

Executive summary – Action Plan for the Blue Whale (Northwest Atlantic population)

The Northwest Atlantic blue whale was listed as endangered under the *Species at Risk Act* in 2005. The main threats to its recovery are anthropogenic noise, lack of food availability, contaminants, collisions, disturbances and entanglements. Published in 2009, the Recovery Strategy proposed three recovery objectives intended to increase knowledge of the population, its habitat, and threats, and implement measures to mitigate threats.

The action plan for the Northwest Atlantic blue whale presents measures that will be implemented in the short and medium term to assist in meeting the recovery objectives. The first set of recovery measures will be undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, sometimes with the collaboration of partners. These are primarily research measures to estimate the population's size and its use of Canadian waters. They also aim to implement or enforce legislation or policies to protect blue whale habitat and mitigate threats.

The second set of measures will be undertaken by the Department in partnership with the various stakeholders involved in the blue whale's recovery. For example, these measures include research on krill and the use of hydroacoustics to document the presence of these whales. The third set presents measures that concerned stakeholders could undertake voluntarily. Such measures include gathering observations of the blue whale, photo-identification and raising awareness among marine users.

The measures set out in the action plan could affect some stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations or the shipping industry. However, their implementation would not necessarily result in incremental costs to these stakeholders. Canadian society as a whole would benefit from the implementation of the action plan, given the economic value that Canadians attach to the recovery of the species and the protection of its habitat.