

**FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS RESEARCH SOCIETY  
PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Halifax -- May 12, 1997

**FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS JOIN FORCES FOR GROUND FISH SENTINEL PROGRAM**

The Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) have entered into a Joint Project Agreement for a Sentinel Program in the NAFO 4VsW Division, which will provide valuable data on stocks under moratoria. The Program is a continuation of the Sentinel Program begun in 1995. The FSRS is a non-profit partnership between fishermen and scientists whose objective is to learn more about the health of fish stocks in the Maritimes Region.

The Joint Project Agreement seeks to continue the program into the future until it can become self-sustaining. Scientists would like to establish a series of catch rate and abundance indices which will be valuable in the assessment and management of primary groundfish resources. In addition to providing valuable data, Sentinel Programs foster a closer working relationship between fishermen and fisheries scientists and managers.

The 1997 Program will begin in July and will utilize up to eighteen commercial longline fishing vessels, in all size categories up to 65 feet. The 1997 Program will consist of two components. One is a Sentinel (Stratified Random) Survey in which fishing locations are preselected randomly by computer. The second is a Commercial Index which will permit a limited amount of commercial fishing effort following fishermen's customary fishing patterns.

To provide members of coastal communities with full details of the 1997 4VsW Sentinel Program, a series of public meetings will be held to outline the structure and rationale of the project, opportunities available, vessel selection criteria, and the application process to participate in the program. Local fishermen, fishermen's organizations, media and other interested members of the coastal communities are invited to participate in the following meetings:

Sydney	Mira Road Fire Hall	May 25th	7:00 p.m.
River Bourgeois	Tara Lynn Community Centre	May 26th	7:00 p.m.
Tor Bay	Good Shepherd Church Hall	May 27th	7:00 p.m.
Sheet Harbour	Bluewater Building	May 28th	7:00 p.m.
Bridgewater	Wandlyn Inn	May 29th	7:00 p.m.
Dartmouth	Bedford Institute of Oceanography	May 30th	7:00 p.m.

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