

SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: *Fisheries Act* closures in Eastern Arctic

Background:

Canada has committed to increasing the proportion of marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% by 2017. To achieve this target, “other effective area-based conservation measures” are being evaluated for their role in marine conservation. These include areas closed to fishing which conserve biodiversity.

For 2017, the focus of fishing closures is the protection of sensitive benthic areas. Significant concentrations of corals, sponges, and sea pens have been identified in the Eastern Arctic (Figure 1) which provide important habitat for many species. Many coral, sponge, and sea pen species are vulnerable to physical damage and sediment smothering because they cannot move, break easily, are long lived, and grow very slowly.

On June 5, 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) presented to the Board a proposed Hatton Basin fishing closure as well as adjustments to the Narwhal Overwintering and Coldwater Coral Zone fishing closure. These closures, if approved, will contribute 42,459 km² and 7,382km² respectively to Canada’s Marine Conservation Targets (MCTs) (Figure 2).

As noted in the June presentation, the multi-stakeholder Marine Conservation Working Group (Working Group) formed under the auspices of the multi-stakeholder Eastern Arctic Groundfish Stakeholder Advisory Committee (EAGSAC) was also evaluating a proposal tabled January 19 at the EAGSAC meeting in Iqaluit, Nunavut. The Working Group finalized a proposal for a fishing closure to bottom contact gear in Davis Strait (Figure 3) to conserve habitat for corals, sponges, sea pens. The annual average value of Greenland Halibut fisheries in Div. 0A/0B and shrimp fisheries in SFA 1/DS is \$78M; the annual average value of the Greenland Halibut and shrimp fisheries in the proposed closure is \$20K. The proposed closure was presented to EAGSAC on July 21, 2017 and EAGSAC members supported the proposal. This fishing closure would contribute 17,298km² to Canada’s MCTs for 2017. It is DFO’s intent to consider all comments, seek Ministerial approval this fall, and implement approved fishing closure for the 2018 fishing season.

Once again, DFO appreciates the extensive output of the Working Group and the hard work and cooperation of its members.

Consultation:

Although the Working Group and EAGSAC are the primary stakeholder consultation mechanisms (including representatives from co-management organizations, groundfish and shrimp fishing industry, territorial/ provincial governments, and environmental organizations), other fora have also been used to engage interested groups. Table 1 lists the main stakeholder meetings. All stakeholders generally support a fishing closure in this area. Broad concerns have been expressed regarding timelines, equitable distribution of marine protected areas among Canadian bioregions, cumulative impact of marine protected areas on future commercial fishery development, rules for other ocean activities within fishing closures, etc. However no specific concerns regarding the proposed Davis Strait fishing closure have been expressed. A summary of comments heard is found in Appendix 1.

DFO will also seek comments from the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board.

Recommendation:

The Board provide comments to DFO on the proposed Davis Strait fishing closure. Comments are requested before October 10, 2017.

Prepared by: DFO, Central & Arctic Region, Fisheries Management

Date: August 3, 2017

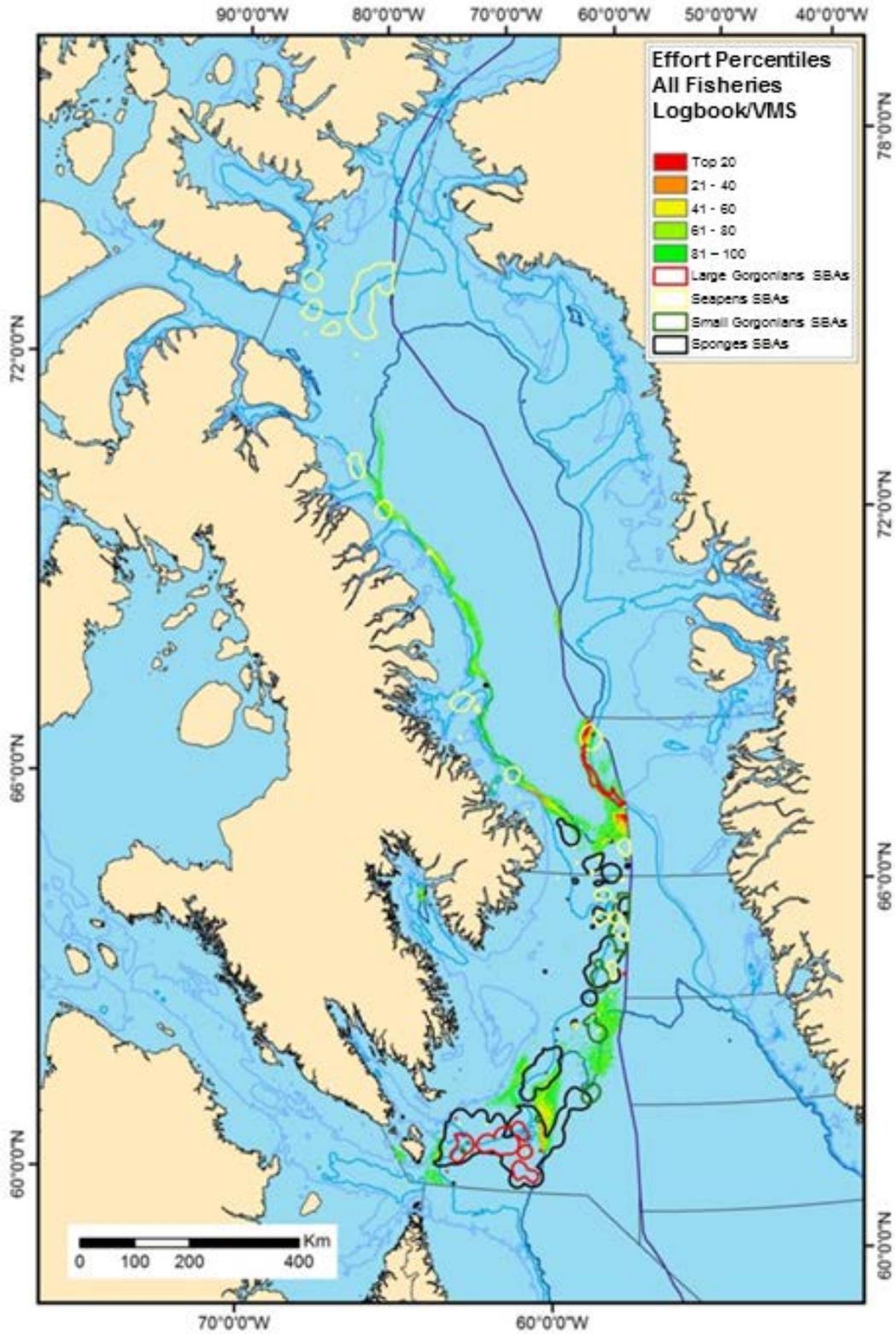


Figure 1. Significant concentrations of corals, sponges, and sea pens in the Eastern Arctic overlaid with fishing footprint.

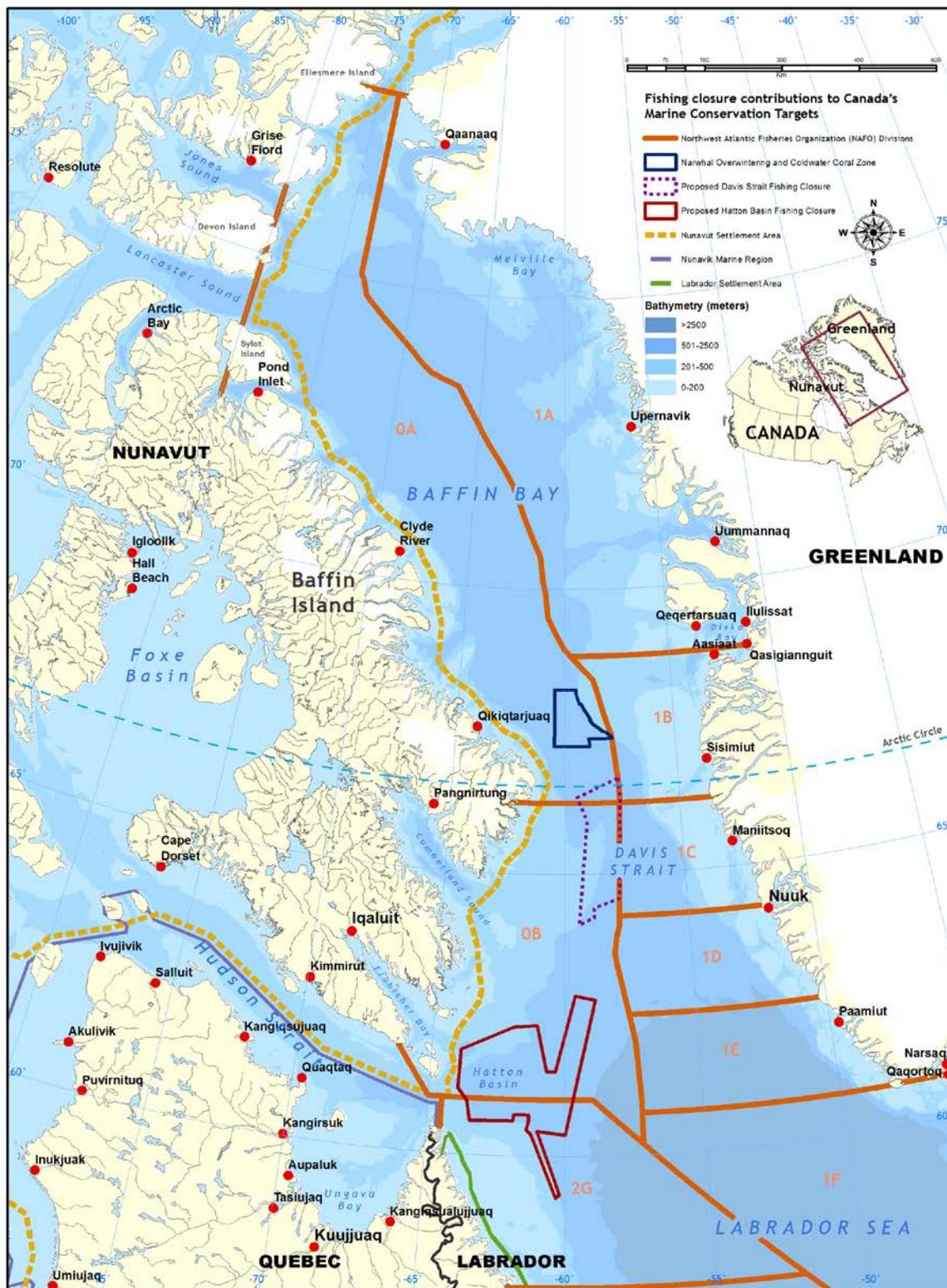


Figure 2. Potential contribution to Canada's Marine Conservation Targets from proposed Eastern Arctic fishing closures.

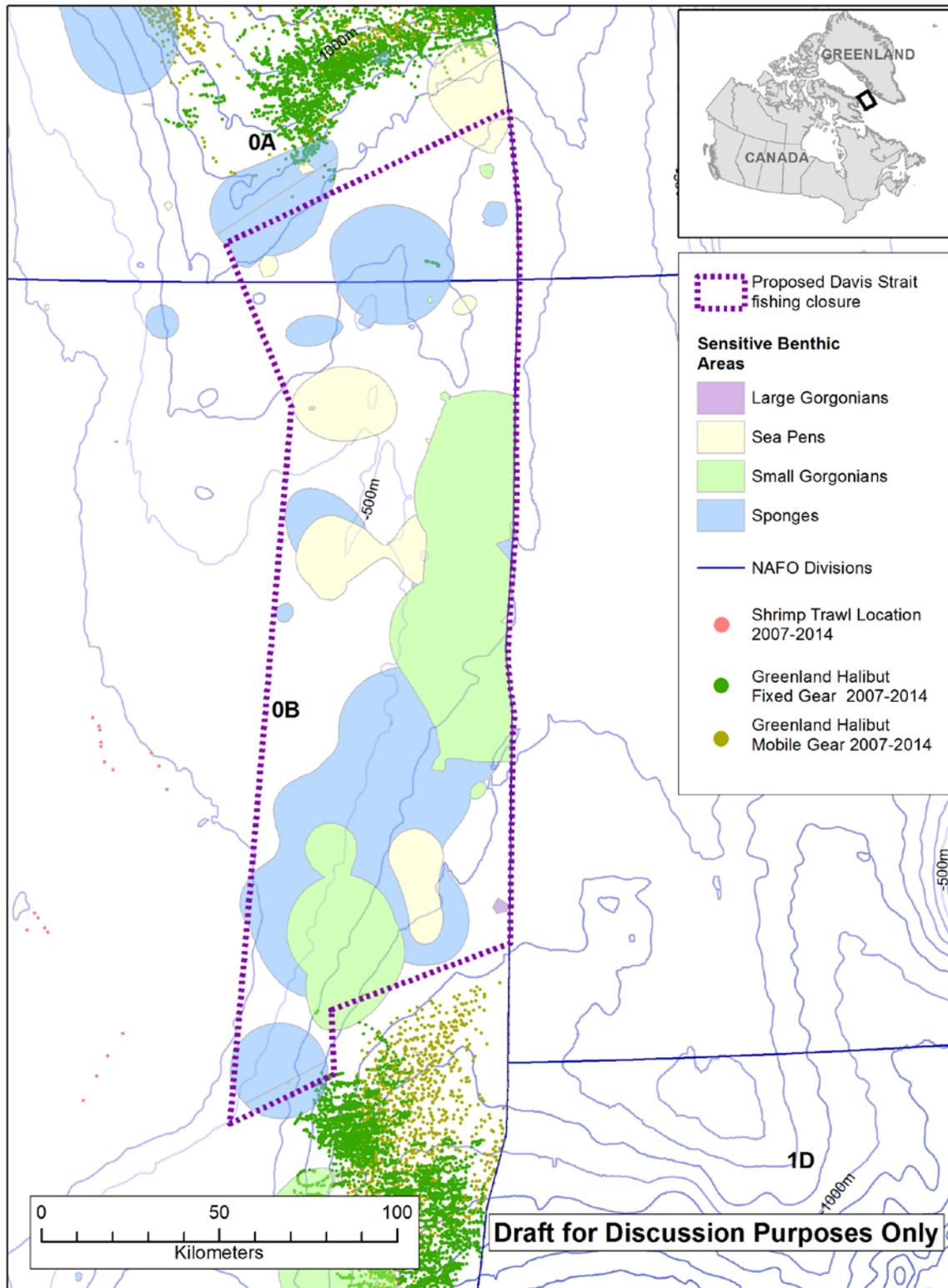


Figure 3. Proposed area in Davis Strait closed to all bottom contact fishing gear to conserve sensitive benthic areas.

Table 1. Consultations related to proposed Davis Strait fishing closure.

Date	Engagement event	Participants
18-Jan-17	Eastern Arctic Groundfish Stakeholder Advisory Committee (EAGSAC) meeting	Provinces/Territories, Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
1-Mar-17	Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board meeting	Indigenous partner
07-Mar-17	EAGSAC Marine Conservation Working Group	Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
07-Mar-17	Nunavut Wildlife Management Board meeting	Indigenous partners
09-Mar-17	Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee (NSAC) meeting	Industry, Indigenous partners, Provinces/Territories
10-Mar-17	C&A/NL consultations with shrimp harvesters/NSAC members	Provinces/Territories, Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
19-Mar-17	Boston Seafood Show Marine Conservation Target Roundtable	Provinces/Territories, Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
27-Mar-17	EAGSAC Marine Conservation Working Group	Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
07-Apr-17	EAGSAC Marine Conservation Working Group	Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
19-Apr-17	EAGSAC Marine Conservation Working Group	Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
27-Apr-17	EAGSAC Marine Conservation Working Group	Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
02-May-17	World Wildlife Canada, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Ecology Action Centre, Oceans North, David Suzuki Foundation, Western Legal Defence Fund	Senior officials from each environmental organization
04-May-17	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Fisheries and Land Resources	Senior officials
05-May-17	Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment, Fisheries and Sealing Division	Senior official
30/31-May-17	Canada-Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Mammal Cooperation Committee meeting	Gov't of Nunavut, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board staff, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
31-May-17	Canada-Nunavut meeting	Gov't of Nunavut senior officials
01-Jun-17	Canada- Nunavut Wildlife Management Board meeting	Nunavut Wildlife Management Board staff

05-Jun-17	Nunavut Wildlife Management Board meeting	Indigenous partner
08-Jun-17	Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board meeting	Indigenous partner
20-June-17	Government of Newfoundland, Department of Fisheries and Land Resources	Provincial Government
23-June-17	Fish Food and Allied Workers	Industry
26-Jun-17	EAGSAC Marine Conservation Working Group	Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations
June 26-17	World Wildlife Canada , Ecology Action Centre, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society	Environmental Organizations
28-Jun-17	Nunatsiavut Government	Senior officials
29-Jun-17	Torngat Joint Fisheries Board Secretariat	Indigenous partner
21-Jul-17	EAGSAC meeting	Provinces/Territories, Indigenous partners, Industry, Environmental Organizations

Appendix 1. Summary of comments heard from stakeholders during consultations on proposed Eastern Arctic fisheries closures relevant to proposed Davis Strait closure.

- Support the goal of marine conservation including protection of sensitive benthic areas.
- Support the governance structure established by Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) to identify and develop boundaries for proposed fishing closures in Baffin Bay/Davis Strait. In particular, the Marine Conservation Working Group, composed of representatives with diverse perspectives, is efficient and productive.
- Thought timeline for 2017 Marine Conservation Targets too compressed which could result in inadequate consultation, mistakes, and damage to stakeholder relationships.
- Requested clarification on marine conservation tools (i.e. Fisheries Act closures, Marine Protected Areas, National Marine Conservation Areas, National Wildlife Areas, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, National Parks) and consultation processes for those which affect fishing.
- Wanted to ensure equitable distribution of fisheries closures and marine protected areas among Canadian bioregions.
- Wanted to ensure meaningful protection to valued ecosystem components. In particular, where fishing is a threat to identified Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas, environmental organizations want fishing closures established with conservation objectives to ensure protection of all the components which make the area significant.
- Wanted balance between conservation and economic impact to both current and future fishing activities. Industry leaned to minimizing economic impact and environmental organizations leaned to maximizing conservation.
- Questioned time period used to determine the fishing footprint which underpinned the socio/economic analysis and boundary negotiations. Industry would like all historical fishing activity to be included whereas environmental organizations would like only the last 10 years to be included.
- Requested clarification on the review process for fishing closures which contribute to Marine Conservation Targets and the ability to reevaluate and revise in the future.
- Varying views on further implementation by DFO of its “Policy for Managing the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas”. Industry concerned with impact to current and future fishing opportunities. Environmental organizations concerned implementation of the Policy will stall after 2017.
- Concern regarding cumulative impact of fisheries closures and marine protected areas on future commercial fishery development, especially in the Eastern Arctic.
- Significant concern that fish harvesters are carrying the burden for Marine Conservation Targets.
- Lack of clear rules on other ocean activities which potentially could negatively impact the conservation objectives of the fishing closure (e.g. dredging, transport, ballast water discharge, oil and gas, marine mining, spill risks, marine cables, tourism, etc.).
- Highlighted the need for adequate monitoring and enforcement of fishing closures.
- Concern regarding actions, or lack thereof, by other countries to protect shared ecosystem components valued by Canadians



Fisheries Act closures in the Eastern Arctic

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board meeting

Iqaluit, NU

September 11, 2017

Outline

- Background
 - Marine Conservation Targets initiative
 - Corals, sponges and sea pens present in eastern Arctic
 - Identification of sensitive benthic areas
 - Development of fishing closure proposals
- Proposed Davis Strait fishing closure
- Consultations
- Next steps



Background

- Canada has committed to increasing the proportion of marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% by 2017.
- Areas closed to fishing which conserve biodiversity will contribute to this target.
- For 2017, the focus of fishing closures is the protection of sensitive benthic areas.
- Significant concentrations of corals, sponges, and sea pens have been identified in the eastern Arctic which provide important habitat for many species.
- Many types of corals, sponges, and sea pens are vulnerable to physical damage and sediment smothering because they cannot move, break easily, are long lived, and grow very slowly.



Corals, Sponges, Sea Pens found in Eastern Arctic



Sponge



Sea Pen



Small Gorgonian Coral

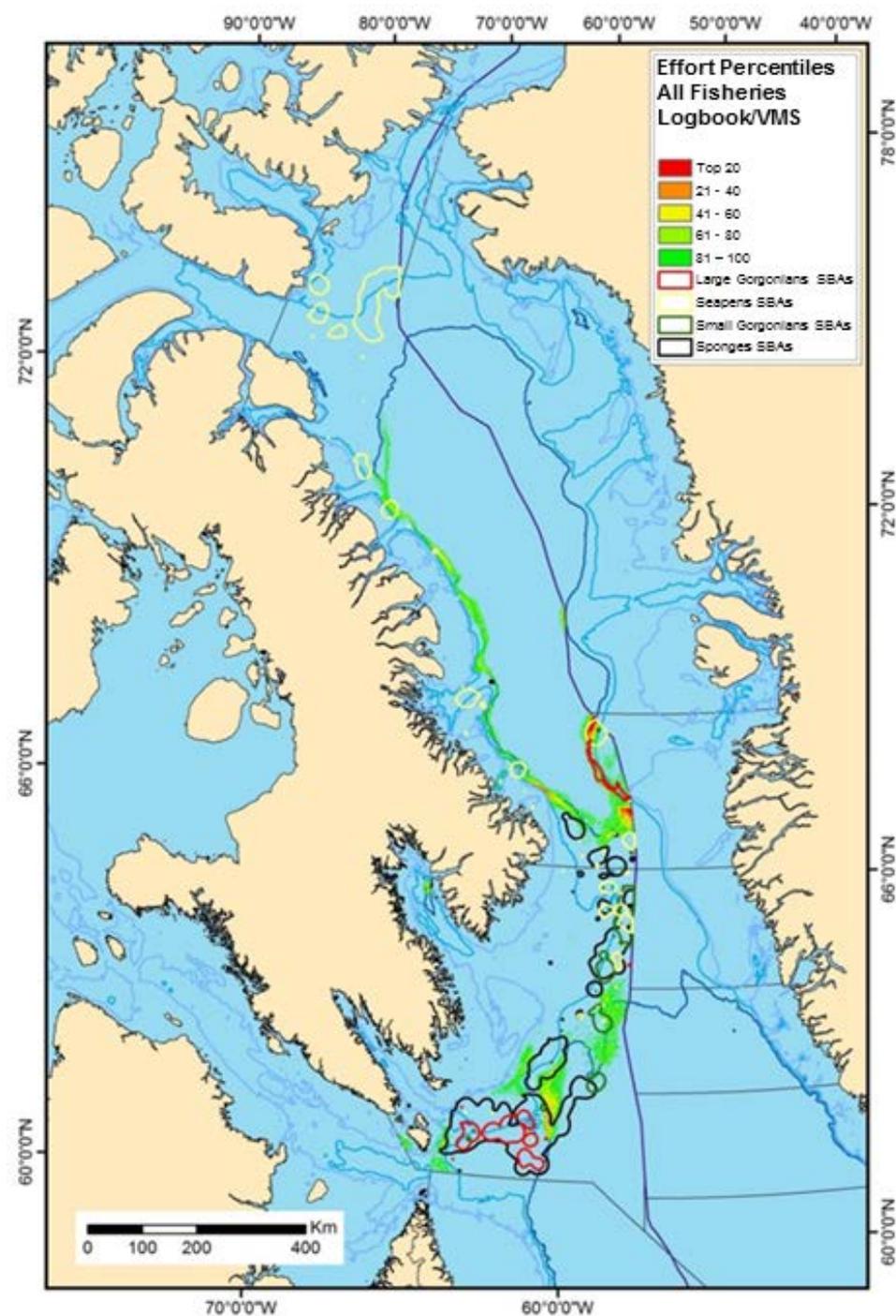


Large Gorgonian Coral



Sensitive Benthic Areas

- Significant concentrations identified by modeling, ground truthed with data from video/camera surveys, captures by research and fishing vessels
- Overlaid with shrimp and Greenland Halibut fishing footprints.





Protection

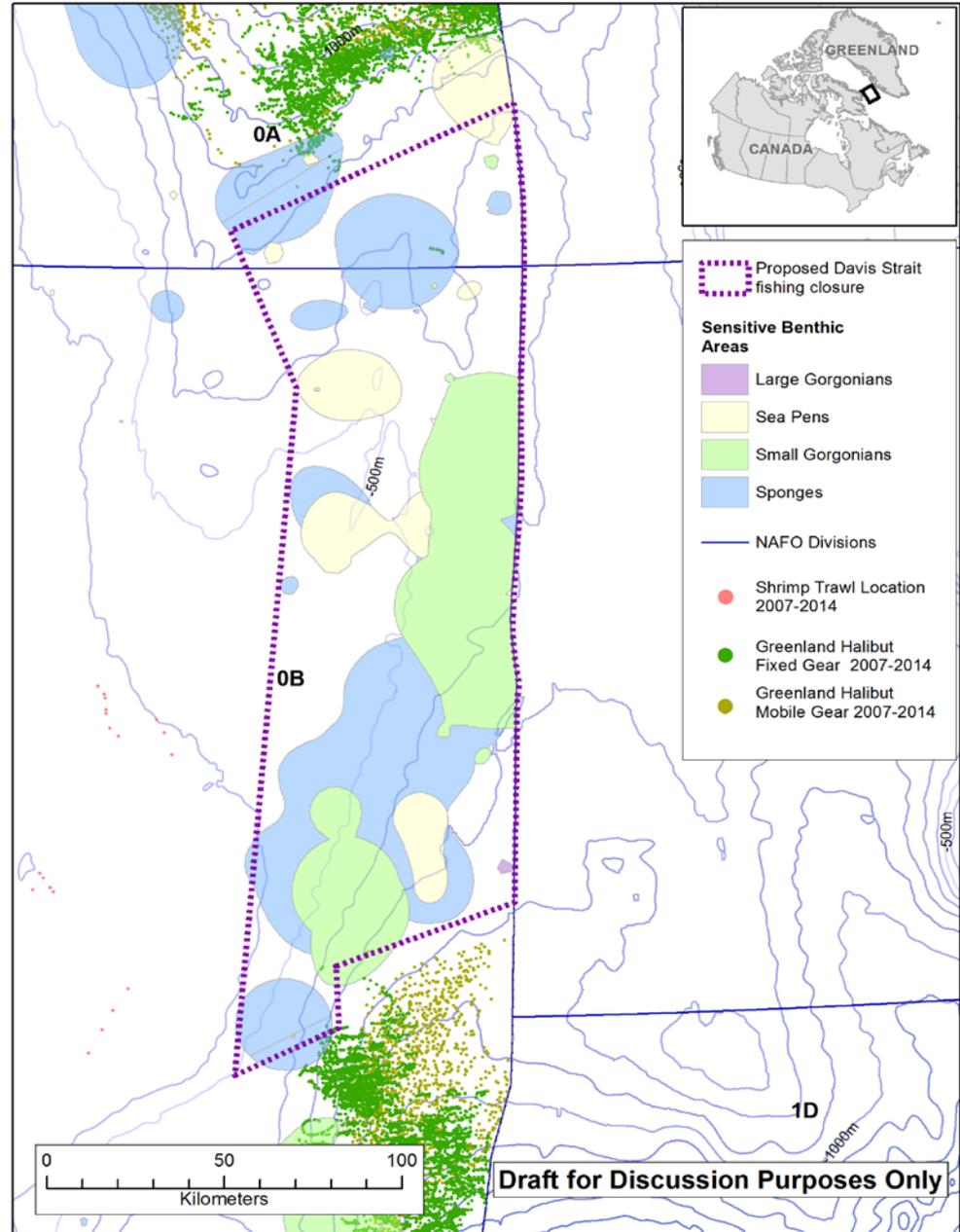
- On January 19, 2017, the Eastern Arctic Groundfish Stakeholder Advisory Committee (EAGSAC) established a Marine Conservation Working Group (MC WG).
- Tasked to review current closures and identify potential areas for new groundfish and/or shrimp fishing closures that would assist with conservation needs and future economic viability of the fisheries.

DFO appreciates the extensive output of the MC WG and the hard work and cooperation of its members.



Davis Strait fishing closure

- Objective to conserve sensitive benthic areas
- 17,298 km²
 - Div. 0A 2,487 km²
 - Div. 0B 14,810 km²
- Annual avg value of fisheries in Div. 0A/0B, SFA 1/DS is \$78M; in proposed closure \$20K.





Consultations

- The primary venue for consultation has been the multi-stakeholder MC WG (6 meetings).
- Since Dec. 2016, DFO has sought the views of other stakeholders, including representatives from co-management organizations, groundfish and shrimp fishing industry, territorial/provincial governments, and environmental organizations, on Eastern Arctic fishing closure recommendations. Highlights:
 - EAGSAC (multi-stakeholder Subarea 0 groundfish fishery interests)
 - Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee and other interested shrimp fishery stakeholders
 - Gov'ts of Newfoundland & Labrador, Nunatsiavut, Nunavut
 - Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, Torngat Joint Fisheries Board, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
 - Environmental Organizations



Summary of Comments

- Support marine conservation.
- Support governance structure established to identify and develop proposed fishing closures in Baffin Bay/Davis Strait/Hatton Basin.
- Timeline for 2017 MCTs too compressed.
- Clarification on marine conservation tools (i.e. Fisheries Act closures, Marine Protected Areas, National Marine Conservation Areas, National Wildlife Areas, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, National Parks) and consultation processes for those which affect fishing.
- Equitable distribution of fisheries closures and marine protected areas among Canadian bioregions.
- Equitable distribution of conservation burden among marine industries.
- Meaningful protection to valued ecosystem components.



Summary of Comments (cont.)

- Balance between conservation and economic impact to both current and future fishing activities.
- Time period used to determine the fishing footprint which underpinned the socio/economic analysis and boundary negotiations.
- Process to reevaluate and revise fishing closures in the future.
- Further implementation of DFO's Sensitive Benthic Areas Policy.
- Cumulative impact of fisheries closures and marine protected areas on future commercial fishery development.
- Rules on other ocean activities which potentially could negatively impact the conservation objectives of fishing closures.
- Adequate monitoring and enforcement of fishing closures.
- Actions, or lack thereof, by other countries to protect shared ecosystem components valued by Canadians.

Next Steps

- In September, seek comments from Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board on proposed Davis Strait fishing closure. Advice requested by October 10.
- Consider all comments and seek Ministerial approval this fall.
- Implement fishing closure for 2018 fishing season.

Comments/Questions

