

DFO Science Response to Habitat Request

RE: Environmental Screening for Harbour Development (Breakwater, Floating Docks, Dredging And Service Area) at Tiverton, Digby County, Nova Scotia.

June 4, 2004

Habitat Request

Based on the project plans and the occurrence of marine mammals in the Bay of Fundy, are you aware of any marine mammals that may be significantly adversely affected in or near Petit Passage by the blasting activities proposed in this area from June 1st to June 30th?

Science Response

DFO data on marine mammal sightings near Petit Passage in June was reviewed. It should be noted that these data are opportunistic (not derived from standardised surveys) and so are effort dependent. Cetaceans that are commonly seen in this area in June include Harbour porpoise, Minke whale, and Fin whale. Humpbacks usually arrive in the area mid-June. Dolphins are seen on occasion.

Right whales usually arrive in the Bay of Fundy in July or even August. Some years Right whales have been sighted in June, though this is not common. Most sightings of Right whales occur in the area of Grand Manan Basin, and not in the Petit Passage area.

Although the effects of blasting on cetaceans have not been reviewed here, harmful effects are considered likely to occur within some radius of exposure to an explosive source. A risk-management approach should be taken and efforts should be made to blast only when no whales are in the passage.