



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

PARTNERSHIP



The Consideration of **Cumulative Effects on Fish and Fish Habitat**, in Support of **Decision-Making Under the *Fisheries Act***

04

How the DFO will consider
cumulative effects on fish
and fish habitat



Fisheries and Oceans Pêches et Océans
Canada Canada



Introduction:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), as part of its Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP), is in the process of drafting a Position Statement for including cumulative effects in the authorization process related to the management of Fish and Fish Habitat.

The summary below provides an overview of how the **DFO will consider cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat** before any decision to issue, or deny, authorization for a project that might result in the death of fish or harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat.

- ▶ The **Fisheries Act of Canada** sets out factors that the **Minister of Fisheries and Oceans** must consider when deciding whether to authorize a project that could result in:
 - a. The death of fish.
 - b. Harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish and/or fish habitat.
- ▶ Since the 2019 amendment to the **Fisheries Act of Canada**, cumulative effects are one of the factors the Minister must consider under certain sections of *the Act*.



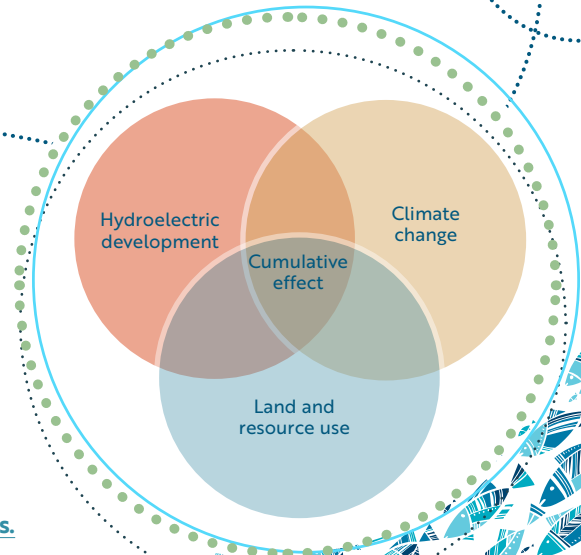


What are cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat, and why are they important to consider?

- Cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat are the combined impacts of multiple pressures, over time and space, and are either natural or man-made.

1. Example: Intersecting pressures of climate change, land and resource use, and hydroelectric development.

Source: <https://www.cerri.ca/copy-of-cree-traditional-fisheries>.





What are cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat, and why are they important to consider? CONT.

- ▶ Cumulative effects occur when an aquatic ecosystem does not have enough time to recover from previous, or existing, pressures before being subjected to one or more new impacts.
- ▶ To protect fish and fish habitats, the DFO must consider the likelihood that a project will contribute to cumulative effects.
- ▶ The DFO considers cumulative effects on a case-by-case basis, and guiding principles, based on two scales:
 - Spatial scale is a geographic area in which the proposed project will affect fish and fish habitat;
 - Temporal scale is the timing, duration, and persistence of potential effects on fish and fish habitat resulting from the proposed project.
- ▶ In determining cumulative effects, the DFO may also choose to consider any other relevant threats to fish and fish habitat, such as: Habitat degradation or modification, invasive species, overexploitation of fish, pollution, and/or climate change.
- ▶ As part of the FFHPP, The DFO has drafted a position statement, which provides a clear overview of how the DFO considers cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat. It will be applied to all proposed projects before deciding to issue, or refuse, authorization for a project. Its purpose is to analyze whether a project may lead to the death of fish, or to the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish and/or fish habitat.



What are the goals of the position statement?



- ✓ The position statement aims to ensure the FFHPP demonstrates consideration of cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat in a consistent manner. It also helps DFO staff to understand how FFHPP mandates and objectives should be implemented to be fair, dependable, and effective.
- ✓ The DFO hopes ongoing, meaningful, and collaborative engagement with Indigenous Peoples, partners, and stakeholders will result in a robust and environmentally sound policy development for the consideration of cumulative effects. The aim is to eventually reduce impacts to fish and fish habitats.

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The DFO's engagement on the cumulative effects of fish and fish habitat is open until December 15, 2022. For more information, please visit DFO's Talk Fish Habitat engagement portal at talkfishhabitat.ca

Register to provide feedback on the proposed cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat using [!\[\]\(339a16584d5da0f0a3ca4e9ec17bf6a1_img.jpg\) this link.](#)



**Native Women's
Association of Canada**

120 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec
J8X 2K1

613-722-3033
reception@nwac.ca