



House of Commons  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans**

---

FOPO • NUMBER 053 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, October 19, 2005**

**Chair**

**Mr. Tom Wappel**

All parliamentary publications are available on the  
``Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire'' at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Wednesday, October 19, 2005

• (1535)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. James M. Latimer):** Honourable members, I see a quorum.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(1) and Standing Order 106(2), your first order of business is the election of a chair. I'm ready to receive nominations to that effect.

Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** On behalf of our party, we'd like to nominate Mr. Tom Wappel as the chair of our committee.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other nominations for chair?

Having asked once, twice, thrice, I'll put the question. All those in favour of Mr. Wappel's being the chair? All those opposed, if any?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Wappel the chair.

Before I invite Mr. Wappel to take the chair, we will proceed to the election of vice-chairs. We will begin with the election of the first vice-chair, which, according to the standing order, requires that this vice-chair be a member of the official opposition.

I'm ready to receive nominations to that effect. Are there any nominations for the position of official vice-chair?

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** I move Mr. Gerald Keddy.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Kamp moves that Mr. Keddy be the official opposition vice-chair.

Are there any other nominations?

I declare nominations closed. All those in favour of Mr. Keddy's being vice-chair from the official opposition? All those opposed, if any?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare Mr. Keddy duly elected vice-chair from the official opposition.

According to the standing order, we must now elect a vice-chair who is a member of a party in opposition but who is not a member of the official opposition.

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Simms.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** It is with great pride, sir, that I would like to nominate the pride of the eastern shore, Mr. Peter Stoffer.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other nominations?

I declare the nominations closed. All those in favour of Mr. Stoffer as the second vice-chair? All those opposed, if any?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** Mr. Stoffer, I declare you elected second vice-chair.

I would now invite Mr. Tom Wappel to take the chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.)):** Colleagues, thank you very much. I very much appreciate your confidence.

I want to let you know that in accordance with our previous decision, we have witnesses today. I'll introduce them in a moment, but I'm going to suspend for just a couple of minutes, or even a couple of seconds—as short a period of time as possible—to allow our console operator to get things organized and get everything set up.

We will have a very, very brief suspension.

• (1537)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1539)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting to order.

For the record, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are under the heading of a study on the northern cod, including the events leading to the collapse of the fishery and the failure of the stock to re-establish itself since the moratorium.

As you will recall, we have the groups that asked to meet with us and we agreed that we would hear them. From the Living Oceans Society we have Catherine Stewart, campaigns director, and we have Dorte Hangaard, sustainable fisheries researcher; from the Ecology Action Centre, Mark Butler, campaign coordinator and internal director, and Wayne Eddy, Eastern Passage fisherman; from the Marine Conservation Biology Institute, Lance Morgan, chief scientist; and from Oceana, Phil Kline, senior fisheries policy adviser. Welcome to you all.

Given the constraints that our committee operates under, you know that you have, in total, a 15-minute time slot for opening statements. Then, of course, the committee obviously will have questions. You can put your comments that you otherwise would have put in as parts of the answers to the questions, just like we politicians do. It doesn't matter what the question is, you know what the answer is anyway. We invite you to do that because you'll have an hour. And we will adjourn this meeting at approximately 4:45 p.m., one hour from now, unless of course there's unanimous consent that we proceed and there are continued questions, etc. In any event, I have to leave at 5:15 p.m. at the latest.

With that, Madam Stewart, you're going to go ahead?

• (1540)

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart (Campaigns Director, Living Oceans Society):** Thank you very much. And thank you for hearing us today. We appreciate your time and your interest in this issue.

Since Chairman Wappel has introduced all of my colleagues, we'll just dive right in.

The Prime Minister, Paul Martin, said in May 2005 it's time to stop the rape of our oceans once and for all. We agree with that sentiment. We're here today in Ottawa to ask the government to deliver more than strong words, to deliver actions—actions that will assist with the recovery of the northern cod stocks and will ensure the future of groundfish stocks on both coasts.

We're going to provide an overview of some of the steps Canada must take in order to address the problem associated with bottom trawling. We're going to talk about the science, the steps that other nations have taken to address these issues, and outline some of the proposed solutions that our groups would recommend.

First and foremost, though, we are asking this committee to consider that the Government of Canada must change our current position on bottom trawling. The fisheries minister has maintained in international fora that bottom trawling is no more destructive than any other gear type. The scientific consensus around the world contradicts that perspective. We believe that Canada must come to grips with the reality that this is an inherently destructive gear that should not be used in sensitive ecosystems and that we must make the transition to more sustainable gear types in order to ensure the recovery of the cod stocks and the future for groundfish on both coasts.

I'm going to turn it over first to Lance Morgan, who's going to give you an overview of some of the scientific research that's been done.

**Mr. Lance Morgan (Chief Scientist, Marine Conservation Biology Institute):** Again, I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee this afternoon. Thank you for having us here.

The corals, sponges, and other deep sea organisms that are on the sea floor are indeed the cradles of fishes, cods, and other marine life, as well as places for all these organisms to feed. So when you consider the recovery of cod, you might consider whether they have habitat with which to recover into. Jeff Hutchings at Dalhousie University has looked into this a great deal and does in fact indicate that some of the failure of the cod to recover is due to the fact that this habitat is no longer available. Other researchers, especially in

New England, in the U.S., have further looked at it and found that juvenile cod do indeed survive at a much higher rate. They are able to hide in these structures when predators are around, so their survival, obviously, is much better at this point in time when they can find the corals to live in.

In fact, there have been many reviews—one notable one is by the National Research Council in the U.S.—that have looked at bottom trawling, dragging, dredging, and its impacts on the sea floor. They have found that of course bottom trawling—if you'd looked at the net out there and seen some of those rollers, you would not be surprised to find this out—does indeed drastically reduce the productivity of the sea floor, crushing the corals and other structures. And in fact Mr. Eddy, a fisherman here, can speak to that more later on, with his observations of this, having been a fisherman.

ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, has also addressed the scientific literature as it pertains to deep sea corals and the impact of fishing on sponges and corals, and it has similarly concluded that bottom trawling is the most destructive form of fishing to these vulnerable habitats.

In the U.K., the royal commission also looked at environmental impacts of fishing as recently as last year, and they recommended that all bottom trawling be banned in British waters.

I have co-authored this report called *Shifting Gears*. It addresses environmental impacts of ten different fishing years, and the consensus of scientists, conservationists, fishermen, and managers was that bottom trawling was the most ecologically damaging of all fishing gears.

It should be no surprise that around the world now, with the advent of modern technologies to look at the sea floor, we've been able to bring back images of what healthy sea floors look like, where trawling gear hasn't been there, and the flattened rubble of different areas where fishing trawling gear has been run over the bottom. This is true of Australia, Norway, Canada, and the U.S., and we'd be happy to send you some of those pictures at a future point in time.

Finally, this scientific evidence spurred over 1,000 scientists to sign a joint petition to the United Nations in 2004 calling on a moratorium until such time as there is efficient regulation in place to restrict bottom trawling—the effects of bottom trawling on the high seas, especially sea mounds and the corals that live on these seas mounds, being of profound concern to this body of science.

With that, I will send it back to Mark.

• (1545)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mark Butler (Marine Campaign Coordinator and Internal Director, Ecology Action Centre):** Thank you, Lance.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee. I'd like to say a few brief words. We've brought along with us to Ottawa a trawler net and trawling equipment to give Canadians some idea of the magnitude of the problem affecting the industry and the sheer size of the nets used. However, what we're really interested in is finding a solution.

[English]

That's what I would like to focus on: the solutions.

One solution the Minister of Fisheries could do tomorrow would be to freeze the footprint—no new expansion of dragging either into new fisheries or new areas. I think there are a couple of MPs on this committee—for example, Gerald Keddy—who know about the controversies surrounded the opening up of rich lobster grounds to scallop dragging with no science in Southwest Nova, or the recent opening up of grounds off western Newfoundland to dragging after ten years of closure and after fishermen reported some restoration of the bottom habitat. I think that's a particularly unfortunate decision.

In terms of solutions, the two studies that Lance mentioned by ICES and the National Research Council in the U.S.A. identified three solutions: reduce effort, protect areas, and use less destructive gear. I think we all know that reduction of effort has been more or less forced upon us. When there was no more fish, we closed fisheries.

Protecting areas is something that is least in DFO's lexicon. Area closures is something they have some grasp of. When it comes to closing areas to draggers, there hasn't been much movement. But it's the third one, using less destructive gear, that particularly interests me because it's the one that isn't about simply stopping fishing; it's about doing it differently. I like to eat fish. I'd just like to see it done right.

I would like to read you two quotes. The first one is from Minister Geoff Regan in an address to the UN in November 2004 around the deep sea moratorium. Mr. Regan said:

Canada's position is that no specific gear type is inherently destructive depending on how they are used. From experience, we know that all gear types can have negative impacts.

When that gets translated down to the level of the fisheries manager...this is a quote from Leslie Burke, fisheries management branch, Scotia Fundy, Nova Scotia: "Dragging is a way of fishing that can have an impact on the seabed, but so is every other kind of fishing."

We've got international scientific bodies recommending the use of less destructive gear and we have DFO and the minister—and frankly, I think the minister is getting bad advice—saying there is no more or less destructive gear. I don't quite see how he can say that if you're going to take a ten-ounce cod jig, or a hook, and compare it with the gear that's on Parliament Hill that weighs ten tonnes. How can you say there is no more or less destructive gear type?

It's not that the minister doesn't realize the importance of habitat. Let me read you this quote:

There's a clear, undeniable link between the health of the fisheries and the health of fish habitat. The equation is brutally simple. No habitat, no fish.

That was Geoff Regan in January 2005. There's a disconnect here between his policy on gear and that statement. Just a little quip is that when we look at that, no habitat, no fish is a slogan of the habitat management branch of DFO. Sometimes we wonder whether it's a slogan or a goal.

Finally, why can't we move to a more realistic and reasonable position on gear? By the way, we're not asking for a ban on dragging. We're asking for some reasonable actions. We have the scientists saying this issue needs to be addressed. We have, I would bet, in Atlantic Canada 80% of the fishermen who would be supportive of some kind of restriction on dragging. We commissioned a poll of Atlantic Canadians—and I think it was pretty fair because they made it so that it was objective—and 70% of the respondents wanted restrictions on dragging and an additional 20% wanted a complete ban on trawling. I would note that in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, 26% wanted a complete ban on trawling. In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia the numbers were slightly less. That's a more radical position I think than we are taking.

I would leave it at that and pass it over to Dorthea.

● (1550)

**Mrs. Dorthea Hangaard (Sustainable Fisheries Researcher, Living Oceans Society):** Thank you, Mark.

I'm going to address the international situation, but I just want to touch on the domestic situation briefly. I hope you'll indulge that.

I'd like to talk about British Columbia for a moment, because I think this committee will be, in the years to come, looking at far more than the recovery of northern cod stock if they don't address the issue of bottom trawling in the country in general. You're going to have a lot on your plate.

I'll just give you one statistic to give you an idea of how active the trawl fleet is in British Columbia. This comes from the trawl observer data from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Between 1996 and 2002, B.C. dumped 68 million kilograms of bycatch. If you can imagine pickup trucks stretched from Vancouver to Prince George, that is the amount that was thrown overboard by the British Columbia bottom trawling fleet. So it is a significant issue in our province, and if it is not addressed throughout our nation, you will be looking at more than northern cod recovery.

What I'm mainly going to focus on is Canada's position on high seas trawling.

For the last 15 years, Canada has been one of the strongest proponents of the conservation agenda at the United Nations in terms of oceans. I think we're to be commended for that work, but I'd like to argue that so far it has been nothing more than words. Absolutely nothing has been put in place to bring this to practical action.

Because of our conservation agenda, we've ended up with the United Nations fish stocks agreement and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization code of conduct for responsible fishing operations, which I'm sure you're aware of.

I'd like to point out that in articles 5 and 6 of the United Nations fish stocks agreement, which Canada is a signatory to and which we are obliged to follow, we have agreed to the following: to apply the precautionary approach in preventing overfishing; to protect habitats of special concern; to assess the impact of fishing; and to minimize the impact of fishing.

It has been three years since the UN General Assembly called for urgent action on protecting sensitive ecosystems, but nothing has been put into action. These are all just words on a page. We're going to present what we think Canada could be doing right now as the United Nations meets.

Canada has delegates at the United Nations right now. They are negotiating the oceans and the law of the sea and the sustainable fisheries omnibus resolutions. So far, the only language our government has agreed to that would address the United Nations' urgent call to action to protect sensitive ecosystems is this one little paragraph, and I'll read it to you.

This is from the oceans and the law of the sea omnibus resolution, paragraph 11(c):

(c) request regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements with existing competency to implement spatial and temporal measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems do so as a matter of urgency;

If you didn't get the gist of that, what they're suggesting is that regional fisheries management organizations be the bodies responsible for putting a management regime in place on the high seas to protect sensitive ecosystems.

You're probably all aware of the fact that there are only five regional fisheries management organizations that are responsible for groundfish in the world. That leaves 70% of the high seas without any regional fisheries management organization. So that's the first problem with Canada's choice for action, and this is the only action they have agreed to so far at the UN.

The second problem is that the issue of creating these management regimes is going to be deferred until 2006. So they're not even going to look at this problem for a year, even though the United Nations has called for urgent action for the last three years. We all know that once they do sit down and look at this, it's going to be years before a management regime is put in place. So we have no action for sure, whether we're talking within an RFMO or without, for several years. What are we going to do about this?

The third problem I would point out is that I'm sure you're all aware of the panel that was appointed by DFO to review NAFO. It concluded that it should be disbanded because it was ineffective. That's the body that DFO is....

I have to wrap it up.

• (1555)

I want to mention that Canada's position at the United Nations is most closely aligned with Spain, the country that we are most concerned about. Canada and Spain both believe that a moratorium

on bottom trawling is unenforceable and that there is no one gear type more destructive than another. So something is wrong with that picture.

I'll leave it at that.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** There's a lot of information we'd like to share with you, and I'm sure some of it will come out in the question and answer period. We have circulated a document in both languages with four particular recommendations.

On the first, we are advocating that Canada must change its position and acknowledge the growing body of international science, the growing evidence that bottom-trawling gear is destroying the benthic environment, destroying species, and eliminating coral and sponge reefs, some that are globally rare. There are reefs in British Columbia that aren't known to exist anywhere else in the world. They're up to 9,000 years old and they are being rolled over by the trawl gear. If you haven't seen the gear, it's on display on the front lawn of the Centre Block today. It's worth taking a look at the rock hoppers and the roller gear. You can't look at them and not understand instinctively that they are causing great damage and destruction—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt you. I have in front of me a press release. Is that what you're looking at?

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** No. We did circulate the press release, but we also circulated this document with these four recommendations.

**The Chair:** That's exactly why I'm inquiring about it.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Thank you, Mr. Wappel. I appreciate it. I think it's being handed out now.

**The Chair:** I have it now, so just before you carry on with your closing remarks, let's let all the members have a look at it.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Sorry, I didn't realize that one hadn't been passed out yet.

**The Chair:** That's certainly not your problem.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** I think we surprised the clerk of the committee by providing two documents in both languages. I wish we could have provided them all.

**The Chair:** As he said, it's a pleasant surprise.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** On our suggestions for the action Canada should take, the first is that we must acknowledge the damage this gear is doing to the potential recovery of the cod stocks and the future of other groundfish stocks within our EEZ, but also on the high seas.

Two, we are asking the government to take immediate and concrete steps to reduce dragging activities within our exclusive economic zone. For example, in British Columbia, while DFO has set aside some areas and placed some trawling closures on a few small, representative areas of coral and sponge reefs that are globally unique, there is no actual protection of those reefs yet. They are so small and inadequate that they are not going to sustain that ecosystem for any length of time.

Concrete steps should be taken, like protecting truly globally rare and endangered ecosystems, freezing the footprint of the existing trawl industry so it's not allowed to expand and wreak havoc in areas of the ocean where there hasn't been any bottom dragging as yet, and trying to sustain the biodiversity of these areas while we at least do the groundwork around the science to understand what we're putting at risk if we expand the fishery.

We're asking the government to create incentives to help shift to more sustainable gear types in order to address not only the future of the fish stocks but the future of fishing communities on all of our coasts, which rely on the long-term viability of those stocks.

Finally, we're asking the Canadian government to support the United Nations' call for a moratorium on high seas trawling. This is absolutely essential. Canada has made a lot of noise over the years, as we all know, about the impacts the foreign draggers are having on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. We finally have an opportunity to do something about that, to take a leadership role within the global community, and to advocate for interim moratoria while we try to identify the areas of the high seas that are most vulnerable to this destructive gear.

Considering the concerns that have been raised amongst our citizens from coast to coast around the collapse of the cod fishery and the angst that has been directed at the foreign fleets outside our economic zone, it is incumbent upon our government to take a leadership role and ensure the moratoria go forward at the United Nations.

Thank you for your attention. We invite your questions and discussion.

Please also feel free to direct questions to Phil Kline from the United States, who can talk about the steps the U.S. is taking to address bottom dragging; and to Wayne Eddy, a commercial fisherman from Nova Scotia, who can speak from personal experience about the impact of this gear on local inshore sustainable fisheries.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Before I go to questions, there are a couple of clarification points. Is dragging a synonym for bottom trawling?

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Yes.

**The Chair:** All right.

Number two, I had some trouble with my earpiece while you, Ms. Stewart, were offering your testimony. I thought I heard you say you wanted to ban bottom trawling.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** No. We're asking Canada to support the moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. We're asking for closures

in specific areas where there are highly rare or endangered ecosystem types. In effect, we're asking for a ban on dragging only in designated areas, not across the board. But we are asking for a transition from dragging to alternative gears where there are other methods of targeting the particular stocks. In some cases, such as scallop dragging, dragging is the method that's used. I'm sure we could invent an alternative. But the main focus is when hook-and-line or more sustainable gear types are viable options, we should shift to those.

**The Chair:** Okay. I'm really not supposed to be asking questions. I'm supposed to let the members ask the questions. I'm just—

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** That was just clarification.

**The Chair:** —raising points of clarification.

Mr. Butler, you said you didn't want any new expansion of dragging. That's different from asking for an immediate interim moratorium. Are you in support of the interim moratorium?

**Mr. Mark Butler:** Yes, we're seeking a moratorium on the high seas, outside the 200-mile limit. Inside the 200-mile freeze the footprint, as it is called, use more sustainable types of gear in closed, sensitive areas.

**The Chair:** On that final point, Ms. Hangaard said Canada had done nothing. Apparently in August 2004, a cold water reef was closed off the coast of Nova Scotia. Is that not part and parcel of this, and isn't that something?

**Mrs. Dorteia Hangaard:** I was addressing high seas issues. Canada has taken some actions toward protection within domestic waters. It's not enough, but Canada certainly has taken some.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you.

Who's going to go first? Mr. Hearn, the official opposition critic for Fisheries and Oceans, may speak for 10 minutes.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll share my time because we may not get a chance to get around to everybody.

Let me thank the panel for coming, and let me say right off the top, I have absolutely no argument with practically all of what you say. We may have some disagreements as to how to go about it.

I am concerned about the word "moratorium" on the high seas because I think there will be blatant uprisings of people who say forget it. I do like the approach of selecting sensitive areas, such as coral areas, but you didn't mention spawning grounds. I certainly think that should be in there, since we've had too much dragging on spawning grounds. We've had too much habitat destroyed; we've had stocks eliminated by constant dragging and overfishing. Certainly, I have no problems with an approach like that, hopefully leading to a complete ban of dragging in sensitive areas on the high seas.

However, there are certain species that might be very difficult to catch without using a similar technology. Can we improve on that technology? Probably, yes. Is there another technology that could catch flounder or shrimp? I don't know, and these will be big issues to address. However, somebody has to start taking a step. We've been heavily involved in trying to deal with the northern cod issue, and certainly the main reason the cod disappeared was overfishing due to dragging, and the destruction of stocks generally. However, regarding the more sensitive issue of getting people onside, if we tell them right off the bat we want to get rid of dragging, the red flag goes up and people object. If we talk about phasing it in in areas with sensitive species—in certain spawning grounds—then I think we can build support. In the meantime, we can try to find out how to eliminate the effect of it on the destruction of habitat in relation to other species, which probably need certain technologies in order to be able to catch them.

I'd appreciate your answers to that.

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Mr. Eddy, go ahead.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy (Eastern Passage Fisherman, Ecology Action Centre):** When you mentioned the other gear types for catching different species, you happened to mention shrimp and flounder. Well, flounder have mouths, so we can catch them on hooks. And now they have shrimp traps with a design similar to a lobster trap to catch shrimp. So there are other methods in whatever category you're in.

What I don't think you understand is that bottom trawling is most important in the destruction of habitat. There is mid-water trawling and there is other trawling. There are other methods that might work with the shrimp and so on. This bottom trawling is understandable.

Make sure to look at that while it's set up on Parliament Hill, because we'll be taking it down this evening. You can see the destruction it would cause.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** I have just a quick point, Mr. Chair, and then I'll pass it along.

I think my comments there were to look at the people who are already involved. I'm well aware of the different gear types; I grew up on a boat and have used just about every type of gear there is. My area and my home have been basically destroyed economically because of what's happened in the fishery.

**The Chair:** Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** How much time do we have?

**The Chair:** You have six minutes and 26 seconds.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Did you have a point...?

**Mrs. Dorteia Hangaard:** With regard to the high seas moratorium, there's some fine print there that I'd like to add.

Implement the moratorium on high seas bottom trawling until the science is in place, until they have done the research and figured out a management regime and figured out where the sensitive areas are that need to be protected on the high seas. If we don't do that, they're going to be trawling until it's too late at that point. It's going to take a while.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Could I just add one brief comment to that?

I appreciate the distinction between the high seas and our EEZ and how we have to approach these issues. I believe you're absolutely correct that within the EEZ we need to talk about a transition plan, impacts on communities, impacts on fishermen, how to shift and develop that slowly. I think in the case of the high seas, most Canadians would certainly support a moratorium that kept the Spanish and the Portuguese draggers off the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. If it's presented in the context of the high seas, there will be pushback, but there was a lot of pushback when we campaigned for the drift net moratorium; nonetheless, the United Nations supported it.

So it's possible.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Thank you very much, and welcome to our presenters.

I have a couple of points. On the point that Mark brought up about area 29 and lobster habitat off southwestern Nova Scotia, one of the frustrating parts—at least for me, trying to represent a fishery-based and rural riding and being on this committee—is the fact that we don't take the reasonable, responsible approach. On the bottom dragging in area 29, for instance, the fishermen themselves have licences to fish there—the same lobster fishermen who catch lobsters there want to drag for scallops. They drag at two to four knots; the lobsters have time to crawl out of the way. They bring in the boats out of the Bay of Fundy to drag the same bottom; they drag it at six to eight knots or faster and they catch the lobsters.

So there are some fairly reasonable, responsible, pretty common sense answers to some of these problems that we don't even try to approach. I just find that a bit frustrating.

Does anyone—maybe Mr. Morgan—have any information on...? And I like the idea of a footprint, I'll tell you that, quite frankly. That's a great idea. Let's keep the footprint we have now; let's not make it any larger. But if we stop dragging on a piece of bottom tomorrow for groundfish—I'd like to keep the scallop fleet out of this conversation if I could—how long before that bottom would come back?

• (1610)

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** I would say the offhand news is not very good in terms of its ability to come back immediately.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** That's not the answer I was looking for.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** I think there is the opportunity for some recovery, but in many cases what we've done is flattened it completely down. We're talking about, at least with corals, organisms that may be hundreds of years old...to regenerate. The opportunities I think refer more to this idea of the footprint, because there's still habitat out there that hasn't been trawled. So preventing any further expansion at this point makes a lot of sense because of the drastic nature.



I think given time you are going to see some of the things recover. Where we have sunken ships and things like that, we've seen them get colonized by all kinds of marine life. Whether they were sunk by a torpedo during World War II or something else, they do get recolonized.

So there is some hope there, but I think it's not going to be—

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Do you know the timeframe?

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** I would not venture to guess.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** When the *Arrow* sank off the coast of Nova Scotia, there was a fair amount of bunker C that went on the bottom, and you'd be hard placed to find that today. I think it was eight to ten years—I have that information somewhere—before that seabed was recolonized.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** If you're talking about the recolonization as one process, the regrowth into habitat that has some vertical complexity to it, I know with some of the destroyers that were sunk off the south coast of the U.S. during World War II, 50 years later they have some fairly extensive growths of some of these corals on them, but 50 years is quite a long time.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I wasn't especially thinking about corals. I don't think there's a lot we can do if the corals have been dragged over. They're not going to come back in five or ten years, but I'm talking about some type of a bottom that would support groundfish specifically.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** I would say the main problem is that we haven't closed enough areas right now to actually look at that process. Where we've seen some closed areas on Georges Bank in the U.S., the scallops came back relatively quickly. Within about 10 years they had very good scallop catches there. For other groundfish we see little blips and people call it recovery, but it's only a per cent of the historic biomass.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** How much time do I have?

**The Chair:** Enough time for a question.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Okay.

I'm a little bit confused. I have a number of questions, but let me try this one.

You started your presentation today—and I was at the lunch time presentation as well—and you made something of a longer point about the fact that the scientific literature is sort of unequivocal, that it's destructive, let's say. You're calling for a moratorium until the scientific evidence is in, you say. Is it in or not in? Are they banned or not banned?

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** The science is in on the technology. The moratorium is in order to do the research, to identify where the rare, vulnerable, highly complex, special ecosystems are on the high seas. That research hasn't been done.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** So there are some places where it doesn't matter if it's destructive. We can still use it.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** I would defer to Lance on that one, I think.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** If I understand the position, what I think is the appropriate position, it gets back to Mr. Hearn's point, that there

are some places where we're saying that we need to transition from trawling to other gear. There are other areas that have some of these complex sea floor sponge coral habitats that should not be trawled at all. In the U.S. we've looked at this as more of a comprehensive zoning approach, so that certain gear types are recognized for what they are and it can be sustainable.

In Canada it's an inshore move to hook-and-line fishermen, and maybe there are areas offshore where dragging can continue. But it needs to be put into a method and analysis. Phil can probably speak to this as well, what has happened in the U.S., where we've had a look at what the habitats are and we've mapped some of the sea floor. The Scotian Shelf has been well mapped, from my understanding, and you could very clearly go through it and probably, with a good process of working with the fishermen and the scientists, look at the different types of habitats and create something in the order of an inshore sustainable hook-and-line fishery. Maybe further offshore, where it's a little bit harder to get to, the bigger boats can drag certain areas, but at the same time have reasonable areas where we have these sensitive habitats set aside from the dragging.

•(1615)

**The Chair:** Mr. Kline, did you want to add anything briefly? I'd like to get you on the record, since you're here.

**Mr. Phil Kline (Senior Fisheries Policy Advisor, Oceana):** Thank you for having us today.

Fisheries management is no less controversial in the United States than it is in Canada. This issue has been taken up in our management structure, which is regional fisheries management councils, which are composed of state representatives in the region and the public at large, which, except for one individual, is the fishing industry.

The sponge and deep water coral were something that came out of the fishing industry to the scientific community and now to the public at large. As this is out there, we know it's important.

The answer to your question about recovery is that these corals grow very slowly. The timeframe is centuries. On some of the sandy, gravelly bottom areas, bryozoans and other organisms recover quicker.

In the United States, in the regional management process that's dominated by the fishing industry, from the Mexican border to the end of the Aleutian Islands this year the industry supported an alternative for habitat protection that truly is a world precedent. They froze the footprint. Our regional councils that have taken action have voted unanimously, so it has the support of industry. They've frozen the footprint of where people are presently trawling.

Where we have maps and known special areas that might have been included in that footprint but that weren't trawled over—a steep canyon edge, a pinnacle, or someplace where coral and sponge habitats exist—those were set aside in designated zones where only bottom trawling is outlawed. Mid-water trawling is not outlawed, nor are any of the hook-and-line fisheries, commercial or recreational. This is really addressing the biggest impact on those communities. So that was accomplished.

We created two zones. We created conservation zones for habitat and we created defined open trawling zones. We chose seven years. In the past seven years, if the area had been trawled, it was included in the open trawl zone. That left the rest of our exclusive economic zone undesignated. In the undesignated area, because the footprint was frozen, you could not trawl outside of the areas you'd been trawling, creating a de facto no-trawl moratorium until such time as it's designated as either an open fishing ground or a closed sensitive area for any number of reasons, including habitat. This gives the scientific community the opportunity to go out and map and assess the resources and make reasonable recommendations to the fisheries management process regarding what the expected impacts would be if you were to go fish there on the bottom.

This really is the first world-size precedent paradigm shift in management. Fisheries management historically has been to fish until you create a crisis and then try to deal with it. By freezing the footprint and asking the scientists to make recommendations on appropriate use as you get the mapping and assessments done, you shift that paradigm so you can have a responsible response to management.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kline.

Yes?

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** I'd like people to understand the scope of the closures in the United States. If you could, just address the size.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** From Mexico to Alaska is pretty broad.

**Mr. Phil Kline:** Over half a million square miles have been closed on the west coast from the Aleutian Islands all the way down to southern California. Again, there were unanimous votes by the fishing industry to move this way, and they're proud of what they've done.

**The Chair:** On that score, is there any documentation in that regard, agreements, anything in writing?

**Mr. Phil Kline:** Yes, there are federal fisheries management plans that were derived by our regional process and then sent to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** What I'm asking is, are there any documents the industry has signed onto, for example, that you could send to this committee?

**Mr. Phil Kline:** There are the records of the votes at the regional councils, where each member has a known profile. On the Pacific coast and in the north Pacific there are only users on the councils. There are no conservation or public interest voices.

**The Chair:** We'd like copies of whatever you can give us in that regard.

**Mr. Phil Kline:** We can get that for you.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

Our next questioner is Monsieur Roy, who is the critic for the Bloc Québécois.

Monsieur Roy.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Mr. Roy, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Thank you for being here. During your presentation, you focused a great deal on deep-sea fishing. That poses a problem. When trawl fishing is done in an area such as Chaleurs Bay between New Brunswick and Quebec, major spawning grounds are destroyed, such as herring spawning grounds.

I don't quite understand. Unless I misunderstood you, you said that Canadians would willingly accept a ban on deep-sea trawling in certain zones.

Canadians realize full well that trawl fishing in domestic waters like Chaleurs Bay in fact destroys the seabed and causes significant damage to the environment. Therefore, I have a problem supporting your proposal, since it pertains only to deep-sea trawling.

Why are you not proposing a similar ban on coastal trawl fishing?

[English]

**Mrs. Dorteia Hangaard:** We believe that until Canada changes its position that no one gear type is more destructive than another, which is their domestic and international position, we're not going to get very far domestically or internationally. Right now we have the opportunity to sway the government's opinion on that matter at the United Nations, and we have been drawing your attention to that today because we feel it is a matter of urgency for us to pressure the Canadian government to look at the work they're doing at the United Nations and change their position there. In supporting the moratorium, they will be signifying that they are changing their position that no one gear type is more destructive than another.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** I think, Mr. Roy, if you look at our four recommendations, however, you'll see we are saying it's essential to take action within the EEZ as well. We're calling for protection in the sensitive ecosystems by freezing the footprint.

Mr. Hearn mentioned earlier that the transition will have an impact on communities, on people, so you have to carefully develop a transition plan domestically that addresses human needs as well as ecological need. We are advocating that this transition be taken seriously by the government and that we start to develop a plan in order to address the impacts within our EEZ as well.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** I think we're asking for a moratorium on the high seas, which is different from a ban. It means give us the time to identify the areas that are perhaps more sensitive, and then maybe in five or ten years there will be trawling in certain areas.

I think it is important to recognize that there are more and less sensitive habitats and that certain habitats might be more resilient. Also, I think to some extent we have to accept that maybe certain parts of the ocean might be modified by human activity. Right now we have 100% of the land that is modified by human activity—well, 100%. Sorry. I'm doing a disservice to my profession, but you know we have much of the land that is affected by human activity, and perhaps we shouldn't expect 100% of the ocean not to be affected by human activity.

This may sound odd for a conservationist who has fought long and hard to have the government do something about dragging to say that, but where we are right now is so far from what you're talking about that to have a ban on dragging in Canadian waters.... We're so far from what you're suggesting for Canadian waters that we're not even willing to acknowledge the destruction that's taking place now or that there are some gear types that are less destructive.

• (1625)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Roy.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** I agree with your take on the situation, except for your example of the land and the sea. We cultivate the land, but not the sea. There is quite a difference. When an ocean is destroyed, it must regenerate naturally, whereas it's different with the land.

I'd like to come back to the other types of gear mentioned by Mr. Eddy, among others. I'd like to discuss the potential impact of a ban on coastal communities.

For example, if trawl fishing was banned in our waters, do you have any idea of the economic impact of this ban on coastal regions and on communities that earn their living from fishing, whether in Eastern Canada, or on the West Coast? These communities are already having a hard time because of dwindling stocks.

If a ban is placed on trawl fishing, we should consider an aid package for those communities that would be affected. Have you evaluated the impact this decision would have?

Furthermore, how have the economies of coastal regions in the United States been affected by this moratorium?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Butler:** Perhaps I could answer, and maybe Wayne or Bill.

At lunchtime we were talking about western Newfoundland, where a closure was put in place in the early nineties. Then the hook-and-line fleet was allowed to return, and you saw a return of codfish. The fishermen also noticed the return of the bottom. They started catching animals like sea lilies and sea potatoes on their hooks, bottom invertebrates that they hadn't seen for a long time. You now have a pretty healthy fishery taking place in that region, employing more people; per pound of fish caught, hook-and-line fishing employs more people than dragging does.

In western Newfoundland the fishermen realize that there is that situation, so they are working with the local development corporation to see if they can buy quota from the dragger fleet and keep the draggers off their grounds, because they've already seen it happen once, and I think they don't want to see it happen again.

So there are ways to do it—through incentives, through shifting quota from one gear set to another over time—that could minimize impacts.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Could I suggest also that Mr. Eddy address the impacts on communities of continuing dragging? Then Mr. Kline would like to briefly address what Iceland has done.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** I'm going to make a statement right now that in 1992-93, when the moratorium went on the cod on the east coast in 4W zone, which is from Halifax up to Cape Breton and all of Newfoundland, the compensation and everything were already made through TAG programs and whatever.

The bottom dragging now is done 90-some percent by large corporations that already have that gear and have been going at it. It's cut back now, so the transition or the compensation, the impact on stopping bottom trawling, is nowhere near the thinking of the moratorium that already was there and was already paid for. I'm telling you, and I know for sure, that if today you told the people on the east coast that there is no more bottom trawling, but you've got this much quota—the fish have come back—they'll be going fishing, and there will be more people employed than you had in the fishery. There are 50% of them gone now, and that would come rising pretty damn fast without any bottom trawling.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** That's what I wanted to hear.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Roy.

[English]

Next is Mr. Stoffer for five minutes, and then Mr. Cuzner.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations on your reappointment.

I thank all of you for coming from your homes, especially from the United States, to come up here to bring this issue to our attention. This committee has discussed it, on and off, for a period of years.

I have some basic questions, though. Dr. Morgan, you talked about two booklets that you had shown. Would it be possible to get copies for the committee at a later time?

Also, Mr. Eddy, can you please describe to the committee, when the questions finish, what's it like out there when you're fishing hook and line and you see a dragger go by?

Sir, you had talked about the example in the United States—the 250,000, if I'm not mistaken, square...miles, I suspect?

• (1630)

**Mr. Phil Kline:** It is over 500,000 square miles.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** It's half a million square miles. Was that industry-driven, and then government accepted it, or was it government saying to industry that you've got to do this? One of the problems I have is—and maybe Mr. Butler can go on this—Mr. Eddy talked about the corporations doing most of the dragging. It seems like a no-brainer that to protect the habitat we would put a moratorium on and find out where the areas are that need to be protected, because without the habitat you don't have fish. It's like on land—if you don't have habitat, you don't have moose or caribou or anything else.

Who is advising the government? Is it industry, or is it somebody else telling government to tell these wackos to get lost? We want to continue this path of fishing. To go back, as Wayne said, to individual hook-and-line fishing may be wonderful, but it's not efficient. It may be long term, but it's not for short-term profit. Who is pushing the government to go the other way?

**The Chair:** For the record, Dr. Morgan shook his head in the affirmative with respect to providing the committee with documentation.

The next question was to Mr. Eddy.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** We're talking about the destruction here of these.... It gets back to the same picture. I've seen these large trawlers—I've been longlining for years—and when they went by me at different times you'd see that nice blue ocean turn into a great big grey road, where everything is torn up from the bottom and the actual colour of the ocean changes for many hours, before it settles back out again and spreads out across the ocean.

This is the large destruction we're talking about, the whole concept of this bottom-dragging and the destruction it does, not only to the fish stocks but with the dumping at sea. It's the large corporations that are still at it today—like the FBIs, the Clearwaters, and the National Seas that our government bailed out in the 1980s I don't know how many times over—that caused this big problem.

Some of the horror stories I've talked to the draggersmen about.... There are a lot of draggersmen out there who hate to go aboard that boat and see the destruction it's doing. Yet they can make money at it, and the Canadian government is letting them do it, so they say "Let's go make the money". Yet they're still shaking their heads: "Why are we doing this, if you get destruction like that?"

As I said, all you MPs here in Ottawa should go out and look at that on the line, and if you can't understand, when that is dragged across the bottom, what destruction it's going to do not only to the fish, but to the habitat and everything, then you shouldn't be our representatives here, because you're not very smart. You can figure out the destruction it's doing, with the 15 tonnes of gear being dragged across the bottom tearing up coral, tearing up everything.

There are dead zones out in that ocean right now, dead zones with nothing there, that I can set a piece of bait on that will stay there for 12 to 24 hours and come back the same way it went into the water, because there's nothing there to eat it; there are no organisms whatsoever to eat it. If you go to another zone and put a piece of bait on a hook and put it in the water, it wouldn't last half an hour, because there's a living ocean there.

This is the destruction it has been doing and has done in the past, with the foreign fleet here years ago when we had the 12-mile limit. I've seen it with them; I've seen it with the National Seas, and I see it yet again with the FBIs, the Clearwaters, and the large corporations. There are very few small ones.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Eddy.

Mr. Butler, you had something directed towards you.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** When I look at DFO's position on gear and then at the position of, say, the Fisheries Council of Canada, representing the large players in the fishery, I see almost no difference. I see them saying almost exactly the same thing the minister is saying. Perhaps it's as simple as that.

I also think there are certain people in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans who simply invested their lives in a certain way of doing things and are deeply reluctant to change. We had some middle-level official come over from DFO today who was quite rude to one of our volunteers and also quite dismissive of the impacts of dragging on the ocean floor, which is quite amazing from a fisheries management official.

I think one thing we need to ask within DFO of DFO's science is, what are you telling your fisheries managers? DFO says they manage on the basis of good science, and there seems to be a huge gap between what DFO's science is doing or not doing and what the rest of the scientific world is saying. In our magazine, which I can provide you copies of, we have DFO scientists directly contradicting—not intentionally, but just because they have to speak the truth—what the minister is saying about gear. This really has to change.

•(1635)

**The Chair:** Mr. Butler, would you happen to know the name of the person you're referring to?

**Mr. Mark Butler:** The DFO scientist?

**The Chair:** The person who was rude to your volunteer.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** I do.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Eddy, give us the name if you know it, just for interest's sake.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** The volunteer we're speaking of is right here, Lisa Asbreuk, who is a third year law student doing some research for us on the Fisheries Act and the Fisheries Act renewal.

**The Chair:** Do you know his name?

**Mr. Mark Butler:** His name is Chris Allen.

**The Chair:** This is just for interest's sake. We're not—

**Mr. Mark Butler:** He was the particular individual, but it's the person above him, unfortunately; it's Les Burke in Halifax. It's more pervasive than one individual, but I appreciate your asking.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The last word is to you, Mr. Kline, briefly.

**Mr. Phil Kline:** I wanted to respond to your question about the process and how it was implemented. I'll try to be brief.

In the mid-1990s, the federal law was changed; it included conservation mandates in fisheries management. One of them was for the councils to assess impacts of fishing gear on habitat and, where there are adverse impacts, to minimize them.

Two years later, councils had done nothing. At that time, a group of fishermen in different regions around the country and environmentalists sued, and they won that lawsuit, which caused the first environmental impact statements to be written on fisheries. These environmental impact statements had a range of alternatives: one end was status quo; one end was the result we have now, with these massive closures, freezing the footprint, etc.

Once the councils had that alternative analysis and science to look at, then they chose the most conservative option and voted unanimously to implement it.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Unanimously?

**Mr. Phil Kline:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Ms. Hangaard.

**Mrs. Dorteia Hangaard:** I really want to address the issue of why this is happening. Where is the pressure coming from?

Something I have realized in the time I've been researching sustainable fisheries is that DFO's mandate at this point is obviously to get out of managing the fishery. In order to do that, to privatize the fleet, move toward the quota system, and have the industry manage themselves, there have to be large boats with big owners who can pay the fees that are necessary to do that kind of management. They've got to pay for their own observers. They've got to have some kind of on-board monitoring systems. They've got to write their own management plans, and they have to have consultants. It really does look as though DFO is trying to get out of managing the fishery. And I really think it is a significant point, when you look at how gutted the department is becoming.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Cuzner.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Thanks very much for being here today. It's important that you make time to present your case and support your case.

I just want to go back to Mr. Butler and the comment about the DFO science. I can't imagine Les Burke, or the minister, appearing at the UN and making a statement that there's no difference in gear types, unless there was some type of reference to a bank of science that had to be undertaken by DFO. So I'm just wondering if there is something your groups would be aware of, where you at least have been able to see and question or peer review...? What is their reference point? Is it ongoing?

If you want to just further develop that, please do so, and maybe Dr. Morgan might want to do that as well.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** Certainly.

There's always a certain amount of scientific uncertainty. Remember smoking, or acid rain, or climate change. Those who don't want to change will use that uncertainty that's around science not to change. I don't think—

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Is that their position, that it's not so much that they have a bank of science they refer to, but it's more that your science is open to challenge?

• (1640)

**Mr. Mark Butler:** No, I think our science is very, very clear. When I first started working on this issue, there wasn't a lot around, apart from common sense and fishermen's knowledge. Now there is. We're a member of ICES. Read the ICES report and the National Research Council: use less destructive gear.

The minister is saying.... Unfortunately, I think it's partly because ocean issues don't occupy the minds of most Canadians and he can get away with that. We would challenge DFO science to a public debate—to any kind of forum. We will live and die by good science.

There are processes going on in DFO where DFO is starting to classify habitats. Do you know that DFO has never, ever done an assessment of the impacts of the fishery on the ocean floor? They have never done what the United States has done. They have never done what ICES has done. It's never been done, I guess, because of political obstruction.

Most of us know people in DFO—the working people in DFO, the working scientists. What they will tell you and what they will say publicly are two very different things. But we have quotes from Dave Wildish, St. Andrews Biological Station, saying that what we need to do in the Bay of Fundy is to close certain areas to dragging and use less destructive gears. Well, that's in direct contradiction to the minister's statement.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** May I add something to that? Thank you.

In the years I've worked with DFO, I think there have been a number of issues, and Mark has touched on some of them. One of them is whether scientists are empowered—given the authority, given the resources, given the mandate—to research the issues that demand researching, and often they're not. The Living Oceans Society just did an analysis of bycatch from the observer reports on the B.C. trawl fleet. The Department of Fisheries has never analyzed their own data. Those scientists may have wanted to do that, but they have not been empowered to do it.

There have been examples where scientific research, or recommendations, have been altered by stock management regimes. For example, the Pacific Scientific Advice Review Committee would make a recommendation of a low- to high-risk TAC, total allowable catch. If you look at the PSARC document, the range is from here to here; if you look at the management document, it's from here to here, quoting the scientists and suggesting that's the range the scientists are proposing. So there are examples within the department where the scientific recommendations are overruled by management interests and by political interests.

Finally, there's the question of suppression of data, when research is done but is not released, is not distributed, is not available. If you get wind of it, you can apply for it through access to information. I think most of us are probably familiar with the case of the Kemano Completion Project in B.C. and the so-called dissident scientist. That is not outside the realm of experience within DFO, where science that contradicts management objectives or political objectives is simply suppressed.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Okay.

About how much time do we have left?

**The Chair:** You have five minutes.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** There are two others, but if you want to make quick comments on this—

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** Yes, a quick comment.

Your question was, does science know something that we don't know, or something like that. I'm going to challenge you, as a smart man, because I know you are or you wouldn't be sitting there, to go out and look at this gear—

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** That's not necessarily so. You just have to be popular.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** —and tell me it's not going to cause any destruction to the ocean bottom when it's dragged across the bottom.

Now, I am not a scientist, and I don't have to be a scientist to understand that that's going to do major damage when I drag that across the bottom. They wouldn't let us down here...it's all right to drag that across the bottom of the ocean. They wouldn't let us put a tent peg on the lawn up there because it might damage it. What's that going to do if we drag that thing right across the lawn? You'd have no lawn left. That's what I'm saying. You don't have to go with science; go with your own science. Use some common sense and look at it.

**Mr. Phil Kline:** We don't think it's a matter of scale. I've fished for 25 years. It's where I've spent most of my life, at sea. I was a hook-and-line fisherman and I broke off a branch of coral now and then. But I've also been in the same area and watched a trawl boat go through and take the entire coral garden with it in a matter of 10 minutes. So there are impacts from other gears, but a lot of them are minimal impacts that we can get recovery from.

So the grey policy area, when statements like that are made, that everything impacts...yes, everything impacts, but it doesn't go on to say that one clear-cuts and one breaks a tiny branch off. That's the grey policy area on statements like that.

For economic things—we've been talking about this—a hook-and-line-caught fish is much more valuable in the marketplace than a trawl-caught fish. The shelf life is up to five times as long, so dealers will pay more for it because they have a longer time to turn it over and earn their profit. So it's not all about volume, when you're talking economics. It's about dollar value of the fish, and the hook-and-line fish command the premium price.

• (1645)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** My next question will be on that as well, because obviously what we're faced with—I know in the Atlantic—is a shift in the paradigm. What we did for years was gather as much

fish as we could, process it in as short a time as we could, and get it to market. Probably the rationale back when they were firing up the draggers was to feed the factories. Now those factories are in China and they're in India and our product is going offshore.

With the draggers, what we're looking at is exactly what you've been saying: it is about the quality of the product. A juvenile cod in the middle of a dragger's net doesn't get a lot of love and attention. The other thing the draggers are doing beyond the bottom—and I think you have to play up this side—is what you're doing to the product.

I'd like Mr. Eddy to make a comment. What I'm hearing from the fishermen as well is that one of the other bad results of the dragging is the disappearance of the sharks. Out where guys are shrimping eight hours off the east coast, they're not seeing sharks. So give me your comment on that.

I know you look like an honest guy, and I'm sure you are an honest guy, so how about a comment on seals as well.

I'll end on that one, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Mr. Eddy, you have sharks and seals, and you have a minute and 10 seconds.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** For starters, the sharks—here we go back to the hook and line again. Most sharks are killed with the hook and line, not with the bottom draggers. Most of the sharks are not on the bottom. That's the longline fleet that's floating for swordfish or large pelagic stuff.

Over the years, when I fished 60,000 hooks per trip, I might have caught half a dozen or a dozen sharks in a whole year's fishing. As I say, I make two trips a week—when we were allowed to fish. On the shark, there are ways.... It all depends on what you're fishing; there's a way to look at it and a way to address it.

The seals are another matter. I don't really want to go there. All I can tell you is that seals—

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** You're among friends.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** —on Sable Island on the east coast of Nova Scotia in the last six years have increased tenfold. They have increased tenfold. Guess what? Seals eat.

We're not talking destruction of what the draggers are doing. When I start talking about the seals like that, it's the impact they're making on the fish stocks not coming back after the draggers destroyed the fish stocks.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

There's obviously great interest, so I'm going to get one question from anybody who wants to ask it. Try to make the question short and the answer a little bit longer.

Mr. Keddy.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** And the answer a little bit longer.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** I have one quick comment for the panel. I think if we could come to an agreement on seals, we could come to agreement on it all.

Rodger, you brought up bottom trawling. There's a huge reason we don't have a public outcry about bottom trawling—you can't see it. It's out of sight, so it's out of mind. It's as simple as that. If you could see it, we wouldn't be having this discussion.

I'm concerned about the United Nations approach. I'm not sure that has any validity. I see too often—

**The Chair:** Mr. Keddy, quickly.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** —you bring in a UN resolution and no one does anything with it. I would much sooner see us, Canada, taking control of everything out to the 200-mile limit and actually enforcing it, especially the bottom dragging—and the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. I want to hear your comments.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Lance wanted to make a comment.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** I want to make one quick comment about the UN approach, because I think it's been slightly misrepresented.

Part of the reason the UN is calling for a moratorium—and it is a moratorium, an interim approach—is not what you think. Part of it is the fact that most of the high-seas fishing is illegal, unreported, unregulated—that is, IUU—fishing. There are no agreements in place. Under all the fish stocks and every other agreement we've made as an international community, we've said we're not going to do IUU fishing. Right now, high-seas bottom trawling is IUU fishing. There should be a moratorium put in place, and during that time we should come to some agreement about how we're going to regulate this fishing.

It isn't necessarily about the science. As I said, the science is pretty clear on what bottom trawling does, but 70% of the area of the high seas has no regulation in regard to the seamounts, the deep sea areas, and the deep sea bottom trawl fishing that's going on there; the moratorium really is about getting a governance structure we can all agree on, so that we can then go back and have some thoughtful management and governance of the high seas.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

What are the three letters you were using, and what do they stand for?

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** They are IUU—illegal, unregulated, and unreported.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** I have a quick question.

You told our chairman at the beginning that bottom trawling and dragging were the same thing. If we had 100 bottom trawlers in this room, would they all do it the same way? Would some claim to be environmentally friendly bottom trawlers and point the finger at some of their competitors and say that they do it...? Would some claim there's a way to do it responsibly?

**A voice:** They're all tarred with the same brush.

**Mr. Phil Kline:** There are different ocean conditions out there. In habitats that are high energy and subject to disturbance, the ecology has evolved to respond to those disturbances. There are shallow, sandy areas for sand dab and flounder. It's a totally different story when you move into deeper water that's never subject to a disturbance, where the animals that live on the bottom haven't evolved to respond to the disturbance.

There is size of nets. There is area swept. There is the way you rig the nets—what kinds of rollers and rock hoppers you have on them. If you brought 100 trawlers into a room and asked that question, you would probably get 100 different answers.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Butler.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** One of DFO's lines is it's the attitude of the person using the gear, and maybe to some extent that's true. At the same time, you could put Jesus at the wheel of a dragger and there would still be a lot of damage. And again, in preparing for this trip to Ottawa we had a couple of dragger skippers actually work with us.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** May I make one quick comment, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Keddy mentioned that the main problem with bottom dragging is out of sight, out of mind. That's what we're here for: to make awareness among people, among the MPs here. When one of our own Fisheries people—and we mentioned his name here a while ago—says that those things don't really drag across the bottom, that's our own Fisheries people who don't know what's going on out there, so how is the public going to know? And when we educate the public, you'll have a public outcry and it will be stopped.

**The Chair:** Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Chairman, we found out just recently that DFO manages its internal finances like they do the fisheries now.

But I want to ask you a very serious question. If the status quo remains and they don't do anything until 2006, if they keep dragging their feet—let's use that pun—how much time do we have left before the stocks are irreversibly damaged to the point where you just forget about it and you get the last one? We heard in Newfoundland a guy say, catch the last one and finish it off because we'll all be done soon.

Dr. Morgan, this may be an unfair question, and you don't have to answer it now, but we've heard in Newfoundland people saying that maybe the northern cod stocks at 2J3KL off Newfoundland should be listed as an endangered species. Have you had a chance to ascertain that, and would you support that type of call, to make that species listed under SARA, our Canadian Environmental Protection Act, as an endangered species?

**The Chair:** Two questions: how long and endangered species.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** The first point I'll make is that it's already been estimated that most of the deep sea hard bottom habitat that's above about 1,000 metres has been fished at some point, at least dragged once. That's an awful lot of deep sea. There's a lot of dragging that's going on in the high seas, and this is why the moratorium issue has come up and is a pressing issue.

We can trawl to about 2,000 metres depth, maybe a little bit deeper, right now with technology that exists. There is still a lot of sea floor deeper than that, but this means that most of the shallower seamounts of the world have been fished, in the middle of the Indian Ocean, in the middle of the South Pacific, and throughout the North Atlantic.

There have been estimates that by about 2025 there won't be a deep sea fishery left. That's in the literature, and I'd be happy to share those references with you as well.

As far as the cod goes, I would really defer it to Canadian fisheries scientists who know this better. I know Haedrich at Memorial University is somebody who has worked with the Species at Risk Act in Canada, and it is his position that at least some of the cod stocks certainly would warrant to be listed.

•(1655)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Murphy, last question.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses.

I want to ask you one question. You talked about the larger bottom trawl. Let's take a specific ecosystem here in Atlantic Canada. You say raise public awareness, but I think we have to do a lot of work in the fishing industry. In the Northumberland Strait there's a raging debate out there right now between the scallop dragging that is going on and the lobster fishermen. And the scientists are very clear. It's very destructive on the habitat, the scallop draggers. They go up and down with these big engines, 600 horsepower, with the hydraulic lifts and everything. We go to the fishermen...and the scientists agree, it's destructive. The fishermen won't take a position on this, because it might offend one of their brothers who happens to scallop-drag. In the meantime, the lobster catch, especially in the middle strait, is going down.

Perhaps I can ask Dr. Morgan—and anyone else—what's your view on scallop dragging and the damage it does to the habitat, and how can we get this on the table, not so much of the public but of the fishermen? They never take a position.

**Mr. Lance Morgan:** Well, scallop dragging is probably second to bottom trawling in terms of its destructive nature in fishing. Probably the only thing that makes it that way is that scallop dragging is in fact restricted to a much smaller geographic area, so the area impacted....

Where it does come into conflict with other fisheries, I think the discussion really needs to get back to the idea of how we are going to manage different uses of this ocean. You can't have it both ways out there. You can't say we're going to support the lobster fishery and we're going to have a full-on scallop fishery at the same place and

the same time. There have to be some decisions made by the fishery management people that this is a scallop zone and this is a lobster zone.

There have been plenty of signs in the U.S. and plenty of council actions that have said we have king crab saving areas here and we are not going to allow any trawling and dragging here. Some of those have been too late, as we've already destroyed some of the crab fisheries, but you have to deal with these conflicts.

I think one of the things that will inspire fishermen to be involved in this conversation is to say, we need to know what the impacts of this are, so that we can actually parcel out where we're going to allow different types of fishing activities and keep moving through this process. If they all feel like there's an honest process where they can address the impacts, then you're going to get the draggers involved in the conversation, and they will work on the solution with you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** I wonder if the members here know that DFO, the Canadian government, has just issued, in the last two years, five more clam-drag licences for the large clambers of Clearwater Fine Foods to drag the bottom for clams. So they're still giving them out.

**The Chair:** Mr. Butler.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** We've had a couple of fairly desperate calls to the Ecology Action Centre from lobster fishermen in P.E.I., because they're seeing their lobster fishery go down the tubes. They ascribe part of the reason for that to scallop dragging.

**A voice:** They don't speak up.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** Well, there's one at least who has called us. I've forgotten his last name.

I agree that at some point fishermen have to take some responsibility and not just shrug their shoulders and say, oh well, DFO is letting me do it, and if I don't do it, my neighbour will, so I'm going to do it too.

Fishermen do have to take some responsibility. But in the end, you are the government, and we had the science on the impacts of dragging, and DFO.... If the managers don't have the courage to act, then the minister should have the courage to act, because, yes, you're right that in small communities it is quite difficult for brother to come out against brother. Thank God there are fishermen like Wayne.

I think if DFO showed more backbone, then fishermen would be willing to stick their necks out. But fishermen have stuck their necks out; I know a lot of fishermen who have taken some risk to come before the FRCC or you guys to say something, and nothing happens. Now they laugh at us; they laugh at Wayne, because they think, well, there's no point. There is a lot of cynicism out there, because DFO will not show leadership. That's really sad.

•(1700)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

A final word to Mr. Kline.



**Mr. Phil Kline:** I've fished 26 crab seasons in the north Pacific. The fixed gear fishermen have thousands of dollars sitting on the bottom of the ocean, and it takes thousands of hours of work to get that gear ready to put out there, yet it takes a matter of minutes for a scallop dredge or a trawl net to clean that gear off, and then you are out of business. So are you going to risk your business and step out to say something on an issue that you just brought up? That is really one of the roots.

If lobster fishermen came out with a rod and reel and then went home again, they would undoubtedly be very vocal, but that's not the case. They have their capital investment in the traps out there, which oftentimes are worth more than their houses and vehicles combined, and they are at risk of being left at sea. Scallop fishermen fish with dredges; that's the name of the gear, because they actually cut into the surface of the bottom of the ocean.

Lance was absolutely correct that you actually need to set up zones. Have the places that are most productive for scallops be the scallop zone. Scallop fishermen tend to condition the bottom, as they call it, in removing rocks bigger than a pillow.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** If I can correct you, we're talking about the same fishermen here. The scallop fishermen who are there are the lobster fishermen; they all have lobster licences.

There are different seasons, too, by the way.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** I think Mark's point is the one that we would all support. We've all seen instances like that where the fishermen are reluctant or fearful to speak out. It's DFO that has to take the leadership role; it's the government that has to say this is the process by which we are going to resolve this, and then step into the breach.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Obviously, it was a very interesting panel. There were clearly many questions, and we went beyond our time.

We appreciate that you asked to appear before us. This will help us as we consider our report on the cod, because that was the beginning of the meeting after all. These issues are part of that and were raised in Newfoundland when we were there.

We want to thank you very much for your appearance, for the demonstration outside, for the lunch, although I didn't attend that, and for your testimony. We look forward to all of the material that you promised to send to us.

Thank you.

**Mr. Wayne Eddy:** We need some help to load that. So if you really want to know how big it is, you're all welcome.

**The Chair:** We have a matter of order, for a moment, please.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** May I have 30 seconds?

**The Chair:** Mr. Murphy, for 30 seconds.

**Hon. Shawn Murphy:** Mr. Chairman, the minister would like to take the committee to dinner. We had a dinner at this time last year, and he'd like to do it again.

If it's suitable to the committee to go out to dinner, just the committee and no staff, he was suggesting that it be on Tuesday, November 2. The invitation is out there, and perhaps we'll bring it up next week.

**The Chair:** Okay. Please do.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Mr. Butler, one second.

Before everybody rushes away, our next meetings will be at 3:30 to 5:30 on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, which are the days we agreed upon. At that time, we will continue to give instructions on the report on the cod.

Mr. Butler.

**Mr. Mark Butler:** I only wanted to say that most of us are going to be in town until Friday afternoon. We'd be happy to meet with anyone for further discussions and to show some of the data, a PowerPoint presentation, etc.

**Mrs. Catherine Stewart:** Both my phone number and Mark's phone number are on the bottom of the press release that you received. You can contact either one of us and we can set up a meeting.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Great.

I will be calling a steering committee meeting for Tuesday, November 1. Mr. Latimer will be in touch.

Thanks again, everybody.

The meeting is adjourned.

---





**Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons**

**Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes**

**Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**