

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 Eskasoni Fish-WIKS Atlantic research site

"If we don't properly manage fish at this juncture, then we would lose the fishery in the future"

Dr. Albert Marshall, Community Elder

Located on the beautiful Bras d'Or Lakes in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, **Eskasoni** takes its name from a Mi'kmaq word, "we'kwistognik", meaning 'where the fir trees are plentiful'. In 1834, Eskasoni officially became a reserve of 2,800 acres of land. Today, Eskasoni is home to nearly 4,000 residents who take pride in who they are and how far they've come. Eskasoni is the largest Mi'kmaq speaking community in Atlantic Canada. Deeply rooted within Eskasoni is the Mi'kmaq culture and language with close ties to Cape Breton Gaelic and French traditions. Managed by a Chief and Council, the Eskasoni Band administers 24 businesses and employs over 120 people. The commercial fishing operation, Crane Cove Seafoods, has 12 employees and 150 part-time fishermen.

Fish-WIKS Atlantic partner is the **Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)**. UINR represents the five Mi'kmaq communities of Unama'ki (Cape Breton), NS-Eskasoni, Membertou, Wagmatcook, We'koqma'q and Potlotek. Established in 1999 to address natural resources concerns, UINR works through partnerships and collaborations to protect and preserve resources for future generations.

Fish-WIKS contacts for the Atlantic 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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