

support a domestic Oceans Management Strategy (OMS) and to establish marine protected areas and marine environmental quality guidelines. An OMS will also provide for the development and implementation of a national strategy for the management of estuarine, coastal, and marine ecosystems. It will evolve through consultation and cooperation with other governments, Aboriginal authorities, and interested groups.

The COA will address the need for marine scientific research. It recognizes that informed decision making requires accurate data and a better understanding of oceans and their living resources and ecosystems.

Marine Environmental Protection

The health of marine environments is a growing focus of Canadian activity. Canadian scientists are learning more about these environments and related issues. For example, oceans figure prominently in much of the climate change research described in the section of this report on protection of the atmosphere.

Canada borders three oceans and has the longest coastline (almost 250,000 km), the largest archipelago, and the second largest continental shelf (6.5 million km²) of any country in the world. Canada's oceans represent almost two thirds of its territorial land mass. The area of Canada's Exclusive Economic Zone alone covers roughly half of Canada's land mass. Approximately 6.5 million Canadians (22%) live in coastal communities.

