

Marine Species at Risk

There are many amazing marine species at risk in coastal and offshore waters around Nova Scotia. These species are often forgotten because few people are fortunate enough to see them. However, they are in deep trouble and require our help. Be an advocate of healthy oceans: purchase sustainably caught seafood (www.seachoice.ca and

Endangered

Leatherback Turtle

(*Dermochelys coriacea*):

Large sea turtle (up to 2 m long!) with ridged leathery skin. Feeds on jellyfish in Atlantic waters from June-November. Estimated to decline by over 70% in the last 15 years. In Canada, threats include fishing gear entanglement, and ingestion of marine debris. (visit www.seaturtle.ca).



North Atlantic Right Whale

(*Eubalaena glacialis*):

Large whale, up to 16 m long, with no dorsal fin. About 400 individuals remain in the Western Atlantic population and this number is declining. Mortality occurs from vessel collisions, entanglements in fishing gear, declining reproductive rates, and increasing amounts of ocean noise from human activities.



Northern Bottlenose Whale

(*Hyperoodon ampullatus*):

A 6-9 m long beaked whale found in deep, cold water. About 260 individuals are found in "the Gully", a Marine Protected Area, at the edge of the Scotian shelf. Threatened by acoustic noise, chemical pollution, vessel collisions, fishing gear entanglement, marine debris, and nearby oil and gas activities.



IMAGES: © DFO

The ocean is vast and mysterious but at the same time extremely vulnerable. Although some see it as an infinite, indestructible resource, human activities endanger its habitats, processes, and diversity of life. Everyone's actions, however small individually, can have a powerful collective effect ... **you can help.**

www.msc.org), encourage the use of fishing gear that reduces bycatch (www.smartgear.org), and reduce marine debris by limiting plastic use and disposing of your garbage properly. To learn more about these species visit:

www.cosewic.gc.ca
www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca



Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*):

Largest animal known to live on earth, with body lengths up to 33 m! Whaling historically reduced this species to low levels. Threatened by vessel collisions, close encounters with whale watching boats, entanglement in fishing gear, pollution, and climate change.

Porbeagle Shark (*Lamna nasus*):

Large oceanic shark (up to 3 m in length) that has declined by 90% since the 1960s. This population has crashed twice because of fishing pressure. Declining numbers due to direct fishing (longline), and bycatch in the swordfish and tuna longline fisheries.



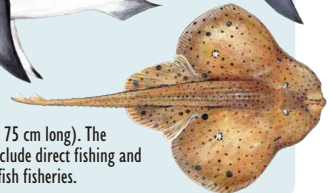
White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*):

Very large, highly migratory shark species that is rare in Canadian waters. Has declined by at least 80% in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. Threats include bycatch from pelagic longline fishing for species such as tuna and swordfish, sport fishing, and the (illegal) international trade of shark parts.



Winter Skate (*Leucoraja ocellata*):

Flattened disc-shaped marine species with a long tail (50-75 cm long). The Southern Gulf population has declined by 98%. Threats include direct fishing and bycatch (unintentional capture in fishing gear) in groundfish fisheries.



IMAGES: © DFO

Threatened

Cusk (*Brosme Brosme*):

Slow-growing, solitary, bottom-dwelling fish. Declined by over 95% since the 1970s. Threats include direct fishing and bycatch in longline fishing for halibut, cod, haddock and pollock.



Northern Wolffish (*Anarhichas denticulatus*):

Large marine fish with large conical teeth. Lives on the ocean floor at depths up to 900 m! Has declined by over 98% since the late 1970s. Caught and discarded as bycatch in fishing gear like bottom trawlers. (Clam and scallop dredgers, and bottom trawlers destroy nesting and spawning habitat.)



Spotted Wolffish (*Anarhichas minor*):

Large, bottom-dwelling predatory fish. Has declined by over 95% since the 1970s, due to the same threats that face the Northern Wolffish (bycatch and habitat destruction).

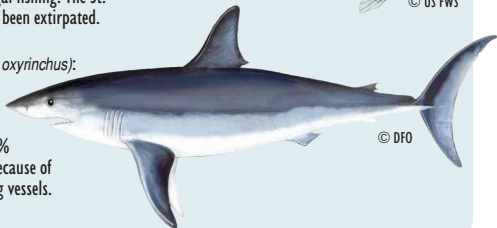


Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*) Bay of Fundy population: Marine fish that spawns in freshwater rivers. Threatened by overfishing, pollution (PCBs, pesticides, heavy metals), alteration of spawning habitat (dams), bycatch and illegal fishing. The St. Lawrence Estuary population has been extirpated.



Short-finned Mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*):

Large, highly migratory shark (up to 4 m), with a pointed snout. The Northwest Atlantic population has declined up to 50% in the past 15-30 years, mostly because of bycatch in pelagic longline fishing vessels.



Special Concern

Atlantic Wolffish (*Anarhichas lupus*):

Large, solitary, slow-growing, bottom-dwelling predatory fish. Catch rates have declined by 90% since the late 1970s, due to overfishing until the mid-1990s and habitat destruction from fishing gear like bottom trawlers and dredgers.



Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*):

Small marine mammal (up to 1.7 m), sometimes found in bays and harbours during the summer. Threats include fishing gear entanglements, acoustic harassment devices used in salmon aquaculture, and habitat degradation (from oil and gas exploration).



Atlantic Cod (*Gadus morhua*):

Medium sized marine fish. Stocks greatly declined due to overfishing. Threats include direct fishing, bycatch, predation, natural and human-caused changes to the marine ecosystem, and habitat destruction due to bottom trawling.



American Eel (*Anguilla rostrata*):

Long, skinny fish with a continuous dorsal fin. Found in coastal estuaries, bays, and inland rivers. Threatened by coastal water pollution, stocking, and barriers like dams that prevent upstream movement.



Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*):

Long, slender, highly migratory shark. Greatest threat is bycatch in pelagic longline fisheries. It is estimated that tens of thousands of tons of blue sharks are caught and discarded in the North Atlantic Ocean alone.

