Informing the RA: Perspectives of the Fishing Industry

February 5th 2024

Nova Scotia Fisheries Alliance for Energy Engagement

Who Are Members of the NSFAEE?

Represent the majority of the wild fish and seafood harvesting sector in Nova Scotia:

Area 19 Snow Crab Association	**Scotia Fundy Inshore Fishermen's Assoc.**	**Eastern Shore Fisherman's Protective Assoc.**	**Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance**	**Brazil Rock 33/34 Lobster**	**Southwest Nova Tuna Association**	**Richmond Co. Inshore Fishermen's Assoc.**
ASPANS	**Seafood Producers Association of Nova Scotia**	**Gulf Nova Scotia Tuna Fishermen's Assoc.**	**NS Swordfishermen's Association**	**Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association**	**SHQ Swordfish Harpoon Quota Group**	**Maritime Fishermen's Union – Local 4, 6 & 9**
Atlantic Groundfish Council	**Shelburne County Quota Group**	**Guys. Co. Inshore Fishermen's Assoc.**	**Tuna Charter Nova Scotia Association**	**Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership**	**Coldwater Lobster**	**Bay of Fundy Inshore Fishermen's Association**

Mandate to unite the Nova Scotia fishing industry; ensuring the emerging renewable offshore energy sector is developed in a manner that respects fisheries, coastal communities, and the marine environment.

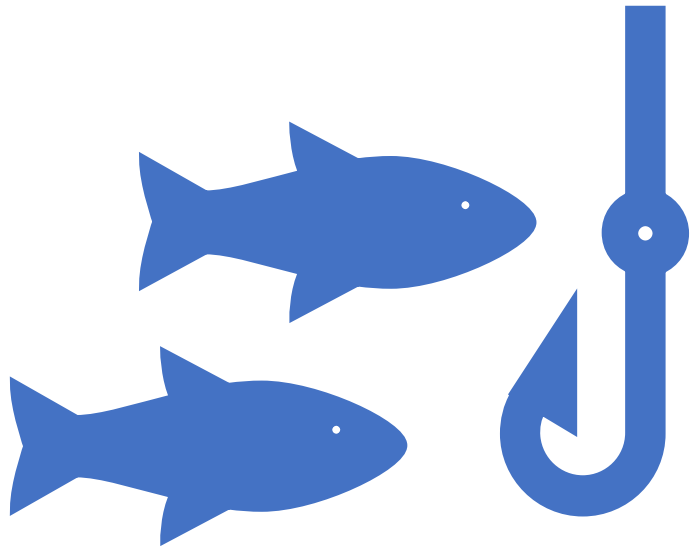
Shared Vision for Offshore Wind Development

- Additive economic value – not replacement
- Avoiding the ‘experiment’
- Responsible and well-paced development
- Fulsome understanding of expectations
- No sector is sacrificed – all fisheries equally important
- No communities are sacrificed – all are equally important

Fishing Industry Challenge

- Provide an industry perspective on current and future commercial fisheries usage in the marine environment
- Account for data gaps where spatial information on fishing is lacking due to vessel size/regulatory requirements
- Identify collective concerns around offshore wind development

End Goal: Inform the RA



NSFAEE Submission

- Part 1:
  - Spatial scan of activities
  - Identification of areas of lower conflict with the fishing industry
- Part 2:
  - Supporting submission
  - Considerations of impacts
  - Industry considerations

Sectors Participating in the NSFAEE

- Inshore/offshore Lobster
- Inshore/Midshore/Offshore Fixed-Gear Fisherman
- Snow Crab
- Northern Shrimp
- Offshore Scallop
- Sea Cucumber
- Floating Longline Pelagics
- Small pelagics
- Whelk
- Inshore/midshore/offshore Mobile Gear Groundfish
- Red Crab
- Herring (mobile/fixed)
- Jonah Crab
- Hagfish
- Halibut
- Rod and Reel Tuna (charter and other)

Part 1: Spatial Scan

Challenge: Project Uncertainty

Uncertainty on allowable activities

What could be permitted?

Compatible/incompatible activities

Uncertainty on project design

Floating? 193 mW of 64,000 mw worldwide is deployed floating

Fixed? Most is deployed in < 30 m of water

Minimum project size

Translates into uncertainty on engagement

What do we ASK for?

What sectors should be concerned?

Starting assumption of complete exclusion of the harvesting sector from offshore wind areas

Challenge – Fishing Data Limitations

- Fleet/Sector Level Data Gaps
- Coarse Logbook Information
- Uneven data resolution across sectors
- Migrating Resources/Fisheries
- Recovering Fisheries
- Timescale is very important

Approach

1

Aggregate all current fishing information:

- By Species
- By Gear
- 2012 – 2021 information

2

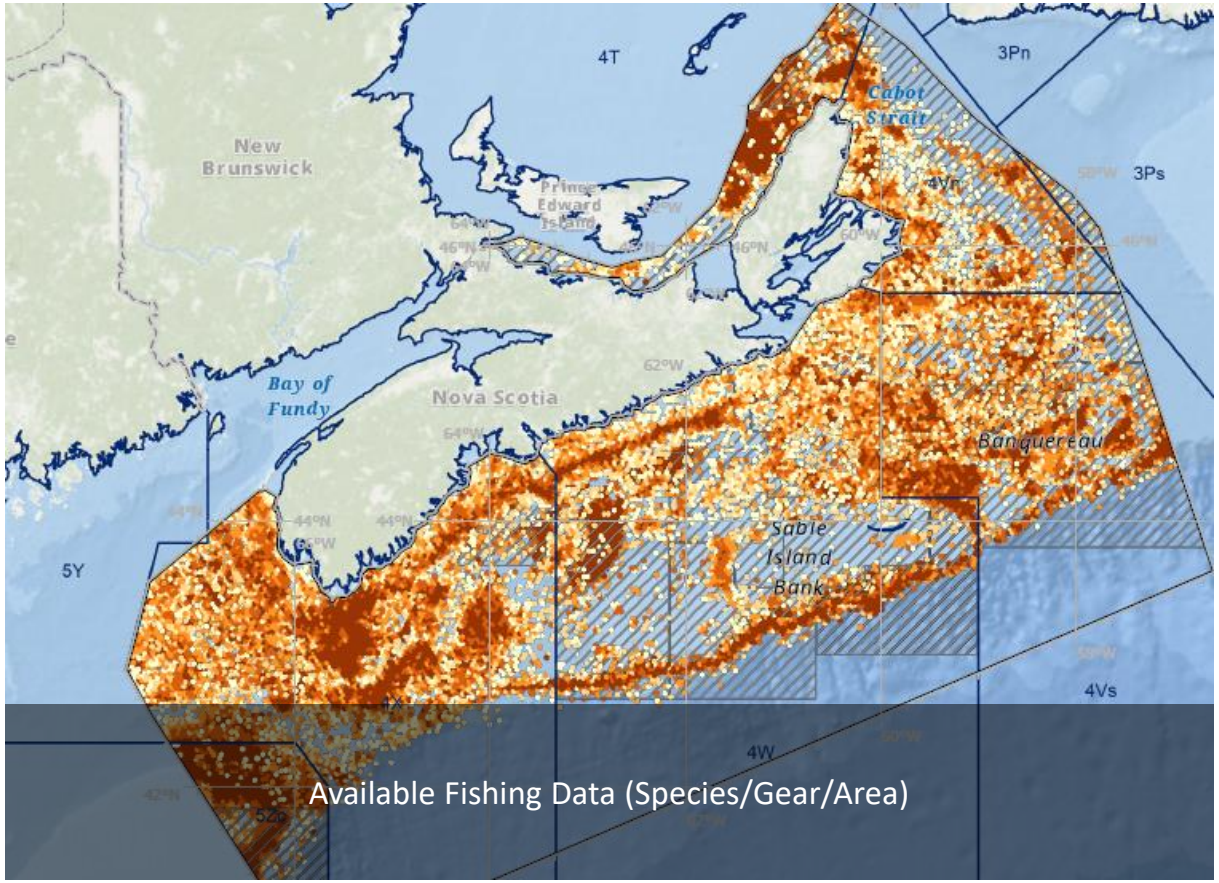
Identify areas of low utilization by those data streams

- Areas not necessarily unused – just not recorded

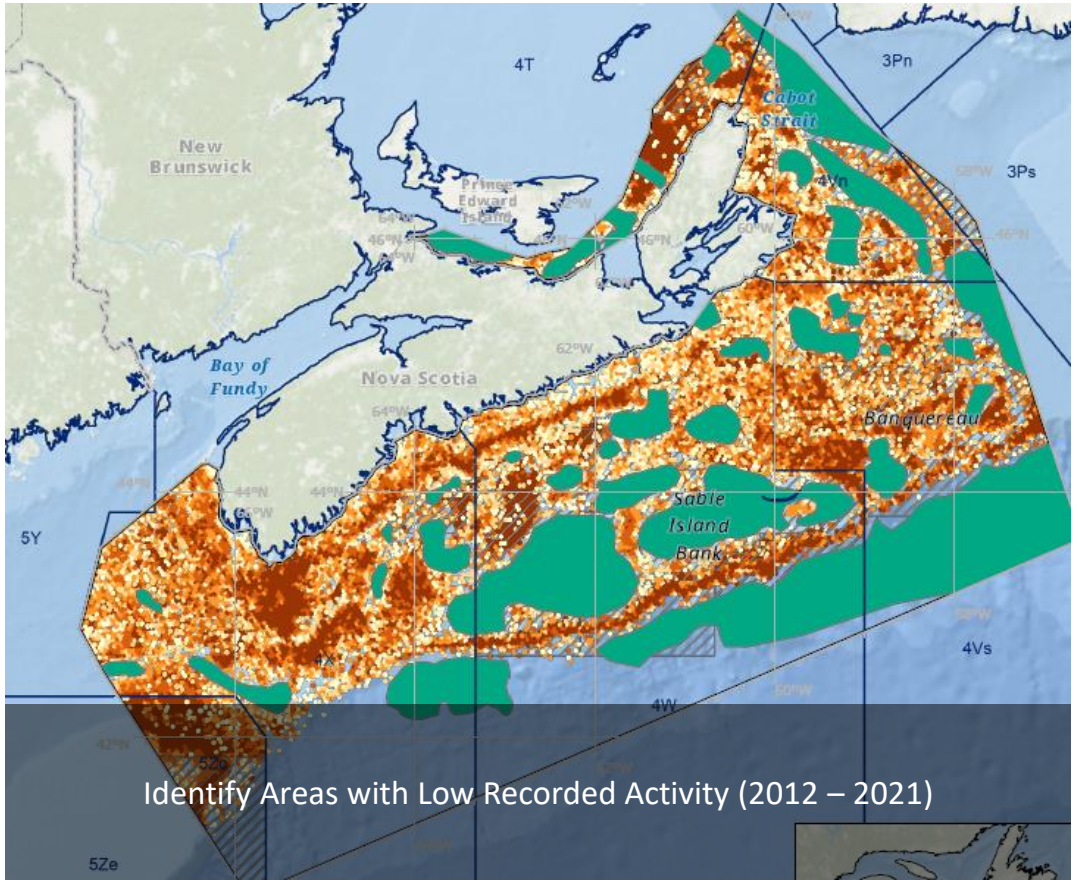
3

Refine areas informed by sector-specific experts through consultation with members

- Each recorded landing is a livelihood



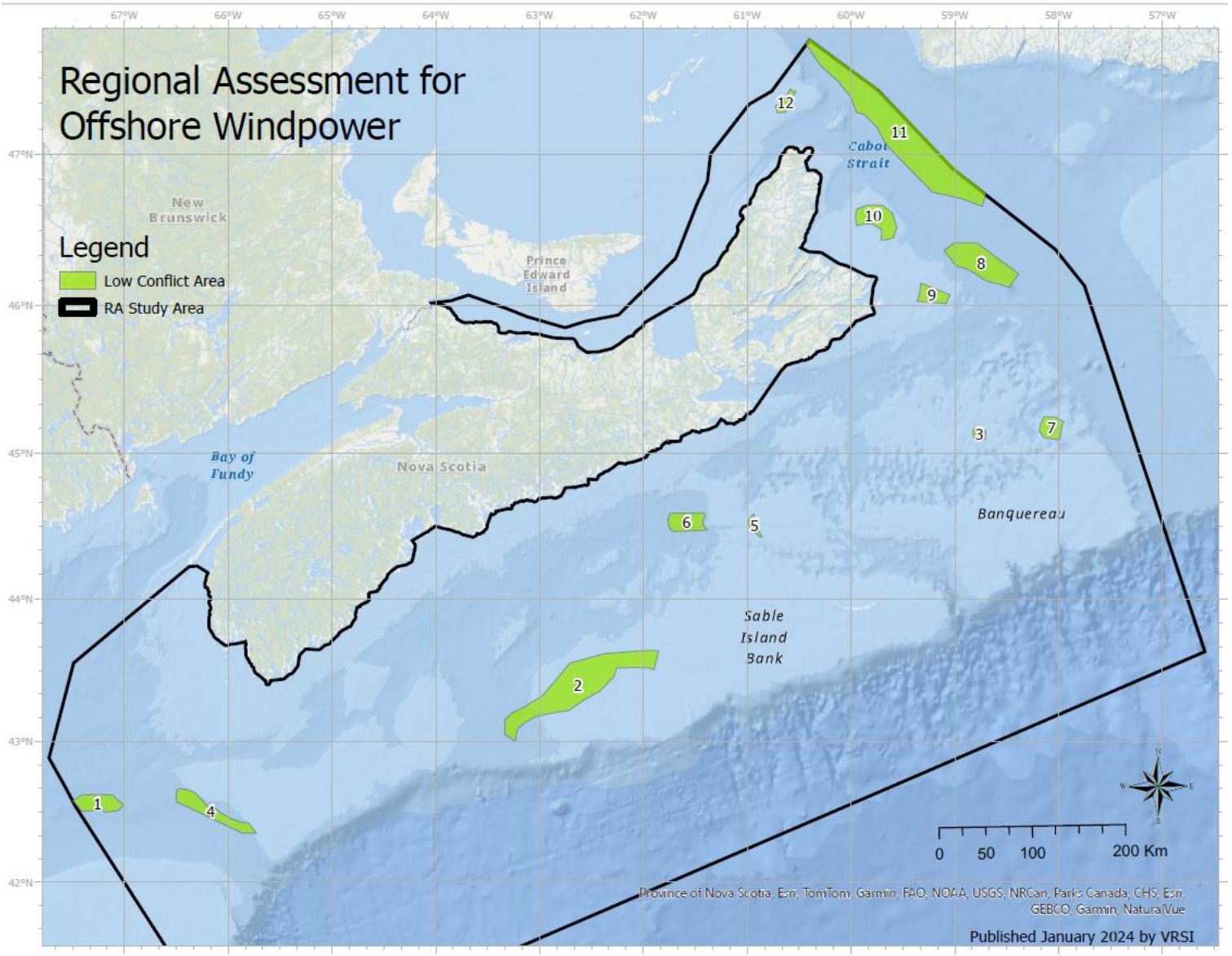
Available Fishing Data (Species/Gear/Area)



Identify Areas with Low Recorded Activity (2012 – 2021)

Starting Point – October 2023

Endpoint – January 2024



What Drove the Changes?

- Shifting patterns in fisheries not yet captured by the DFO information (2022 and 2023 were very dynamic)
- Guidance from fleet sectors where DFO data is lacking precise spatial information on activity
- Guidance from fleet sectors with diffuse footprints and whose activities are completely incompatible with surface structures
- Integration of historic fishing footprints for recovering species

Area identified by NSFAEE via 2012 – 2021 landings/effort data was reduced from an initial > 79,000 km^2 to < 9,080 km^2

Outcomes of Spatial Assessment

- Gaps in mapped fishing information from the 2012 – 2021 period are misleading
  - Gaps have local names and local uses
- Scale is important
- Very little area deemed ‘unused’ or ‘not likely used’
- Clear preference for areas closed to most sectors (i.e. Western Emerald Banks Conservation Area)
- Data-driven assessments of activity are incomplete
- Real conflicts prevent self-nomination of areas

Part 2: Supporting Submission

Supporting Submission

- Given the uncertainty, additional meaningful advice was challenging to provide. The NSFAEE did highlight concerns and recommendations related to:
  - Operational Impacts
  - Oceanographic and Ecosystem Impacts
  - Cumulative Impacts
  - Transmission Corridors

Recommendations - Process:

1. All waters, whether they be provincial or shared federal/provincial jurisdiction, should be regulated under a common set of rules and a single regulatory regime. This will level the playing field and provide clear guidance to proponents irrespective of what side of a boundary their project may be.
2. Any future call for bids issued by the future Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator be selected from within an area ultimately selected by the RA Committee in their final report as a Potential Future Development Area (PFDA) and identified as an area for further intense study (as per the original Regional Assessment's Terms of Reference) prior to the call for bids. This will allow all parties to focus attention on a limited set of areas and eliminate unneeded distractions.
3. Assuming the required Impact Assessment Act amendments are amenable and implemented in a timely fashion, all wind projects proposed in the Nova Scotia offshore be subject to individual project assessments under the applicable legislation. While the work of the RA will be robust, it will lack the ability to inform specific projects because of the rapid evolution of technology in the offshore wind sector.

Recommendations - PFDAs:

1. It is challenging for the industry to identify low conflict areas for offshore wind development because fishing activity ranges widely over geography and through time.
2. Areas closed under Fisheries Act closures (i.e. marine refuges) should be considered and evaluated as PFDAs if fishery conservation objectives can be accommodated. These areas are truly low-conflict areas for the fishing industry and provide an opportunity to reduce the socio-economic consequences of displacing the fishing sector.
3. The RA Committee is cautioned against over-interpreting any synthesis of spatial information where sampling is temporally or spatially sporadic (for example, truncated time series for fisheries or long obsolete surveys for conservation values). This includes those assessment that reference fishing information and conservation values information (e.g. AEGIR or NRCan Canmet reports).
4. Any PFDAs identified by the RA Committee include some mechanism of review to ensure they continue to be appropriate areas for development in light of evolving information on the marine environment and new offshore wind technologies.
5. The NSFAEE and its members look forward to providing further information to inform planning the PFDAs in support of the 2025 Final Report.

Recommendations - Impacts:

1. Every effort possible must be undertaken prior to any offshore wind development to ensure appropriate levels of baseline data are collected in and around PFDAs to ensure impacts can be determined, detected and mitigated wherever possible.
2. Our collective understanding of the potential impacts of offshore wind energy development on the structure and function of marine ecosystems remains in its infancy, as demonstrated from programs in other jurisdictions undergoing offshore wind development. This uncertainty must be acknowledged in future assessments, especially as it pertains to the future productivity of wild fish and seafood stocks.
3. Develop a detailed socio-economic profile of the fishery; the existing baseline distribution of services it relies on throughout Nova Scotia; and, how that availability may be impacted by a developing offshore wind sector.
4. Offshore wind development stands to impact the fishing industry both directly and indirectly. These impacts must be further scoped out and a plan established that will provide fair compensation to those impacted by industrial development in offshore areas.
5. Impacts not related to the marine ecosystem must also be planned for in a proactive fashion. For example, impacts to search and rescue operations and steaming routes, competition for labour and port services must also be identified as a key data gap and acquisition of baseline information must be considered.
6. Transmission corridors and their direct and indirect impacts must be more fulsomely examined with associated research to understand the impacts on species sensitive to temperature and electromagnetic fields. Identification of corridors should be an important component of the final 2025 RA Committee report.

Looking Forward

- March 2024 – RA Release Potential Future Development Areas
- April – December 2024
  - NSFAEE Members will seek to delineate sector-specific interests in the PFDAs
  - NSFAEE will identify fishery interests/potential mitigation in PFDAs
  - NSFAEE will seek to assist in identification of compensation approaches for those potentially impacted by offshore wind development

Discussion