



Business Plan

2020–21

*Department of Fisheries
and Aquaculture*



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Budget 2020–21: Business Plan
Finance and Treasury Board
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Minister's Message

Nova Scotia's seafood industry is our province's largest exporter and Canada's top exporter of seafood. Our goal is to increase export value by focusing on quality and market diversification.

Our hardworking industry needs access to capital to make facility improvements which will lead to higher quality products. That's why we reduced the processing time for businesses that make use of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

We're encouraging innovation through programs such as the Atlantic Fisheries Fund. The \$400 million fund, cost-shared between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Atlantic provinces, is helping our fisheries and aquaculture industries remain strong, prosperous, and sustainable for generations.

As a government, our aim is to continue to help our industry thrive. The existing regulatory framework of fish-buying and processing is 25 years old and needs updating to reflect current industry practices. The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture is working with industry to develop a new licensing system. This involves legislative, regulatory, and policy changes, including recent amendments to the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act* last year.

We have a healthy aquaculture sector that continues to thrive. We are encouraging communities to partner with the Department to consider aquaculture development areas that will reduce barriers to growth for aquaculture operators. Aquaculture is important to food security, economic development, job growth and the growing success of Nova Scotia's seafood exports.

Sportfishing generated about \$66.5 million in revenue in Nova Scotia last year. This year, we will roll out a plan to expand opportunities for both local and tourism-based recreational sportfishing. I guarantee it will be an exciting campaign for the tens of thousands of angler enthusiasts who participate in sportfishing annually in Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
The Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Mandate

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has a legislated mandate to promote, support and develop the fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing and sportfishing industries that contribute to the economic, environmental and social prosperity of Nova Scotia's coastal and rural communities.

The Minister is committed to develop the farming and fishing sectors through the Building Tomorrow Fund, supporting the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, expanding the seafood export marketing program and to continue to build on the success of the Aquaculture Growth Strategy.

The priorities and core functions of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture are driven by five strategic themes:

- Enabling responsible economic growth
- Supporting research and innovation
- Building public trust and market acceptance
- Increasing trade and market access
- Encouraging quality initiatives and value added opportunities

Department Priorities

The Department will undertake the following priority initiatives in 2020-21:

- Continue to focus on promoting and developing sustainable aquaculture. Funding received for the *Aquaculture Growth Strategy* laid the foundation for the establishment of a robust regulatory framework, the collection of data to support sound decision making, and research and development projects to support responsible growth. Moving forward, the Department will address aquaculture interactions; advanced planning and industry innovation; new marine site development; and enhanced communication and public engagement.
- Implement the third and final year of the *Building Tomorrow Fund*, a \$9 million provincial investment into agriculture and fisheries, which supports the creation of new products and new market development to further drive export growth. One half of the annual budget has been allocated to fisheries and aquaculture, with a focus on establishing Nova Scotia as a centre of excellence for quality lobster and on capacity building in the sportfish industry. In 2020-21, the Department will launch a branding and marketing strategy for sportfishing which will include developing intelligence on target audiences and markets, seeking opportunities to incorporate sportfishing experiences with other tourist activities, and creating a value added, professionalization plan and standards for fishing guides.
- Promote and facilitate the utilization of the *Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF)*, a 70:30 cost-shared partnership between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Atlantic provinces. The Province of Nova Scotia has committed almost \$38 million over the

duration of the Fund, with \$7.49 million allotted for 2020-2021. The AFF supports innovation in the fish and seafood sector to increase productivity, competitiveness, quality and sustainability.

- Support proposals to the *Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund* for marketing initiatives that directly benefit Nova Scotian businesses and organizations, as well as seek collaborations for regional and national projects to increase recognition of both Nova Scotia's and Canada's fish and seafood sectors. The Program commits \$38.6 million nationally over seven years, through a federal/provincial 70:30 cost shared partnership.
- Expand the *Seafood Export Marketing Program*. In 2020-21, \$500 thousand will be used to maintain and build on the existing export success of the Nova Scotia industry, delivering premium quality seafood products around the world. As Canada's leading seafood exporter, Nova Scotia seafood exports were valued at a record \$2.32 billion in 2019, up 13.5% from 2018. The Department will continue to employ strategies such as the utilization of the Nova Scotia seafood brand, international marketing promotional activities focused on retail, foodservice, individual consumer, and on-line opportunities. Priority markets include the European Union, Asia, and the United States, capitalizing on competitive advantages arising from recent international trade agreements.
- Enhancement of handling and quality standards to increase the market value of Nova Scotia seafood. Lobster quality training initiatives will focus on best handling practices to ensure all participants in the value chain have a core understanding of lobster biology and how proper handling techniques can maintain the quality of their products.
- Work to implement a *Sportfishing Development Strategy*. Sportfishing in Nova Scotia generates more than \$66.5 million each year and there were 62,000 licensed anglers in 2019, primarily from within the province. In 2020-21, initiatives will focus on increasing the number of nonresident anglers in the Province. The Department will also develop opportunities with licensed fishing guides, accommodations providers and regional and municipal tourism agencies to highlight Nova Scotia as a sportfishing destination.
- Partner with the Nova Scotia Salmon Association and Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc (Perennia) to fund a research program to design a strategy for acid precipitation mitigation on trout rivers in mainland Nova Scotia and on the production of Atlantic salmon. This builds upon the 12-year liming project on the West River Sheet Harbour where the addition of lime through helicopter liming and the construction of two lime dosers has improved water quality and resulted in increased salmon production.
- Through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board, expand the focus in value-added and high-value financing to support the processing sector, and continue to support new entrants into commercial fisheries and aquaculture. Last year saw the Board undertake its first promotional and branding campaign, including the introduction of a standalone website. The Board will continue with this push into 2020-21 to raise awareness of our lending products and the advantages of working with a lender based here in Nova Scotia.

- Continue to champion labour issues by working across government to seek a coordinated approach to address persistent labour needs of the seafood industry and explore long-term solutions.
- Host the 22nd Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister's Conference in 2020. New this year, the Department is partnering with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia's Seafarmers Conference. The overarching theme of the conference is quality. Four key pillars supporting that are technology/ innovation, full utilization, automation and labour. The three-day event, with over 400 delegates and 100 speakers, is the largest annual seafood conference in Atlantic Canada.
- Work with industry to implement a review of the fish buyer and processor licensing framework to ensure the licensing regime is transparent, efficient and reflects a modern fishery beneficial to our rural and coastal communities.

Core Functions

Highlights of the Department's core functions and programs supporting its mandate, strategic themes and government priorities include:

- Administering provincial licenses and leases for fish buyers and processors, aquaculture and rockweed. This numbers approximately 800 annually and generates a revenue of close to \$600,000.
- Delivering infield, regional assistance and extension services to seafood clients including strategic guidance and advice to industry stakeholders on management issues related to commercially significant fisheries. The Department also plans, coordinates and executes industry and Department initiatives that foster the sustainable development and growth of the fish and seafood sector to maximize its economic potential.
- Through collaboration across multiple levels of government and industry, providing strategic analysis and program services on coastal and marine issues that impact the Department's seafood development mandate. The Department provides outreach and provincial representation on national and regional marine planning initiatives.
- Growing a competitive, quality-focused seafood sector by encouraging strategic use of automation in processing and harvesting.
- Supporting and promoting fishing industry organizational development and industry professionalization by administering both the *Fish Harvesters Organizational Support Act* and the *Fish Harvester Registration and Certification Board Act*.
- Working with other provincial and federal departments and agencies to process new aquaculture site applications in a thorough, efficient, and transparent manner.

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- In partnership with Perennia's *Centre for Marine Applied Research*, focusing on strategic project development to support the sustainable growth of the seafood industry in Nova Scotia, while fostering collaboration with the Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship ocean technology cluster industries.
- Operating three provincial fish hatcheries that stock brook, brown and rainbow trout to approximately 200 lakes each spring and an additional 200 in the fall, as part of the *Urban Stocking and Wild Replenishment Program*. The Department also manages a *Wild Atlantic Salmon Enhancement Program* in several rivers to supplement wild salmon populations.
- Managing the Sportfish Habitat Fund which provides over \$300 thousand each year to fund sportfish habitat restoration and access projects such as boat launches and barrier-free fishing facilities.

Departmental Expenses Summary

| (\$ thousands) | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Programs and Services</u> | <u>2019-2020 Estimate</u> | <u>2019-2020 Forecast</u> | <u>2020-2021 Estimate</u> |
| Administration | 653 | 653 | 666 |
| Aquaculture | 5,530 | 5,546 | 2,761 |
| Inland Fisheries | 2,509 | 2,678 | 2,527 |
| Marine and Coastal | 12,844 | 12,659 | 11,838 |
| Total - Departmental Expenses | 21,536 | 21,536 | 17,792 |
| Ordinary Recoveries | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| <u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u> | | | |
| Department Funded Staff | 70.7 | 66.3 | 70.7 |

Note:
 For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1