DFO Species at Risk Update

Canada-US Transboundary Steering Committee

October 16, 2026

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update

Species at Risk Act (SARA) Listing update

- A proposed order to add several species to SARA was published to the Canada Gazette, Part 1 for a 30-day public comment period on October 10, 2026. This includes:
  - Spiny Dogfish (Special Concern)
  - Basking Shark (Special Concern)
  - Porbeagle (Endangered)
  - Winter Skate, Eastern Scotian Shelf and Newfoundland population (Endangered)
- Sei whale (Endangered) and Lumpfish (Threatened): regional listing recommendations are in the approvals phase
- Greenland Shark: listing consultations are planned for late October 2026 to late January 26, 2027
- Atlantic Salmon: The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) re-assessed 19 Designatable Units of Atlantic Salmon in 2025. Listing consultations are planned for late November 2026 to late January 2027

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update

Species at Risk Program - Recovery Planning & Implementation update

- Published documents:
  - White Shark recovery strategy – published November 2025
- Work continues on recovery documents for transboundary species
  - Leatherback Sea Turtle recovery strategy amendment
  - Loggerhead Sea Turtle action plan: next step is public comment period on proposed version
- North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW)
  - Amendments to NARW Recovery Strategy underway
  - DFO Right Whale Recovery Network (RWRN) met virtually September 24, 2026, to discuss setting population and distribution objectives. Next meeting planned for winter 2027 with focus on Critical Habitat

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update

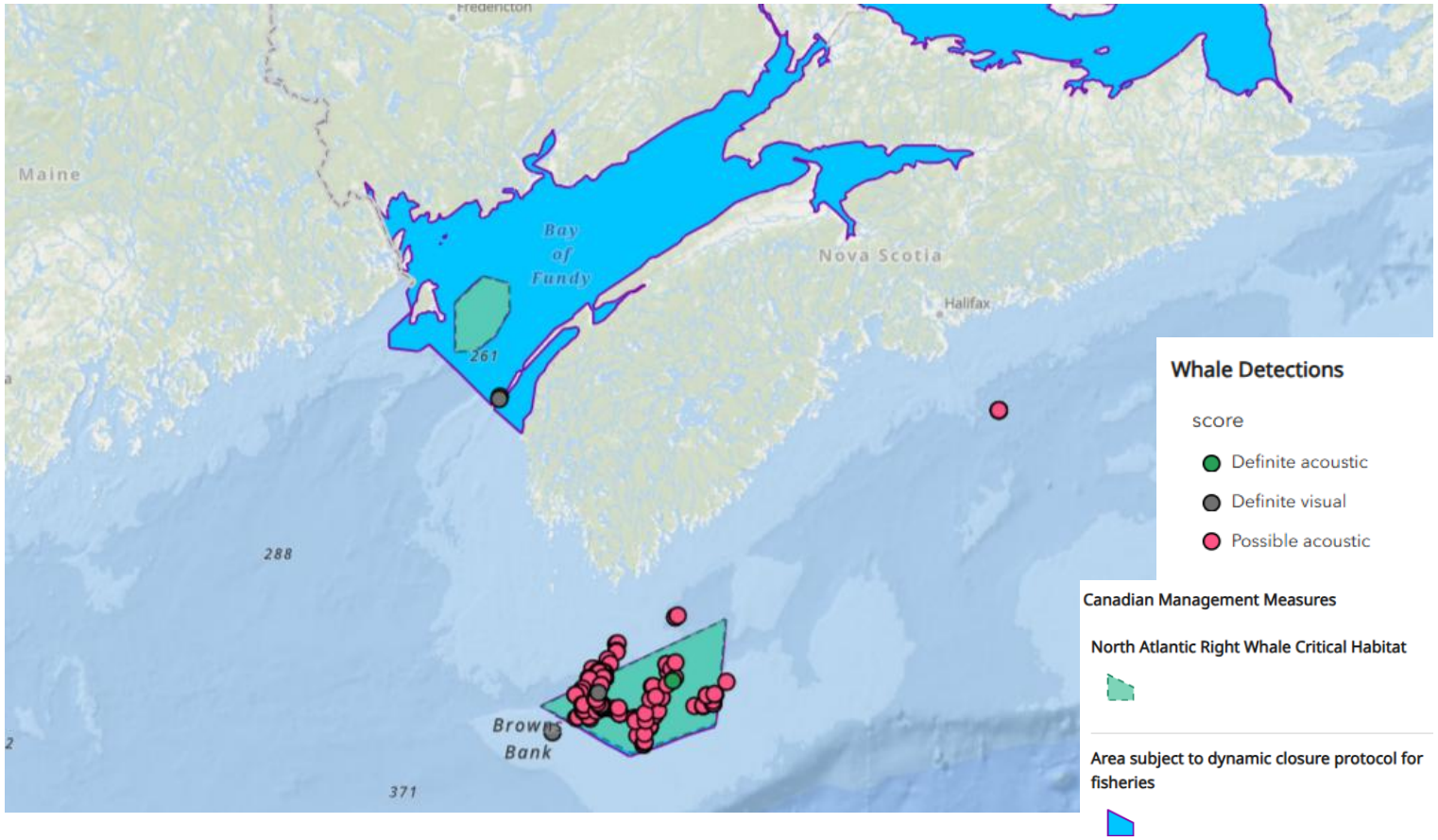
2026 Fishery management measures

- https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/atl-arc/narw-bnan/management-gestion-eng.html
- Temporary and season-long prohibited fishing in dynamic management areas
- Provisions for waters shallower less than the 20 fathom management line
- Measures in waters outside of the dynamic and critical habitat areas - new vigilance advisory
- Effective tracking of fishing gear – Gear marking required for all non-tended fixed gear fisheries in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, including lobster and crab
- Mandatory reporting for lost gear
- Mandatory reporting of interactions between vessels or fishing gear and marine mammals
- Whalesafe fishing gear - Canada's Whalesafe Fishing Gear Strategy was released on February 3, 2026
- Continued monitoring and reporting
- Addressing ghost gear –
  - Ghost Gear Program Funding (2026-2029)
  - Development of Gear Management Regulations and a Canadian Ghost Gear Action Plan by 2027
- Marine Mammal Response
- Engagement – Technical working group, and annual North Atlantic right whale advisory meeting with stakeholders

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update

NARW detections in Bay of Fundy and Southwest Nova Scotia since Jan 1, 2026

- Fisheries Management measures have included temporary fishing prohibitions:
  - Near Roseway Basin: end of June – early July
  - Grand Passage, Digby Neck: end of July – early August
  - Roseway Basin: mid-September – early October



Map produced using Whale Insight.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Update

2026 Vessel Traffic Management – Transport Canada (TC)

- Roseway Basin Area: Seasonal International Maritime Organization (IMO) Area to be Avoided in effect from June 1 to December 31, 2025. Recommended for vessels of 300 gross tonnage or more to avoid area when possible.
- Bay of Fundy: TC asks vessels to voluntarily reduce speed to 10 knots when whales are detected near the Grand Manan Basin and the shipping lanes.
- Other areas: TC asks vessels to voluntarily reduce speed to 10 knots over the ground when whales are detected in areas outside Vessel traffic management zones.
- Gulf of St. Lawrence: Mandatory protection measures for all vessels over 13 metres in length inside vessel traffic management zones and/or areas.
- https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/navigation-marine-conditions/protecting-north-atlantic-right-whales-collisions-vessels-gulf-st-lawrence#mandatory-protection-measures

