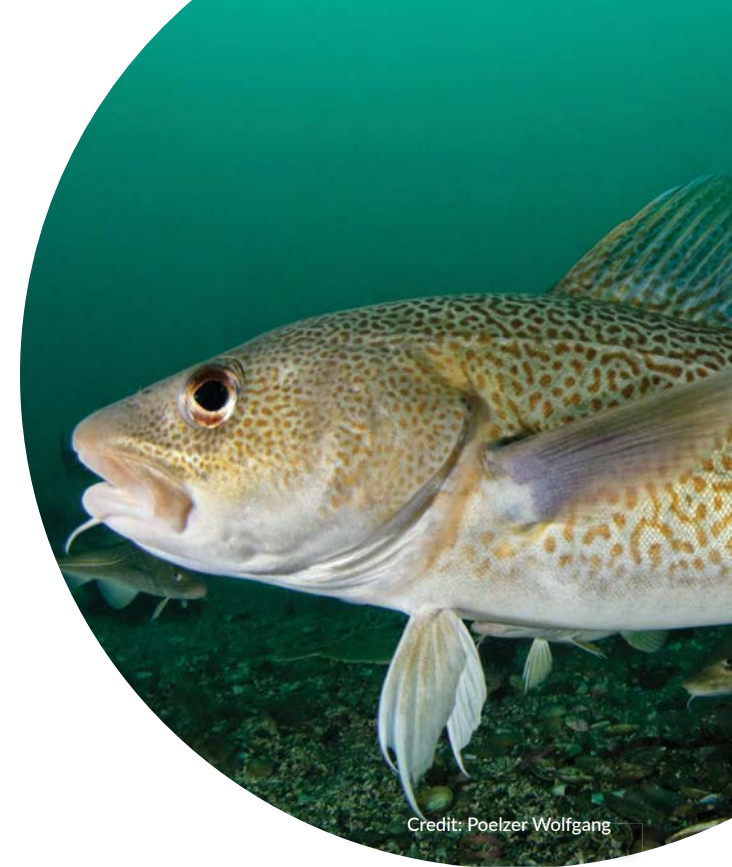
CRITICAL STOCKS WITH REBUILDING PLANS



DFO WORK PLAN DELIVERABLES COMPLETED*



*New indicator in 2018.



Credit: Poelzer Wolfgang

This report focuses exclusively on Canada's marine fisheries. This includes finfish, shellfish and other invertebrates but not freshwater fish or fish, like salmon, that spend part of their life in fresh water. The data represented in this report is from July 2, 2018 to July 1, 2019.

HOW WELL ARE CANADA'S FISHERIES MANAGED?

Improving stock health and increasing the overall abundance of the ocean requires three basic ingredients. **Sound science** makes it possible to assess stock health and project how populations will grow or shrink under different conditions. **Effective monitoring** reveals how many fish are being harvested or discarded each year. **Good management** uses science and monitoring data to make informed decisions about who can fish, where and when, how much they can catch and what methods and gear they use — ensuring there are enough fish to support a healthy marine ecosystem today and plentiful harvests for years to come.

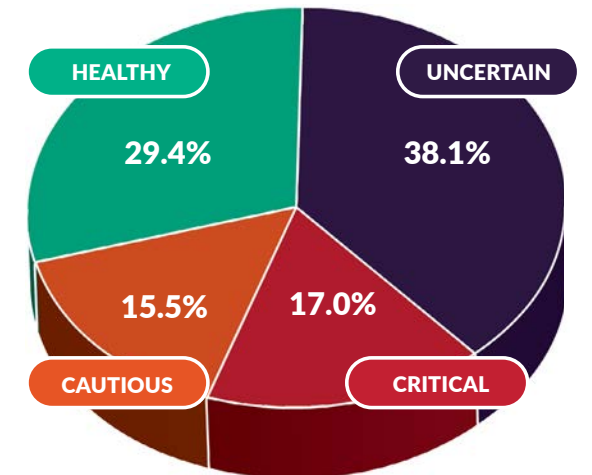
This report assesses Canada's performance using indicators of good fisheries management developed from globally accepted best practices and from DFO's policy framework. To create it, Oceana Canada analyzed data from 194 stocks³ published on DFO websites, referred to in this report as Oceana Canada's index stocks. For full details of the methodology and analysis, visit oceana.ca/FisheryAudit2019.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: 33 STOCKS IN CRITICAL CONDITION, 74 UNCERTAIN

In 2019, less than a third (29.4 per cent) of Canada's marine stocks can confidently be considered healthy — fewer than in 2017 and 2018. Meanwhile, the number of critically depleted stocks has increased to 17 per cent. Most of these are Atlantic groundfish, although there was also an increase in critically depleted crustaceans, especially on the Pacific coast, and two species of forage fish, which are important contributors to the overall health of the ecosystem.

Oceana Canada found that DFO did not have sufficient data to assess the status of 38.1 per cent of stocks — indicating an increase in the number of stocks with an uncertain status from previous years. This means fisheries are being managed with incomplete information for more than a third of Canada's fish stocks. It is impossible to assess or verify the appropriateness of fishery management decisions in the absence of key data or reference points.

2019 HEALTH STATUS



57 Healthy stocks 33 Critical stocks
30 Cautious stocks 74 Uncertain stocks

³ The *Fishery Audit* index stock list (194 stocks) was created for the 2017 *Fishery Audit* and is based on marine fish and invertebrate stocks included in Oceana Canada's report, *Canada's Marine Fisheries: Status, Recovery Potential and Pathways to Success*, combined with those included in the first public release of the Sustainability Survey for Fisheries and any stocks with newly available information from government reports that year. To make annual comparisons, we use the index stock list but continue to add stocks that appear in newly published government reports each year to our larger dataset. Further details are available at oceana.ca/FisheryAudit2019.

Healthy, Cautious and Critical

DFO has three categories of fish stock status to indicate the health of the population: healthy, cautious or critical. They are defined relative to the maximum sustainable yield: the largest amount of fish that can be theoretically harvested without reducing the size of the stock over the long term.

HEALTHY

A stock is considered healthy if its biomass is greater than 80 per cent of the amount that can support the maximum sustainable yield. When a stock is in this zone, fisheries management decisions should aim to keep it healthy.

CAUTIOUS

A stock falls in the cautious zone if its biomass is between 40 and 80 per cent of the amount that supports the maximum sustainable yield. If a stock falls into this zone, harvesting rates should be reduced in order to avoid seriously depleting the stock and to promote rebuilding to the healthy zone.

CRITICAL

A stock falls in the critical zone if its biomass is less than 40 per cent of the amount that supports the maximum sustainable yield. If a stock moves into the critical zone, serious harm is occurring and conservation actions become crucial.

Change in Health Status from 2018

10 stocks at greater risk in 2019



- Intertidal clams – depuration
- Pink shrimp trawl in the Prince Rupert District Shrimp Management Area
- Sidestripe shrimp trawl in the Prince Rupert District Shrimp Management Area
- Northern shrimp in Shrimp Fishing Area 4
- Northern shrimp in Shrimp Fishing Area 5



- Pink shrimp trawl in the Fraser River Shrimp Management Area
- Sidestripe shrimp trawl in Shrimp Management Area 14



- Pacific herring in the Prince Rupert District
- Sidestripe shrimp trawl in Shrimp Management Areas 18-19
- Snow crab on the Scotian Shelf (NAFO 4X)

Two stocks at reduced risk in 2019



- Icelandic and sea scallops around the Magdalen Islands (areas 20A, 20B, 20C, 20E and 20F)
- Pacific halibut⁴

⁴ The change in status for Pacific halibut was a result of clearer documentation of the LRP and USR equivalents for this Canada-U.S. jointly managed stock, rather than increased biomass levels (although the stock has grown from 40 per cent to 43 per cent of unfishable levels).

SCIENCE INDICATORS: BIG GAPS IN DATA



To track Canada's progress in improving fish stock health, Oceana Canada uses a set of key science indicators that are consistent with DFO policy guidelines.



74 stocks don't have sufficient data to assign them a health status.

INDICATOR:

Stocks with sufficient data to assign health status

Purpose: Allow scientists to make robust estimates of how many fish are in the water and assign stock health status.



INDICATOR:

Stocks with recent biomass estimates

Purpose: Help managers make decisions based on recent estimates⁵ of how many fish are in the water.

Several stocks haven't been assessed since 2013 and are therefore considered outdated in this year's analysis.



An **upper stock reference point** identifies the boundary above which a fishery can be considered healthy, while a **limit reference point** identifies the boundary below which it can be considered to be in a critical state. Corrective action should be taken before a stock reaches the limit reference point.

INDICATOR:

Stocks with reference points established

Purpose: Allow managers to assess whether a stock is in healthy, cautious or critical condition, set the appropriate harvest levels and gauge the success of management measures.

Limit reference point



Upper stock reference point



GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT:

In 2019, DFO made measurable progress toward its commitment to develop limit reference points for all major commercial fish stocks (up 11.3 per cent from 2017). It also made marginal progress in developing upper stock reference points (up 4.1 per cent from 2017). Together, these reference points help DFO to assess stock health and set targets for rebuilding depleted stocks to healthy levels. Under DFO's precautionary approach framework, fisheries managers must use the best available information to make decisions, but they cannot use a lack of information as an excuse for not taking action.

⁵ Within the last five years.



Credit: Ian Mcallister



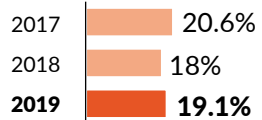
DATA GAP

More than a third of stocks still lack limit reference points and more than half lack upper stock reference points.

INDICATOR:

Stocks with fishing mortality estimates

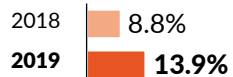
Purpose: Help determine the rate of fish removal and sustainable fishing limits.



INDICATOR:

Stocks with natural mortality estimates*

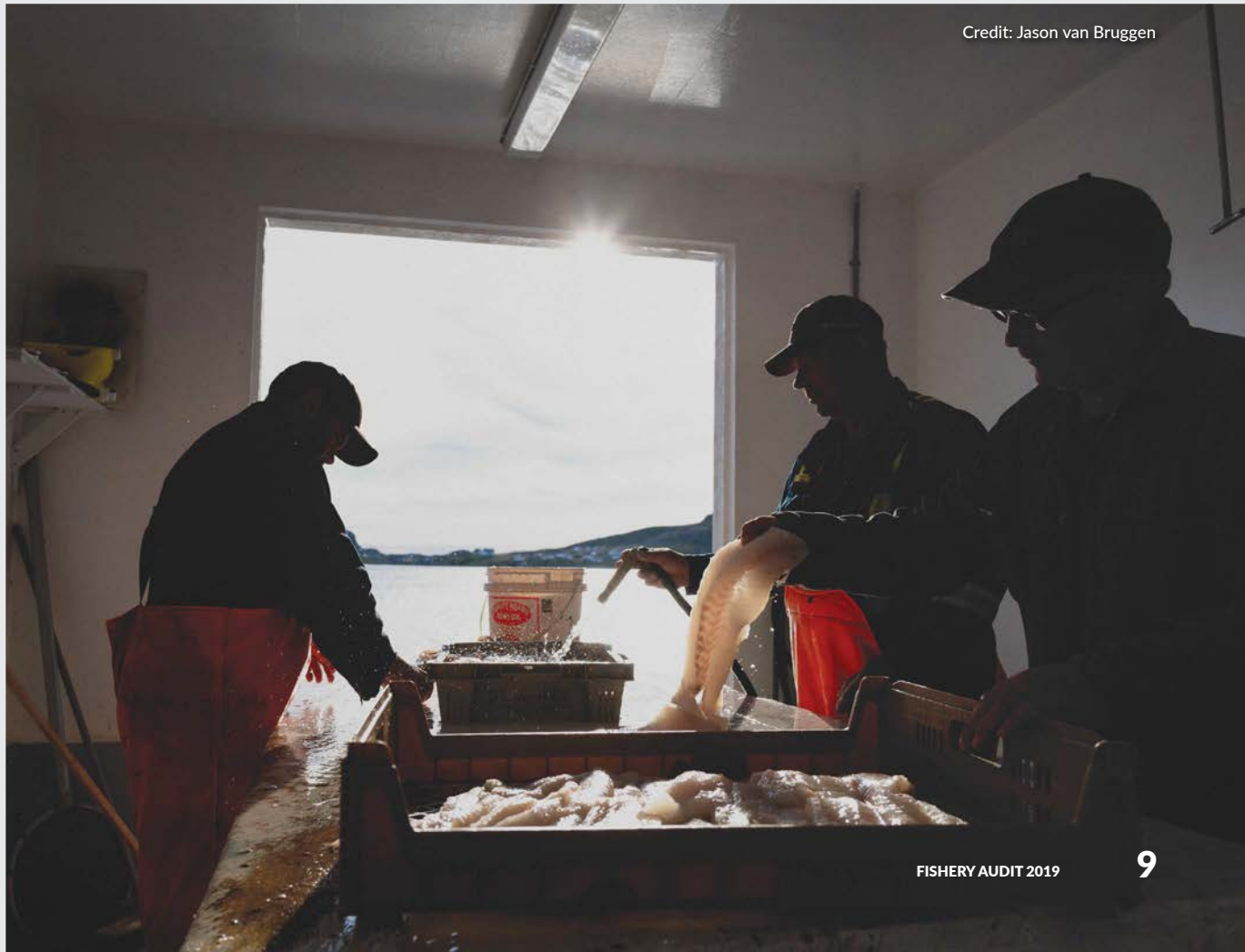
Purpose: Help make better fisheries management decisions by determining the rate at which fish naturally die.



*New indicator in 2018.

Fish are removed from a population in two ways: through fishing (**fishing mortality**) and through natural causes (**natural mortality**), including being eaten by other fish. When fisheries managers have reasonable estimates of both, they can more confidently estimate the size of next year's population and adjust management practices accordingly.

Fishing mortality should include estimates of all the ways that fishing has removed fish from the stock, including commercial and recreational fishing, bycatch, personal consumption, fish taken for bait and fish taken for social and ceremonial purposes.



Credit: Jason van Bruggen

Missing Upper Stock Reference Points (USRs) Leave Fisheries Rudderless

USRs mark the boundary between the cautious zone and the healthy zone. If this number has not been established, the health of the stock can't be determined. This means managers must make decisions with no benchmark for maintaining or rebuilding stocks to a healthy state.

A 2016 Auditor General's report found that reference points were missing for more than half the stocks examined. Based on these findings, the Auditor General made several recommendations, which DFO has agreed to implement. This includes developing a work plan with priorities, targets and timelines for establishing reference points for key stocks.

Now, for the first time, DFO has developed a work plan that includes establishing USRs for 10 stocks. This work includes several species with stocks in the critical zone, such as northern shrimp and Pacific herring.

If this work plan is completed, the percentage of stocks with USRs would increase from 46.4 per cent to 58.2 per cent. Although that is a significant improvement, it is concerning that this fiscal-year work plan indicates only one of the new USRs will be developed by the end of March 2020.



Credit: Oceana Canada/Evermaven

Publication Delays Leave Fisheries Managers in the Dark

Good decision making depends on good data. DFO's Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) is responsible for reviewing and publishing the scientific information that underpins fisheries management in Canada.

In the past year, only 9.2 per cent of documents were published within CSAS policy timelines. A third were published late.⁶ Meanwhile, less than half of the documents that should have been published were in fact available by the end of the year.

To its credit, DFO initiated its own internal evaluation of the CSAS process between March 2018 and January 2019. It identified several opportunities for improvement, including developing new national, standardized procedures by December 2020.

Oceana Canada has made nine recommendations for improving the timeliness of scientific information — such as allocating enough funds for translation services, filling vacant CSAS staff positions and creating a public listserv that provides monthly email updates listing new publications.

For a complete list of these recommendations, visit oceana.ca/FisheryAudit2019.

⁶ Late documents from 2017 and 2018 meetings were published on average 163 days (minimum 1 day; maximum 690 days; median 113 days) after the policy timelines indicated they should be publicly available.

CATCH MONITORING INDICATORS: NATIONAL POLICY LONG OVERDUE



Most of Canada's marine fish and invertebrate stocks have some catch-monitoring tools in place, and the public availability of more IFMPs has allowed a better assessment of the tools used and the coverage levels targeted.

There are three main catch-monitoring tools used in Canada: logbooks, at-sea monitoring or dockside monitoring. Each has a different purpose, and not all fisheries require 100 per cent coverage with each tool. Tracking catch allows managers to figure out important fishery statistics, such as how many of each species are caught. It also reveals whether harvesters are following the rules.

It is difficult to know what monitoring levels are being achieved and whether these are adequate to reach catch-monitoring objectives (in cases where objectives exist). DFO must complete and implement its National Fishery Monitoring Policy to guide the selection of monitoring tools, the level of monitoring required and the establishment of monitoring objectives.

INDICATOR:

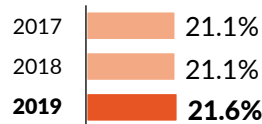
Stocks with fisheries that have catch monitoring in place

Purpose: Help prevent overfishing, control bycatch and collect scientific information for stock assessments.

At-sea or electronic monitoring



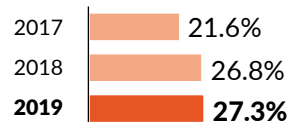
At-sea or electronic monitoring with 100% coverage



Mandatory logbooks



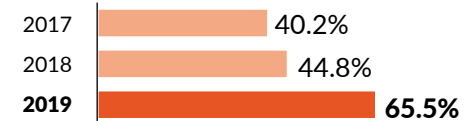
Mandatory logbooks that record the entire catch



Independent dockside monitoring



Independent dockside monitoring of 100% of landings



GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT:

Canada is still waiting for the National Fishery Monitoring Policy, originally slated for 2017, to be finalized and implemented.



In 2019, none of the index stocks had IFMPs that include specific catch-monitoring objectives. Oceana Canada strongly encourages DFO to require that specific, measurable catch-monitoring objectives be included in IFMPs.

MANAGEMENT INDICATORS: POSITIVE STEPS IN 2019



IFMP and rebuilding plans are core elements of modern fisheries management. These plans provide conservation, ecosystem, socio-economic and cultural objectives for the stock; an assessment of its current status; and the actions required to keep or return the stock to healthy levels. Nearly 90 per cent of all stocks are now included in an IFMP, a significant increase since Oceana Canada's 2017 *Fishery Audit*. Progress on developing rebuilding plans remains slow, however: currently, there are plans in place for just over 18 per cent of critically depleted stocks.

INDICATOR:

Stocks included in Integrated Fisheries Management Plans

Purpose: Provide a planning framework for the conservation and sustainable use of Canada's fisheries, clearly outlining how a fishery will be managed over a given period.



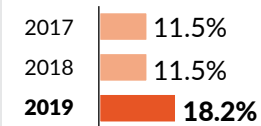
GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT:

DFO has committed to develop and release IFMPs for all major stocks.

INDICATOR:

Stocks in the critical zone with rebuilding plans in place

Purpose: Provide a planning framework to rebuild stocks out of the critical zone. Serious harm is occurring to stocks in the critical zone, and conservation actions are crucial.



REBUILDING PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Evidence from other jurisdictions, like the EU and U.S.,⁷ shows that rebuilding plans that include targets and timelines have a higher likelihood of rebuilding depleted fish stocks,⁸ creating resilient ecosystems and providing long-term economic prosperity for fishing communities.

Oceana Canada has developed 10 recommendations for improving rebuilding plans in Canada, based on international best practices and existing DFO policy. These include requiring that the healthy zone is the target for rebuilding the stock, ensuring plans are developed with the support of recent scientific stock assessments and making the progress and results of rebuilding plans publicly available. For a complete list of these recommendations, visit oceana.ca/FisheryAudit2019.

⁷ 2018 Report to Congress on the Status of U.S. Fisheries, available online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/2018-report-congress-status-us-fisheries>

⁸ Garcia, S.M., Ye, Y., Rice, J. & Charles, A., eds. (2018). Rebuilding of marine fisheries. Part 1: Global review. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No 630/1. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca0161en/CA0161EN.pdf>

Credit: iStock/IvanMikhaylov



Work Plan Deliverables

At Oceana Canada's 2016 symposium, *Rebuilding Abundance: Restoring Canada's Fisheries for Long-Term Prosperity*, DFO committed to improving its transparency. Since then, progress has been made toward making information open and accessible. DFO's Sustainability Survey for Fisheries was released, providing more detailed information about stock results, and three annual work plans were produced, with the resulting deliverables publicly available.

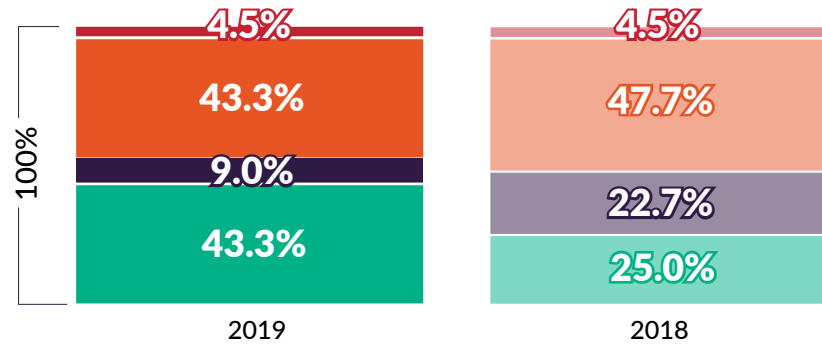
INDICATOR:

DFO work plan deliverables completed

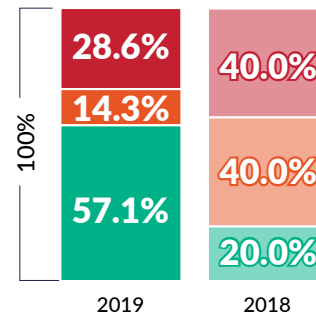
Purpose: Achieve the departmental priorities set out each year, including developing LRPs, IFMPs and rebuilding plans.

- Completed
- Delayed
- Ongoing as expected
- Suspended

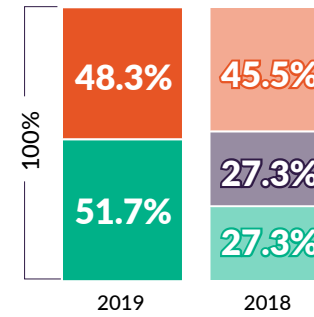
Overall deliverables



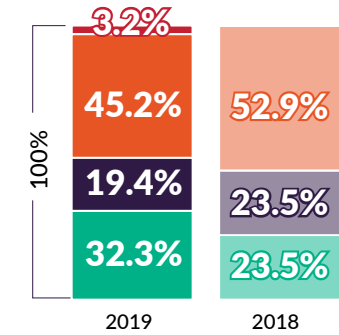
Rebuilding plans



Integrated fisheries management plans



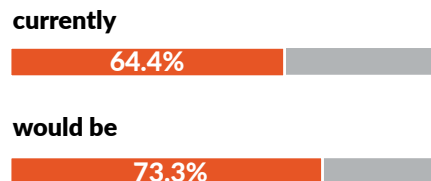
Reference points and harvest control rules



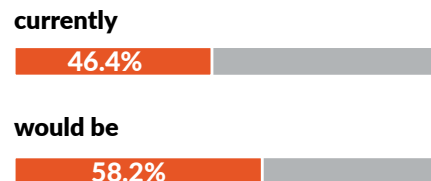
IF COMMITMENTS WERE MET, WE WOULD SEE CHANGE

If all deliverables outlined in all three fiscal-year work plans (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20) were completed, here's how Canada's fisheries would benefit:

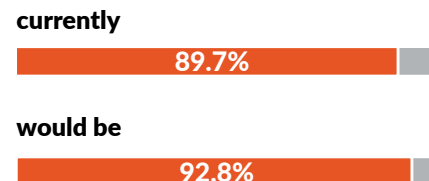
Stocks with LRPs:



Stocks with USRs:



Stocks included in IFMPs:



Critical zone stocks with rebuilding plans:



A MODERNIZED *FISHERIES ACT* COULD LEAD TO MAJOR CHANGE

On June 21, 2019, amendments that modernized the *Fisheries Act* became law, setting the stage for rebuilding fish abundance in Canada's oceans. For the first time ever, rebuilding plans are now required for all fish populations in the critical zone, with the target of rebuilding them to sustainable levels.

There's just one issue. These new provisions on rebuilding apply to all major stocks as outlined in regulations — regulations that have not been finalized. Therefore, the rebuilding provisions in the new *Act* do not yet apply to any fish stocks.

DFO has indicated that stocks will be listed in regulations in batches over the next five years, starting in 2020 when the first set is expected to be finalized. The content and pace of development of these regulations will determine whether the *Act* signals a turning point in the health of Canadian fisheries or a continuation of the status quo.

Global experience shows that legally binding requirements to rebuild fish stocks work, increasing revenue and jobs in coastal communities and supporting the overall health of the ocean. The U.S. has some of the most stringent and effective legislation in the world that mandates fisheries rebuilding. It has successfully rebuilt a total of 45 fish stocks,⁹ creating more resilient ecosystems and greater economic opportunities.

In addition to benefiting critically depleted stocks, the new rebuilding provisions in the *Act* should help prevent them from becoming depleted in the first place. It should also help ensure that stocks like redfish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, once depleted but now on the rebound, are allowed to return to healthy status before fishing effort is renewed.

In addition, the *Act's* amendments also:

- uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognize Indigenous knowledge;
- incorporate modern fisheries management practices, such as the precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches;
- restore important habitat protection measures; and
- feature a clear purpose to manage fisheries sustainably.

Ultimately, the *Act* will only be as effective as its implementation. At a minimum, the rebuilding regulations must include a timeline in which rebuilding should occur and a target level in the healthy zone, with progress indicators to allow managers to change course if objectives are not being met.



Credit: Jason van Bruggen

⁹ 2018 Report to Congress on the Status of U.S. Fisheries, available online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/2018-report-congress-status-us-fisheries>

UNDERMINING THE NEW ACT

Just days after the government passed the amended *Fisheries Act*, DFO released its annual quota for critically depleted northern cod, allowing catch levels of up to 12,350 tonnes on a critical stock under a moratorium on commercial fishing. This is a 30 per cent increase over 2018 levels and does not include the unknown number of cod caught in Newfoundland's recreational fishery.

This decision undermines the amended *Act* and the government's own policy to keep all sources of fishing mortality on depleted stocks at the lowest possible level.

It also makes bad economic sense. According to Oceana Canada's 2019 report *Economic and Social Benefits of Fisheries Rebuilding*, reducing fishing pressure today could support 16 times more jobs than current levels and five times more economic value in little more than a decade.

To download *Economic and Social Benefits of Fisheries Rebuilding*, visit oceana.ca/EconomicCaseforCod.

Cause for Concern: More Crustaceans Enter the Critical Zone

As this year's *Fishery Audit* reveals, Scotian Shelf snow crab and three Pacific shrimp stocks have moved into the critical zone, bringing the total number of critically depleted crustacean stocks to seven. In 2017, there was one.

Continued declines in crustacean fisheries would be a major economic shock to coastal communities. Today, Canada's seafood industry is driven by a handful of species. According to the most recent data,¹⁰ the value of just three groups of crustaceans — crab, lobster and shrimp — account for more than 74 per cent of total fisheries landings, worth approximately \$3.8 billion.

¹⁰ 2017 Value of Atlantic & Pacific Coasts Commercial Landings, by Province, available online at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/stats/commercial/land-debarq/sea-maritimes/s2017pv-eng.htm>



Credit: iStock/RLSPHOTO



Credit: Kevin Galvin

FROM COAST TO COAST:

MORE STOCKS CRITICALLY DEPLETED

There are now 33 critically depleted stocks across the country. Most are in Atlantic Canada, but the number on the Pacific coast is growing. Currently, DFO has published rebuilding plans for only six of them. Meanwhile, because there are inconsistencies in management approaches across the country, the same species of fish is often managed differently in different regions, despite having the same status and threats.

 PLAN IN PLACE

 COMMITMENT TO DEVELOP PLAN










 NO PLAN

* These stocks are co-managed with other jurisdictions.


† These stocks do not have Precautionary Approach-compliant rebuilding plans but do have interim rebuilding strategies developed by the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO).


^ Rebuilding plan development for these stocks is being led by management in Ottawa.

PACIFIC REGION


	Bocaccio rockfish (B.C. waters)	Completed in 2013/14
	Yelloweye rockfish (inside waters population)	Completed in 2017/18
	Yelloweye rockfish (outside waters population)	Completed in 2015/16
	Pacific herring (Haida Gwaii)	Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)
	Pacific herring (Prince Rupert District)	
	Pink shrimp (Fraser River SMA)	
	Pink shrimp (SMA 18-19)	
	Sidestripe shrimp (SMA 14)	
	Sidestripe shrimp (SMA 18-19)	

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION


 Northern shrimp (SFA 6)^ **Completed in 2018/19**


 Atlantic mackerel (subareas 3 and 4)^ **Ongoing (to be completed in 2019/20)**


GULF REGION

 American plaice (4T) **Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)**


 Atlantic cod (4T+4Vn (Nov-April)) **Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)**

 Atlantic herring (4T, spring spawner) **Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)**


 White hake (4T) **Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)**


 Winter flounder (4T) **Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)**

 Winter skate (4T)


 Yellowtail flounder (4T)


QUEBEC REGION


 Atlantic cod (3Pn, 4RS) **Ongoing (to be completed in 2020/21)**


 White hake (4RS)

NEWFOUNDLAND REGION


 Atlantic cod (2J3KL) **Delayed (was to be completed in 2018/19)**


 Acadian redfish (2+3K)


 American plaice (2+3K)

 American plaice (3LNO)*†

 American plaice (3Ps)


 Atlantic cod (3NO)*†


 Atlantic herring (4R, spring spawner)


 Deepwater redfish (2+3K)

 Haddock (3Ps)

MARITIMES REGION

 Atlantic cod (4X5Y) **Completed in 2019/20**

 Atlantic cod (5Zjm)* **Completed in 2019/20**

 Snow crab (4X)

 White hake (4VW)

PROGRESS REPORT ON 2018 *FISHERY AUDIT* PRIORITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS:

GET SERIOUS ABOUT GETTING RESULTS

DFO continues to make uneven progress in the key management indicators assessed in this *Fishery Audit*.

In the past year, the government passed a modernized *Fisheries Act* that included provisions to rebuild depleted fish populations. More stocks – almost 90 per cent – are now included in IFMPs, and DFO has completed four rebuilding plans for stocks of northern shrimp, yellowtail flounder and Atlantic cod.

DFO also made progress in developing LRPs and harvest control rules – the rules that describe how a stock must be managed.

Even with this progress there are still major gaps. DFO must release and implement its long-promised National Fishery Monitoring Policy and ensure that fisheries have sufficient levels of monitoring, with accurate estimates of all retained and discarded catches.

The number of stocks in the critical zone has increased. The number of stocks with recent biomass estimates has dropped, and progress on developing rebuilding plans has been slow. And while DFO has determined the causes of delays in publishing science information, it has yet to address them.

At the current rate,¹¹ it will take six more years until all index stocks have an LRP, 26 more years until all have a USR, and 24 more years until all critically depleted index stocks are included in a rebuilding plan.

The new *Fisheries Act* is now law, and the government has committed \$100 million to assess and rebuild fish stocks. This provides a rare opportunity for ambitious progress in 2020 and beyond to create change on the water, increasing the number of stocks in the healthy zone and building resilience to climate change. In the year ahead, DFO's top priorities should be:

- Completing regulations to bring into force the new provisions in the *Fisheries Act*, including identifying major stocks and requiring targets and timelines in rebuilding plans;
- Addressing inconsistencies in catch monitoring by implementing the National Fishery Monitoring Policy; and
- Developing and implementing high-quality rebuilding plans that include targets and timelines for critical stocks identified in the 2019/2020 work plans.

¹¹ Based on the average annual increase in the percentage of index stocks with each indicator over the last three years.



Credit: Ocean Exploration Trust, WHOI MISO, Northeast Pacific Seamount Expedition Partners

To-Do Checklist

In addition to completing rebuilding regulations to fulfil the intent of the *Fisheries Act*, Oceana Canada calls on DFO to complete, at a minimum, the following actions within the next year.

SCIENCE

- Invest resources** in timely stock assessments that include estimates of mortality from all sources, prioritizing stocks that do not have assessments or have assessments that are more than five years old.
- Address the causes** of delays in the publication of science information.
- Continue to develop** reference points for all stocks to define health status zones and develop associated harvest control rules for each zone. Specifically, fulfil commitments to develop:
 - LRPs for 11 more stock groups, ensuring at least six more index stocks have new or updated LRPs, increasing the percentage of index stocks with LRPs to 71.1 per cent.
 - USRs for one more stock group, ensuring at least one more index stock has a new or updated USR, increasing the percentage of index stocks with USRs to 46.9 per cent.
 - Harvest control rules for three more stock groups, ensuring at least three more index stocks have new or updated harvest control rules.

MONITORING

- Complete and publish** the National Fishery Monitoring Policy to ensure fisheries have sufficient monitoring, with accurate estimates of all retained and discarded catches. Publish a work plan to guide implementation of the policy.

MANAGEMENT

- Complete and publish** management plans. Specifically, fulfil commitments to develop:
 - IFMPs for 19 stock groups, ensuring at least 12 more index stocks are included in a publicly available IFMP next year, increasing the percentage of index stocks with IFMPs to 92.2 per cent.
 - Rebuilding plans for two more stocks: Atlantic cod – northern cod and Atlantic mackerel – Atlantic coast.
- Report on progress** toward DFO's commitment to develop rebuilding plans for 12 stocks by 2021.
- Set priorities and timelines** for completing rebuilding plans for all stocks in the critical zone.
- Ensure** rebuilding plans are informed by recent stock assessments and include targets and timelines, as well as evidence-based management measures to promote rebuilding.

TAKE ACTION

It's time to start managing Canada's fisheries more responsibly.

1. Add your voice to the urgent call to rebuild Canada's fish populations. Become an *Oceana Canada Wavemaker* at oceana.ca and join supporters from across the country who are committed to saving Canada's oceans.
2. Get breaking news and insights into vital ocean research, expeditions and campaigns at oceana.ca/blog.
3. Share your passion for ocean protection with friends and family.



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WE CAN SAVE THE OCEANS AND FEED THE WORLD.

Oceana Canada was established as an independent charity in 2015 and is part of the largest international advocacy group dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana Canada has successfully campaigned to end the shark fin trade, make rebuilding depleted fish populations the law, improve the way fisheries are managed and protect marine habitat. We work with civil society, academics, fishers, Indigenous Peoples and the government to return Canada's formerly vibrant oceans to health and abundance. By restoring Canada's oceans, we can strengthen our communities, reap greater economic and nutritional benefits and protect our future.

 **OCEANA** Protecting the
World's Oceans