



Fundy Fixed Gear Council: Community-Based Governance by Inshore Fishermen within the Bay of Fundy, Canada



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Who We Are

The Fundy Fixed Gear Council (FFGC) was created in 1996 by the Maritime Fishermen's Union Local 9, Bay of Fundy Inshore Fishermen's Association and the Islands Inshore Fishermen's Association. Fixed gear refers to handlining, longlining and gillnetting. The FFGC's community-based management work has been multifaceted from the very beginning; covering almost every aspect of fisheries management i.e. community quota allocations, harvesting, compliance, research, government relations, policy and democratic decision-making.



Handline



Gillnet



Longline

Our Vision

- ❖ To provide strong community based leadership to its fishing members of the 45' Groundfish Fleet and to help ensure that the Fishery remains a viable and environmentally sustainable way of life for generations to come
- ❖ To help protect and enable the small coastal communities by working closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as with environmentally focused groups, in order to maximize the benefits to the fishers and their communities while protecting the Bay of Fundy and the health of existing and future stocks.



Haddock (Gadus macrocephalus)

Examples of Groundfish



Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*)



Pollock (*Pollockius virens*)



Hake (*Merluccius bilinearis*)

Where We Fish

The area served by the FFGC is the Nova Scotia side of the Bay of Fundy, which comprises the counties of Digby, Annapolis, Kings, Colchester and Cumberland



Our Collaborative Initiatives Include:

- ❖ In 1998, the FFGC, and Western Valley Development Authority founded The Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre (MRC). The MRC provides learning, technical, and organizational support to groups engaged in coastal community-based management.
- ❖ The "Writing the Rules" project (2003) was designed to define "ecosystem based" management meant from the perspective of the Bay of Fundy's inshore fishermen.
- ❖ In 2003, Members of the FFGC provided support for Bear River First Nation members to partake in the lobster commercial fishery.
- ❖ The FFGC, and in particular the MFU Local 9 Gillnetters, have played a major role in working with right whale conservationists.



Off the
Hook



Clean
Oceans
Campaign



Members of the FFGC are currently involved in the "Off the Hook" project, coordinated by the Ecology Action Centre. A community supported initiative, this project connects consumers to locally and sustainably grown, fairly traded foods. Off the Hook's fish shares are caught with a bottom hook and line, which is a low-impact alternative to bottom trawling (dredgers). Species caught include haddock, hake and the occasional Pollock. Despite the high quality of the catch, fishermen are often still offered the same price as dragger-caught fish. Direct marketing enterprises, e.g. this project can support fishermen get a better price for their catch, thus protecting their livelihoods in an industry rapidly becoming dominated by large-scale, corporate players.

Inshore fishermen are becoming aware of how their fishing practices affect the ocean and are taking steps (e.g. trash bins at the wharf) to improve those fishing practices in order to protect the ecosystem. Many fish harvesters, Harbour Authorities, Government representatives and Non Governmental Organizations have been meeting to deal with the growing problem of the disposal of frozen bait packaging. While bait packaging is a significant problem for the local marine environment, other marine trash include rope, plastic buoys, nets, traps, untreated sewage, solvents, aluminum cans and all plastics. See the campaign video at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxJY_RD0zX0

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Our Reflections:

Successful community-based fisheries governance requires all to work together as a whole – First Nation communities, Non-native fishermen, Government agencies and other Civil organizations. Although challenging, if communities and other stakeholders want to work together, they can!

"Although our groundfish allocation is not much but at least we have something for the community....that belongs to the community and is distributed by the community"

Hubert Saulnier –Community Fishermen, Meteghan, 2011

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