

# Proposed South Coast Fjords National Marine Conservation Area

The Government of Canada, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Miawpukek First Nation, Qalipu First Nation, and the Town of Burgeo signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June 2023 to work together to assess the feasibility of creating a national marine conservation area (NMCA) in the South Coast Fjords. A Steering Committee consisting of representatives from each partner is leading the feasibility assessment.

The feasibility assessment explores whether the study area has the characteristics and potential to become an NMCA. It is a flexible process that looks at key considerations to determine if the study area is a good location for balancing conservation and sustainable uses while providing social, cultural and economic benefits.

## Process to Establish a National Marine Conservation Area

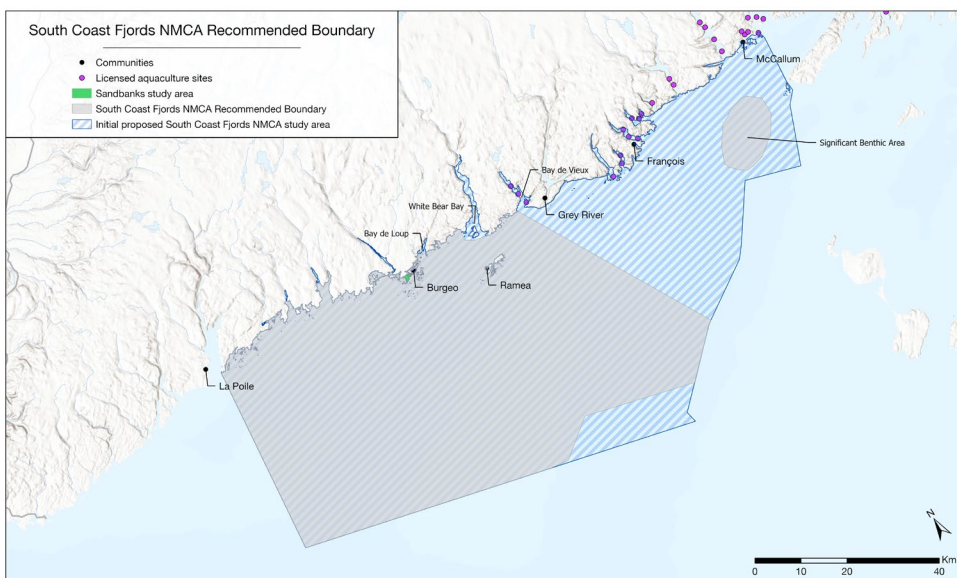
1. Identify representative marine areas
2. Select a candidate NMCA
3. Assess feasibility of an NMCA
4. Negotiate establishment agreement(s)
5. Designate and protect NMCA in Legislation

## Proposed Updated Boundary

The updated boundary reflects changes to the initial study area (9,114 km<sup>2</sup>) based on information and input received through an extensive consultation and engagement process for the proposed South Coast Fjords NMCA. Areas important for finfish aquaculture and some areas where bottom-trawling is occurring were removed from the NMCA boundary; and an area identified by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as significant to sea pen communities was retained to

protect their habitat and support marine biodiversity. It is common for a proposed boundary to evolve throughout the NMCA establishment process as stakeholder input is received through ongoing consultations. Adjustments have been made to mitigate industry concerns while preserving features of natural and cultural significance. The updated proposed boundary encompasses 6,491 km<sup>2</sup>.

## Proposed Updated South Coast Fjords NMCA Boundary



Parks Canada  
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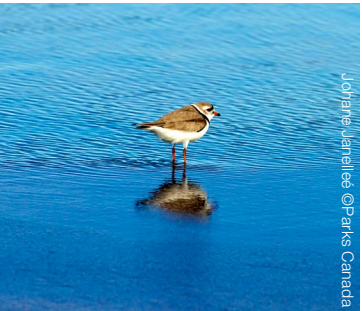
Qalipu  
FIRST NATION







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### Commitment to a Healthy Ocean Economy

In accordance with the Feasibility Assessment Memorandum of Understanding, the final NMCA boundary would exclude all existing aquaculture sites. The updated boundary proposal honours the South Coast Fjords Steering Committee's commitment to ensuring that aquaculture, fisheries and the NMCA can co-exist.

A key objective of the feasibility assessment is the extensive consultation with coastal communities, Indigenous peoples, industry stakeholders and other levels of government. With a solid understanding of all perspectives, the South Coast Fjords NMCA proposal can be designed to support ecologically sustainable use and economic growth.

### Ecologically Rich Marine Environment

Glacier-carved fjords and steep bedrock cliffs tower above a complex coastline of estuaries, marshes, tidal flats and beaches. A diversity of species travel along the coastline to feed in its sheltered inlets and bays and migrate through the productive offshore waters.

These waters are home to several species, such as Leatherback Sea turtles, corals and sponges, harbour porpoises, dolphins, sharks, and humpback, fin, blue, right, and killer whales. Some species are important culturally, socially and economically, such as Atlantic Salmon, cod and lobster, providing food security to coastal and First Nations communities.

Ecologically important eelgrass beds in the study area provide habitat for many marine species and create more coastal resilience towards climate change impacts by stabilizing and buffering shorelines.

The study area also includes Sandbanks Provincial Park, which protects a series of sand dunes, white sandy beaches and marshes set against a spruce-fir dominated forest and coastal barrens. The beaches provide habitat for the globally vulnerable and nationally endangered Piping Plover, Harlequin and eider ducks, other migratory shorebirds, and several other species.

### Cultural Significance

These lands and waters have sustained First Nation and local communities on the south coast of Newfoundland for centuries, providing food and materials needed for a traditional way of life.

Old settlements and villages occur along the coastline as well as hunting and fishing areas, burial grounds, sacred areas, traditional gardens, and campsites.

The coastline contains sites that have been identified as culturally and spiritually significant to the Mi'kmaq. It continues to be used for traditional hunting, trapping and fishing.

The South Coast Fjords and Sandbanks Provincial Park offer a tremendous variety of recreational activities including boating, fishing, swimming, scuba diving, wildlife watching, hiking, and camping.

Stakeholders are invited to share their feedback on the proposed updated boundary by emailing [fcs-scf@pc.gc.ca](mailto:fcs-scf@pc.gc.ca)

[website: parks.canada.ca/south-coast-fjords](http://parks.canada.ca/south-coast-fjords)

[email: fcs-scf@pc.gc.ca](mailto:fcs-scf@pc.gc.ca)