



St. Lawrence Estuary Marine Protected Area (MPA) for the protection of marine mammals

Consultation workbook on the management measures

1.0 Introduction

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for the conservation and protection of Canada's marine resources, including marine mammals.

Human interactions with marine mammals in their environment are increasing. The growth of activities related to ecotourism, recreational boating, and other maritime industries has the potential to impact the survival and conservation of many marine mammal populations.

Canada's Ocean's Act (1997) gave DFO a new tool for the management and protection of oceans. This law integrates the precautionary principle the recognition of federal and provincial competences and jurisdictions, as well as aboriginal rights. Among various things, this law allows for the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Following several steps to identify and evaluate sites of interest, the St. Lawrence Estuary MPA project was selected to protect marine mammals, their habitats, and their food resources.

The marine mammals in the St. Lawrence Estuary are of great ecological and economic importance. This has socio-economic implications by raising the area's visibility both nationally and internationally. The establishment of the MPA would, together with other tools already in place, greatly increase the level of protection afforded to these marine mammals, their habitats, and their food resources. This concerted effort would, in effect, ensure the harmonization and efficiency of efforts to protect the marine mammals, the development of public awareness tools, and motivate scientific research. It would also allow the continuation of sustainable economic activities in the Estuary and confer a certain status and recognition to the area.

Since April 2000, workshops and committees have been held to bring together scientists, experts, and managers in various fields to find solutions or measures to reduce the pressure on and threats to whales and harbour seals in the St. Lawrence Estuary, the latter whose status in the Estuary is worrisome.

In order to ensure that the management measures put in place will be efficient, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is holding public hearings to solicit advice and comments from the public, First Nations, territory managers, industry groups, and organizations dedicated to protecting the environment. We hope that these consultations will be transparent, inclusive, and well documented.

Your comments will be considered in the elaboration of the St. Lawrence Estuary MPA project. They will help DFO in the planning, decision-making, and management of the project.

2.0 How to use the workbook

The workbook was developed to allow you to make known your thoughts and to provide advice and input on the proposed management measures for the Estuary MPA to ensure the long-term conservation and protection of marine mammals that live year-round in or travel through the St. Lawrence Estuary and of their habitats and food resources. The questions asked are based on recommended management measures developed by five working groups of government representatives and scientists from universities or from research establishments, and non-governmental organizations. Measures are grouped by subject and aim to counter or mitigate threats to marine mammals. We encourage you to answer all the questions and to provide any pertinent comments. We want to know your opinion. Please return the workbook by mail, e-mail, or fax (addresses given on the last page of the document) or simply return it to any DFO office.

To help you to complete the Workbook (questionnaire), a web site has been set up where you may consult or print an Information Booklet. This contains a map of the proposed MPA, a description of the current threats to marine mammals, a list of related management measures, and other pertinent information. It is essential that you read the Information Booklet prior to completing the questionnaire. Other general information and a reading list are also available on the site. In fact, for all there is to know about the proposed St. Lawrence Estuary MPA, you just have to visit www.qc.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/zpmestuaire/.

3.0 Background

The St. Lawrence Estuary is internationally recognized as a critical area for many marine mammal species. Each year, many whales, including large fin whales, migrate there to feed and build up reserves in preparation for their breeding season. Further, the Estuary is also critical habitat for beluga whales and harbour seals both of which live there year-round. The marine mammals that live in the Estuary are faced with a multitude of threats resulting from the high level of human activity in the area. Several of these species are on the list of Canadian Species at Risk.

New research programs are being conducted throughout the world to better understand the effects of human activities on marine mammals. Although data specific to a particular situation, species or location is not always available, all available evidence shows that more concrete actions must be taken to protect marine mammals.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is proposing a series of management measures to promote discussions towards countering or mitigating the threats to marine mammals in the St. Lawrence Estuary. These measures are an integral part of the St. Lawrence Estuary Marine Protected Area project. This consultation process will allow you to express your point of view. Further, your comments and suggestions will make it possible to improve the project for the benefit of the marine mammals St. Lawrence Estuary.

4.0 Questionnaire

IMPORTANT NOTICE: People and organizations who are interested may annex a written or electronic document to the questionnaire in order to give more detailed input.

Q1. Where do you live?

- Upper North Shore
- Charlevoix
- Lower St. Lawrence
- Other, specify: _____

Q2. Which category best describes you?

- Individual
- Representative of an organization
- Other, specify: _____

Q3. Which type of activities do you do within the St. Lawrence Estuary?

- Shoreline resident
- Recreational fishing (including recreational seal hunting)
- Commercial fishing (including commercial seal hunting)
- Aquaculture
- Subsistence fishing
- Pleasure boating (sailboat, kayak, personal watercraft, etc.)
- Commercial navigation
- Recreational marine mammal viewing
- Commercial marine mammal viewing
- Other, specify: _____

Q4. How much time do you spend in the St. Lawrence Estuary each year?

- 1 to 5 days
- 6 to 15 days
- 16 to 30 days
- 31 days or more

Q5. Do you think it is important to better protect the marine mammals in the St. Lawrence Estuary?

- Yes
- No

No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Q6. The following question relates to objective “A” for the MPA: **TO PROTECT MARINE MAMMALS**. (Consult the information document for further details concerning the measures relating to objective “A”)

Threats to marine mammals are as follows

- A1. Collisions with boats or ships resulting in death or injury (related management measures: A1.1 and A1.2)
- A2. Entanglement in fishing gear (related management measures: A2.1, A2.2, A2.3 and A2.4)
- A3. Marine mammal disturbance caused by human activities (related management measures: A3.1, A3.2, A3.3, A3.4, A3.5, A3.6, A3.7 and A3.8)
- A4. Disturbances by man-made noise (related management measure: A4.1)
- A5. Unintentional killing of harbour seals by hunting (related management measure : A5.1)

Which management measures relating to objective "A" will be most beneficial for the protection or the conservation of marine mammals?

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.) and identify the measure(s)

Q10. In general, what do you think of the proposed management measures to protect marine mammals in the St. Lawrence Estuary MPA?

Check the appropriate box

- wording of management measures difficult to understand
- wording of management measures easy to understand
- wording of management measures not always easy to understand
- no opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Check the appropriate box

- management measures ineffective for achieving MPA protection objectives
- management measures effective for achieving MPA protection objectives
- no opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Check the appropriate box

- management measures difficult to apply in proposed area
- management measures easy to apply in proposed area
- no opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Q11. Do you believe that the establishment of the St. Lawrence Estuary MPA will be beneficial to marine mammals?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Q12. Are there areas included within the proposed MPA that merit particular attention (e.g., specific threats, species or number of marine mammals present, important feeding sites, etc.)?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Q13. Are you generally satisfied with the consultation process?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Check the appropriate box

The consultation process made me aware or informed me about the need to better protect marine mammals in the St. Lawrence Estuary

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Check the appropriate box

The consultation process convinced me of the need to establish the St. Lawrence Estuary MPA

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Check the appropriate box

The consultation process showed transparency with respect to access to information

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

Check the appropriate box

The consultation process promoted public participation

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Give details (comments, opinions, etc.)

5.0 Your Participation is Important for DFO

Your opinions, comments, and advice on this important initiative will be used to bring to completion management measures, to write the regulation draft that will lead to the designation of the MPA, and to prepare the management plan. It matters that DFO understands what impact this project will have on you and if it meets your expectations for the protection of marine mammals in Canada. The regulation draft will be published in the Canada Gazette for final public comment before being adopted.

6.0 Personal information (optional)

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The personal information provided below will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this consultation process.

Name : _____
Company or organization : _____
Address : _____
City : _____
Province : _____ Postal code : _____
Country : _____
E-mail (to forward you a copy of the consultation report) : _____

7.0 Submitting your workbook

Your completed workbook may be submitted as follows:

By e-mail: zpmestuairedusaint-laurent@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

By mail: Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Maurice-Lamontagne Institute
Marine Protected Area Program
850 route de la Mer, P.O. Box 1000
Mont-Joli (Quebec) G5H 3Z4

By fax: (418) 775-0718

In person: Any Fisheries and Oceans Canada office

8.0 Summary of Public Consultation

Please check the box if you would like a copy of the consultation report

Fisheries and Oceans Canada would like to thank you for participating in this process