

2.4 Relative Economic Importance of the Inland Fisheries

Table 3 translates the freshwater fish harvest for 1983 into value on a province-by-province basis, and indicates the relative economic importance of the commercial freshwater fishery to each of the provincial/territorial economies.

Table 3 shows that, relative to the total size of each of the provincial economies, none of the freshwater fisheries exceeds 0.21% of the value of the gross provincial product, and none employs more than 0.5% of the provincial/territorial labour force. By comparison, the total Canadian fisheries account for approximately 1% of the total national gross domestic product, and the fisheries account for 5-12% of employment in some of the Atlantic provinces.

The table also shows that the four provinces under the FFMC's jurisdiction, covering a huge territory with approximately twice the inland water base and a much larger number of fishermen, handle slightly less product than the Ontario region. The explanation for this imbalance is the concentration of capital and effort that characterizes the less geographically-dispersed fisheries. As shown in the subsequent sections of this report, the Great Lakes fisheries account for over 93% of the quantities landed even though they account for only 53% of the number of licences issued in the Ontario Region.

Table 3

THE FRESHWATER FISHERY, ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE, BY PROVINCE 1982/83

Province	Harvest ('000 tonnes)	Landed Value (\$000,000)	Market Value	% of GPP	Employ- ment*	% of Total Provincial Employment
Ontario	32.5(e)	27.84	60.0(e)	0.050	2,881	0.07
Manitoba	15.9	12.95	28.2	0.200	3,708	0.50
Sask.	3.5	2.35	6.5	0.040	1,153	0.29
Alberta	1.2	0.78	1.9	0.004	516	0.04
N.W.T.	1.5	1.35	2.5	0.210	134	0.05

Source: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Western Region, *Annual Summary of Fish Harvesting Activities, Western Canadian Freshwater Fisheries*, Winnipeg, 1982-83.

* Employment figures reported by DFO may be at variance with Provincial/ Territorial figures.

(e) Estimate.

While fully recognizing that the inland fisheries of the Western and Ontario Regions are of minimal importance to the national economy or even their respective provincial economies, the Committee wishes to stress the many representations made to it as to their local importance, especially in northern areas where up to 90% of fishermen are of native origin. The lack of alternative employment makes some remote northern communities even more dependent on commercial fishing than would be the case in some Atlantic Canada communities.