

How do you know what you know?

We're looking for
the answer.



Fish-WIKS

understanding how **Western and Indigenous Knowledge Systems** can improve the sustainability of Canadian fisheries

What is Fish-WIKS?

Fish-WIKS research looks at understanding western and indigenous knowledge systems and explores how the different processes by which knowledge is acquired, transmitted and used can be harnessed to enhance Canadian fisheries policy. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the research aims to identify the commonalities and differences in indigenous knowledge systems across the Pacific, Arctic, Inland and Atlantic regions and in four distinct coastal communities in Canada (Tla-o-qui-aht, British Columbia; Naujaat, Nunavut; Nipissing, Ontario; and Eskasoni, Nova Scotia). The project also seeks to understand how indigenous and western knowledge systems can be used to improve the sustainability of Canadian fisheries.

Fish-WIKS Research Goals

- Examine how knowledge is valued, shared and used in both indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge systems
- Identify possible commonalities and differences
- Use the knowledge acquired to enhance decision-making affecting Canada's fishery resources for current and future generations

Focus on Naujaat Fish-WIKS Arctic research site

"We have to give our knowledge to our future generations to come. Our late elders used to pass on their knowledge to the younger ones and I want to do the same." John Tinlashu

The hamlet of **Naujaat** is located exactly on the Arctic Circle and has a population of 1,000, 95% of whom are Inuit. Transport to the community is provided primarily by air and by an annual sealift. Naujaat is home to a wide variety of animals including polar bears, caribou, seals, whales, and walrus. There are also approximately 100 species of birds in the area. The Naujaat community continues to rely on traditional sealing, fishing, hunting, trapping, and carving for their livelihood, together with tourism.

Fish-WIKS Arctic partner is the **Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment (Fishing & Sealing Division)**. Nunavut has been home to Inuit for millennia and part of Canada for more than a century. Embracing both traditional knowledge and values and the new opportunities presented by technologies, the Government of Nunavut provides a wide range of services tailored to the unique needs of over 34,000 residents.

The **Nunavut Wildlife Management Board** is a Fish-WIKS community partner. The Board and its co-management partners work together to combine the knowledge and understanding of wildlife managers, users, and the public to make decisions concerning the management of wildlife in Nunavut.

Fish-WIKS contacts for the Arctic Region

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The Fish-WIKS project started in 2012 and runs for five years to 2017.

Key activities

- Engage in community-identified priority setting
- Conduct, analyze and interpret desk-top and field research related to fisheries decision-making
- Build awareness at each participating community site of Fish-WIKS and its goal of enhancing fisheries sustainability
- Recommend opportunities to enhance fisheries governance and management through shared knowledge

Key Outcomes

- Building long-term partnerships and mutual capacity based on trust and respect
- Identifying and using the best model or mix of models from western and indigenous knowledge systems to influence fisheries-related decision-making within a regional and national context
- Training and mentoring of 18 undergraduate, Master's, doctoral and post-doctoral candidates with priority to indigenous students
- An expanding network of fisheries governance scholars and practitioners across Canada
- Shared policy-relevant knowledge using oral and written communication formats
- Enhanced fisheries sustainability through effective governance



“Looking at the interplay of traditional knowledge systems and western knowledge systems, the academic literature often prioritizes one form of knowledge over the other. Fish-WIKS is about valuing knowledge systems equally and identifying how they both can be used to manage fisheries sustainably.”

Dr. Lucia Fanning, *Fish-WIKS Principal Investigator*

To learn more about Fish-WIKS and to get involved, visit fishwiks.ca or contact your regional representative.

fishwiks.ca

Regional Partners

Assembly of First Nations
BC First Nations Fisheries Council
Government of Nunavut
Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

Community Partners

Atlantic – Eskasoni, NS
Arctic – Naujaat, NU
Inland – Nipissing, ON
Pacific – Tla-o-qui-aht, BC

Academic Partners

Dalhousie University
University of Guelph
University of Toronto
Vancouver Island University

Fish-WIKS National Project Office

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