



ABORIGINAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

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NOTE:

The information contained in this report is believed to be accurate but is not warranted. Any errors or omissions are unintentional.

General Overview of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy

The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) is a program that provides for the effective management of the Aboriginal fishery in a manner consistent with the Sparrow decision. This landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision found, among other things, that where an Aboriginal group establishes an Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes, this right, after conservation, has priority over any other user of the resource.

In accordance with negotiated, time-limited agreements, Aboriginal groups participate in the management of the fisheries and are provided with both allocations of fish and economic development opportunities. The Program applies where DFO manages the fishery, and where land claims settlements are not in place.

AFS Agreements

AFS Agreements are without prejudice to either party's position on Aboriginal rights. Agreements negotiated under the AFS contain an allocation to be harvested by the Aboriginal group, which is fished under a communal fishing licence. This allocation is determined after consultations with the group regarding their needs for food, social and ceremonial purposes. Agreements detail the conditions to be included in the communal fishing licence, such as quantities, time, gear and data collection. Agreements may also contain other arrangements for the co-management of the Aboriginal fishery by the group and DFO, such as stock assessment, fish enhancement and habitat management projects. Commercial fishing and other economic development opportunities may also be negotiated as part of an AFS Agreement.

Fishing Plans

Fishing Plans, one component/schedule of an AFS Agreement, detail the numerical harvest levels which have been negotiated and established for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

These plans establish the Fishing Authority and the plan to monitor fisheries harvests by members of the community who have been designated on behalf of the community. The allocation sets the species and the quantities, times and gear to be used.

Communal Licences

The Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licence Regulations provide for the issuance of communal licences to Aboriginal groups. These licences include conditions for quantity of catch by species, gear time and area of harvest, and disposition of fish. The conditions for designating fishers and the reporting requirements are also set out in the

communal licence. Typically, communal licence conditions flow from the fishing plan within the AFS Agreement. However, where DFO cannot reach an agreement with a First Nation, a communal licence is issued. As per s.6(f) of the Policy for the Management of Aboriginal Fishing, the conditions will be minimal and will contain allocations based on the last offer made by DFO before termination of negotiations.

The communal licences are a way of providing the opportunity for Aboriginal communities to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes consistent with the priority afforded them, while integrating the management of Aboriginal fisheries with all other fisheries.

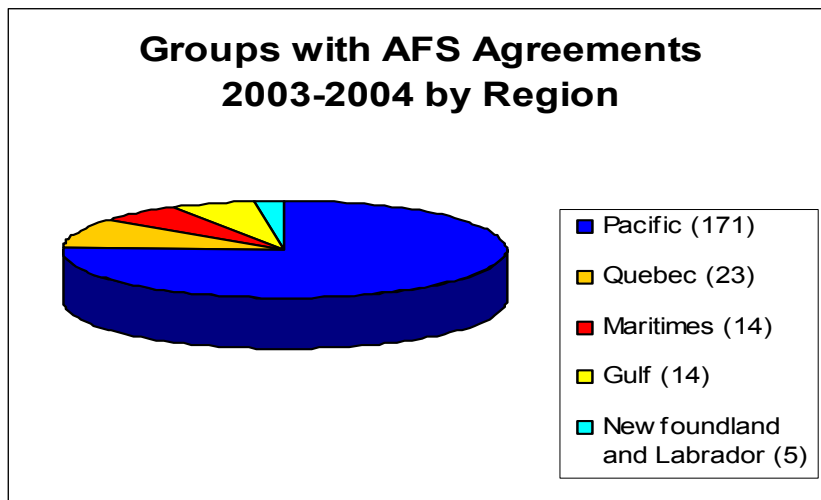
National Perspective

The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy was funded at \$35,221,000 in 2003-2004. This included a mandated amount of \$25,238,050 for co-management expenditures and \$9,982,950 for the Allocation Transfer Program (ATP). There was some movement between Co-Management and ATP funding throughout the year resulting in final expenditures of \$25,310,050 in Co-Management and \$9,910,950 in ATP. \$320,000 from the Co-Management mandate was provided to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs for implementation of the Nisga'a Treaty. \$920,200 in Co-Management Contribution funds and \$178,090 in Operating funds were transferred to the Marshall budget to compensate for AFS expenditures paid out of the Marshall Response Initiative in the first two years of the MRI Program.

189 AFS Agreements and Amendments were signed with 227 Aboriginal groups in British Columbia, Quebec and Atlantic Canada. (Central and Arctic region does not have AFS Agreements but contracts projects with Aboriginal groups). Some of these First Nations are funded under an Agreement with an Umbrella Group such as a Tribal Council, Watershed Authority or Native Council.

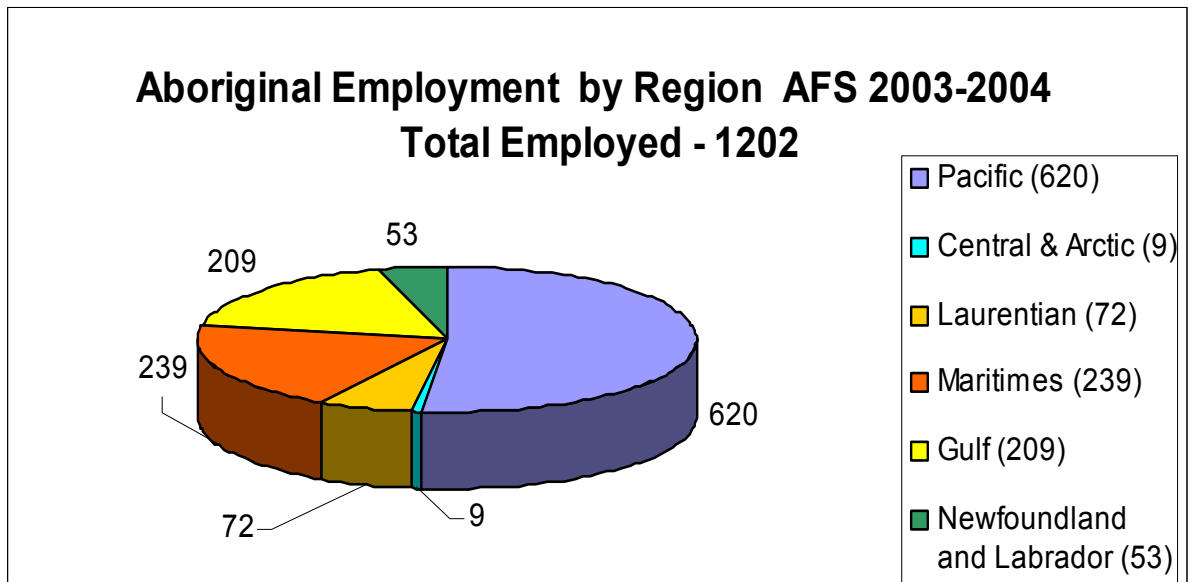
These AFS Agreements have resulted in the creation of 1202 seasonal jobs in areas such as processing, monitoring and enhancement activities. 183 of those employed through the AFS are Aboriginal guardians, trained by DFO and employed by the Aboriginal group. The remaining 1019 jobs were created nationally in the fisheries management field (habitat restoration, stock assessment, fisheries enhancement, etc.), and in the areas of consultation and economic development.

Groups with AFS Agreements



Employment Under the AFS – 2003-2004

REGION	GUARDIANS	OTHERS	TOTAL
PACIFIC	57	563	620
CENTRAL & ARCTIC	0	9	9
LAURENTIAN	17	55	72
MARITIMES	36	203	239
GULF	36	173	209
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	37	16	53
TOTAL	183	1019	1202



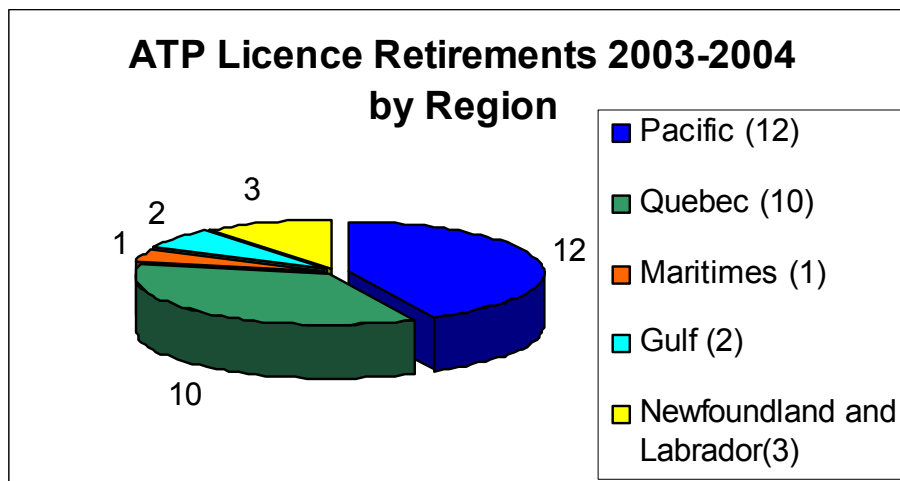
Allocation Transfer Program

Background

In 1994 the AFS was amended to include the Allocation Transfer Program (ATP). The ATP supports Aboriginal groups in achieving self-sufficiency through participation in commercial fisheries. The ATP facilitates the voluntary retirement of commercial licences and the issuance of new licences to eligible Aboriginal organizations in a manner that does not add to the existing effort on the resource. As a result of changes in 1998, funding may also be provided to purchase equipment, such as vessels and/or gear necessary for Aboriginal groups to fish these licences. Eligibility is restricted to Aboriginal organizations that have fisheries agreements with DFO under the AFS. It is a means to stimulate Aboriginal economic development opportunities and develop fisheries expertise in Aboriginal communities.

National ATP Budget

As noted above, the ATP was funded at \$9,910,950 in 2003-2004. 28 licences were retired and the department purchased or contributed towards 17 vessels. In addition various quotas, equipment and gear were retired nationally.



Pacific Region

The core budget for 2003-2004 in Pacific Region was \$20,694,000, which included \$15,850,000 for co-management, and \$4,844,000 for the ATP. A further Co-Management top-up of \$80,000 was provided from HQ contingency funds.

During 2003-2004, a total of \$4,498,000 was spent to retire licences, vessels and gear under ATP in this Region, \$15,930,000 was spent on Co-Management Agreements, and \$346,000 in ATP funds was not spent by year end and was re-allocated to other Regions by HQ.

Number of Agreements

The following Agreements were negotiated in 2003-2004

- 36 Contribution Agreements
- 19 Amendments to Contribution Agreements
- 46 Fisheries Agreements
- 38 Amendments to Fisheries Agreements
- 1 Framework Interim Measures Agreement
- 1 Framework Interim Measures Agreement Amendment
- 1 Fisheries Resource Protection and Conservation Sub-agreement Amendment
- 1 Razor Clam Sub-agreement
- 2 Communal Commercial Fisheries Access Sub-agreements
- 1 Communal Commercial Fisheries Access Sub-agreement Amendment
- 1 Project Funding Agreement
- 1 Watershed Agreement

Total of 148

Employment

In 2003-2004 approximately 57 Aboriginal Fisheries Guardians were employed for a total of 531 months. Another 563 people were employed for a total of 2,309.95 months in other projects funded through the agreements. Please note that this information is based on final reports received for 2003-2004, or on preliminary projected estimates provided by the group at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Commercial Access:

Twelve commercial licences were retired in 2003-2004 under the Allocation Transfer Program in Pacific region. Six licences have been allocated to First Nations and the remaining licences will be allocated under future AFS Agreements.

The following licences, quotas and vessels were acquired under the ATP in 2003-2004

Item	Value
Salmon seine licence (19.59 m. vessel)	\$375,000
Salmon seine licence (19.76 m. vessel)	\$370,000
Salmon seine licence (19.45 m. vessel)	\$375,000
Salmon seine licence (19.45 m. vessel)	\$375,000
Salmon seine licence (20.11 m. vessel)	\$375,000
Salmon seine licence (20.11 m. vessel)	\$375,000
Herring seine licence	\$700,000
Salmon seine licence (20.43 m. vessel)	\$375,000
Salmon gillnet licence (13.39 m. vessel)	\$85,000
Salmon troll licence (13.39 m. vessel)	\$84,000
Salmon seine licence (16.89 m. vessel)	\$355,000
Crab by trap licence (11.47 m. vessel)	\$470,000
Licence coordinator	\$174,000
Vessel Repairs	\$10,000
Total	\$ 4,498,000

Key Projects

Cariboo Tribal Council

In 2003-2004 the Cariboo Tribal Council made the decision to move to a Community Fisheries Representative (CFR) program under AFS.

They hired four representatives, one for each community. The CFR's function is to provide fisheries information to the Chief and Council and local community, and act as a two-way conduit for information to pass between the Department and the community. They are also involved with catch monitoring within their individual communities.

The program is designed to assist with the building of the CFR's capacity and knowledge of the different aspects of fisheries and fisheries management, so they are better able to understand the technical issues involved in the management of fisheries. This has and will allow them to be more engaged in the co-management and stewardship of the fisheries in their territory. This increase in knowledge and capacity is resulting in consultation, between the Department, the Tribal Council and communities, becoming more coherent and easier since the level of understanding and comprehension is higher.

It seems to be working well so far with keen people in the CFR positions.

The Bella Coola River Eulachon Studies 2001-2004 - Nuxalk Nation

Eulachon (oolichan, ooligan) have been a fish of vital importance to First Nations along the Pacific Coast for millennia. While the products of their harvest may include fresh, dried, smoked, salted, and frozen whole fish, the product of greatest cultural, economic, nutritional, and social value is indisputably the "grease" or oil rendered from the fish.

The Bella Coola River, as recent as 1998, supported a spawning eulachon population that sustained a fishery by the Nuxalk First Nation. However, in 1999 the run failed to return and for the past 6 years the run has been insufficient to support a fishery. Studies were initiated on the Bella Coola River eulachon in 2001 and were repeated from 2002 to 2004. The objective was to collect basic information on the life history and habitat of eulachon in the Bella Coola River. This included describing the run timing, incubation period, spawning distribution, body size, fecundity, and to estimate the spawning escapement based on larval and egg abundance. The year 2004 marked the fourth year of studies on the Bella Coola River Eulachon run.

The management of the study has evolved since 2001. The Bella Coola eulachon study was initiated with the help of the Eulachon Conservation Study (ECS) in 2001. The ECS supplied the technical expertise, the training for the workers and compiled the final report. For the 2002 study, Bradan Ecological Consultants were contracted to help with the planning, the supervision, and the report writing. By 2003, the Nuxalk Fisheries

program had gained the needed experience and the technical skills to carry out the project independently. Therefore, the 2003 and 2004 Bella Coola Eulachon studies were entirely Nuxalk managed and operated. The Nuxalk Nation is now working with the Oweekeno Nation of Rivers Inlet to help develop a similar study in their territory.

The core funding for these projects came from Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) through the Nuxalk Nation's Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) Agreement. Other funds were also obtained from the Mid Coast First Nation's Training Society and the David Suzuki Foundation. These funds have helped to build the capacity of the Nuxalk Nation to carry out scientific research as well as to provide valuable information to the Nuxalk Community and to DFO regarding the status of the Bella Coola Eulachon and other Central Coast eulachon stocks.



Eulachon Stocks



Nuxalk Crew



Releasing to live box

Central and Arctic Region

In 2003-2004 the Central and Arctic Region operated on an annual Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy budget of \$240,000, all in O&M. (Operations and Maintenance). Late in the year, an additional \$18,500 in ATP funding was provided from the HQ Reserve to retire a boat and motor for the Sambaa K'e Dene Band.

\$200,000 was spent on Community fisheries projects. The remaining \$40,000 funded consultations with Aboriginal groups.

Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy Projects Workplan 2003-2004

Community Fishery Workers

Claim/Aboriginal Organization: 2003-2004 Funding

NWT Métis First Nations:

Hay River Métis Council	\$20K
Fort Smith Métis Council	\$2K

Akaiitcho First Nations:

Deninu Kue	\$8K
Lutsel Ke First Nation	\$56K

Deh Cho First Nation:

Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band	\$8K
Kakisa Dene Band	\$8K
Hay River Dene Band	\$6K
Sambaa Ke Dene Band	\$18K
West Point First Nation	\$4K

FS Coordinator/Technician \$70K

Total \$200K

LOCATION: Communities of the North Slave, South Slave and Deh Cho regions of the NWT

DATE: 1 April, 2003 to 31 March, 2004

Project Description:

The community field workers, hired by 9 Aboriginal organisations in 7 communities, will foster co-management at the community level. The program will allow interaction with Bands, management boards and Hunters and Trappers Associations, establish co-operative projects, gather harvest information, help improve fish handling and processing practises, promote conservation education and promote co-operative fishery management projects.

The co-operative fishery management projects involve:

- i. Assessing fish stocks, important to aboriginal people, through tag/recapture studies, weir counts, sampling for age and growth data and measuring Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE);
- ii. Delineating stocks through stock identification programs;
- iii. Conducting community surveys to gather harvest information and traditional knowledge of stocks and fishing patterns;
- iv. Involving the Aboriginal community in finding solutions to fishery management problems;
- v. Conducting habitat workshops to teach development corporations and Aboriginal contractors approved practises when working near water;
- vi. Conducting traditional ecological knowledge studies to compliment and enhance scientific studies; and
- vii. Providing learning opportunities to enhance the knowledge of fisheries management protocol;

Sub-Projects – 2003-2004

**i. Great Slave Lake Fisheries: \$86K
(by contracting the Hay River Métis Nation, the Hay River Dene Band, the West Point First Nation and the Lutsel Ke Dene Band)**

The fish resources of Great Slave Lake (GSL) are shared by Aboriginal, commercial and recreational fisheries. At least six Aboriginal communities utilise GSL fish stocks for sustenance and over 80% of the participants in the GSL commercial fishery are of Aboriginal origin. All users of the resource are represented on the Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee (GSLAC) which represents all user groups on the lake and co-manages the fisheries by making recommendations to DFO.

Objectives:

- To train Aboriginal community field workers to gather information useful in the management of Great Slave Lake fisheries by DFO, Aboriginal partners and the Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee.
- To monitor the stock status of GSL whitefish stocks and other species by measuring for size and age, CPUE, and species composition of the commercial catch.
- To monitor the harvest of the various user groups.

The Hay River Métis Govt. Council, Hay River will be contracted to hire two seasonal field workers to assist with data collection on the Great Slave Lake and two inland fisheries. The study will involve sampling 2000 whitefish at FFMC fish plants, conducting assessment studies in the Hay River Domestic Area and the T-bar tagging and sampling of 300 inconnu at Buffalo River.

The Lutsel K'e Dene Band, LutselK'e will survey itinerant anglers encountered in the east arm of Great Slave Lake, conduct an Aboriginal food fishery survey and complete a traditional ecological knowledge survey in the community of Lutselk'e.

Objective:

- To provide harvest statistics useful in the management and allocation of fishery resources, especially lake trout, for area 5 and 6 (the East Arm) of Great Slave Lake. These statistics will be crucial in future allocation of the fisheries resources.

The Hay River Dene Band and the West Point First Nation will assist in the assessment of fish stocks in the Hay River Domestic Fishing Area by setting and lifting experimental gillnet gangs and recording CPUE, size and age parameters of the catch.

ii. Deninu Kue First Nation, Fort Resolution: \$8K

The Deninu Kue First Nation will be contracted to hire a harvest surveyor who will collect harvest statistics for the Fort Resolution Aboriginal food fishery, which occurs on Resolution Bay, the Slave River delta and the Little Buffalo River.

iii. Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band, Fort Providence:\$8K

Digaa Enterprises Ltd. will be contracted to hire a harvest surveyor who will collect harvest statistics for the Fort Providence Aboriginal food fishery which occurs on the Mackenzie River and Horn River. The Band will also conduct an experimental commercial fishery in the Mackenzie River and Horn River.

Objective:

- to determine whether commercial fishing for jumbo whitefish and other species is biologically sustainable as well as profitable.

iv. Fort Smith Métis Nation: \$2K

A field worker will be contracted to survey the First Nation food fishery harvest on the Slave River from August to October.

v. Sambaa Ke Dene Band, Trout Lake: \$18K

The Band will be contracted to collect harvest data on the local commercial fishery as well as the food fishery. They will also be contracted to monitor the walleye sport fishery

on Trout Lake and the Moose and Island rivers, including guests of their lodge business. 200 walleye will be sampled for size and age data for comparison with earlier samples.

vi. Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation, Kakisa: \$8K

Walleye size and age samples will be collected from the catch of the Kakisa Lake and Tathlina Lake Dene Band's commercial fisheries. Data collected during 12 years of monitoring will be analysed and interpreted and published in a Technical Report that will include quota recommendations for the commercial fishery.

ix. AFS Coordinator/technician: \$70K

The overall co-ordination of the program will be facilitated by an Aboriginal graduate of a Renewable Resources Technology Program. This person will explain the program to the various Aboriginal groups, arrange contracts with the various organisations and monitor progress on contracted services. The Co-ordinator will ensure that data is being collected according to current fisheries management protocol and is recorded in a clear and concise manner by the workers in the various communities. The Co-ordinator will supervise the organisation and computer analysis of data collected during the various community studies and assist with the preparation of reports. This person will be responsible for the aging of scale samples collected during AFS programs. She will present results of the programs to the Aboriginal organizations and management committees and will conduct at least two conservation education sessions in community schools. She will also be responsible for organizing a habitat related workshop in one Dene community and developing material for a web page accessible to Aboriginal groups. The co-ordinator will attend at least one conference or work-shop and present material as appropriate.

Summary of Progress Towards Objectives: 2003/04

EXPECTED

ACTUAL

i. Great Slave Lake

Hay River Métis Govt. Council

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. 1 worker recruited - May 2003 | 1 worker recruited |
| b. Inconnu sampling completed | 588 Inconnu sampled;
176 tagged |
| c. GSL fisheries monitored | 800 whitefish sampled |
| d. outflow temperature monitored | completed |

Lutsel K'e First Nation

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. 2 workers recruited - June 2003 | 2 workers recruited |
| 2. 300 anglers surveyed -partial survey | 200 surveys |
| 3. Study data analysed | Data analysed |

ii. Fort Resolution

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| a. Fisheries worker recruited; June 2003 | 1 worker recruited |
| b. Harvest study completed | Res Bay and L. Buffalo
completed |

iii. Fort Providence:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. 1 worker recruited – June 2003 | Worker recruited |
| b. Harvest study completed | Mackenzie and Horn
completed |

v. Trout Lake: Sambaa Ke Dene Band:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| a. One worker recruited and trained (May 2003) | 2 part time workers
recruited |
| b. Lake & two rivers – sport fishery monitored | surveys completed |
| c. 200 walleye sampled | 315 fish sampled |
| d. samples aged and analysed | completed |

vi. Kakisa:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| a. Tathlina Lake walleye stocks assessed | completed |
| b. Kakisa and Tathlina Lake sampling completed | 400 walleye sampled |
| c. samples aged and analysed | completed |

vii. Coordinator:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| a. Co-ordinator recruited – April 2003 | Co-ordinator recruited |
| b. 5 contracts arranged | 9 contracts arranged |
| c. 9 field workers trained | 11 workers trained |
| d. 7 projects co-ordinated | 9 co-ordinated |
| e. Program data analysed | completed |
| f. Local concerns identified | completed |
| g. Liaison between communities, | |
| h. Aboriginal groups and DFO completed | completed |
| i. Harvest data analysed | completed |
| j. Trout Lake data completed | completed |
| k. 7 study reports completed | 9 reports completed |
| l. 3 con-ed sessions completed | 4 completed |

NOTE: The remaining \$40K is allocated to the consultation budget

Key Project:

We have been working with the Sambaa K'e Band for 4 years under the AFS program.

In 2003-2004, AFS provided an additional \$18.5 K to purchase a boat for the Sambaa K'e Dene Band for use on Trout Lake AFS projects. The boat was hauled into this small isolated community with a population of 101 people on the winter road. The Band is proud of their new boat which will replace a smaller rental boat unsafe for this large unsheltered lake. The boat will be used to monitor the sport fishery and support stock assessments on the lake.

The Band has a small lodge which they plan to upgrade and expand. In addition, anglers fly into Trout Lake mainly to fish for walleye but also lake trout and northern pike. The lake also provides the community with fish for the table and for working dogs. In addition there was a small local sales commercial fishery. The community and DFO were becoming concerned about the effects of these varied fisheries on fish stocks.

Last winter, DFO met with the community to discuss the fisheries and fish stocks. As a result of this meeting, a moratorium was placed on commercial fishing. Additionally, sports catch and possession limits will be reduced next season for walleye; 4 daily/7 in possession to 2/3; pike from 3/5 to 2/3; lake trout 3/5 to 1/1. The plan is to maintain trophy sized fish in the lake to support the local lodge business and maintain the food fishery.

Quebec Region

In 2003-04, the Quebec Region had an annual budget of \$3,381,950 for the AFS. This included a top-up from HQ of \$35,950.

Of this, \$1,055,200 was earmarked for co-management agreements and contracts, while \$2,326,750 was earmarked for the purchase of fishing enterprises under the Allocation Transfer Program.

Northern Quebec

Agreement with the Kativik Regional Government (KRG)

The objective of the agreement was the protection, conservation and annual management of marine fishery resources in the Nunavik region, with particular attention to beluga, two populations of which are on the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) list of species at risk.

Number of jobs created:

The agreement provided for the recruitment of 16 staff members, including a coordinator, an administrative assistant, nine community officers and five fishery guardians, all seasonal. The total project cost was \$465,000.

Southern Quebec

Fisheries Agreements

Five agreements were signed in 2003-04 with a group of seven Innu communities. The *Regroupement Mamit Innuat*, which initially included three communities, saw the departure of one of these communities, Unamen Shipu, in the winter of 2004.

The funds were allocated primarily toward the recruitment of fishery coordinators, to theoretical and practical training and, in large part, to the Allocation Transfer Program for the purchase of fishing enterprises and fishing gear.

Training of Innu Fishers

This year, 70 Innu fishers in the seven communities enrolled in training. The courses were paid for by DFO and given by the *Centre Spécialisé des Pêches* in Sept-Îles.

To date, 32 fishers have completed their training in the program. The table below shows the number of candidates who completed each program:

Program	Number of course hours	Number of candidates who completed the program
General deck work	210 hr.	14
Mechanical	210 hr.	10
Professionalization	236 hr.	8
Fishing Master, Class IV	210 hr.	10 candidates began in 2004 and will continue in the fall.

Three communities are proud of the fact that they have at least one fishing vessel with 100% Aboriginal fishers on board.

Fishery Coordinator Training

In the Fall of 2003, DFO held a two-week intensive training course in Grande-Rivière for fishery coordinators. The purpose of the training was to discuss the commercial fisheries and the issues involved in order to enhance the coordinators' skills and knowledge and equip them with new tools. The coordinators were very interested in learning to manage the fishery responsibly and sustainability. The training also created a synergy among the participants which is especially positive in view of the new Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) Program.

However, because of the existing form of governance – elections every two or three years, depending on the Band Council – there is a certain amount of personnel turnover. Of the seven coordinators who took the training in the fall of 2003, three were replaced by new ones in 2004.

Employment

In 2003-2004 under AFS Agreements in Southern Quebec 72 Aboriginal people were employed for a total of 1351 weeks.

Commercial Access

In 2003-2004 Quebec Region participated financially in the purchase of the following commercial licences under the Allocation Transfer Program:

COMMERCIAL LICENCE	VESSEL	COMMUNITY	CONTRIBUTION
	Fishing gear	Essipit	\$21,110
Whelk Area 1	"Piernik" 42' LOA	Betsiamites	L. \$70,000 V. \$115,000
Scallop & gear 16C Crab 16	Repairs to "Monikaroline" & gear	Uashat	L. & V. \$195,000 Rep & Gear \$155,000 L. \$712,640
Lobster 17B Scallop 16E,F, 18A	Lobster boat "Le Marsouin" and gear	Mamit Innuat	L. \$300,000 V. \$75,000 V. \$400,000
	Fishing gear	Natashquan	\$46,000
Total			\$2,089,750

Non-transferred commercial licences

The following licences were purchased in 2003-04 or before, but were banked for future use:

Whelk – area 4	\$10,000
Lobster* – area 15 (reserved for Mamit Innuat)	\$27,000
Lobster – area 15	\$26,000
Lobster* – area 17B and vessel (reserved for Uashat)	\$625,000
Scallops – 2 licences area 19	\$225,000

*These acquisitions will be transferred to an Aboriginal community in early 2004-05.

Key Projects

Innu Commercial Fishery projects

In general, as far as the Innu communities that have signed an AFS agreement with DFO are concerned, Aboriginal communities have shown a considerable interest in the commercial fishery, and their involvement in the fishery has been constantly evolving and diversifying. The Aboriginal communities each have at least one lucrative licence, i.e. a crab and/or scallop licence while, with DFO's financial support, the Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam community has begun to fish a shrimp licence this year.

This year, another fishery education project was carried out by the Innu Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam in the form of a DVD entitled "*La pêche à la crevette*" [the shrimp fishery]. The DVD shows Innu fishers fishing for shrimp aboard the Monikaroline, shown in the photo below. A copy of the DVD is included with this report to show you Aboriginal fishers at work on their shrimp boat, an example of the gradually increasing involvement of Aboriginal people in the commercial fisheries on the North Shore.



*Shrimp boat – The Monikaroline S.
Operated by Innu Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam.*



Maritimes Region

The total operating budget under the AFS for Maritimes Region for 2003-2004 was \$3,017,100. \$945,600 was provided to fund the Native Council of Nova Scotia (NCNS), and the remaining \$2,071,500 funded Agreements with 13 First Nations. All of the funding for First Nations was for Co-Management Agreements. \$234,100 of the NCNS funding was for Co-Management projects. The remaining \$711,500 was for commercial access for this group.

Number of Agreements and Employment

In 2003-2004, AFS Agreements were signed with the Native Council of Nova Scotia and with 13 First Nations in Maritimes region. Under these 14 Agreements, 36 Aboriginal Fishery Guardians were employed for a total of 180 months, and approximately 203 Aboriginal workers were employed for a total of 852 months in other projects.

Commercial Access

The ATP mandate for Maritimes Region for 2003-2004 was \$711,500. The following licences, vessels and gear were retired and provided to the NCNS:

LFA 34 lobster licence	\$470,000
Mackerel trap	\$32,700
Lobster traps, rope and buoys	\$68,000
Funds towards a new vessel	\$140,800
Total	\$711,500

Their Aboriginal Communal Commercial fisheries are now located throughout the Province.

Key Projects

Fort Folly First Nation

The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy funding was used to complete an ecological monitoring project on the Back Brook in Dorchester, NB. As this brook once had a population of Inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon and has a viable population of brook trout, Fort Folly First Nation, through its recovery team, decided to look more closely at this watercourse. The work entailed doing a habitat assessment of the brook with regards to suitable salmonid habitat. Benthic invertebrate sampling was performed at two sites on Back Brook. This information, along with the electrofishing and habitat assessment, will produce a better picture with regards to the health of this watercourse. A few areas were targeted for riparian planting of small shrubs. The planting was quite successful as approximately 85% of the shrubs are growing well.

Waycobah First Nation

During the fiscal year 2003-2004 the Waycobah Fishery Guardians were busy during the months of April to December working on the following tasks:

- patrolling and monitoring the food fishery and commercial fisheries within the Bras D'Or Lakes;
- working closely with DFO Fishery Officers on the oyster fishery in Whycocomagh Bay and the River Deny's Basin in regards to multinucleate sphere X (MSX), a parasite which affects oysters;
- attending workshops on MSX and winterizing vessels;
- assisting at the Fish Derby by ensuring participants have all necessary safety supplies, i.e., life jackets, bail cans, rules, etc.;
- conducting a workshop at the school on Treaty Day;
- assisting summer students with the Skye River clean-up;
- conducting water sampling in the Whycocomagh Bay; and
- winterizing the fish plant in Auld's Cove

The Fishery guardians are looking forward to returning to the workforce in April 2004.

Gulf Region

Gulf Region AFS had a total operating budget for 2003-2004 of \$3,827,250. A top-up of \$676,800 was provided to Gulf Region from HQ contingency funding to provide commercial access for the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, resulting in final expenditures in this Region totaling \$4,504,050.

\$736,000 was provided to the Native Council of Prince Edward Island of which \$318,149 was spent on Co-Management projects and \$455,000 was spent on commercial access for this group.

\$760,585 was provided to the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council of which \$205,585 was spent on Co-Management projects and \$555,000 was spent on commercial access for this group.

The remaining \$2,441,350 was spent on Co-Management Agreements with 12 First Nations.

Number of Agreements and Employment

In 2003-2004, AFS Agreements were signed with the Native Council of Prince Edward Island (NCPEI) and the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC) and with 12 First Nations in Gulf Region. Under these 14 Agreements 36 Aboriginal Fishery Guardians were employed for a total of 128 months, and approximately 173 others were employed for a total of 860 months in various other projects. In addition 10 Non-Aboriginal people were employed by the 2 Native Councils to assist in harvesting of commercial catch.

Commercial Access

\$555,000 was spent to retire licences and vessels for the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council as follows:

Lobster licence package	\$250,150
Gear	\$121,129
Vessel	\$172,019
Electronic equipment for vessel	\$11,702

Total **\$555,000**

\$455,000 was spent to retire licences and vessels for the Native Council of PEI as follows:

Licence package – lobster, herring, mackerel	\$295,000
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Vessel upgrade	\$90,000
Gear	\$70,000
Total	\$455,000

Key Projects

Eel River Bar First Nation – Upsalquitch River project

The Eel River Bar (ERB) First Nation was working on the Upsalquitch River system as a member of the Restigouche River watershed committee. Six members of the ERB First Nation worked on stock enhancement, restoration, and improvement initiatives within the watershed. Duties for stock enhancement, restoration, and improvement initiatives included setting up salmon counting traps, observing the beaver dam, and identifying salmon pools.

It is expected that the Eel River Bar First Nation in coordination with the Listuguj First Nation, be part of many affiliations working together to improve, monitor, and perform scientific studies and projects pertaining to the Restigouche watershed.

Elsipogtog First Nation – Lobster fishery

This year Elsipogtog First Nation (EFN) decided to use part of their AFS money to hire two vessels to fish lobster on behalf of the community. The interesting aspect of this year's fishery under the EFN food social and ceremonial license was that it happened at the same time as the lobster commercial fishery season. The Community and the commercial lobster fishermen from EFN agreed that it would be beneficial for everybody if these two activities could happen at the same time. They all agreed that fishing under the same condition and at the same time could ease any tension between members of EFN and with local fishing communities.

EFN also took advantage of this activity under their AFS by providing training in the lobster fishery to quite a few apprentices.

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Newfoundland Region had a total AFS mandate for 2003-2004 of \$1,875,000, comprised of \$905,000 in Co-Management and \$970,000 in ATP funds. During the year they received a top-up from HQ of \$6,000 in Co-Management Contribution funding and \$2,500 in Operating funding. \$229,000 in ATP funding unspent at year end was redistributed to other regions by HQ.

Number of Agreements and Employment

5 Agreements, 1 Amendment and 2 contracts were signed with five Aboriginal groups in this region in 2003-2004. The Agreements with Conne River and the Labrador Inuit Association included communal licences for their food, social and ceremonial needs, while the Agreements with the Innu Nation, Labrador Métis Nation and Federation of Newfoundland Indians were limited to funding for Fisheries Guardians.

These agreements resulted in seasonal employment for 53 Aboriginal people. 37 were employed as fishery guardians and 16 were employed in other areas of fisheries management.

Commercial Access

Newfoundland Region was able to actively participate in the Allocation Transfer Program again in 2003-2004.

\$741,000 was used to retire licences, gear and vessels as follows:

Groundfish, (2GHJ3KL 3Ps and 3Pn) supplementary crab (Areas 10 & 11) and Scallop licence (Areas 3-11) with 44'11" vessel	\$80,000
34'11" vessel, 20' fiberglass vessel and motor, fishing gear (Labrador)	\$111,000
Groundfish (2GHJ3KL), snow crab (Area 4) and capelin licence (Area 3K) With 44'11" vessel	\$550,000
Total	\$741,000

Key Projects

Federation of Newfoundland Indians - Then and Now

1992	2003
\$63,000 annual budget	\$200,000 annual budget
6 Aboriginal Fisheries Guardians	15 Aboriginal Fisheries Guardians designated by DFO
No experience/training in enforcement	11 years of experience in enforcement with highly skilled enforcement officers
No networking circle	Expansive network of professional relationships in the field of fisheries management and a strong relationship with DFO
No role in management of the fisheries	An integral role in the management of salmon stocks in Western and Central Newfoundland
No knowledge of the Allocation Transfer Program	2 enterprises providing employment for two families and a Comprehensive Fishing Strategy Plan

Significant Issues for the 2003-2004 Season

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) Program

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) program is a key element of a more proactive and sustainable approach to DFO's Aboriginal programming.

It is designed to assist Aboriginal groups in developing the capacity to play a more active role in key areas of fisheries and oceans management. Particular emphasis is placed on Aboriginal participation in multilateral decision-making and advisory processes that involve fishers, scientists, industry representatives, conservation groups, DFO officials, and other government departments. At the same time, the new initiative would contribute to the broader government objective of improving the socio-economic situation of Aboriginal people.

The program is designed around: 1) support for Aboriginal groups that come together on a voluntary basis to create common aquatic management structures; 2) potential funding for Aboriginal Fishery Officers; 3) capacity-building assistance; and 4) commercial fisheries access and aquaculture opportunities.

Multi-year funding could be available to groups in areas where DFO manages the fishery, and where the above elements have not been addressed through a comprehensive land claims settlement. At the same time, there would be a requirement for Aboriginal groups to meet specific criteria to be eligible for AAROM program funding.

These ideas arose out of the 2002 AFS discussions, and from the innovative practices used by Aboriginal groups that have come together, used DFO program funding to develop their own capacity, and then leveraged additional government and private sector funding. The AAROM program has also been designed around practical considerations of watershed and ecosystem management, and best use of the limited funds available.

Cooperative, cost-effective participation in areas of DFO responsibility

The AAROM program would provide funds to groupings of Aboriginal communities to assist them in jointly establishing common aquatic management bodies. These bodies would be designed to serve at a level between member-communities and multi-stakeholder processes, and as such, could serve as a cost-effective focal point for interaction with the full range of DFO sectors and programs.

The role, structure and staffing would be up to the member-communities involved. The proposed aquatic management organization could play a more advisory, coordination and information management role, or choose to become involved at a more operational

level on behalf of member-communities and oversee project management, monitoring and enforcement, training or scientific research activities.

Depending on the priorities and capacity of the membership, program funding may provide access to professional personnel such as a coordinator, fisheries manager, biologist or technologist, as well as administrative staff. This may also include support for office space, computer and liaison-related expenses. The program is designed to support the creation of new bodies or the enhancement of existing structures where appropriate.

It should be noted that the AAROM program in general would not fund projects. AAROM focuses instead on sharing expertise among member-communities in a cost-effective manner, and facilitation of Aboriginal participation in aquatic resources and oceans management processes through capacity development.

Program funding constraints as set out in the 2003 federal budget would limit the number of Aboriginal aquatic management bodies supported under the program and the scope of their activities. As a result, it is anticipated that the program would support only a limited number of common management structures in the first few years.

Such support is not intended to replace the vital and essential relationship between DFO and Aboriginal groups – but to strengthen and complement it for practical and mutual benefit. Accordingly, DFO would continue to respect its existing obligations to individual member-communities under AAROM.