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October 31, 2023

Jeffrey Janes  
Policy Analyst, Regional and Strategic Assessments  
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

**Subject: Response to the Request for Advice submitted by the Committee for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia**

Dear Jeffrey Janes:

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) received a Request for Advice (RFA) from the Impact Assessment Agency (IAAC) detailing the information in DFO's possession that the Agency required in support of the ongoing Regional Assessment (RA) of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia. This response aims to fulfill DFO's obligation per section 23 of the Impact Assessment Act (IAA) and the current Memorandum of Understanding between DFO to provide specialist or expert information or knowledge that is in DFO's possession. The response also includes information that was not specifically requested by IAAC, but that DFO feels is important to consider as the Committee carries out the RA.

As the RA Study Area encompasses areas that fall within both the DFO Maritimes and Gulf administrative boundaries, information provided pertains to both of those regions. The written response for each region is therefore provided in separate documents, each with their own accompanying attachments. Please note that the level of detail regarding some environmental characteristics may be different between the Maritimes and Gulf responses, due in part to the allocated time to collect the information and its availability and relevance in each region.

Please also note the following:

- The information represented here should not be considered peer-reviewed, DFO Science advice but rather information that is in DFO's possession and relevant to the topics outlined in the RFA
- Almost all the information presented is from already published literature or subject matter expert knowledge. Information from non-published sources has been identified.
- Per discussions between DFO and IAAC, a number of different pieces of information pertaining specifically to DFO Maritimes Region will be provided after the requested deadline of October 31<sup>st</sup>, likely in early November. These are:
  - o Chlorophyll-a concentrations and the noted trends in timing and location of blooms

- Current knowledge of Atlantic salmon presence / migration
- Current knowledge of American eel presence / migration through the Study Area
- Overview of current and anticipated future moderate livelihood fisheries
- Overview/summary of pinnipeds

Finally, some information shared is sensitive in nature and should not be posted to the public registry without first consulting DFO. For both regions, this includes the following information:

- Information on Food, Social, Ceremonial fisheries
- Information on commercial-communal fishing licences

Information on FSC and commercial-communal fishing licences is sensitive. Disclosing such information could impact relationships and ongoing consultations between DFO and First Nations and Indigenous Groups. Please refer to the attached “Best Practices for food, social and ceremonial fisheries information management.” If there are requirements around disclosing this information, DFO requests that IAAC to reach out to DFO directly. DFO looks forward to continuing to work with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to support the Regional Assessment. The department welcomes any follow-up correspondence from the Agency pertaining to this response.

Sincerely,

<original signed by>

Wendy Williams

**Attachments:**

1. DFO Maritimes written response
2. DFO Gulf written response

**Annexes**

1. Annex A: Information on requested geospatial information/data layers (both regions)
2. Annex B: DFO Maritimes Region species list recorded from offshore clam surveys
3. Annex C: DFO Maritimes Region information on commercial fisheries
4. Annex D: DFO Maritimes Region information on commercial-communal licences
5. Annex E: DFO Maritimes Region information on Food, Social, Ceremonial (FSC) licences
6. Annex F: DFO Gulf Region information on commercial fisheries landings, including maps
7. Annex G: DFO Gulf Region fisheries management data
8. Annex H: DFO Gulf Region verbatim personal communications from Science Branch SMEs in response to the Request for Advice (as supporting documentation to the written response)
9. Annex I: DFO Maritimes Whale Sightings Database cetacean sightings

**PDF documents**

1. Best Practices for food, social and ceremonial fisheries information management.
2. Cook, A. M. 2023. Maritimes Region American Lobster: Fisheries Spatial Distribution. Tech. Rep. Aquat. Sci. xx: vi + 27 p [*in press*].
3. DFO Gulf Region Existing Regional Environmental Characteristics
4. MSC Canada Scotian Shelf Northern Prawn Surveillance Report

**Spatial information/geodatabases**

1. DFO Gulf Region Commercial landings data (geodatabase)
2. DFO Gulf Region Existing Regional Environmental Characteristics (.ppkx file)
3. DFO Maritimes Region draft conservation network (geodatabase) [*Please note that this a draft design and should be cited as such. The information is also subject to change.*]

**Annexes and PDFs can be accessed using the link provided via email. Spatial files will be shared over email.**

c.c.: Alain Hebert  
Glen Herbert  
Monik Richard

