

Western Shorefast

A joint newsletter of the Bonne Bay Marine Station and the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance (CURRA)



This issue

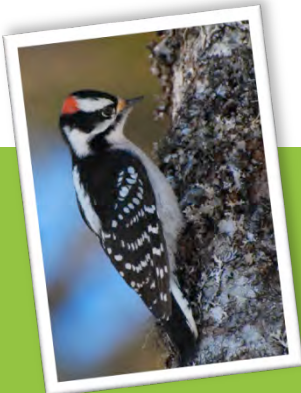
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The Memorandum of Understanding

The long-awaited *Report of the Independent Chair of the Memorandum of Understanding of the Steering Committee* was released on February 25. You can access the report and some of the news articles and commentary surrounding it on the CURRA web site at: www.curra.ca/fishery_MOU.htm. There is also space for you to comment on the MOU and add your reactions to those of others.

The MOU Report was the result of a prolonged process of working group discussions and research that was initiated by the province in response to a prolonged strike in the shrimp fishery in 2009. A core objective of this process was to “discuss the types of initiatives that may be required to bring a measure of stability to the industry in the short-term” with a focus on the restructuring and rationalization of the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery and on marketing.

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TTT is for the birds, too.

Come and be a part of some of the nature walks and hikes during the fifth annual Trails Tales and Tunes Festival. Check the schedule at www.trailstalestunes.ca and join a hike to see the spring birds.

Photo by Darroch Whitaker



Photo by Darroch Whitaker



Photo by Pierre Ryan

Introducing The ‘Gros Morne Beach Watch’ Program

*Interested in Volunteering? Interested in the Health of your Beaches?
If so, the ‘Gros Morne Beach Watch’ program may be for you*

Our marine and coastal ecosystems provide many important benefits and are vital to the health of our communities. They offer a source of beauty and inspiration. In addition, they support industries such as tourism, fisheries, transportation, and oil and gas. However, things ranging from plastics and invasive species to oil spills and changing weather all have the potential to adversely impact beaches and marine ecosystems along the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Hence, it is important that we monitor the long-term health of the coastal ecosystems and of the organisms that depend on them.

The Gros Morne Beach Watch program is designed to do just that. Starting this spring, we will be looking for local residents who want to volunteer some of their time to walk a beach in their area and record their observations of such things as dead and live birds, beached marine mammals, oil pollution, and non-native species. Ideally, each volunteer can perform these walks two to three times each month from May to November.

Participants will be given training in a range of topics ranging from marine conservation to natural history and will enjoy the benefits of being part of a group of citizens who share their concern for the health of our coastlines.

This community-based, volunteer observer program is being developed by Gros Morne National Park in partnership with the Bonne Bay Marine Station and the CURRA. Our search for participants will begin in early May when public meetings will be held in communities throughout the Gros Morne area.

*Come out and join our team!
Explore your coastline and help
protect this valuable ecosystem!
When you sign up, you will get a
volunteer kit with valuable and
interesting stuff!*

For more information, call the program coordinator Tracy Shears, Parks Canada: 709-458-3403 or visit our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/grosmornebeachwatch>

Voice of Bonne Bay Community Radio

VOBB will be broadcasting from May 14 to May 29 from the Julia Walsh Centre in Norris Point. We'd love to see you in the big studio—drop by for a chat and a cuppa. On Wednesday May 18 and Wednesday May 25, we will be broadcasting live from the school in Woody Point. Trout River, GBS and Woody Point residents can drop by and participate during those two days.

If you live far away, you can pick us up on the Internet by going to our web site

<http://www.vobb.org/> and clicking on the appropriate links.

Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to help with all aspects of our community radio. Visit our web site and sign up. You can also follow us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Voice-of-Bonne-Bay-1025-FM/75828790641>

The Fisheries MOU

Some fish harvesters from the Northern Peninsula area are concerned about the lack of long-term planning for small-boat inshore fish harvesters. They feel it should include some discussion of small-scale fisheries and tourism initiatives.



Professor Tom Clift of Memorial University's Faculty of Business Administration prepared the Report. He served as the independent chair of the steering committee between August 2009 and the release of the Report. The main focus of the Report is the less than 65 foot crab and shrimp fleets. Its emphasis is on improving the viability of these harvesting and processing enterprises.

A core assumption in the Report is that a reduction in the number of enterprises would contribute to the viability of the industry by increasing the raw material available to the surviving enterprises. As a result, the central focus of the report is on where rationalization or industry downsizing needed to occur.

The Harvesting Rationalization Working Group reached the conclusion that in order to achieve viability,

- there should be a 30-80 per cent reduction in inshore fleets with the biggest reductions to occur along the northeast coast, the west coast and in southern Labrador and,
- from 0 to 50 per cent

reduction in nearshore fleets with the greatest reductions happening along the northeast coast and southern Labrador.

The Processing Restructuring Working Group concluded that

- levels of profitability in the processing sector were lower in NL than in other parts of Canada and that a 30% reduction in crab and shrimp plants (by volume) would be necessary to bring profit levels in line with those in seafood processing elsewhere in Canada.

The estimated cost to government of these and other proposals in the Report is about \$450-million.

Minister Jackman told CBC reporter David Cochrane he is NOT going to recommend government acceptance of the report. He criticized the report, saying it offers little more than a demand for too much money to fix the problems of the fisheries in this province. Jackman said he is disappointed with the report, and the \$450-million needed to implement the changes is too high, adding that he will not support it until the industry and the union come up with a long-

term restructuring plan that goes beyond simple downsizing.

The report recommends buying out commercial fishing licences and compensating fish processors affected by the cuts. The funding calculations for the rationalization process do not include severance pay for fish processing plant workers who would lose their jobs if the recommended cuts were made.

Some fishermen in the Bonne Bay area, who wished to remain anonymous, thought that this plan, if adopted, will "put a swift end to the inshore fishery in Trout River and down the coast." The west coast communities dependent on shrimp and crab would be very hard hit if the recommendations are implemented with a 30% reduction in plants on top of a 50% reduction in the fishing fleet.

Leave your comments on the CURRA web site at http://www.curra.ca/fishery_MOU.htm.

BONNE BAY MARINE STATION NEWS

Quick Updates

The Bonne Bay Marine Station can now be found on Trip Advisor!

<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>
Search for us and write a review about your tour of the aquarium.

You can now support the Bonne Bay Marine Station by clicking on the new Donate Page on the [website!](#)

Our summer courses are filling up rapidly but there are still several spots left! Please send your course request form to Allison allison.eaton@mun.ca. For more details and course request forms please visit our website: <http://www.bonnebay.ca/undergraduates.htm>

The Norris Point classic film club will be pleased to hear that the BBMS theatre recently got its new projector!

Bonne Bay Marine Station Midterm Break Visit

For the first time in many years, the station opened its doors to students and others during midterm break. Members of the MUN Biology Society, prospective students, BBMS alumni and friends were invited to stay at the station for the duration of the midterm break!

Seven happy students spent their midterm break enjoying the Bonne Bay Marine Station. Activities included stimulating talks with Dr. Bob Hooper, exciting BBC Science films, a chance to go sliding on Burnt Hill, a quiet place to study for exams and not to mention a great way for BBMS alumni to catch up.



FISHERY-TOURISM INITIATIVE UPDATE

The **Fisheries and Tourism** workshop held in Bonne Bay in June, 2010 provided an opportunity to discuss potential synergies between these two sectors. We discussed ways fish harvesters in the area could augment their incomes and ways tourism operators could collaborate with those in the fishery to offer authentic and interesting experiences for their clientele such as fresh, healthy seafood and access to the unique culture and experience in our

fishing industry. We also discussed programs and regulations relevant to achieving these synergies, as well as potential new collaborations between the two sectors and ways to achieve these. A full report of the workshop discussion is available on the CURRA website:

<http://www.curra.ca/reports.htm>

Since that workshop a number of **fisheries/tourism initiatives** have been under development:

1) A 4-month research intern (funded through MITACS and the Rural Secretariat with support from the CURRA) will work with fish harvesters and tourist operators in the Bonne Bay area identifying ways to promote synergies between fisheries and tourism that could increase the sustainability of the small boat fishery in the area.

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HERITAGE NEWS

The Great Northern Peninsula Heritage Network cluster project is moving along nicely. Phase 1 is coming to an end and Phase 2 is starting up.

The Great Northern Peninsula Heritage Network has been busy these past months with activities around the Heritage Cluster Pilot project in which thirteen heritage groups from Trout River to St. Anthony are participating. For more information, visit

http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/heritage/heritage_cluster_pilot_project/index.html

The Pilot Project consists of three phases, the first of which has now been completed. Consultants have finished their visits to and assessments of each institution and have guided participants through the preparation of action plans for each institution. They are currently preparing their final report.

A series of meetings have been held in Hawke's Bay, Plum Point, and Rocky Harbour allowing those participating in the Heritage Cluster Pilot Project to meet and discuss their institutions with consultants Bob Buckle, Marilyn Dawe and Erin Buckle of Heritage Collaborative Inc.

In preparation for Phase 2, the Advisory Board and Project Management Committee have completed interviews for the

position of Heritage Development Specialist. Once hired, the specialist will work with the individual member organizations and the Cluster as a whole to implement the action plans and to develop marketing and promotional synergies.

Training workshops offered by the Museum Association of NL (MANL) and the Association of NL Archives (ANLA) have been arranged for later in April and early May for members who want to build their skills in these areas. Members are also encouraged to participate in workshops on accounting and computer skills offered by the Nortip Business Development Corporation.

Phase 3 of the pilot project will begin in 2013, and will consist of an evaluation and report on the outcomes of the project.

Six-Sites Project

Glenda Bavis continues her work with the Red Ochre Board on a special project led by the Nurse Myra Bennett Foundation. The project involves bringing together six heritage locations in the

southern region of the Network to share marketing and Internet resources.

French Shore Heritage

Housed in a former Grenfell nursing station in Conche, the French Shore Interpretation Centre highlights authentic French sites scattered throughout the French Shore communities of Conche, Croque, Grandois/St.Julien's.

The exhibition takes visitors through the history of the French cod fishery on the northeast coast of the Great Northern Peninsula. From the earliest recorded voyages in the early 1500s until their last trips to tend a cemetery in Croque in the 1970s, the exhibition explores the lives of these French fishermen and the French society that sent them.

The exhibition continues at historic sites and visitors' centres in each community. A second exhibition room tells the story of the Irish and English settlers whose descendents make up today's communities.

<http://www.frenchshore.com>

Fishery-Tourism Initiative—Continued from page 4



The CURRA has a new Facebook page. If you are a Facebook user, check out our page for interesting links to assorted photographs and information about fisheries issues and community sustainability. Be sure to “like” our page and tell all your Facebook friends.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Community-University-Research-for-RecoverAlliance-CURRA/194502763902295>



Protesters at the Oil & Gas Forum

On 8-9 April CURRA researcher Peter Sinclair spoke at a forum taking place in the Magdalen Islands about the impacts of offshore oil development. There are plans to explore what may be an extremely large field situated between the Islands and SW Newfoundland. Communities along the Gulf are interested in learning about the possible impacts of oil exploration on the fisheries in the region. This is not a CURRA initiative, but a related project that is concerned with the social costs and benefits of offshore oil development for coastal communities. Visit the CURRA website [www.curra.ca] to read Dr. Sinclair's notes on the Forum

Funding has been confirmed for this initiative and intern Kristen Lowitt has begun her research (see below for more information on a key part of this initiative). Ms. Lowitt will develop a report with recommendations and these will be available on the CURRA website in September 2011.

2) *Documentation of the policy requirements and barriers to better integration of fisheries and tourism, to be funded through the provincial Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (TCR).* Plans are underway for hiring a research assistant to undertake this review and documentation.

3) *Pilot experiential fisheries-tourism project.* The CURRA and the Red Ochre Board Regional Development Board will develop a proposal for a pilot project for the Bonne Bay Region. The main aim of this project is to provide experiences for tourists to interact with local fish harvesters in ways that enhance the visitor's experience and supplement the fish harvester's income. Discussions have been held with TCR, who would be prepared to supply a consultant to help develop this pilot project proposal.

4) *Workshop in the region on cooperatives for fish harvesters and others.* Discussions are underway regarding a training workshop on cooperatives for fish harvesters, tourism operators and others interested in the possibility of developing an over-arching cooperative to support the development of experiential fisheries-tourism

initiatives in the region and to promote access to high quality local seafood for local people and tourists at prices capable of providing sustainable livelihoods to local harvesters.

Kristen Lowitt Research

Kristen Lowitt, an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. student affiliated with the CURRA is carrying out research on food security in the Bonne Bay area. The first phase of this research was completed in 2009 and the report is available at [Food Security Report](#).

In the current phase of her research Kristen is working as a MITACS-Rural Secretariat-funded intern on tourism-fisheries synergies (see above), Kristen is working with local community leaders and Memorial researchers to learn more about access to local seafood, seafood consumption and the cost of seafood for people living in the Bonne Bay area. The goal of this work is to look for opportunities to increase interest in and access to healthy local seafood in Bonne Bay households, and to help make the fishery more sustainable by expanding local markets for fish and shellfish.

In mid-April, a short, anonymous survey was placed in the mailboxes of all of the households in the Bonne Bay region along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you have not already done so, *please take a few moments to fill it out and return it to us.*

We are using the information we gather from this survey to learn more about what seafood local people eat, how often they eat it, where they get it and any concerns they might have about access, quality and cost.

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CURRA Researcher wins award

MUN geography professor Dr. Kelly Vodden has been awarded the 2010 Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association (NLREDA) - Leslie Harris Award for Excellence.

[Read more about the award.](#)

[Read more about Vodden's research with the CURRA.](#)



CURRA Student is awarded

Victoria Neville had an extremely successful weekend at the 21st Annual APICS Aquaculture and Fisheries Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, March 11-13, 2011. Her presentation of her research in Bonne Bay resulted in her winning prizes for:

- Best Overall Presentation – APICS Communication Award
- 1st Place in the **Corey Nutrition / NSERC Award**

Results of the survey will be available at www.curra.ca later in the summer and will also be presented at a workshop in the region. If you have any questions about the survey or her larger project on fisheries-tourism synergies and local food security, please contact Kristen at klowitt@mun.ca or (709) 864-3065.

Torrent River Salmon Symposium

The Town of Hawke's Bay in conjunction with its operating partner, the Torrent River Salmon Interpretation Centre, are holding the first of its kind Salmon Symposium on June 24 – 26, 2011, at the Salmon Interpretation Centre in Hawkes Bay. The Torrent River Salmon Interpretation Centre tells the story of the province's most successful Atlantic salmon restocking initiative and promotes environmental stewardship.

Salmon Symposium events are open to the public and highlights include a musical tribute to Rufus Guinchard featuring Daniel Payne, Anita Best and the local high school's fiddling group.

Guided tours of the interpretation centre and fishway will be available to symposium participants. In addition, other activities will include interactive salmon releases; fly-tying workshops; casting clinics; guided hikes

through protected wetland areas with the Dept of Environment and Conservation – Wildlife Division; "Big Catch" fishing contest with the chance to win a SAGE fly rod; kids activities; campfires; salmon dinners; traditional kitchen parties and much, much more.

While the wide array of events and activities will largely take place in and around the centre, the venue for evening festivities will be the Torrent River Inn, Hawke's Bay.

Guest speakers: Hans van Klinken, Kate Blubaugh, Don Hustins and Bill Maynard.

For more information, please contact the Interpretation Centre at the following:

Phone: 709 248 4066

Email: info@torrentriver.ca

Website:

www.torrentriver.ca

Facebook: Torrent River Salmon Interpretation Centre and Nature Park

Twitter: TorrentRiver

Globalization, fisheries and recovery: update report

Dr. Peter Sinclair

This section of the CURRA is trying to answer how we can best understand the current situation and the prospects of fishing dependent communities. How have they survived the collapse of the cod fishery? Our mandate thus extends from the fisheries to the communities. In October 2008 and May 2009 we met with approximately 60 people in the three communities of Burnt Islands, St. Anthony and Port au Choix. For Burnt Islands we also focused on Port aux Basques because of the close links between them. We are combining this information with the census and other secondary sources. Here are a few preliminary observations.

Although Burnt Islands-Port aux Basques as a whole appears to have stabilized in the last few years in terms of employment and population, the fishery now has a small role in the area and small-boat fishers are struggling to survive given the low prices for their lobster in the current markets. This is the challenge of the US market at present. Also, the Burnt Islands area no longer has a winter cod fishery. In the future, if the cod stock can rebuild, there may be opportunity to increase value based on the long line technology, perhaps with eco-labelling playing a part. This challenge of finding ways to increase returns is common to all areas. They are not helped at present by Marine Atlantic's new policy that two days notice is required for a shipment. This endangers the quality of fish getting to market because shipments cannot be timed perfectly.

In general, data on incomes show that all communities we studied have improved substantially from the low points of the mid-nineties. Some fishers have recovered by focusing on shellfish plus other species when available. Part of the improvement in incomes is unfortunately the result of the decline in population that all communities experienced as out-migration reduced the pressure on local opportunities. Part is also due to increased reliance on seasonal employment elsewhere or long-term, long distance commuting. Some work in the Alberta oil patch, others on the Great Lakes boats. Still others find employment in urban Ontario or as home care workers in Nova Scotia. This enables families to stay in the area, maintaining communities. However, this strategy is vulnerable to downturns in the wider economy, as happened this year.

Student Research and Presentation

Student researchers Kim Olson and Victoria Neville gave public presentations of their findings from snow crab-related research conducted on the west coast during the summer and fall of 2010. The presentations were well received by those attending, the discussions continuing over a mug-up in the BBMS kitchen. Kim carried out her research in the Bay of Islands area and Victoria carried out hers in Bonne Bay.

Snow Crabs In Bonne Bay

The objective of Victoria Neville's research was to look at size distribution of harvestable snow crabs (*Chionoecetes opilio*) in Bonne Bay. The research was supervised by Dr. Bob Hooper. Her research involved getting permission to set 4 crab pots in Bonne Bay between September and December, regularly hauling the pots and measuring the crabs caught. After they were measured and tagged, they were released back into the Bay.

The harvestable snow crab population in Bonne Bay, Newfoundland appears to have recovered during the two-year fishing closure. These findings are based on the size of the population, and anecdotal observations. Groups of male crab appeared strongest at approximately 85-110mm carapace width. Considering the moult cycle of *C. Opilio* we expect that those individuals moulted to catchable size during the fishery closure. The 115mm and above groups contained significantly fewer individuals. Despite this, evidence of some degree of recovery was observed during the study.

Crab harvesters report that high number of crabs per pot may be evidence of a population increase, compared to the low numbers reported by harvesters prior to the voluntary moratorium. However, these hauls were made up of largely undersized males. The recovery that has occurred has not been extensive enough to allow the majority of the population to reach harvestable size. The majority of the legal-sized males have small claws,

which indicates that they could moult once more and reach twice their present weight.

The high incidence of immature crab above legal size suggests that 95mm carapace width is not sufficiently wide to protect the reproductive capacity of the population. The current size distribution of the stocks suggests that the re-opening of this fishery in the Spring 2011 fishing season would produce sub-optimal landings. Currently, given the high number of undersized individuals within 10 mm of legal size, we expected a high rate of undersized catch discards in the current season, borne out by crab harvesters' comments since the season opened. Also, because those crabs which have attained legal-size, have not yet reached their maximum size, premature fishing of *legal-sized* stock may reverse the beneficial effects of the voluntary closure, removing adolescent males from the stock before they have reproduced.

In addition to the ecological consequences of opening the fishery in the spring of 2011, the results of this study suggest that the snow crab population in Bonne Bay has not recovered sufficiently to yield optimal fishing productivity. The claw of an adult (terminally-moulted) male snow crab contains considerably more flesh than that of an adolescent (non-terminally moulted male). 89% of fishable size crab in Bonne Bay population is currently adolescent (small clawed).

These small-clawed groups of adolescents have not yet reached the optimum developmental stage to produce maximum value. Given time to moult once more, these individuals can be expected to achieve an approximate 200% increase in mass. This has considerable potential to double the income to harvesters (without accounting for recruitment of new individuals) after an additional year of closure (one more moult). The benefits of increased yield and decreased by-catch mortality of undersized individuals would largely benefit harvesters by combining maximum short-term profit (increased landings) with enhanced maintenance of the population's reproductive stock.

Voluntary Fishery Closures in the Bay of Islands

Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee, one of the CURRA's main researchers, supervised Kim Olson's work in the Bay of Islands. Her study examined the processes and drivers of voluntary crab closure discussions in the Bay of Islands, western NL. To understand the closure process, she conducted a series of meetings with

fisheries managers, scientists, key community members, processors, and the fish harvesters union, in addition to interviews with fish harvesters, processors and processing workers.

Voluntary fishery closures have become increasingly popular throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond. These closures are initiated and implemented by fish harvesters and indicate that fish harvesters are working towards the improved sustainability of particular fisheries.

Her research shows that closure discussions in the area were driven by three main factors: declining crab stocks, low prices, and a neighbouring voluntary closure in Bonne Bay. Her research further illuminated the potential benefits and implications of a voluntary snow crab closure in the Bay of Islands at ecological, fish harvester, and managerial levels. Benefits of a voluntary closure could include (1) increased crab stock; (2) enhanced harvester control and involvement in fisheries management; and (3) allowing harvesters to set the length of the voluntary closure. Furthermore, for fisheries management, voluntary closures may offer the benefits of increased regulatory compliance and decreased managerial costs.

Perceptions of the potential positive and negative implications of a voluntary closure varied between different groups of crab harvesters in the Bay of Islands. Those crab harvesters who depended on crab for their 'bread and butter,' felt a closure would threaten their livelihoods, whereas those less dependent on crab felt, if needed, they could potentially offset their income loss by pursuing other species. A voluntary crab closure would have few implications for the community at large or for other, non-crab fish harvesters because crab harvested in the Bay of Islands comprises roughly 4% of the raw material processed in the area. As a result, it is not likely to impact processing plants or employment in the fish processing industry.





Join us at the 5th Tales Trails and Tunes Festival May 14-29

The fifth annual Tales Trails and Tunes Festival will take place at various locations in Norris Point from May 14-29. Come and join us for a wonderful time with hikes, guided bird-watching, great food and wine, old stories and songs and lots of wonderful music.

Tune in to our community radio station VOBB--102.5 on your FM dial to get daily updates, performances and interviews.

See the schedule and list of performers at:

<http://www.talestrailstunes.ca>



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