



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

PARTNERSHIP



Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities

01

Fish and fish habitat
restoration in Canada



Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pêches et Océans Canada



Introduction

In Canada, there are countless threats to fish and fish habitat. These include:

- Habitat modification and degradation.
- Aquatic invasive species.
- Overexploitation of fish.
- Pollution and
- Climate change.

Fortunately,

Many threats to fish and fish habitats can be addressed using restoration activities.

- ✓ Restoration activities include **any effort to address** negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems.
- ✓ Restoration activities seek to **re-establish healthy** conditions to affected ecosystems.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), as part of its Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHP), is seeking public input in developing an approach for identifying and prioritizing fish habitat restoration opportunities. The first round of engagement involves sharing information about a plan for identifying fish habitat restoration priorities, particularly, factors that should be considered in selecting and prioritizing opportunities for restoration.

The DFO has made engaging with Indigenous Peoples a critical factor in developing restoration priorities by including considerations that support Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.



Fish and fish habitat restoration in Canada:

The DFO supports restoration efforts in a multitude of ways. These include:

The Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund.



Controlling Sea Lamprey in the Great Lakes.

Watershed planning.

The Salmonid Enhancement Program in the Yukon.

Removal of Green Crabs in the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

Restoration of Pacific Salmonid habitats in British Columbia





Habitat banking and offsetting:

The DFO also reviews and monitors habitat offsetting and habitat banking plans.

Habitat offsetting and banking plans are innovative efforts to compensate for the losses of fish and fish habitat.



Habitat offsetting

Habitat offsetting refers to restoration or improvement projects designed to **counterbalance (offset) harmful impacts** to fish and fish habitat caused by development works, undertakings, or activities. Before considering habitat offsetting, efforts must be made to avoid and mitigate harmful impacts to fish and fish habitat.

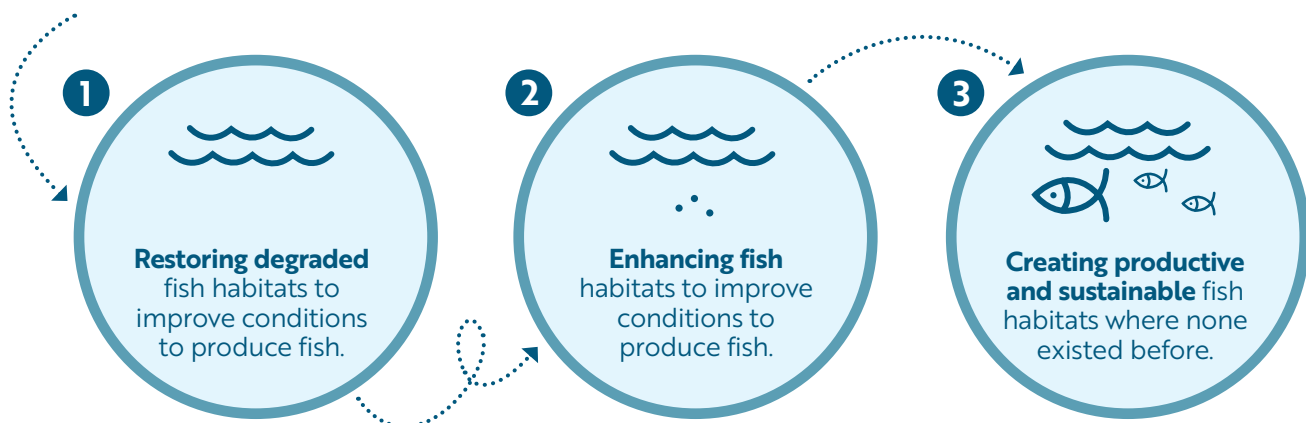
Any remaining (or residual) impacts must be addressed by additional offsetting measures, with the goal of replacing fish habitat losses to the extent possible.

Habitat offset measures may include but are not limited to:

Habitat banking

A **habitat bank** consist of one or more **conservation (restoration or improvement) project**. Habitat banks are treated as habitat credits once a restored or improved habitat is fully functional. Credits (the habitat bank) can be used by a proponent to address offsetting requirements for a future development project, which requires a Fisheries Act authorization.

For example: A proponent may establish a habitat bank because the proponent plans to undertake a projects in the future that will impact fish habitat and that will need offsetting to address authorization requirements. Once the proponentva determines how much offsetting is needed, the proponent may use habitat credits instead of implementing other offsetting measures.





Identifying fish habitat restoration priorities:

The **DFO's newest project** is developing an approach for identifying fish habitat restoration priorities.

Identifying fish habitat restoration priorities will help to improve coordination of habitat restoration regionally, provincially, and within Indigenous communities.

Restoration priorities will be identified using two approaches:



1 A Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities.

The framework is intended to be an overarching guidance document. It will:

- **Outline the need** for and use of fish habitat restoration priorities.
- **Describe a consistent**, yet flexible, approach to identify restoration priorities for fish habitat across Canada.
- **Describe principles** that characterize integrated and effective restoration.
- **Identify considerations** for selecting restoration actions, opportunities, or objectives.

2 Regional Fish Habitat Restoration Plans.



- **DFO Regions** will use the Framework to identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities to guide development of more detailed and specific Regional Fish Habitat Restoration Plans.
- **Each plan** will be tailored to regional characteristics and interests. But overall, a plan will identify actions, opportunities, and objectives that should be prioritized.
- **In some Regions**, site-specific restoration opportunities may be prioritized (e.g., replacing a specific culvert).
- **In other Regions**, focus may be on restoration objectives for a larger area (e.g., improving connectivity in a geographical area).
- The Framework and Regional Restoration Plans will be updated from time to time as additional information becomes available.
- **The DFO aims** to complete the Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities by **December 2022**, and the Regional Fish Habitat **Restoration Plans by 2024**.





NWAC's engagement activities related to the DFO's Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities have been completed. However, you can provide feedback on the engagement **reports here.**



For more information on the Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities, please visit the DFO's Talk Fish Habitat engagement portal at: **talkfishhabitat.ca**

You can also register to provide feedback directly to the DFO on the proposed Framework to Identify Fish Habitat Restoration Priorities by using



this link.

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