

Marine Protected Areas

GILBERT BAY

Gilbert Bay is 47 km² in size and is located approximately 300 km from Happy Valley-Goose Bay on Labrador's southeast coast. The bay is 20 km in length but less than 100 m deep with two narrow outlets to the sea, one at Williams Harbour Run and the other at Winard Tickle. This geophysical configuration contributes to the bay's unique character through semi-isolation from the Labrador Sea.



The waters of Gilbert Bay support a wide range of marine resources including several species of shellfish (mussels, scallops, sea urchins, snails, shrimp), cod, pelagic fishes (herring, capelin, salmon, eels, smelt, trout) and aquatic plants (eel grass, kelp). The area is also inhabited by several species of waterfowl including black ducks, geese and mergansers.

Since 1996, scientists from Memorial University of Newfoundland have conducted research in Gilbert Bay and have found the habitat supports a resident population of Atlantic cod. Through careful scientific analysis it has been determined that the "reddish-brown" cod are genetically distinct from other Labrador cod. Tagging and tracking of the cod has confirmed that the species remain in the bay year round.



Since this discovery, people from the local communities, scientists, and the Provincial Government have approached Fisheries and Oceans Canada to put measures in place to protect the unique ecosystem, including the various commercial and non-commercial fish species. On the basis of this support and existing information, Fisheries and Oceans Canada selected Gilbert Bay as an Area of Interest (AOI) in the Marine Protected Area (MPA) program under the *Oceans Act*.

In October 2005, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced the designation of the Gilbert Bay Marine Protected Area.

For further information please contact:

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