

**FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS RESEARCH SOCIETY
PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Halifax --December 9, 1997

1997 4VSW GROUND FISH SENTINEL PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED; RESULTS TO BE REVIEWED AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

A series of public review meetings are scheduled to review the preliminary results of the 1997 4VSW Groundfish Sentinel Program completed in December 1997. The survey, conducted by the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS) under a Joint Project Agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), provides valuable data on stocks under moratoria. Preliminary results of the analysis of the data collected during this year's survey will be presented at the meetings.

The 1997 4VSW Sentinel Program was the third year of a program begun in 1995. It consisted of a longline groundfish survey with two components. One, a Stratified Random Survey, which required vessels to set gear at 252 pre-selected random locations. The second, a Commercial Index, during which activities emulated normal fishing patterns.

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 spanning at least 10 - 20 years. Such indices of primary groundfish resources would be valuable in the assessment and management of these resources. In addition to providing valuable data, Sentinel Programs foster a closer working relationship between fishermen and fisheries scientists.

A series of public meetings is being held to review and discuss preliminary findings of the survey, review the goals, structure and operation of the 1997 4VSW Sentinel Program, and provide participants and others with an opportunity to share their observations, evaluate the project and make recommendations for changes to improve possible future projects. Participants in the 4VSW Sentinel Program, members of the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society, local fishermen, fishermen's organizations and other interested members of the coastal communities, media, etc. are invited to participate in the following meetings:

Sydney Area - Mira Road Fire Hall	Sunday, January 11th	7:00 p.m.
River Bourgeois - Tara Lynn Community Centre	Monday, January 12th	1:00 p.m.
Tor Bay - Good Shepherd Church Hall	Monday, January 12th	7:00 p.m.
Sheet Harbour - Blue Water Business Centre	Tuesday, January 13th	7:00 p.m.
Dartmouth - Bedford Institute of Oceanography	Wednesday, January 14th	7:00 p.m.
Liverpool - Royal Canadian Legion Hall	Thursday, January 15th	7:00 p.m.

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For further information contact:

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