

Marine Protected Areas

EASTPORT

The Eastport Peninsula, one of the most picturesque areas of Bonavista Bay, is located approximately three hours drive from St. John's, Newfoundland. The rugged coastline is interrupted by a number of headlands, coves, and beaches. Numerous islands found in the area provide habitat for a variety of marine wildlife. The rich, productive waters surrounding the Eastport Peninsula are host to a wide range of groundfish, pelagic fish, shellfish, marine mammals, and aquatic plants. Since early settlement the people of the Eastport Peninsula have relied on the fishery for their economic subsistence.



In 1995, to address declining catches, the Eastport Peninsula lobster fish harvesters formed the Eastport Peninsula Lobster Protection Committee (EPLPC). The aim of the Committee was to implement an overall lobster conservation strategy for the Eastport Peninsula. Committee members provided information and data required for the management of the resource and implemented various measures to address conservation and sustainability. Based on the initial success of various initiatives, the EPLPC developed an agreement with Fisheries and Oceans Canada in 1997 to limit local fisheries and close two areas of prime lobster habitat to lobster harvesting. One benefit of these initiatives has been the ability of fish harvesters, government, community youth, academics, and scientists to work together and share information and knowledge for better management of the lobster fishery.



In 1999, the EPLPC approached Fisheries and Oceans Canada on establishing a Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the *Oceans Act* in the Eastport area. The EPLPC feel that establishing a MPA would support their current work and aid in implementing further conservation initiatives. There is scientific evidence that suggests that protecting the two areas of habitat has sustained and perhaps enhanced the local lobster fishery.

In October 2005, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced the designation of the Eastport Marine Protected Areas.

For further information please contact:

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