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CANADA

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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, December 2, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Rodney Weston**



## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

• (0850)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)):** I'll call the meeting to order.

I'd like to thank the officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for being with us here this morning. You probably are aware of the motion that was passed. We have a laundry list of items we'd like to chat with you about. I appreciate your taking the time to be here to brief our committee on the various issues at hand.

Deputy, I believe you have an opening statement to make and you're going to introduce some of the new faces at the table as well. I'll turn it over to your right now.

**Mr. Matthew King (Deputy Minister, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Good morning, and thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, I would like to start by thanking you and the members of the committee for inviting us to appear before you this morning. It is always a pleasure to answer questions about the important work that Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Canadian Coast Guard do for our three oceans and in Canadian communities.

As you said, Mr. Chair, I will take a moment to introduce the team members from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard who are with me today.

[English]

First of all, I'd like to introduce Ms. Leslie MacLean, DFO's new associate deputy minister. Leslie joined DFO last week and comes to us most recently from the Treasury Board Secretariat. Leslie has had a long and successful career in the public service and, Mr. Chair, after a week I can say we are very happy to have Leslie with us as well.

Long-time committee members will know that Leslie replaces Mr. David Bevan, who retired from the public service last May after 38 years of public service, all at DFO. That was, on a personal and a professional level, quite a loss for us.

[Translation]

Marc Grégoire, the Canadian Coast Guard commissioner, is with me today. Unfortunately, Mr. Grégoire will be retiring from the public service in a few weeks after 31 years of loyal service. The members of this committee know that Mr. Grégoire has been running the Canadian Coast Guard for over four years and that he was an important member of the DFO management team during that time.

I am pleased to inform you that Jody Thomas, who was already the deputy commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, will assume the responsibilities of commissioner on January 2, 2015.

[English]

The senior assistant deputy minister, ecosystems and fisheries management, Kevin Stringer, is with us as well. Some members will know that Kevin recently replaced David Balfour, who retired this past September after 35 years of service, 33 of them at DFO.

Our new assistant deputy minister, not unknown to the committee, from ecosystems and oceans science, Trevor Swerdfager, is here. Trevor replaces David Gillis, the former ADM science, who retired just last week after a long period at DFO. For those of you keeping track that is three Davids retiring.

Tom Rosser, the senior ADM, policy, is here as well. Tom joined us last year and has had a couple of opportunities to appear before the committee.

Finally, I would introduce Marty Muldoon, our CFO.

Michel Vermette is also here, deputy commissioner from the Canadian Coast Guard, to answer any questions on where we are on fleet renewal with the coast guard.

As you are aware, Mr. Chair, we were last here in March to outline the department's 2014-15 main estimates, which totalled \$1.68 billion. DFO did not submit any items as part of supplementary estimates (A), so today we will talk about items under supplementary estimates (B).

Our supplementary estimates (B) include 25 items representing \$178.2 million, including adjustments, net transfers, and statutory increases. To break that down, the majority of the increase is represented by an additional \$123.3 million in capital spending. There are also increases of \$33.1 million to the grants and contributions programs, and a \$20.5-million increase to the DFO operating budget. In total, and if approved, these estimates will increase our departmental spending this year to \$1.86 billion.

Key items of our supplementary estimates (B) that the CFO will cover in a minute or two include \$32.2 million for the renewal of both the Pacific and the Atlantic integrated commercial fisheries initiatives, \$17.8 million for repair and maintenance work under the DFO small craft harbours program, and \$5 million to extend the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program.

Mr. Chair, the government continues to invest as well in the renewal of the Canadian Coast Guard fleet and is proposing another \$78.8 million to move us forward toward that objective. In addition to spending on fleet renewal there is \$20.6 million in the supplementary estimates (B) related to the new light-lift helicopters for the coast guard.

● (0855)

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members, for your time and attention this morning. As we've agreed with the committee clerk, I believe, and if there are no questions on this part, I'll turn it over to our CFO, Marty Muldoon, who will provide a very short presentation on the supplementary (B)s.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Deputy.

Please proceed, Mr. Muldoon.

**Mr. Marty Muldoon (Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Thank you very much. I appreciate the introduction. I'll just add a few more contextual comments to help bring a bit of life to what these supplementary estimates mean for Fisheries and Oceans. Obviously, we won't cover this line by line, as it would take us the duration of the meeting. I'll be brief.

We are coming forward, as the deputy minister just mentioned, with supplementary estimates (B), and we will also then follow on with the supplementary (C)s. My summary estimate is that we will only be seeking about another \$23 million or \$24 million in those supplementary (C)s, bringing us to \$1.88 billion in total authorities by the end of the fiscal year.

On slide 3 of the deck that we prepared for you, I'll jump right to the bottom line. Part of this is a cut-and-paste right out of the supplementary estimates, which members of the committee will easily recognize. I've added, for a bit of context, the increase since our main estimates.

We opened the year with \$1.605 billion. I was here alongside the deputy and other members of DFO at the main estimates briefing in March, outlining that \$1.605 billion. Since then, we've received the carry-forward for capital and for operating, which you can see shown in the centre column of "Authorities to Date".

The starting point today, as the deputy just mentioned, is \$1.68 billion. Moving to the column called "These Supplementary Estimates", this is the composition by vote structure of the amounts that we'll be bringing in, totalling \$178.2 million. Ultimately, as a result of these, we'll be moving forward, as noted, on \$1.86 billion of plans.

We'll go to the next slide on page 4. The deputy just gave you a pretty good snapshot of the key items. Out of the 25 listed items in our supplementary estimates, the first 14 or so are actual voted items. This is a kind of hit list of the signature ones. Just to give a little

more detail on how these are functioning for us, for the first three items on the page it says very clearly that they are budget 2014 items, so we're accessing these funds for the first time.

For AICFI and PICFI, as we call them for short—the Atlantic integrated commercial fisheries initiative and the Pacific version as well—PICFI will bring in \$21 million out of that \$32 million. The other \$11 million will be available to the AICFI program, which, as the committee is probably well aware, helps our first nations fishery enterprises integrate into commercial fisheries and helps first nations participate in decisions around fisheries management.

For the next item, you'll recall that we had a good discussion on this during the main estimates, when the announcement for the small craft harbour increase was fresh off the press. As we know, it's a very successful program that augments spending on construction and maintenance, repair, and dredging, whatever the requirements are at local core fishing harbours across Canada. As a result of the announcement of the \$40-million increase over two years that was set out in budget 2014, these supplementaries will bring in year one of that money, or \$17.8 million. With that, we plan to embark on 28 projects across the country.

The next item is the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. Just to give some sense of how this one is working, it's a two-year announcement, which represents both an augmentation of and an extension to the existing formerly announced two-year programs. Just to demystify this, budget 2013 set out \$10 million for Fisheries and Oceans over two years. We're in year two, 2014-15, so that was a five and five.

What this supplementary estimate will do is bring in the \$5-million augmentation this year. It will boost the program in 2014-15 from \$5 million up to \$10 million and then extend the program into 2015-16 for a new additional year at a full \$10 million. Then the program will have run for three years: at \$5 million, at \$10 million this year, and at \$10 million next year. That program allows us to partner with local community organizations, not-for-profit groups, to restore fish habitats, and we expect over the life of the three years that we will have undertaken around 385 projects.

Moving into funding that was previously earmarked for Fisheries and Oceans and which we are now bringing into the organization, the coast guard increase of \$78.8 million here is made up of three very discrete projects. The first big piece is \$63.6 million for the offshore fisheries science vessel procurement, where we're having three science vessel trawlers built out on the west coast at the Vancouver Shipyards. Those vessels, as the committee is likely well aware, are for important scientific work that supports the sustainable development and conservation of our oceans.

• (0900)

The next item that makes up this \$78.8 million is \$9.5 million, which is part of a shared initiative between ourselves and DND to help that shipyard hit full stride in manufacturing capability or construction capability for our vessels. It's called horizontal engineering program plan. Basically, what we're doing is investing in the shipyard's capability to get itself up to capacity, to start churning out vessels.

Finally, \$5.9 million, the remainder of the \$78.8 million, is for refitting one of our icebreakers, one I'm sure the community is well aware of, the largest in the fleet, called the *Louis S. St-Laurent*. This is necessary for us to be able to keep that ship at sea for a little bit longer, up to the end of 2020-21, to align its life cycle with the planned delivery of the polar class icebreaker, the *John G. Diefenbaker*.

The next item is \$20.6 million. This is the first major installment of a \$183-million plan to put 15 new light helicopters into our service. We'll see the first one come into service this year. With this money, we will also build the building that will house the flight simulation training facility for both the light and the medium helicopters that will come on stream in time.

The last item noted on the page is outer limits, continental shelf, at \$7.1 million. That was a capital project designed to enable us to add multibeam sonar capability to our icebreaker fleet in order to continue with our mapping exercises across the north. That's a good look at the signature items. I have a couple more points to make and then I'll be wrapping up.

We're on slide 5 now. The remainder of the supplementary estimates are about another 11 items. They are transfers to and from the department with other federal agencies, or internal adjustments among our votes. Quickly, on the slide, it points out that we'll see a net increase of \$1 million in transfers to our department for six items. It's a couple with Environment Canada of around—

• (0905)

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I'm going to have to interrupt.

When you say slide 5, 4, 3, I'm having trouble following.

**Mr. Marty Muldoon:** Sorry.

Do you have a slide that says current status? It looks a little bit like that.

**Mr. John Weston:** All right.

Thank you.

**Mr. Marty Muldoon:** Excellent.

We have three transfers coming in. Two of those are from Environment Canada. We have one for the environmental restoration of the Great Lakes. We have a second one to support aboriginal involvement in activities related to programming for species at risk. We have a third one from DND for the efforts that we undertake on their behalf for search and rescue programming. We are transferring funding to support fisheries management in the Labrador Inuit settlement area out to the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs. There is also another transfer to the same department for the co-management of the Tarium marine protected area.

Finally, as I mentioned, we have five internal transfers that allow us to get money out of our operating vote and into our grants and contributions vote, so that we can support the various programs that we undertake. Primarily that would be aboriginal supports programs. That's a good look at the 25 items at a really high level.

I will land on slide 6 to close. As the deputy said in his opening remarks, these supps would move us from \$1.68 billion to \$1.86 billion in terms of total authorities. Prior to these supps, we had very strategically managed \$147 million in available authorities, through either reprofiles or the two carry-forwards that I mentioned on one of the slides earlier on, staying well within our limits in those instruments so as to align timing. As a great example, it's simply a matter of getting the capital funding aligned to the actual production schedules at Vancouver Shipyards. A lot of this is keeping that knitting tied together.

Altogether, as we move to the supplementary estimates that will come later in the year, we believe that DFO will have the authorities necessary to fulfill its mandate and expectations in 2014-15.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm happy to take any questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Muldoon.

We're going to go right into questioning. We'll start with a 10-minute round, and we'll start with Mr. Chisholm.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the senior staff at DFO and the coast guard for being here with us today.

Let me begin by saying, Mr. Chairman, how disappointed I am that we are not going to see the minister before the supplementary estimates (B) are introduced in the House to vote. This is a significant department with a nearly \$2-billion budget, and the supplementary estimates (B) are \$178 million, no small sum.

People are probably going to say, “Well, you know, it was because of procedural wrangling that this committee hasn't met, and therefore, we weren't able to give the minister enough time.” I think we all knew that the supp (B)s had to go back into the House at a particular point in time, and therefore, she could have.... A few other ministers have appeared before their committees to answer questions. I wanted to make that point, because it's all about accountability, and I think the political minister is responsible to the House through this committee.

I have a few questions. Most of them deal indirectly with the supp (B)s, but I want to start with the decision to bump the work on the new polar vessel out to 2022. I believe Seaspán said that we can't do everything and the navy got precedence on the space that they had in order to do this work. I think the *Louis* was built in 1968 and does pretty hard work. I wonder if you share the concern expressed by many that this is going to affect our ability to do the kind of work that the *Louis* has done, if we are going out to 2022, and heaven knows whether we're going to be able to do the work even before then. I wondered if you would comment, please.

● (0910)

**Mr. Marc Grégoire (Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Yes, certainly.

First of all, this is a collective decision. We have a deputy ministers' steering committee, and we advise ministers on the way forward on this one.

The shipyard, as you mentioned, can only build so many ships at the same time, and they have to be lined up, so we had to make a decision between the joint supply ship of the navy and the *Louis S. St-Laurent*.

You mentioned the age of the *Louis*. The joint supply ship is older and in far worse shape than the *Louis*. We, the coast guard, offered, if we got the money, to extend the life of the *Louis*. We would be able to extend it probably past 2022, even 2024. That's why we are getting money, to extend its life, and we actually did some work. It's in very good shape. It was at the North Pole. It's a solid ship; it's the flagship of the coast guard. We don't have any problem extending that, and this will not affect the work of the coast guard.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** I appreciate the fact that there are choices, and we've come up against it on a number of these procurement issues, where a lot of things have been left to languish because the procurement process has not been as speedy as we would like it. Everything is coming into the funnel at the same time. Nonetheless, questions of safety, research, Arctic sovereignty, marine traffic, and so on, are all important. You know better than I, but the fact that it was deemed necessary to get this work under way and now we've punted the ball farther up the line causes some concern, as others have expressed.

Let me move on, if I may. Regulatory changes were made this past spring as a result of legislative changes in 2012 to the Fisheries Act, as it relates to the release of deleterious substances in the aquaculture sector. I wondered if you could give me an update on the status of these new regulations. Has the department listened to the concerns—I've certainly heard them from many Canadians—and have any changes been made as a result of the concerns that have been raised?

**Mr. Matthew King:** Thank you for the question.

The changes to the fisheries protection and pollution prevention provisions in the Fisheries Act and the subsequent section 36 designation order, which was made public last spring, we believe will focus and clarify federal efforts in managing threats to fish and fish habitat. Implementation of the designation order will be governed under an interdepartmental MOU with the Department of the Environment.

I think on balance, the MOU will ensure clear roles and responsibilities for each party and support even greater collaboration among departments. This work had been under way for quite a while. You might remember that the delegation of section 36 to the Minister of the Environment took place in the mid-seventies by way of a letter from the prime minister of the day to the two ministers.

The designation order is simply to provide certainty and clarity to industry that from this point forward, the Minister of the Environment is now fully responsible for the administration of section 36, the deposits of deleterious substances, with the exception of the way section 36 is applied with regard to aquaculture and aquatic invasive species and aquatic pests.

So whereas before, the Minister of the Environment undertook section 36, it was always the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who remained accountable to the House. This designation order formalizes an arrangement that's been in place since the mid-seventies.

● (0915)

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Last September, the minister signed a memorandum of understanding with B.C. first nations. For some time there's been a concern and my understanding from talking with first nations leaders in B.C. is that whenever a court decision comes down or whenever there's a decision needed in managing a particular fishery, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has expressed that they don't have a mandate.

But that changed, I understand, with this memorandum of understanding signed by the minister and I believe with the BC Treaty Commission and with the leadership of the B.C. first nations, and that includes two meetings a year. I know some concern was expressed in December when I was out there that a meeting had been scheduled with the minister but had been cancelled at the last minute.

I wondered if you could give us an update on that, whether that MOU was being fulfilled, and a status report on the negotiations with the first nations.

**Mr. Matthew King:** I'd be happy to.

Thank you for the question.

Minister Shea did sign this MOU last year. It had been under negotiation with the First Nations Leadership Council for a period of time. It does commit the minister and the department to a minimum of two meetings a year. I believe Minister Shea has had at least one, and I think maybe two meetings with the leadership council so far. I'm afraid I'm not aware of a meeting that was cancelled in January. Beyond the formal meetings with the minister, which as you pointed out happen every two years, DFO officials, myself included, meet with the leadership council. I meet with the leadership council every time I'm in British Columbia.

It's quite a good forum. It's one of those where, it's fair to say, there's a fair and frank exchange of views but on balance. It's a way for us to continuously interact with key first nations and their representatives on fisheries issues across the coast. So I think the MOU is quite a good initiative.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** I was interested if you could provide us with an update on the 2014 B.C. salmon run, particularly sockeye, chum, and pink. At one point, you were here before this committee and indicated that 12 or so recommendations of the Cohen Commission had been addressed. I wonder if you could give us a brief update on the 2014 run and also indicate whether any additional recommendations from the commission have been implemented.

**Mr. Kevin Stringer (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Ecosystems and Fisheries Management, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** In terms of salmon this year, it was a very good year for Pacific salmon and Fraser sockeye, in particular. In fact, final formal numbers won't be in until March, but the estimate is around 20 million returned this year. We made some adjustments to management measures and we believe around 10 million were caught.

We've met our escapement measures and it really has been an extraordinary year. In fact, we've been keeping good records in terms of the number of returns since the fifties. This will be probably number four in terms of the run, certainly top five. So it was a very good year. In other runs, we saw good numbers for chinook in some areas where we hadn't seen chinook. We saw remarkable numbers in the Okanagan that we hadn't seen for years, still low numbers but some increases. So there was some good news in that regard.

With regard to Cohen, we've said previously, with respect to the department's approach, that we do take the recommendations very seriously. We've moved forward on much of it. We spend \$65 million a year on salmon on the west coast, \$20 million of which is on Fraser River salmon specifically, and around \$16 million to \$19 million, depending on the year, on science.

We have moved forward on specific issues, such as maintaining the current moratorium on new developments for aquaculture facilities in the Discovery Islands area. We've made specific investments. The recreational fisheries partnership program, which is featured in the supplementary estimates, is one piece.

We've provided an extra million dollars a year to the Pacific Salmon Foundation to do much of the work around habitat, but also the general issues that Justice Cohen speaks to, and we continue to be guided by the advice.

It has been a really good year for salmon on the west coast. It goes in cycles and in terms of the four-year cycle, this was expected to be a good year. You may recall that 2010, four years ago, was also a very good year. In 2015, we don't expect as positive a cycle, but we're hopeful that some of the signs that we saw in a number of other species, and the management measures that we've taken, will mean that we have a good year next year as well.

● (0920)

**The Chair:** Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, for coming. Ms. MacLean, welcome to the committee, and welcome to DFO. It will be good to have you there.

I'm sorry to hear that Commissioner Grégoire is going to be leaving, so let me ask a couple of questions in that direction to begin with.

In the presentation, there was mention of the shipbuilding initiatives. I'm particularly interested in the offshore fisheries science vessels.

Could you just remind us again how much of the \$78.8 million for shipbuilding, that's listed in the estimates, will be used for these offshore fisheries science vessels? Are these vessels replacing aging science vessels or is this increasing the capacity of the department to do this offshore science work?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Actually, these are to replace very old vessels, three old fishing trawlers, one in St. John's, one in Dartmouth, and one in Victoria. Of the \$79 million, \$63.6 million is devoted to these three ships, which will be built by Vancouver Shipyards.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** You say they're trawlers, but in a general year, what are the tasks that they're engaged in?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** That would be a question for our colleagues in science.

**Mr. Trevor Swerdfager (Assistant Deputy Minister, Ecosystems and Oceans Science, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** There are a number of functions to which these vessels are put.

The first and the critical, and most important part is the fisheries survey, so that we can determine, to the best of our ability, what fish are in the sea, where, what numbers, what trends, and so on. We have a very extensive time series of data on both oceans and to a growing degree in the Arctic context. These vessels are very much oriented around that.

Secondly, they have a number of ancillary functions in the oceanographic science area. They do a fair number of measurements at sea for pH, salinity, temperature, current, those sorts of activities. To the extent that we can do so, we also will occasionally load them with other experimentation modules to do a variety of much more purpose-built and usually shorter-term research projects.

In addition, there are a number of additional coast guard-type duties, which are not specifically related to science but do a number of other functions in SAR and other areas in the coast guard duty portfolio.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Okay. Thank you for that.

Can you tell us when these ships are going to be in service or are expected to be in service?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** I'll let Mr. Vermette answer this one.

**Mr. Michel Vermette (Deputy Commissioner, Vessel Procurement, Canadian Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The project we have and the funding in the supplementary estimates (B) are allowing us to move ahead on two fronts on the OFSV, the offshore fishery science vessel project. The first is to complete the engineering for the ship. It's very important for us to have a complete three-dimensional engineering model of the ship before we move into construction. The second piece of what we're doing is to acquire most, if not all, of the material for that first ship so that when we do start construction we will have in the shipyard all of the motors, equipment, electronics, right down to the steel, in order to ensure that we have the information required from that material as we complete the engineering.

It is our hope that we'll be into construction in the spring of 2015 on the first of the vessels, for delivery sometime in 2016. That's the current shipyard schedule. The next two would come out at about eight-month intervals, so the final delivery, the third vessel, would be in 2017.

• (0925)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Okay. Thank you.

Let me just move to the helicopters that were mentioned in the presentation and in the documents. If I heard right, I think it was \$20.6 million. Does that give us one helicopter out of a fleet of many more than that? Can you just tell us in general what the coast guard helicopter fleet is, what it does, and how this \$20.6 million plays into that? Is this a major replacement of all of our helicopters, and so on?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** That's a good question, and there is very good news, actually, for the coast guard.

The coast guard operated 22 helicopters up until last fall, when we lost one, so we now have a fleet of 21 helicopters. The government has given us the funding required to replace the whole fleet. This money is actually the first portion for the replacement. This portion is to acquire a piece of the contract, which is spread out over two "contract years", if you want, but spread over three fiscal years, starting now. As the CFO mentioned, we will receive the first helicopter in March, I believe, and then one a month for three months, and then two a month for all 15 of the light helicopters. These light helicopters are being built by Bell Helicopter in Mirabel.

They are Bell 429s. They are mainly replacing the fleet of light BO-105 helicopters we are using.

The next phase of the helicopter acquisition program will involve building seven medium helicopters, and once that is completed, all coast guard helicopters will have been replaced. Finally, a simulator, to be located at the Transport Canada training centre at the Ottawa airport, will be acquired.

The coast guard uses those helicopters for a variety of work, from aids to navigation maintenance to maintenance of remote communication sites—mountain sites and island sites. When the ships are moving through the Arctic, there is a helicopter aboard each of them. These helicopters are used to do ice surveying of the route to be taken by the ship. These helicopters are used to do crew changes and all kinds of work around the ship, again, in the Arctic, as well as maintenance of various installations on the ground. The helicopter is the most efficient way to do all of that work. Helicopters are not used per se for search and research and hoisting. Those things are done by the National Defence helicopters.

That, in essence, is the work we're doing.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Okay. Thank you for that. It's good to hear that we're making good progress there.

I have just one final question, I think, on the fisheries side. The presentation referred to the Pacific integrated commercial fisheries and the Atlantic integrated program as well, and funding for that. So that we understand what that money's going to be used for, can you give us kind of the history of the two programs, how the two programs might be similar or different, and what progress and accomplishments we've seen from those two programs over the several years?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Thank you for the question. You've asked about a number of points, and I'll try to touch on all of them.

As was pointed out in the presentation by the CFO, PICFI, the Pacific program, is \$44 million over two years, and the Atlantic program is \$22 million over two years. As the question suggested, these are renewals of programs that have been in place for a while. They were both started in 2007. They were both renewed for one year each in 2012 and in 2013. They've been operating since then. They're similar, but there are some differences.

I'll start with the similarities. It really is about supporting an effective aboriginal fishery as part of an overall integrated fishery on both coasts. It is about supporting jobs, economic development, in first nations communities on both coasts. It is about ensuring proper fisheries management and proper engagement around fisheries management, particularly with respect to the business of running fisheries enterprises.



Take the Atlantic program, for example. The Government of Canada made a significant investment, following the Marshall decision, in first nations fisheries on the east coast. A significant amount of access was provided. That was followed by a couple of programs to ensure that first nations participants were trained in fishing and were able to effectively operate the fishery. First nations have now become major players on the fishery on the east coast.

The AICFI program is about building on that. It's ensuring that the training is in place, that the capacity for proper fisheries management is there, and that business enterprise regimes are there as well. It's working with first nations on the east coast to develop business plans and to diversify in the fishery. There's also some boat replacement, boat repair, and those types of things. It's about making sure that the investment made by the Government of Canada but also by first nations is effectively protected and used to the best of the abilities.

The west coast program is similar in many ways, but it also includes an element around support for information systems, management systems, collaborative arrangements, and also for an enhanced compliance capacity on the Fraser. So it has an additional element as well.

You've asked for an indication of results. We've done third-party reviews, and they've been shown to be quite successful. Starting with the east coast, 31 of the 34 Mi'kmaq and Maliseet first nations that would be eligible are participating; 27 have diversification projects, and an estimated 500 new jobs have been created by this fishery. On the east coast we now have 1,700 full- and part-time jobs in the fishery. About 1,300 of these are harvesters, the rest land-based. The AICFI program is estimated to be directly responsible for 500 new jobs. On the west coast, with the funding we have there, it's estimated to be around 550 new jobs. It's provided considerable access on the west coast as well.

So it is showing progress and real jobs in the communities, supporting an integrated fishery on both coasts.

●(0930)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. MacAulay.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to welcome the deputy and all the entourage from the Department of Fisheries.

Mr. Grégoire, we'll miss you.

Ms. MacLean, we certainly welcome you. No matter what I did around here over the last few years, the Treasury Board and Fisheries were two important components of anything I had to deal with. So all the best; I'm sure you'll be an asset to the department.

The budget for DFO for small craft harbours was over \$200 million at its highest point. Now it's under \$100 million. But the government recently announced an infrastructure funding agreement that amounted to \$288 million for small craft harbours.

Now, is that over a five-year period? How much will be allocated in each of the years? That's what I would like to know.

●(0935)

**Mr. Matthew King:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair.

I'll start us off, and I'm sure Kevin might want to add a few details.

To start with the beginning of the question, the A-base level of the program is set at about \$75 million, but I think once in the past five or six years have we ever spent to that level. If you go back in time through the economic action plan, through bump-ups in budgets for storm damage and that sort of thing—and indeed you referenced the announcement that the Prime Minister made last week—it's always been executed at a level quite a bit above that.

I don't remember when the budget was \$200 million, but I suspect it had to have taken place before program review when DFO was the custodian of well over 2,000 harbours. I think we're down to 1,050 today, of which 750, as you know, are core fishing harbours. The budget that we have now is what we dedicate to the 1,050 harbours that we have.

There was indeed an announcement last week, which was again announced in British Columbia on Friday, I'm told, that would send to the department \$288 million for small craft harbours. That's not over five years, Mr. MacAulay; it's over two years. Effectively for next year we will have our regular \$75-million budget, plus the \$20 million that the government added last year, plus \$144 million—roughly half of the \$288 million. So for the next two years the small craft harbour program will be very busy.

As you will be aware, we have a long safety-based priority list for work on the 1,050 harbours that remain with us. I wish I could say this money will exhaust that list. I don't know if it will or not. But I can guarantee that at this quantum we are very hopeful of reducing whatever backlog exists by a very considerable margin.

We're very happy to have this money. We believe we have a talented enough team of project managers to spend this money wisely. As I say, we've long had a list of priorities to which these new fundings would be directed.

Kevin, I'm not sure if you want to add to that.

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** I'll add a little bit to what the deputy said at the beginning in terms of what looks like a reduction of dollars on the small craft harbours.

The deputy mentioned the core program, which has always been the core program. The A-base is \$75 million. The government has, at a number of steps, provided specific injections of new cash. In budget 2008 there was \$45 million over four years for divestiture of a number of harbours, as the deputy said. I think we did 106 divestitures. Budget 2009 was a very significant investment of \$200 million over two years. That was part of the overall infrastructure program that was going on at that time, post the 2008 challenges. Budget 2010 actually had \$71.6 million over three years for storm damage. That was funding for Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and Manitoba.

This year we do have the \$20 million in addition to the core \$75 million, so again we have new funds. Then the deputy has spoken to the new funds going forward that have been announced.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Thank you very much.

I'm sure it will be an asset. Having been around this a long time... there's always a desperate need in small craft harbours.

In your most recent corporate business plan on page 18, it says the department is unable to sustain a sufficient and representative workforce needed to support, deliver, and manage the small craft harbours programs.

Can you elaborate on this? Have you been cutting funding to the volunteers? What would the problem be? I'd like you to mention the harbour authorities. We did receive some complaints about the harbour authority people being able to travel for meetings and their funding has been cut. Is that correct? Will that be changed?

• (0940)

**Mr. Matthew King:** I think you're referring to our corporate risk profile.

Marty, if you can look for that on page 8, I'll start off.

As part of a broader suite of initiatives whereby we, like all other government departments, have looked over the last four or five years at efficiencies, one of the small things we did was ask our harbour authorities, rather than to meet annually, to meet every two years. We have done that with a lot of our volunteer associations across the department. I suspect that's what you're referring to.

In that regard, we managed through.... As Kevin has just told us, in 2008-09, beyond our A-base programming we received from the government \$278 million in additional funding for small craft harbours. We managed to spend that over quite a compressed period, over a two-year period.

To my knowledge, we received pretty much a clean bill of health from the Office of the Auditor General on this. We're very confident in our small craft harbour team. If we're flagging it in the corporate risk profile, it's because this, I suspect, is part of a general demographic trend that we're anticipating and are now trying to work in advance to mitigate.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Do you consider those volunteers part of the small craft harbour team?

**Mr. Matthew King:** Do you mean our harbour authorities. Yes, we do, of course.

We have 750 core fishing harbours for which revenues from the harbour have been turned over to harbour authorities, who do a fantastic job maintaining the safety and accessibility of the harbours.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** I think the volunteers and the harbour authorities are a vital part of this. I was here when these people were put in place. What that change did was take some of the responsibility of the department and put it with the wharves and the fishermen. I think it added a lot.

I'm disappointed that you had to see fit to cut their funding to meet the need, because I would expect it was the exchange of ideas that would have been.... It's quite an asset to any group of people who are trying to improve infrastructure and put business plans in place. But you have people above you, too.

I think this is most unfortunate.

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** It's enormously important. The reality is, as the deputy said, that the harbour authorities and the volunteers who run them are an essential part of the small craft harbour program.

We have 559 harbour authorities that manage 690 of our 750 core harbours. They collect \$24 million annually in revenues, and that is absolutely essential to the running of those programs.

They do meet. There was a meeting, I think in November—about two weeks ago—at which they all got together. I believe it was in St. John's; it was on the east coast, in any case. They continue to be very active, absolutely essential to the work of the program. We estimate that nationally about 5,000 volunteers are effectively involved through those harbour authorities. Our estimate is that, given the number of hours that we understand they work, this is the equivalent of about 70 FTEs. Their work is absolutely essential to the running of the program. We enormously appreciate their work, as the deputy said.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** I do too. As I said, I was here when they were put in place, and I think it took some of the responsibility for the infrastructure and put it in the hands of the fishermen. It put the small craft harbour repair program in a better stance, I would think.

In the corporate business plan there are many references to the physical infrastructure at DFO. Does this area of risk include small craft harbours? Could you elaborate on the risk? What alternatives are you looking at, or is the \$288 million going to fix this up?

**Mr. Matthew King:** I believe that DFO is possibly the second biggest land and building owner department in government. We actually have quite a big footprint.

In terms of anticipating risk, we often cite our infrastructure as an area that we believe we need to pay special attention to. Small craft harbours is a big part of this, obviously, given their number, but I would include our federal buildings and labs, and the coast guard has facilities and warehouses across the country as well.

We flag this area because we believe we need to stay on top of it. We have, for all of our assets, through our assistant deputy minister for real property, a plan whereby we can dedicate resources to the most pressing issues, always ensuring safety first. This appears in our risk profile because we think we need to pay attention to it on a constant basis.

With respect to the small craft harbour funding that we're discussing now, obviously we will be looking at the health and safety of these harbours first and foremost as we begin the process of trying to determine how to allocate this new money.

• (0945)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. MacAulay.

Mr. Sopuck.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Thank you.

First of all I would like to compliment the department on how well the recreational fisheries conservation partnership program is being run. I know it was a somewhat difficult administrative nut for you to deal with, given the complexity of the program and the geographic range. I'm in close touch with the angling groups across the country that participate in the program, and I've rarely heard anything but praise for the department and the field staff who administer it. So I'd ask you, Mr. King, if you could pass that on to the staff. It's a very well-run program.

Could one of you describe the types and geographic ranges of the 385 projects? I don't expect you to describe them all, but just in a short form, the types and geographic ranges of the projects.

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Thank you very much. Thanks for the question, and thanks for the comments, which we will certainly pass on to the staff. They do work very hard on this enormously useful initiative.

Let me just say there are two things, two general areas, where it's been enormously useful. One is in doing the types of projects that I'm about to describe, and the other is in developing partnerships with groups that are on the ground making a difference. There are hundreds of thousands of Canadians; there are hundreds of groups that care passionately about fisheries protection. This initiative, this program, enables us to partner with them, so it's been very useful.

There are all kinds of projects, and we have a set of criteria and program eligibility, but it really is driven by working with the local groups that know best what is required in their area to improve fisheries habitat. It's everything from riparian restoration and bank stabilization, to removing barriers and dealing with fish passage. There are a number of these types of things.

The program is new, as members will know. The first year was last year, so we only have the first results. But let me just speak to some of the results that we're getting from this program.

In the first round of funding, the first round of support, we did 94 projects, and the estimate is 385. I don't know if that's exactly the number of projects, but there were 94 in the first round, partnering with 74 organizations—community groups, watershed groups, angling groups. We leveraged \$7 million with the \$3.1 million that came in the first round, so that is \$2.25 for every dollar that the government invested. In those 94 projects we have 370 partners that are identified, because we've leveraged with a number of other groups. So there are 370 partners. They report to us about the number of people who are involved in the project. We've identified 1,700 volunteers that got active with these 94 projects. The estimate is 2.4 million square metres of habitat restored, or 2,000 linear kilometres restored.

In 2014-15—so we're just partway through it—the estimate is that just around 200 more projects are going to get done this year, and then maybe another 100 next year. So it really is making a difference.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Thanks. Yes, we really appreciate the work that's being done by all parties.

Regarding the Pacific salmon run, I had the pleasure of fishing it in August, and given the size of this year's run, it's fair to conclude that the overall system for Pacific salmon production and maintenance is capable of producing these large runs. Is that a fair conclusion to draw?

• (0950)

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Well, it did produce these large runs this year, and it produced these large runs in 2010. Our objective is to make sure that with each cycle it continues to improve. We remain concerned about some stocks, weak stocks, etc., but overall we certainly saw good numbers this year.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** In terms of aquaculture on the west coast, I understand it's been going on since 1985, net-pen aquaculture, and a number of people have expressed concern about the environmental impact of aquaculture, especially on wild salmon. Given the size of this year's run and the size of the 2010 run, is it also fair to conclude that aquaculture on the west coast is being done in an environmentally sound way?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** One of the the things we seek to do with aquaculture facilities is to ensure that we have proper siting criteria, as much as possible not in the migration route, and there is a number of other elements that we take into account in that regard.

We've been doing research on impacts, and we may want to give some details of that and all those types of things, but aquaculture has been there for the long term, and the wild fishery has been there for the long term as well.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** I'm on the environment committee as well, and we did a fairly major study on water quality in the Great Lakes. I heard you say that Great Lakes restoration is a program that the department is undertaking. Could you describe what is being done in terms of projects related to restoration of some of the areas of the Great Lakes?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** I think there are two or three things we can highlight. The program we just discussed, the recreational fisheries partnership program—I think you actually asked where they are being done—they are, indeed, being done in all 10 provinces and at least one of the three territories, but certainly along the Great Lakes watershed.

That activity is being done on the Great Lakes watersheds as well. With respect to the Great Lakes waters—that's the agreement with U.S.—that's an Environment Canada lead and they deal mostly with water quality.

DFO's involvement includes aquatic invasive species, habitat work, so we have a number of initiatives and partnerships with the U.S. in those areas.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Drilling down, what kind of habitat work are you talking about, apart from the recreational fisheries program?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Studies in terms of what habitat in the various Great Lakes are, what we know about habitat, what we don't know about it, and research into different ways of improving those types of things.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** One of the big issues with Lake Erie, for example, is the eutrophication that is happening in the west end. What's the potential fisheries impact if that's allowed to proceed?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** The Great Lakes fishery, and particularly the Lake Erie fishery, is very significant. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission looks at that on an annual basis and it's the one, I think, that's in the best shape. There are a number of potential threats to that fishery. Certainly, eutrophication is one; Asian carp is another. It is something that we watch very carefully.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Given that most of the eutrophication comes from nonpoint source pollution, are you developing any programs to deal with nonpoint source pollution?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** It's something that the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is looking at and we're part of that. In terms of section 36, the pollution issues, that would be an Environment Canada lead, specifically.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Okay.

Could you describe the situation for Atlantic salmon, especially in the Miramichi area but in the Maritimes in general? What's going on with Atlantic salmon? We're hearing about some grave concerns. What's the path forward?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Atlantic salmon has been a concern for a number of years and continues to be. There was a commercial fishery for Atlantic salmon but that was stopped a number of years ago, many years ago. I think 1998 was the last year.

In some years we've seen some improvements, but most years it has been really challenging. It is an enormously important fishery for anglers, and it's an iconic fishery. It brings in literally billions of dollars to the Canadian economy, the recreational fishery unit in

particular. There is a first nations and aboriginal food, social and ceremonial fishery as well.

COSEWIC has proposed that it be listed. They've looked at nine different populations. They are working their way through the system. Last year we had particularly troubling results in the Miramichi, southern New Brunswick, southern Nova Scotia. Some good results in Newfoundland and Labrador, but overall we saw a reduction.

We did take action. We reduced retention numbers. We moved some areas from retention to catch-and-release only. But I do think there's a sense that we're reaching a point where we need to look at something more substantive and we're actively considering that. We are concerned about the fishery.

● (0955)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Thank you.

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

We'll move to the five-minute rounds and start off with Mr. Cleary.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the DFO crew for appearing before the committee today.

I echo Mr. Chisholm's concern; it's too bad the minister couldn't be here today. It's all about accountability.

Now, guys, you can consider this the speed round. I have five minutes and I have to get through a number of different subjects, so let's cut to the chase.

Let's start off with Mr. Grégoire and the coast guard and the *Manolis L*. The *Manolis L* is a paper carrier that went down off the northeast coast in 1986, as you're well aware, with 500 tonnes of oil aboard. It was still leaking as of October. What's the long-term solution? What can we do about it?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** We are going there about twice a year now, and we were there in November. We put in a cofferdam and whenever there is oil, we remove this oil. There is no long-term solution for now. We are assessing it as we go forward. But we don't want to see any oil in the water, so we're taking this very seriously. In November, for instance, we sent an ROV down, and we inspected the whole ship. We're following this very closely.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** There is no long-term solution? You can't reuse the oil?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** There's no other long-term solution at this point in time, no. But should there be a risk, then of course we would envisage another option. But for now, to go there twice a year to empty the cofferdam is considered a sufficient measure.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** I think the risk has already been well documented in terms of the oil that's spilled to date and continues to spill.

Moving on to the Atlantic Pilotage Authority, there is a proposal to move the pilot docking station 20 kilometres deeper into Placentia Bay. Does the coast guard have a concern about that? Placentia Bay has already been deemed one of the riskiest areas in Canada in terms of potential oil spills. Now with the boarding station 20 kilometres further in, do you have a concern about that?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** No.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Why?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** You said, "cut to the chase". No, I don't have any concern.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Okay, now elaborate.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Okay, so now we can elaborate.

Every time there is a suggestion to make a change like this, we look at it very seriously, and in this case it was with the Atlantic Pilotage Authority and Transport Canada. The risks were assessed, and this situation of moving the station was accepted by all.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** In advance of a risk assessment being carried out—and that was the answer given to one of my questions in the House of Commons last week—you're saying that you're not concerned about a greater risk?

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** I'm not concerned at this point in time, but the pilotage authorities are under the authority of the Department of Transport. These are crown corporations regulated under the Pilotage Act, so your question would be more addressed through the Minister of Transport.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** You're with the coast guard and the coast guard would respond to an oil spill, so I'm sure that's why your comments are relevant.

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Yes, so at this point—

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** You say this is not a concern, so I appreciate the answer.

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Not at this point in time, no.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Mr. King, I have a question for you as well, sir, moving on to another topic. As I said, this is a speed round.

NAFO has recommended moratorium on shrimp in the NAFO zone this year. If the department follows through with the LIFO policy—last in, first out—that 4,000-tonne cut to shrimp is going to have a massive impact on coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Does the department plan to do any kind of economic assessment of the economic impact if the LIFO policy is followed again?

• (1000)

**Mr. Matthew King:** I'll try to be quick. Let me just point out, though, that we will have new science available in February 2015 on the status of northern shrimp stocks in areas 1 to 6. Nevertheless, NAFO did make a decision to effectively close that fishery this year. As I'm sure the member will know, Mr. Chair, the issue of the LIFO policy has been with us since 1995 at least. We did unfortunately

have some shrimp reductions this year. LIFO was applied. We'll wait and see what the science advice tells us in 2015, and we'll put advice to the minister as to how she wants to proceed.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** My specific question was about a study on the economic impact on the coastal communities of Newfoundland and Labrador, yes or no?

**Mr. Matthew King:** Sorry, with respect to the NAFO decision...?

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Yes. If the NAFO decision is followed through on, if there is a 4,000-tonne cut in shrimp and LIFO was followed through on, does your department plan to do an economic assessment of the impact on coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador?

**Mr. Matthew King:** I don't believe we're in a position to do that right now.

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

Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks for being with us again this morning. Welcome to those who are new. We appreciate your being here.

I just want to follow up briefly on a question that Mr. Sopuck was asking regarding the restoration of the Great Lakes. Specifically, the question is that you're showing an increase in transfers in from Environment Canada. Is there extra work that's going to be undertaken now, or is this continuing on with the same work?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** No, I think it's in response to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which was signed; Environment Canada is the lead. Some of the funds for that went to Environment Canada, and it's being transferred to us. It's largely about aquatic invasive species.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Okay.

Speaking about invasive species, can somebody give me an update on what's happening with the Asian carp measures that are being taken right now? I know that the minister is doing round tables on invasive species, and things are taking place across the province.

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** There is a lot going on in terms of Asian carp.

Do you want Asian carp, or aquatic invasive species writ large, or a bit of both?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** A bit of both.

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Okay.

Let me start with Asian carp. We've talked about that previously with this committee. As you know, a couple of budgets ago we received \$17.5 million, over five years, for an Asian carp program. We were able to speak in previous iterations to the objectives of the program, but now we can speak a little bit to some of the actual achievements.

The minister opened an Asian carp lab in Burlington to implement key science activities for the programs, and we have refurbished a genetics lab in Winnipeg to analyze DNA samples. Those labs are now in place for Asian carp. We've also moved ahead with further risk assessments. It was largely based on the first risk assessment that the new program was developed—a risk assessment around bighead and silver carps—but we've now moved ahead with risk assessments on grass carps and black carps. We have further developed a socio-economic impact assessment with respect to the challenge if these actually enter into the Great Lakes.

We've developed relationships with groups that are involved in prevention. I'd note in particular the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, who are working with us and getting word out about the challenges and the risks around Asian carp. There are a number of elements in that regard.

We have an agreement now with the Invasive Species Centre in Sault Ste. Marie. They're developing an Asian carp website, developing Facebook, Twitter accounts, etc. Again, it's getting the word out, and increasing the digital footprint of awareness around Asian carp. We're doing research into control techniques, different ways that we can address Asian carp—keeping them out and what we do if and when they actually get in. We are collecting data in various parts around the Great Lakes.

We've established 34 early detection sites, in Lakes Huron, Erie, Ontario, and Superior. We've actually caught, fortunately or unfortunately, one grass carp last year and one grass carp this year, in Canadian waters. They turned out to be triploid, which means that they're aquaculture and not able to reproduce.

We're really pleased to announce that whereas it used to take three to four days—so you'd catch these things, the world would hold its breath while we were finding out about it—our new lab in Burlington is able to do the assessment in two hours. We have the facility to be able to do it now. We've been able to stand down in terms of whether we had to do “a rapid response”, so it really is working.

I'll stop there.

•(1005)

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Okay, thank you.

I think in budget 2014 there was funding to implement the national conservation plan. Can you tell me what role DFO plays in that NCP?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** The national conservation plan is certainly broader than DFO, but DFO does have an important role. For DFO it's really about marine conservation. It's really about continuing the work that we've been undertaking over the last years since 2007, I believe it is. We've invested over \$77 million on the health of the oceans initiative, which has been moving forward on marine protected areas in particular, working on identifying areas of interest, moving forward regulatory proposals, working with stakeholders identifying vulnerable marine ecosystems, and establishing marine protected areas.

The second piece, which is becoming a larger piece as we go forward with the next phase, is around marine protected area networks. Whereas our department has done marine protected areas,

Environment Canada has done wildlife areas for migratory birds in marine areas, and Parks Canada has done national conservation parks including marine parks. Provinces have set aside areas in ocean spaces and in aquatic areas, and there are well over 800 overall.

The idea now, as opposed to all of us sort of going along identifying what we want to protect, is really getting all the players and the stakeholders around one table and having marine protected area networks looking at whether we have all the representative areas, whether we have all of the areas that need protection, and whether we have sufficient replication, those types of principles. That really is the next phase of the plan.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Davidson.

Monsieur Lapointe.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Thank you, gentlemen.

In 2012, the environment commissioner noted that Canada's marine protected areas were underdeveloped and that progress was extremely slow. That is what he said.

In September 2014, it was discovered that the committee that was supposed to work on creating a marine protected area for the St. Lawrence estuary had never met. Yesterday, we learned that the beluga, which are found in what should be the marine protection area, would now be considered an endangered species.

What resources will Fisheries and Oceans Canada allocate in the next year to address this problem of what I would call the “under-underdevelopment” of marine protection areas? There is so much ground to catch up. Are we finally going to establish stringent targets to achieve short-term results?

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Thank you for that question.

I will answer in English in order to better express myself.

[English]

We did just speak to the national conservation plan initiative, which includes a marine component, and the new investment that's being made with respect to the oceans program is in the supplementary estimates. In terms of the overall oceans management program, the estimates for this year for oceans management identify \$30 million ongoing. In my own sector of ecosystems and fisheries management, it's around \$7 million or \$8 million, and we do have the investment that is being discussed in the supplementary estimates in the answer that I just gave to the previous question about the national conservation plan.

•(1010)

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Stringer, could you please tell us what resources would be allocated to once and for all address the major delay in creating marine protection areas? I would like you to speak a little more specifically about the problem I mentioned in my question.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** We've actually had, I think, some success in terms of creating marine protected areas, but it does take time. The effort to create marine protected areas starts with an assessment of what science we have about ocean spaces writ large, so there's science work done on what are called EBSAs—ecologically and biologically significant areas. What things do we need to protect? Where are the corals? Where are the sponges? Where are the vulnerable marine ecosystems? A significant amount of work is done there.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** You say that significant work has been done. I'll remind you that the committee that was to have met to discuss the St. Lawrence estuary marine protection area has never met in 10 years. So I am asking you this: Where is the major work that is being done to address this problem?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** We have these going on in many different parts across the country. We have a number of candidate sites that are moving forward. The one that you are speaking about is one. We can probably get more details in terms of that specific one, but we do have activity moving forward. We've identified some priority areas and we already have marine protected areas established.

I think we'll have to come back with a specific response to you.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** I would indeed like you to provide more specific details soon on your services that relate to the estuary. I would find that very helpful.

In October 2014, we learned of the closing of the Maurice Lamontagne Institute library. This institution in Mont-Joli, in the Lower St. Lawrence, was Fisheries and Oceans Canada's only French-language library. This decision goes completely against the recommendations of the commissioner of Official Languages.

Don't you think that closing the only point of service in North America devoted to marine sciences is unacceptable?

**Mr. Tom Rosser (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the member for his question.

Closing the Mont-Joli library was part of a change in the business model for managing our collections and our libraries. In reality, 96% of research by library users is done electronically. We are investing significantly in digitizing our collections.

The Mont-Joli library, similar to our libraries elsewhere in the country, has always been bilingual. Most of the collections were in English. However, we had collections in English and French. We wanted to transform how we provide information to our users by making it more modern.

**Mr. François Lapointe:** That is in no way consistent with the information I had.

In a modern world, information requests are indeed made electronically. People ask that we send the PDFs and not documents in hard copy. Nevertheless, there was still a direct interaction on site

between staff and researchers, sometimes by telephone. A human being who speaks French cannot be replaced by some kind of vague website. That is not a conclusive decision, in my opinion.

I would like to address another issue.

Many experts want the bluefin tuna to be declared a threatened species. However, Canada has asked regularly for a few years now that bluefin tuna fishing quotas be increased. What is the scientific basis for Canada's position on this?

Could you tell us what the scientific basis is for Canada's position on this? I believe it is fairly complicated to understand.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** In terms of bluefin tuna, the decision with respect to the total allowable catch on bluefin tuna is made by ICCAT, which is an international body dealing with tuna and tuna-like species. Canada is one of 49 contracting parties that participate in that.

A recovery plan was put in place in the 1990s for this species. Canada has been part of that. Every year science is done to assess how the bluefin tuna is doing and that science is provided to the ICCAT, the international tuna group, who met last month. They provide science advice with the suggestion of what a total allowable catch could be. This year's science advice said that there was room for an increase and that there should not be a reduction in the species as long as it didn't go above 2,250 tonnes in the fishery that Canada participates in. They did identify that there are signs of recovery in the species. On the decision to land at 2,000 tonnes, I think the view was that it was a cautious position that is somewhat up from where we were but short of where the science advice said we could go.

At the end of the day regardless of whether something is before us for consideration under the Species at Risk Act, we need to make a decision based on the science advice. That's one point.

The second point is that Canada is not alone in making this decision. We're one of 49 contracting parties that are at ICCAT, so that's basically how the decision gets made.

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lapointe. I will caution you, Mr. Lapointe, on mixing up the red and the blue.

Thank you.

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** Thank you.

We're really always delighted to hear from you. I wish we had hours because this is so important to Canadians, especially in British Columbia, where the minister has made countless visits and has on many occasions acknowledged the key role salmon has to play for British Columbians. It's where, I believe, we say the environment is the economy, and fisheries is such a key part of both.

My questions relate to the role British Columbians have played in bringing about changes, and how the department and the government have responded. I'd like to ask you three questions.

Firstly, on the recreational fisheries program, you've already alluded to that. At a time of global restraint, a new program was created, against the grain. I'd like you to comment further on the reach that has had.

Secondly, you've talked about the Pacific Salmon Foundation, with 30,000 to 40,000 volunteers in British Columbia. I'd appreciate it if you could give us some examples of how the PSF distributes the funding.

Then, thirdly, on enforcement, British Columbians have expressed their concern that in this time of global restraint, habitat officers were let go. Can you just comment on how that has ended? How have the efficiencies been improved to make sure that we are still enforcing our rules and protecting our precious fish, especially the salmon?

**Mr. Matthew King:** Thank you for the three questions, Mr. Chair. I'll try to answer them very quickly.

With respect to the recreational fisheries program, I believe Kevin gave quite a few statistics about how that has been rolled out over the last year and a bit. It's obviously a program that has struck a resident chord with Canadians. We're seeing all kinds of projects coming from all kinds of groups, and already I think we have begun to accumulate a fair number of metrics on the value of the program, which is very encouraging. British Columbia, of course, is planning a huge role in that. The linkage between this program and the salmon fishery is obviously immediate. As I just count my way through here, if you will, there have been at least 15 of these projects in British Columbia, so British Columbians have taken up this program in a big way.

With respect to the Pacific Salmon Foundation, obviously the department has had a relationship with the PSF for a long time. Over the years we had always turned over a certain percentage of our fees to the PSF. Typically it was around \$300,000 a year, which the PSF used, in conjunction with all of its other fundraising, to do all kinds of great projects in British Columbia. As you mentioned, in last year's budget that contribution to the PSF was increased by \$1 million to now \$1.3 million. That has allowed the foundation to expand significantly the types of programs that it runs. Historically it has been among, as you're well aware, the most popular programs in British Columbia. Almost always it's community based. More often than not, it's family based, in that any given weekend you can see moms and dads and kids out there working on really important projects for the long-term success of Pacific salmon. In a sense, the two programs do complement each other.

I'm going to turn to Kevin for the conservation and protection part of the question.

● (1020)

**Mr. Kevin Stringer:** Sure. Thanks, Deputy.

I'll just add that in terms of the Pacific Salmon Foundation, you know they used to get one dollar out of every six from the conservation stamp. They now get six, so they get the whole thing. It is an extra \$1 million for them. In addition to the restoration work, they're on the cutting edge. They're dealing with partners. They're

dealing with science. They're connected to people who we need to be connected to. It has been an enormously useful partnership for us, and they're doing really important work in terms of supporting us with salmon management long term.

There have been reductions, which you've spoken to, in terms of staff working on the fisheries protection program. I would say that the program has changed. Our focus, in terms of the regulatory regime, is around significant impacts to fish and around major projects. The other part of our focus is developing partnerships with those groups who are out in the field, through the recreational fisheries partnership program, through the Pacific Salmon Foundation program, through the funds that we provided to the Atlantic salmon foundation that's doing work. It really is a somewhat different focus.

What we need to be able to do—and we do believe that we have the ability—is to look at the major projects that are being done and ensure ourselves that we're protecting, in terms of the potential impacts on those fisheries. We're confident that we can do that.

What we've done is we've consolidated from 63 offices to 16. We've built some economies of scale. We've pulled people together in different offices. We've identified centres of expertise, and we're operating on a different model. As I said, we're partnering with community groups who are helping us in fisheries management and protection.

**The Chair:** Mr. Leef.

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all to witnesses.

I'm going to focus on the coast guard end of things. I had a great opportunity, a couple of weeks ago now, to be in Victoria and meet with the folks on the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* after they returned. I'll just say quickly, "Congratulations to the great folks working there". They did a wonderful community outreach right on the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* itself, brought school groups in, and were able to talk to them directly about the discovery of the Franklin, which was a really exciting moment in Canadian history, an exciting chapter for the Canadian Coast Guard, with wonderful contributions on their part.

They should certainly be acknowledged for the great work they did involving the local school groups in that program. I think it's just a wonderful outreach opportunity by the department and by the folks of the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*.

I had the opportunity to talk about two specific things with them. One was their excitement around the helicopter procurement and the new work they were doing. They were pretty clear that there's a lot of work that's done when I talked to them about the coast guard helicopters from the search and rescue mission that occurred during the time of the Franklin. The pilot, in fact, was ultimately responsible for finding the first pieces of the Franklin on the beach that led to the narrowing down of that search position.

At the same time, they were involved in assisting the mapping services that were going on. There were three very diverse and distinct events that they were participating in, in a very short period of time. They talked about the role of the helicopter on that vessel and were highlighting, of course, the need for new helicopters.



I'm going to ask for a little bit of further background on the role that this procurement will play, why it's necessary, and how this \$20-million allocation is going to assist.

If you have time, perhaps you can touch on the additional investments in terms of the side sonar scanning technology that's available for the mapping that's going on and what other additional roles, such as the discovery of the Franklin, will play a factor, and why the investments in the supplementary (B) estimates are important for those two things.

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** I'll come back to the helicopter. First of all, we're told by Airbus Helicopters that we have the oldest fleet in the world now in the BO-105. It's the same thing for the Bell 212, which is frankly from the time of the Vietnam war, so the helicopters at the coast guard are extremely old. They are very well maintained, but of course very expensive to maintain. Helicopters are owned by the coast guard, but they are operated and maintained by Transport Canada under an MOU we have with them.

This project to replace the helicopters is a major piece of our fleet renewal, but it's much faster to get the helicopters because we're basically buying off the shelf. You are right, if you met some helicopter pilots out on the west coast, they are quite ecstatic about the change. Some of them have actually tried the new Bell 429. I should have said earlier that the first three helicopters have flown already and have been certified. One has gone to the refit and paint shop already. So we can't wait to get them. One of the things I'll be very sorry to not see as a commissioner is the new helicopters when they come in.

The helicopters play a very important role everywhere, but especially in the Arctic. Of course in the Arctic, when the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* was searching in the Victoria Strait for the *Erebus*, the helicopter was used to move people around, and as you mentioned they moved people to the shore to establish a GPS station to facilitate a more precise search in the bay there. The pilot was actually on bear watch, so he was watching for polar bears and making sure that the two geographers installing the GPS station would be protected. I should say that this is the standard procedure, and as he was walking around and doing his polar bear watch he found this piece of the ship and that kind of was the proof that the ship was right there. This is why the search concentrated in this area right after that, and very quickly the *Erebus* was found.

The side sonar scanner actually does not belong to the coast guard. In some cases we have our own. This one I believe belonged to National Defence and was borrowed by Parks Canada and we were using some of the boats launched from the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* to use it. We had a sonar on board the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*. It was a temporary multibeam scanner on board the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, which provided after-the-fact extremely precise images of the bottom of the ocean in that area. That's technology that we will be hoping to get on other ships in future years. This year we have installed a very sophisticated multibeam scanner on the *Louis S. St. Laurent*, which was used in the polar mission.

• (1025)

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

Thank you, Mr. Leef.

Mr. MacAulay.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank you and congratulate you on how you handled the bluefin tuna and the quotas. I understand it's a challenge where it's fished around the world, so thank you for that.

On page 34 of the department's corporate business plan it says that the capital reinvestment is "insufficient to upgrade aging infrastructure and equipment", and that "could affect service delivery and endanger shipping and mariners".

Mr. Grégoire, I'd like you to comment on that, considering that your budget was \$540 million of authorized spending in 2013 and only \$448 million was spent. The fleet's maintenance budget was planned for \$138 million and only \$107 million was spent, and the fleet procurement budget was estimated at \$115 million and only \$62 million was spent. Looking at your corporate business plan indicating that it's insufficient and could cause a danger to shipping and mariners, I'd just like you to elaborate on that.

Being that it's my last question probably for you, thank you for your service.

• (1030)

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Ever in life...

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** We never know.

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Yeah, you never know, indeed.

A very good question, but let's not get carried away because the coast guard spent its money. First, on the capital dollars—

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** You didn't spend what was allocated.

**Mr. Marc Grégoire:** Let me explain.

First of all we have an A-base budget, which is composed of vote 1: budgets, salaries, and maintenance. We have a small budget at the coast guard for grants and contributions, of which we spent it all, almost to the dollar. It goes mostly to the coast guard auxiliaries.

We also have the capital investment portion and we have the B-base budget, which is composed of a big chunk of money that's part of the \$5.2 billion announced in budget 2012. Why is it that you see those big movements of money? I think Marty explained it earlier in his presentation. It's cash management and it's to move the money around according to the schedule of the shipyards. For instance we may have planned earlier... We have to do those papers way in advance, so we proposed that we were going to spend a lot of money on the OFSV, the offshore science vessels. In discussion with the shipyard we agreed that we cannot start the building now. We have to start the building a bit later. That forces us to move the money from one year to another year.

No money is lost there. There's only one little bit of money that's lapsed and it was by design. If I go back to the vote 1, last year, we had a big chunk of money to do the *Zalinski* operation. We had received from the government \$46.4 million specifically to remove the oil from the *Zalinski*, which is located south of Prince Rupert. We did that operation and there was less oil than what we had figured originally. We finished with \$22.9 million less than the \$46.4 million we were given. That was lapsed, meaning it was returned. In the last few years, that's the only time where we lapsed in the vote 1 by more than 1%. We're within the 1%.

If you take this out of my budget we're within 1%. We're never going to be at 0% because it's too dangerous to go above and to spend more than the allocated budget. It's very prudent to be within. The government procedures and the budgetary process allow us to go 5% under and to carry forward this 5% amount. In our case we're managing our budget so closely that we're within 1%.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Thank you very much.

In your corporate business plan it says that the major human resource challenge at DFO is its inability to attract, develop, and retain the staff needed to achieve the objectives of the integrated fisheries management program. I understand that there was \$60 million put in. Is that the reason why, and will that fill the gap?

**Mr. Matthew King:** I think we're signalling a general risk to not just our department, I would submit, but to all the departments. This is related to where we are in a demographic bubble. Happily now we're seeing a flattening in our retirement rate, but we have signalled the need to have to be more aggressive in making sure that we have an influx of young and new public servants into the department in time to have them trained and then carry on work such as the development of the IFMP. We're citing it as a risk and it's something that we need to pay a lot of attention to, particularly over the next five years.

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

Mr. Chisholm.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to ask three questions, and I'm going to try to do it quickly and give time for the response.

We talked a bit about Cohen and the response to Cohen. At our last meeting that you attended, you indicated there were 12 responses. You've indicated that you've responded in a couple of other cases. I wonder if I could ask the witnesses, Mr. Chairman, to provide us a further response indicating how the department has responded to the recommendations to date from the Cohen Commission report.

With respect to the Atlantic salmon, you've indicated what a problem their survival continues to be. I know, for example, that the Southern Upland Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia is on the endangered species list, yet there was a decision made last year to bulldoze the Mersey River biodiversity station, which was doing important research in that respect. I wonder if you could quickly provide an explanation for that.

Finally, following the last CITES conference, Canada placed reservations on all 76 new species added to appendices I and II, a list

that includes the polar bear and the porbeagle shark. I wonder if you would indicate when the government plans to remove these reservations and introduce the necessary legislation to protect these endangered species.

Thank you.

• (1035)

**Mr. Trevor Swerdfager:** Thank you very much for that question.

With respect to the Mersey River station, I think you're quite right. What we've done is consolidated our operations there into two other sites.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** I call it "bulldozing", but you'd say "consolidation".

I won't argue.

**Mr. Trevor Swerdfager:** That transformation has taken place. We're now in a position where we're moving forward with a consolidated approach to the restoration of that particular species.

We will see over time if there's a need to continue to diversify the operations that are in place in Mactaquac and in Coldwater. We will continue that effort. But we are very confident that the objectives of the program will be maintained.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Next was the CITES question.

**Mr. Trevor Swerdfager:** I couldn't hear the final question properly.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** It was about the reservations put on 76 species, two of them being the polar bear and the porbeagle shark. When are you going to remove these reservations and introduce the necessary legislation to protect these endangered species?

**Mr. Matthew King:** I'm not sure we can answer that today, but we'd be happy to get back to you with information on that.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** I'd appreciate that.

The final thing was in respect to Cohen. We spent \$26 million on this. It was a big deal. There were a lot of recommendations made, including in relation to the intersection between aquaculture and the wild salmon. Measures have been made in the Discovery Islands, for example, in terms of placement of facilities there. I believe there has been more science.

You reported to us the last time you attended that there were 12 responses, and you gave us something in writing. Now I'm asking if you would give the committee a further updated status report on how the department is responding to the recommendations of Cohen.

**Mr. Matthew King:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair.

I believe, as I probably mentioned when I was here last, that the Cohen Commission has provided the department with all kinds of valuable information that informs now and will continue to inform our operational decision-making as we go forward. I believe that in an earlier question Kevin provided a number of examples of how that type of information at the ground level is being incorporated into the way we make operational decisions.

I don't remember, Kevin, if you referenced changes in the way we're doing things like siting it, and that kind of thing.

I would just have to hold my answer there. We are taking Cohen into account. I expect that we will do so for a long time.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** I just asked if we could get that in writing, that's all, a status report on that, just to confirm what you and Kevin have said.

• (1040)

**Mr. Matthew King:** I think we can do that, yes.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** That would be great.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There's just one final multipart question from me.

The supplementary estimates, under "Voted Appropriations", refer to "Funding for Defining the Outer Limits of Canada's Continental Shelf in the Arctic Ocean". I'm assuming that this relates to Canada's submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, which I understand was initially due in 2013.

I just wonder if you can tell us what this funding will be used for. What role is DFO playing in that submission? If the UN commission accepts Canada's petition, can you speculate for us on what that might mean for Canada, particularly with respect to Fisheries and Oceans?

**Mr. Matthew King:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

The reference in the supplementaries is actually a capital acquisition. With it, in fairly short order, we managed to install a very sophisticated multibeam camera on the bottom of the *Louis S. St-Laurent*. We did that in a matter of months. In fact, the *Louis* was dispatched to the Arctic under an expedition led by Natural Resources Canada to provide high-definition mapping on what we would consider to be fairly critical elements of the delineation process that we will ultimately submit to the United Nations.

As members may know, we did submit our Atlantic claim last year. We submitted a fair amount of information, but partial information on the Arctic claim, so along with our colleagues in NRCan, we mapped in this past year. I expect that we will do so

again next year in an effort to complete what has turned out to be obviously a very complicated process.

Once it's complete, we will submit it to the UN and a process will ensue. But we believe that, under any circumstances, the amount of territory that Canada will be able to oversee going forward will be very considerable. We're very hopeful that from a fisheries perspective, but also from a general economic perspective—oil and gas and minerals—it will bring substantial benefits to Canada.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Kamp.

Deputy, on behalf of the entire committee, I want to say thank you to you and your colleagues for appearing before us today and taking the time to answer our questions.

Monsieur Grégoire, I want to wish you all the best in the future and thank you very much for being here the many times that we've called on you to come before this committee. We certainly do appreciate your service. Thank you once again for coming today.

Deputy, do you have a final comment?

**Mr. Matthew King:** +I wonder if I could just come back to a question that Mr. Cleary asked me earlier, because I wasn't sure if I was as precise as I needed to be.

I interpreted the question to be whether or not the department would do specific economic impact analysis with regard to the NAFO decision on SFA-7. I answered that we would not be doing a specific publishable economic analysis on that sector. But I neglected to say that in all of the fisheries management advice that we provide to our minister, we do have a group within Fisheries and Oceans, our economic analysis group, that provides socio-economic information for consideration in all fisheries-related decisions. I just wanted to clarify that.

Thank you for the opportunity.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Deputy, for that clarification.

We certainly do appreciate everyone being here today, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and with the new members of your team. Certainly, please pass along our best to the former members who have since retired.

There being no further business, this committee now stands adjourned.





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