

Global Programme of Action calls on countries to develop regional and national programs of action to prevent, reduce, and control land-based activities that contribute to the degradation of the marine environment.

The Arctic

The Arctic Ocean is a particularly sensitive environment. It has been the focus of many Canadian environmental initiatives. Prominent among them is the Arctic Environmental Strategy. This has expanded scientific research on contaminants, the use of traditional knowledge concerning marine living resources, the monitoring of water quality, and the cleanup of hazardous wastes in Canada's North. This is being complemented by the international Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, which has improved circumpolar cooperation to protect the Arctic region.

Aboriginal people have an important role in oceans and coastal zone management, particularly in northern Canada. For example, fisheries and marine co-management processes are part of comprehensive land-claim agreements in the Northwest Territories. Under these agreements, Inuit have rights of involvement in the decision-making process related to marine conservation and the harvesting of marine mammals in and beyond their claim settlement areas.

Domestic Progress in Fisheries Management

A primary focus of oceans-related activity for Canada has been the sustainable management of fisheries. Stock collapses and fishery closures have encouraged Canada to pursue change in fisheries policies and management practices domestically and internationally.

Among many domestic policy developments has been federal initiation of a process to develop integrated fishery management plans for all harvested species or stocks by the end of 1996. This approach will integrate all elements associated with the commercial, Aboriginal, and recreational fishing sectors. It will be an effective tool in ensuring resource sustainability.

In 1995, a national policy was initiated to provide for the orderly development of under- or un-utilized stocks and species. It will also facilitate the collection of scientific data necessary to ensure sustainability of stocks.

In step with the new course being charted for Canadian fisheries is the development of a Partnerships Implementation Strategy. Partnering agreements will increase the role of stakeholders in the decision-making process. These partnering agreements with industry can play an important role in realizing Canada's goal to promote a fishing sector that is sustainable, economically viable, and self-reliant.

The federal government launched the seven-year Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy in 1992. Under this strategy, the federal government enters into agreements with Aboriginal

The Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC) makes recommendations to the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on total allowable catches and other conservation matters for Atlantic fish stocks. The FRCC is a partnership that draws on advice from scientists and the fishing industry. It is guided by the principles of sustainable development and an ecological approach to fisheries management. It works in an inclusive, open, and transparent manner.