



Accountability Report 2021–22

Fisheries & Aquaculture



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Accountability Report 2021–2022

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture for the year ended March 31, 2022, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2021-2022 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

Honourable Steve Craig
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Original signed by:

April Howe
Deputy Minister

Message from Minister

I am pleased to present the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture accountability report for 2021-22.

Nova Scotia's high quality seafood products continue to be sought after by global markets while the industry emerges from the COVID challenges of the last two years, as strong, innovative, and determined as ever. The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture continued to support industry during this period and remains committed to promoting the growth of Nova Scotia's seafood industry – the largest exporter and the top seafood exporter in Canada. Nova Scotia's fish and seafood exports were \$2.5 billion in 2021, an increase of 23% from 2020.

Our environmentally sustainable aquaculture industry is an important part of the growing success of Nova Scotia's seafood exports. Aquaculture is key to our economic development, job growth and food security. In keeping with the direction of our Government's Fall 2021 mandate letter, our Department has begun a comprehensive review of the aquaculture regulatory framework and the development of a coastal classification system. We have made progress towards establishing Aquaculture Development Areas in collaboration with interested communities. I am also excited about steps taken to deliver a robust, multifaceted promotional campaign to encourage Nova Scotians to buy local seafood.

To expand our renowned sportfishery, we are continuing to implement the Nova Scotia Sportfishing Development Strategy to market sportfishing opportunities to visitors. Our sportfishery has a huge following and holds great promise for boosting tourism numbers to higher levels. We have developed and launched the new Fish Nova Scotia website – an exciting new tool to aid in that promotion.

Our fishing, aquaculture, processing, and sportfishing sectors are environmentally sustainable contributors to the health of our economy and our rural communities. I will ensure we keep working closely with Nova Scotians to promote, develop, and grow these sectors in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

The Honourable Steve Craig
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Financial Results

| | 2021-2022 Estimate | 2021-2022 Actuals | 2021-2022 Variance |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Program & Service Area | (\$ thousands) | | |
| Departmental Expenses: | | | |
| Administration | 559 | 737 | 178 |
| Aquaculture | 4,438 | 5,245 | 807 |
| Inland Fisheries | 2,680 | 2,460 | (220) |
| Marine Fisheries | 11,316 | 8,778 | (2,538) |
| Marketing | 500 | 561 | 61 |
| Total Departmental Expenses | 19,493 | 17,781 | (1,712) |
| Additional Information: | | | |
| Revenues | 794 | 801 | 7 |
| Fees and Other Charges | 1,001 | 1,020 | 19 |
| Ordinary Recoveries | 500 | 544 | 44 |
| Total: Fees and Recoveries | 2,295 | 2,365 | 70 |
| TCA Purchase Requirements | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) | 70.7 | 74.7 | 4 |
| <p>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanations: The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture's 2021-22 Actual Expenses are \$1.7M lower than Estimate due to \$2.2M cash flow decrease associated with the Atlantic Fisheries Fund agreement offset by \$0.5M salaries and benefits increase related to staff transition from Department of Agriculture to Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.</p> <p>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation: Miscellaneous increases across the department.</p> <p>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation: N/A.</p> <p>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation: Majority of increase is related to positions transferred from Agriculture.</p> | | | |

Measuring Our Performance

Department priorities that develop our aquaculture, fisheries, and seafood industries:

Strategic Buy Local Communications and Marketing

As per its Departmental priorities, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Department) has continued to support the Province's seafood and aquaculture industry through strategic *Buy Local* communications and marketing. The *Buy Local* marketing campaign aims to make it easier for consumers to find local products and encourage Nova Scotians to purchase locally grown and produced agri-food, seafood, and beverages.

Buy Local consumer research was completed September 2021 and included locally farmed salmon as a key commodity for consumer data collection.

The *Get Your Hands on Local* logo was launched in retail in February of 2020. It was developed in partnership with Taste of Nova Scotia to increase the identification and availability of seafood and agri-food products. Point-of-Sale signage rolled out in 160+ retail locations. Participating retailers included major grocery chains, such as Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore, and Walmart, along with Clearwater and Fishermen's Market.

Working towards encouraging Nova Scotians to buy local seafood and agri-food, a robust, multi-faceted *Get Your Hands on Local* program was developed to re-launch into retail in Fall 2021. The program was paused in August 2021, pending the development of the Nova Scotia Loyal program through the Department of Economic Development. *Buy Local* staff continue to support Economic Development by providing Nova Scotia Loyal with best practices and industry insight. The *Get Your Hands on Local* Program was initially negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, joint advertising campaigns were developed to promote the seafood and agri-food industry locally during the pandemic and were funded by the Department of Agriculture.

Focus on the Continued Expansion of a Sustainable Aquaculture Industry

In response to the Fall 2021 mandate letter commitments, work has begun on a review of the current aquaculture regulations and the development of a coastal classification system for finfish aquaculture.

Work began on the **Aquaculture Regulatory Review** in December 2021, with a meeting of the Nova Scotia Aquaculture Regulatory Advisory Committee. Through this Committee, Government will engage with stakeholders and the public to collect input on the

regulations. A jurisdictional review of regulations in other parts of Canada and internationally will also be conducted. Changes to legislation and regulation that result from the review are expected to be finished in 2023 or 2024.

The **coastal classification system** for the suitability of finfish aquaculture was initiated in February 2022. The initial phase of the project included developing the strategic approach to developing the classification system, determining how the classification system will be incorporated into the licensing process and establishing the criteria to be used to assess the coastline. This is a multi-year project to develop and implement a coastal classification system by 2024-2025.

Through a memorandum of understanding, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Municipality of the District of Argyle have worked collaboratively to explore the potential for an **Aquaculture Development Area** for shellfish and marine plants. The Aquaculture Development Area planning process is meant to increase collaboration between aquaculture and social/cultural users and ecological functions. This proactive planning approach is intended to secure suitable marine locations for aquaculture development by reducing barriers to entry to the industry, streamlining application processes, and reducing financial risk for interested parties.

The Department continues to invest in research and technology to support science-based decision making in the aquaculture sector. Multiple projects led by the Centre for Marine Applied Research at Perennia have been supported to better understand the relationship between aquaculture farms and the environment, provide data and analysis for coastal planning, and support innovative technologies. The Department has also been developing educational material to explain how aquaculture is regulated in the province and the science behind the regulatory framework.

Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF)

The AFF is a \$400 million cost-shared fund between the Atlantic Provinces and the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). It was launched in 2017 by DFO to develop the fish and seafood sector, including aquaculture, in Atlantic Canada to better meet increasing market demands. The AFF is a seven-year multi-lateral federal/provincial 70:30 cost-shared partnership from 2017-2018 until 2023-2024.

Over the first five years of this program (2017-2018 to 2021- 2022), Nova Scotia received a total of 483 applications with 302 of those projects successfully approved by AFF. The total project costs amount to \$153.6 million with AFF contributions of \$89.5 million. This includes both Provincial and Federal contributions.

The approved projects focus on harvesting, including wild commercial fisheries, processing with an emphasis on seafood, and aquaculture. This includes both repayable and non-repayable contributions.

While the AFF continued to accept and process applications throughout 2021-2022, clients experienced significant timeline delays due to COVID including supply chain issues, labour, and product availability. The Department's AFF staff, along with the Department's Coastal Resource Coordinators provided ongoing support for applicants of the AFF by promoting the fund, building awareness, and providing frontline services and guidance to applicants.

Support Proposals to the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF)

As a funding partner under the CFSOF framework agreement, Nova Scotia continues to engage with industry partners, provinces and territories, and the Federal Government to advance projects that seek to develop and implement Canadian seafood branding strategies, advance domestic and international markets, address market access issues and undertake market research and intelligence to expand and develop new markets.

Since the beginning of the seven-year CFSOF partnership, Nova Scotia has participated as a funding partner in a total of seven projects, providing over \$800 thousand in funding to regional and national associations for marketing and market development initiatives.

International Seafood Export Marketing Development

As part of the Department's continued commitment to grow the seafood industry, the Province invested \$110 thousand in 2021-2022 for the promotion of Nova Scotia Seafood in export markets. This funding supported the Department in working closely with the Nova Scotia seafood industry to develop and promote new market opportunities for Nova Scotia seafood products.

The Department partnered with the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance to conduct research on opportunities in the European Union (EU) for under-marketed Nova Scotia Seafood species (frozen lobster, snow crab, Jonah crab and silver hake products) resulting in strategic recommendations for Nova Scotia companies to access new markets in the EU. This information will be used to support industry to build on that work through market development activities in 2022-2023 in France, Spain, and other EU markets.

Recognizing the continued importance of markets in Asia, the Department planned and delivered a comprehensive live lobster retail promotion in China in 2021-2022. The

Department partnered with a major supermarket retail chain to promote Nova Scotia live lobster in 150 retail stores leading up to Christmas and the Chinese New Year. The promotion included Nova Scotia seafood branding, consumer and product education, direct consumer engagement through live streaming, attracting over 200 thousand views, chef demos and on the ground support from the Canadian Consulate in Guangzhou. This promotion resulted in sales of over 800 thousand pounds of live lobster.

The Department supported the annual Parent Child Cooking competition in Japan that brings together parent child teams to cook products from Canada. This annual event features four parent-child teams preparing original Canadian-themed recipes using Canadian food ingredients including Nova Scotia seafood. Highlights of the event were made into a television program, which was broadcast in August 2021 by TV Osaka to an audience of over 8 million households in the Kansai region of Japan.

The Department continued to collaborate with Atlantic Canada provincial and federal government partners on international market development initiatives as part of the Atlantic Trade Investment Growth Strategy.

Most international seafood trade shows and in-market promotions were cancelled or postponed until COVID travel restrictions were lifted in March 2022, allowing for in-person participation and direct industry involvement. Departmental marketing efforts over the year focused on supporting virtual events, promotions and strategic market intelligence gathering and research. Despite these challenges over the past year, our seafood industry continued to thrive. Nova Scotia's fish and seafood exports were \$2.5 billion in 2021, an increase of 23% from 2020. Nova Scotia is Canada's seafood export leader, representing 28% of the country's total seafood export value.

Marine and Coastal Initiatives

In line with Government's commitments to fight climate change, in 2021-22, the Department developed its **Climate Change Readiness Framework**. Through this framework, the Department has established and actively conducts Department-wide meetings involving staff in a working group focused on emerging sector-related climate change issues, and growing staff capabilities to advise industries on appropriate readiness and response to climate change. This working group is known as the Fisheries and Aquaculture Climate Team (FACT).

The Department worked with the Centre for Marine Applied Research (CMAR) to prepare a white paper describing the risks of climate change to the Province's seafood sector, and seafood-dependent communities. As well, the Department conducted a broad **Climate Change Vulnerability Study**, to determine which parts of the Provincial seafood sector are susceptible to specific impacts stemming from climate change. 'Phase I' of

this study provides the Province and industry with a ‘rapid assessment tool’ to better understand where specific impacts stemming from climate change are more/less likely to occur. The Department initiated two additional ‘Phase II’ projects to prepare finer-scale information (e.g. community-level), to assess vulnerabilities associated with the Province’s lobster fishery and to critical infrastructure supporting the Province’s seafood sector.

The Department partnered with Efficiency Nova Scotia, to establish an **Onsite Energy Manager** in the assessment of energy efficiency opportunities within the seafood processing industry, as well as within provincially owned fish hatcheries. The following table describes the progress of the projects:

| Number of Sites/ Projects Completed | GHG Reductions (tonnes/yr) | Electricity Cost Savings to Industry | Incentive \$’s Received by Industry |
|--|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 28 | 1,899 | \$371,500 | \$338,316 |

In 2021-2022, although COVID significantly limited opportunities to coordinate and congregate volunteers to support **shoreline and ocean clean-up**, the Department did provide an association with funding to conduct a shoreline cleanup through the Department’s Marine Debris Clean-up Fund. Members of the association and community volunteers committed to gathering and removing garbage, debris, and lost fishing gear from a portion of shoreline near Bacarro Point, approximately 30 km from Shelburne, NS.

The Department oversees handling and quality standards in an effort to increase the market value of Nova Scotia Seafood. Regulations require that lobster buyers complete a **Lobster Quality Handling Course**. Through our course delivery partner, the Université Sainte-Anne, this course was delivered 25 times in 2021-2022. A total of 498 participants were issued certificates in 2021-2022. During the period of April 2021-March 2022, a total of six companies successfully passed the third-party audit process and obtained certification under the Université Sainte-Anne **Live Lobster Quality Certification Program** standard. Two companies have committed to obtaining certification in mid-2022 with several others expressing interest.

The **Nova Scotia Seafood Quality Program (NSSQP)** led by Perennia was officially launched in June 2021. The NSSQP was developed to promote high quality standards within the Nova Scotia seafood supply chain and to enhance Nova Scotia Seafood’s international reputation for premium quality seafood. A total of seven Nova Scotia seafood companies successfully completed the process and received certification under the NSSQP since its launch and are now licenced to use the “Nova Scotia Seafood” brand. This is a certification program initiated under the Nova Scotia Seafood brand, with the Université Sainte-Anne for live lobster and Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc. (Perennia)

for all other species. The program is a set of quality standards that meet or exceed the very best globally recognized standards around seafood quality, sustainability, and traceability.

COVID has been a challenge for both the Université Sainte-Anne-led and Perennia-led Programs in recruiting new companies to the programs.

Sportfishing Development Strategy

The Departmental priorities within the 2021-2022 Business Plan emphasize the importance of sportfishing opportunities within the Province as a healthy outdoor activity which positively impacts Nova Scotia's economy. Sportfishing in Nova Scotia contributes more than \$66.5 million to the Nova Scotia economy annually. In 2021-2022, 79,000 sportfishing licenses were sold, totaling \$1.8 million in license sales revenue.

The Department has completed the **electronic licensing system** initially rolled out in 2020 to include all sportfishing license types. In addition, the Department has successfully developed and completed the **Fish Nova Scotia website**. It will be launched the summer of 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the **Sportfishing Development Strategy** initiative focused on increasing the number of visiting anglers in the Province. Specifically, the pandemic delayed the implementation of the marketing phase of the project due to travel restrictions in 2021. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, marketing efforts will focus on the recruitment of visiting anglers to the Province in the Fall of 2022 into the early Winter months of 2023.

Youth Attraction into the Seafood Industries

Engaging and attracting youth to careers within Nova Scotian seafood industries is a priority for the Department. This includes the creation and implementation of a Marine Education Strategy guidance document to introduce information about the fisheries and seafood industries into Nova Scotian schools, along with the Department's Seafood Student Bursary Program to encourage work in the seafood industry as a career choice for youth.

Nova Scotia's **Marine Education Strategy** guidance document was completed in the Summer of 2021. Collaborative work with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's team to develop learning resources and experiences was initiated in January of 2022.

The **Fisheries and Aquaculture Student Bursary Program** received a total of 87 applications in 2021-2022, with 69 applicants approved. Program uptake was double that of the previous year resulting from a loosening of COVID restrictions. A total of \$94.5 thousand was disbursed under the program. The Bursary Program was transitioned to the Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council at the end of 2021-2022. The Sector Council will re-launch the bursary program under the Team Seafood NS brand with re-designed guidelines for employers and students, new branding and targeted promotion for implementation in 2022-2023.

Key Core Functions

Primary Departmental functions advanced in 2021-2022 that supported the Departments mandate, strategic themes and overall government priorities included:

Administered Licences and Leases for Fish Buyers and Processors, Aquaculture and Rockweed

The following table describes the number and sales revenue from licenses and leases administered for fish buyers and processors, aquaculture and rockweed in 2021-2022:

| Category | # of Licenses and/or Leases active 2021-2022 Fiscal | Revenue |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|
| Aquaculture | 235 | \$ 195,690.39 |
| Fish Buyer | 317 | \$ 231,165.45 |
| Fish Processor | 208 | \$ 65,122.45 |
| Designated Fish Buyer | 1586 | \$ 52,575.90 |
| Rockweed | 17 | \$ 49,774.67 |

Marine Services Division and Coastal Unit Initiatives

In 2021-2022, the Marine Division:

- continued to represent provincial fisheries interest at numerous federal and international fisheries management advisory committees where key decisions are made about the management and execution of the commercial fisheries at the local, regional, and international levels. These decisions impact the economic

benefits that Nova Scotia realizes from its commercial fishing and seafood processing industries, which are the backbone of rural coastal communities.

- represented provincial fisheries interests on numerous federal initiatives, including Marine Protected Areas and the Blue Economy. The division's goal is to ensure the Nova Scotia seafood industry is recognized as a pillar of rural coastal communities, and that marine conservation takes a balanced approach that maintains economic benefits to Nova Scotia.
- worked with industry clients to identify strategic opportunities and/or overcome barriers to industry growth including access to resources, identification of underutilized/developing species, attracting and maintaining skilled labour, and industry financing through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.
- staff provided ongoing regional and extension services to a variety of agencies and partners relating to commercial seafood activities, aquaculture development, sportfishing, and boatbuilding.
- in partnership with other government departments, agencies and the fishing industry, staff continued to participate in and promote the Fishing Safety Now by promoting safety at sea, on the wharf, and in processing facilities.
- on behalf of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board, the Marine Division's Coastal Resource Coordinators (CRCs) conducted 60 vessel inspections for vessel loans under \$50 thousand, with the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board conducting inspections for vessels above \$50 thousand.
- CRCs played a key industry liaison role to both gather critical regional industry intelligence related to COVID-19 impacts and to inform and educate industry on public health measures and requirements.

Partnership with Perennia and the Nova Scotia Salmon Association

The Department continues to partner with Perennia and the Nova Scotia Salmon Association to support the ongoing process of designing a strategy for acid precipitation mitigation on trout rivers in mainland Nova Scotia and on the production of Atlantic salmon. The Department's focus continues to be supporting the West River, Sheet Harbour restoration efforts by contributing to watershed liming initiatives.

Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board

Since 1936, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board has played an integral role in the development of the province's marine fisheries sector. The Loan Board supports the development of sustainable fish harvesting and aquaculture sectors through responsible lending. The Loan Board has a range of products tailored to harvesters,

aquaculture, processing, and boat building. Government committed to reviewing Agencies, Offices and Crown Corporations in the Fall 2021 Mandate Letters. The Loan Board's promotional plans were paused pending the review.

Labour Initiatives and Developments

The Department continued to champion labour development in 2021-2022 by working with other provincial departments, the seafood processing industry, and the federal government to address persistent workforce challenges facing our provincial seafood industry.

Department staff continued to participate in the Fishers Sector Council led Ad Hoc Labour committee. This committee consists of government representatives from the Department and the Department of Labour Skills and Immigration and industry.

The Department also actively participates on an Atlantic-wide call with federal and provincial representatives related to Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), who support the seafood processing sector.

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts focused on pandemic-related supports for the workforce as well as the coordination of TFWs. In 2021, over 300 TFWs for the seafood sector came to Nova Scotia and were supported through COVID-19 protocols.

Minister's Conference

Originally scheduled for February 23-24, 2022, the 24th Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister's Conference, produced by Perennia and held in partnership with the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia's Seafarmers Conference, was postponed until October 12-13, 2022, due to COVID.

As a prelude to the rescheduled Fall event, organizers conducted two of the planned agenda sessions as webinars, free of charge, on February 24 and March 22, 2022. Webinar topics included an international panel discussion on the Blue Economy, as well as panel of experts examining trends in the domestic seafood market. Both webinars were considered a success and received positive comments, drawing 166 and 93 attendees for the Blue Economy and Trends in Domestic Seafood Markets, respectively.

Planning continues for the Fall 2022 conference and industry trade show, which will be offered as a hybrid in-person and on-line event, attracting an audience comprised of

domestic and international seafood processors, harvesters, aquaculturists, academia, government, and support-industry representatives.

Growing a Competitive Seafood Sector

The Department advanced its work to grow a competitive seafood sector, in a number of areas. The Department hired a Seafood Industry Development Analyst in 2021-2022 to assist the seafood sector in identifying and adopting new innovative technologies to increase efficiencies, increase production and reduce energy consumption. The Department also continued to support industry innovation through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF).

The Department continued to administer the *Fish Harvesters Organizational Support Act (FHOSA)*. In 2021-2022, the **FHOSA Registry** processed 1757 fishers for a total of \$616 thousand. Online payment of dues through the Access-to-Business system was launched in February 2022 to enable the collection of mandatory dues for fish harvester organizations, and 123 online payments were processed by March 31, 2022. The shift to an online payment system meant that COVID-19 had no impact on the functioning of the registry.

The *Fish Harvester Registration and Certification Board Act* is enabling legislation to support the formation of an industry board, to register and certify fish harvesters based on established certification criteria, with an end goal of promoting the sustainability and economic viability of the fishing industry. The **Fish Harvester Registration Board** was officially launched in October of 2021 and has begun delivering on its first mandate which is to register Nova Scotia Fish Harvesters:

- Eight Board meetings were held during 2021-2022 fiscal. COVID impacted the board, where for some meetings, the board was unable to meet quorum.
- The registration and certification database was established and integrated with the federal DFO database.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and DFO was drafted and expected to be finalized during 2022-2023 fiscal.
- 617 registrations were processed for the period ending December 31, 2021 and 320 were processed for the period of January 1, 2022, and March 31, 2022, for a total of 937.
- Industry outreach was delayed until COVID-19 allowed for in-person meetings.

Inland Fisheries Division initiatives

As part of the **Urban Stocking and Wild Replenishment Program**, the Department has completed upgrades to the three provisional fish hatcheries. This includes the replacement of eight round ponds at Margaree Hatchery, and re-surfacing of raceways. The project began in the Summer of 2020 and was completed the following Spring of 2021. Eight existing 25-foot circular ponds were replaced with seven new 25-foot circular ponds. An upgrade relating the Margaree Hatchery visitors centre to accommodate persons with disabilities is ongoing.

A consultant report has been completed which includes recommendations on renewing infrastructure to modernize the Frasers Mills Hatchery over a phased approach to minimize impact on services. The Department is ramping up efforts to initiate upgrades to the hatchery.

Upgrades at the McGowan Lake Hatchery facility have not started.

Invasive Species

In 2021-2022, the Inland Fisheries division continued to expand its partnerships for managing invasive species with the Federal government, non-government organizations, and relevant stakeholder groups.

The Department made significant progress in managing aquatic invasive species through containing smallmouth bass in Dobson's Lake, Guysborough County. As of Summer 2022, this species has successfully been contained and is undergoing continuous monitoring. Next steps include planning development and consultation initiatives.

Post-treatment monitoring of Piper Lake has determined that the project successfully eradicated Smallmouth Bass from the lake. Technical reports provided by MacCallum Environmental Consultants to Inland Fisheries indicated that there were no negative impacts to adjacent wetlands nor the invertebrate community. The next phase of the project is monitoring lake recovery.

Sportfish Habitat Fund

In 2021, the Nova Scotia Sportfish Habitat Fund raised \$299 thousand through a \$5.91 levy on fishing licences. A total of \$238 thousand was provided to the Nova Scotia Salmon Association's Adopt-A-Stream Program which funded fish habitat restoration projects undertaken by community and First Nation groups throughout the province. In addition to these projects, the West River Acid Rain Mitigation Project received \$15

thousand for a liming project on the West River, Sheet Harbour and \$25 thousand for catchment liming by helicopter in the same watershed.

The Fund also provided support to the Port Morien Wildlife Association for the refurbishment of a barrier free sportfishing facility at New Waterford Park, River Ryan in Cape Breton County (\$6.2 thousand) and to the Antigonish Rivers Association for the installation of a Barrier-Free floating dock and fishing platform at Cameron Lake, Antigonish County (\$19.8 thousand)

Annual Report Under Section 18 of the *Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act*

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purpose of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing. The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture:

| Information Required under Section 18 of the Act | Fiscal Year 2021-2022 |
|--|-----------------------|
| The number of disclosures received | 0 |
| The number of findings of wrongdoing | 0 |
| Details of each wrongdoing | Not applicable |
| Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing | Not applicable |