

**FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS RESEARCH SOCIETY
PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SENTINEL SURVEY OF GROUND FISH PLANNED FOR NAFO
DIVISIONS 4VSW**

Halifax: - The Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS), a non-profit association which is an active partnership between fishermen and scientists who are working together to obtain more accurate indicators of the health of fish stocks in the Maritimes Region, has been awarded a contract by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to survey groundfish in NAFO Divisions 4VsW. This is the second year of a multi-year project; it is a continuation of the 4VsW Sentinel Survey Program implemented in 1995, which was sponsored by the FSRS and jointly funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRD) and DFO.

The need for gathering information on fish stocks while moratoria are in place is indisputable. The use of commercial fishermen to collect this data has also proven to be very successful. In 1995 the first sentinel survey in 4VsW was conducted using commercial fishing vessels fishing to survey protocols designed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and intended to provide unbiased estimators of fish abundance and catch rates.

The need for gathering information on fish stocks while moratoria are in place is indisputable. The use of commercial fishermen to collect these data, as has been the case in the 4Vn cod fishery over the past two years, has a number of benefits beyond the hard data gathered, not the least of which is the fostering of a closer working relationship between fishermen and fisheries scientists/managers. With this in mind, it was decided to implement a sentinel survey program for the groundfish resources in 4VsW. The objective of the program is to establish a long-term (10-20 year) series of catch rate and abundance indices which reflect the overall abundance of the primary groundfish resources in this area which will be used in the assessments and management of these resources.

The first survey in this program was conducted during October and November of 1995 using commercial fishing vessels fishing to survey protocols designed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and intended to provide unbiased estimators of fish abundance and catch rates. This project was sponsored by the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS), and funded jointly by the Department of Human Resources Development Canada and DFO.

With its past experience in the development and implementation of the sentinel survey, the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS) is well qualified to undertake the work outlined in the request for proposal: *Sentinel Survey of Groundfish in NAFO Divisions 4VsW Using Fixed Longlines*. The Society currently has in place trained members and can provide the infrastructure to manage such an undertaking. It has a proven track record through its previous projects, both internally and in conjunction with DFO, of administering successful projects which deliver quality data.

The 1996 4VsW Sentinel Survey will be sponsored by the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS), and funded by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and will consist of two separate fishing phases, a *Stratified Random Survey* and a *Commercial Index*.

It is recognized that it is important that the coastal communities in the program area be fully informed about and understand the program, how it operates, who will be participating etc. Through a series of six community meetings jointly sponsored by the Society and community organizations, the goals, structure, etc. of the program will be communicated and promoted. Local fishermen, fishermen's organizations and other interested members of the coastal communities, media, etc. are invited to participate in these meetings.

The meetings are as follows:

July 16/96 7pm Sydney
July 17/96 7pm P D
July 18/96 7pm Tor Bay
July 19/96 7pm Sheet Hbr.
July 23/96 7pm Musq. Hbr.
July 24/96 7pm Sambro

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