

What’s holding us back?

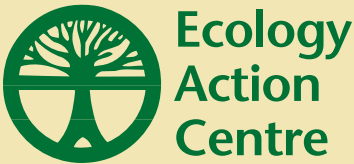
Global experience has proven that MPA networks offer a powerful prescription for ecological and economic health.

The benefits include:

- More plants and animals per square metre of ocean
- A wider range of species
- Bigger commercial fish stocks, including larger fish that produce more young
- Increased income for fishing communities
- Streamlined rules for resource users
- Opportunities for eco-tourism
- More resilient ecosystems that can better cope with the challenges of climate change

But to realize these benefits, we need a plan to dramatically increase the level of ocean protection — a plan that includes actions, timelines and interim rules to protect vulnerable species and spaces before the opportunity is lost.

To learn more about the solutions, and about what our organisations are doing to help make this happen, go to www.wwf.ca/saveouroceans.



Are we on track?
Taking stock of ocean conservation in the
Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region

Marine protected areas are a crucial tool for helping damaged ocean ecosystems recover. Three environmental groups have taken a snapshot of the state of marine protection in the waters off Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature by:

- conserving the world’s biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

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This report is updated and adapted from more detailed work done by a group of NGOs in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The original work was designed to inform conservation planning on the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region. A report is available which describes the full analysis.

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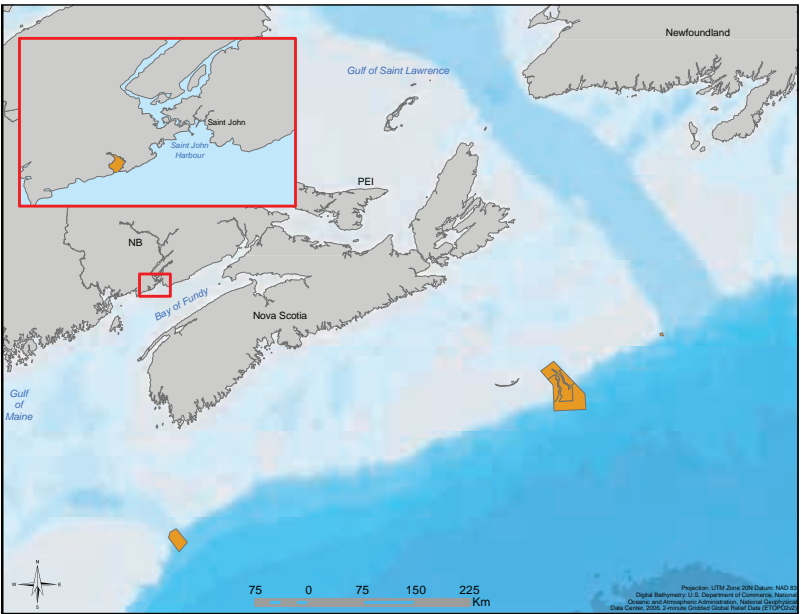
An Ocean of Diversity

From above the waves, the ocean waters off Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (called the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region) conceal the many different landscapes that lie beneath. As the glaciers retreated they left a complex system of shallow banks, steep-walled canyons, deep basins, and patches of bare rock and boulders creating a range of living conditions. By mapping out these seabed features, we can begin to form a picture of the distribution of different kinds of habitats, species and ecological communities that make up the ecosystems of the region.

Biodiversity is the foundation of a healthy ecosystem, and an effective protected areas network includes examples of all of the different habitats in a region. In order to assess how well our current set of protected areas is meeting that goal, we started with a map of seabed habitat types developed for us by an expert marine geologist.



Major seabed habitat types of the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region.



Existing protected areas in the Region

The Current Conservation Picture

For this updated analysis, we were interested in protected areas that meet national and international standards of protection¹.

These are places that are clearly defined in geographical space; recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. Simply stated, **places where ecological integrity is the primary goal.**

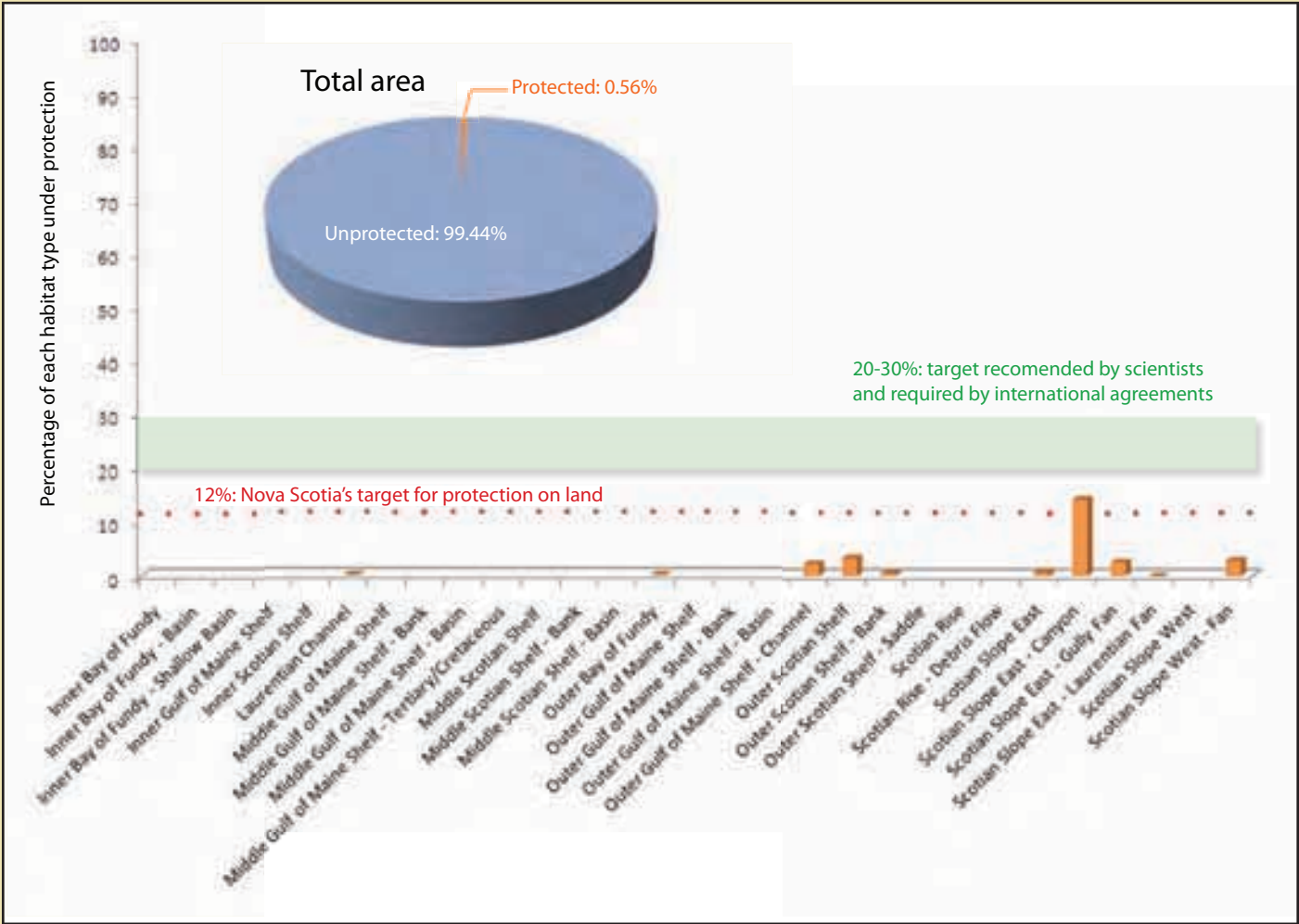
In the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region, there are four places which meet this standard. They include The Gully and Musquash Marine Protected Areas, as well as two sites that have been closed to bottom fishing to protect cold water corals.

The analysis

A gap analysis is a quantitative assessment of how well the current set of marine protected areas protects the regional ecosystem. One way to assess progress toward these objectives is to use a Geographic Information System (GIS) to answer the questions:

- *What percentage of the region is currently protected?*
- *What percentage of each habitat type is currently protected?*

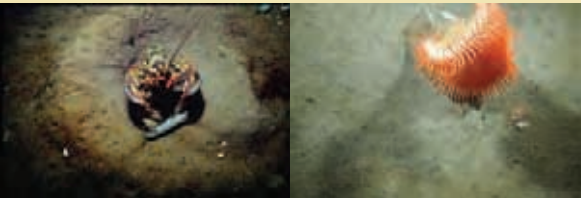
Protection levels in the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region



The findings

Our current set of protected areas covers 2931.5 km², which is **only 0.56% of the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy Region**, and protects examples of only **seven of 29 of the Region's habitats**.

As a province, Nova Scotia has legislation committing it to protecting 12% of our land base by 2015. Canada has made international commitments – and received scientific advice – indicating that we should aim to protect much more of our oceans and coasts if we hope to give ecosystems a chance to recover and thrive². Less than one percent is a far cry from these targets. And while our region is home to a diversity of habitats, we are leaving the vast majority of them unprotected.



¹We defined a protected area as a place that meets the World Conservation Union (IUCN) definition of a protected area (in italics, above) and is managed to achieve what the IUCN terms Category I-III Protection. This approach is consistent with the one adopted by the Canadian Parks Council (CPC), an organization comprising Federal, Provincial and Territorial parks agencies.

²International commitments include 10% (the UN Convention on Biological Diversity), and 20% (the World Parks Congress), and a recent analysis of scientific guidance recommended targets of 20-30%