



association of
seafood producers



Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council

The Future of Northern Cod Gets a Boost from the Federal Government

October 12, 2017 – St. John’s, NL - The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, federal Minister of Science, today announced over \$500 million in research infrastructure funding for Canadian research institutions provided by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), including over \$4.8 million in support for the Development of an Autonomous Marine Observation System (DAMOS), lead by Memorial University in partnership with Dalhousie University.

The CFI investment in DAMOS equipment will enable researchers and industry to provide information critical to the restoration and future sustainable management of Canada’s Northern Cod stock, to the benefit of coastal communities and the Canadian economy. This will be achieved by supporting the world-class offshore acoustic tracking project for Northern Cod, a central part of the Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) administered by the Association of Seafood Producers (ASP) and the Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council (GEAC).

“DAMOS will provide an opportunity to address a significant gap in our understanding of how marine species move in Atlantic Canada. Based on the partnership with ASP-GEAC, an array of acoustic receivers will be deployed that will contribute to understanding Northern cod movement along the slope of the Newfoundland and Labrador continental shelf, as well as their inshore/offshore migration patterns.” said Dr. Fred Whoriskey, Executive Director of the Ocean Tracking Network.

“This project demonstrates the tangible impact of academia, industry and government working together to improve science, and in turn, management of marine resources,” stated Bruce Chapman, President of GEAC. “Our fisheries improvement project has committed \$250,000 to deploy and maintain the infrastructure needed to move this project forward. With this announcement, we expect to be on the water in 2018.”

With the support of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, ASP-GEAC recently hosted a scientific workshop in St. John’s, to share perspectives on the design of the acoustic receiver array. This included leaders from Memorial University, Dalhousie University, the Ocean Tracking Network, the Ocean Frontier Institute, Icewater Seafoods, Ocean Choice International, Davigel Inc. (of France), and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. At this workshop, the merits and challenges of different design options were debated with the aim of establishing a final deployment plan.

“We certainly had active discussion,” remarked Steve Devitt, Director of Sustainability with GEAC, “and at the end of the day we established consensus on key points that will provide a solid foundation to proceed. This will be used to help secure additional funding to expand the scope of the receiver and tagging program.”

Over the coming months, final preparation for deployment of the acoustic tags and receiver array will be undertaken, further informed by cutting edge genetic work also funded by the ASP-GEAC FIP.

“Together, we’re working to help manage the resource in a sustainable manner. Filling gaps in understanding of this iconic stock will help manage the resource sustainably into the future,” concluded Derek Butler, Executive Director of ASP.

-30-

Sarah (Sullivan) Fleming
Director of Communications, GEAC
sarah@covepublicaffairs.ca
709.725.5830

About GEAC

The Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council is a non-profit association representing year-round groundfish harvesters in Atlantic Canada. GEAC contributes to research that will improve the sustainability and management of groundfish fisheries by actively supporting science, sustainability certifications and responsible management.

About ASP

The Association of Seafood Producers is a not for profit industry trade association representing seafood processors in Newfoundland and Labrador. ASP works for the betterment of the industry in the areas of public policy, sustainability and fisheries management.