

its ecosystems approach to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as a useful framework for action across a wide variety of international initiatives.

LIVING MARINE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources is one of Canada's principal oceans objectives. Stock conservation problems, allocation conflicts, international boundary disputes, excessive harvesting, and fiscal restraint have all shaped federal government approaches to domestic and international fisheries policies and management practices in the continuing pursuit of economic and environmental sustainability.

Canada's federal fisheries managers are developing a renewed and integrated approach toward the management of the resource. The main program elements focus on conservation, streamlining programs to seek efficiencies, and working more closely with the public, industry, and Aboriginal groups through co-management arrangements.

Canada's Pacific coast stretches about 804 kilometres, from the Juan de Fuca Strait north to Alaska. If this jagged shoreline were laid straight, it would extend about 26 000 kilometres.

The Need for Responsible Fishing

Canada faced extraordinary social, economic, and political costs when it made conservation the top priority in fisheries management decisions. In the wake of the collapse of Atlantic groundfish stocks and poor Pacific salmon returns, the Government of Canada resisted the pressure to compromise the future and has put in place measures that will ensure the sustainable management and exploitation of fisheries resources.

Canada has embraced the precautionary approach, integrated management, fishing capacity reduction, selective fishing strategies, and many other building blocks that are essential to the fishery of the future. As it moves forward into the next millennium, Canada is coming ever closer to its vision of a fishery that is environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

The complex problems of the world's fisheries are well known, and global instruments to deal with many of these problems have been developed. The most important of these are the United Nations Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (known as the United Nations Fisheries Agreement, or UNFA), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas, and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible