



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

FOPO • NUMBER 082 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

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Chair

Mr. Scott Simms

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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• (0850)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.)): Welcome back, everybody. Happy 2018. I hope this is going to be a wonderful, fruitful year for you all professionally, and personally of course.

We're continuing our study of the Oceans Act's marine protected areas, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2).

On the docket today, we have our witnesses for the first hour, and for the second hour we're going into committee business. Someone mentioned that we might need more time with the witnesses—we have three here today. If it's okay, I'll extend the 9:45 ending time a little further, maybe even up to 10 o'clock, if necessary.

Could I get the permission of the committee to do that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Committee business should probably take less than a full hour, so we can extend it as we see fit.

Welcome back, and as we said, we're continuing our study.

I want to thank our witnesses here this morning. We have Larry McKinney, executive director of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi. Thank you for travelling to be here with us today—a fair distance I might add. Welcome to winter, by the way.

Dr. Larry McKinney (Executive Director, Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, As an Individual): Very much so. I have more layers of clothes on than ever before, I think.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I was going to say that you look far more appreciative of the winter than you should be.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): This is warm.

The Chair: Yes, as Mr. Liepert points out, this is warm.

From the Fisheries Council of Canada, we have Paul Lansbergen, the president of the association.

Joining us by video conference from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, we have Sabine Jessen, the national director of the oceans program. She is joining us from Washington, D.C.

Thank you for joining us, Ms. Jessen. First of all, can you hear us?

Ms. Sabine Jessen (National Director, Oceans Program, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society): Yes.

The Chair: Good. We can hear you as well.

Normally, each organization gets up to 10 minutes to present. You don't have to use all 10 minutes, obviously. Then we go to our lines of questioning by each of the parties—our governing party, the official opposition, and the New Democratic Party.

Mr. McKinney, we're going to start with you. I'm sorry. Are you a Ph.D., by chance?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Yes, sir, I am.

The Chair: You are. You're Dr. McKinney. My sincere apologies.

Dr. Larry McKinney: It's not a problem.

The Chair: Very well, sir. You have up to 10 minutes for your opening remarks. Thank you.

Dr. Larry McKinney: I appreciate it.

My apologies to the translator. I'm a speed-talking Texan with an accent and a time limit. I'll try to do my best.

Thank you for the opportunity and honour of testifying before you today on this important topic of marine protected areas, or, as they're often referred to, MPAs.

I have been much involved in the topic over my fifty-year career. I spent half of that career in resource management and the other half in academia. My experiences with marine protected areas have spanned both, which has provided me a unique perspective. My goal is to share with you in the short time available some of what I have learned in the hope that it will benefit future development and management of MPAs in Canada. I am both honoured and humbled to testify before you today. I was initially inclined to politely decline, as I cannot see what a marine biologist from Texas could possibly contribute to the benefit of one of the great maritime nations in the world, an acknowledged leader in ocean management and conservation. I do have some experience within the broader Gulf of Mexico, but that seems farther from here than in just distance.

During my tenure as a fisheries manager at Texas Parks and Wildlife, one of the world's largest non-federal conservation agencies, I established dozens of MPAs. Most were to protect nursery areas for commercial species, but not all. I established a network of MPAs designated as state-scientific areas. The primary purpose was to protect special habitats. I also established one of the most controversial MPAs ever proposed in Texas. While I have never established any MPA that banned recreational fishing, I did establish one that disallowed the use of powered craft. In Texas, perhaps only gun control would have been a more controversial issue. I was successful because of the process I had developed during my tenure at TPWD, which I called "adaptive regulation", a bow to the adaptive management principle on which this rule-making process was designed.

The process was based on the premise that taking no action was not an option, that a regulation based on the best available information with clearly stated and defined objectives would be put in place. The process included commitments to an active and ongoing process of review with regular monitoring of agreed metrics, consultation with stakeholders, timely review of the regulation before our approving commission, and a sunset provision that required positive action by that commission to sustain the MPA. We eventually were able to sunset that MPA because the state legislature adopted a law based on what we had learned in that MPA process protecting seagrass statewide over several million acres.

There are two important lessons from this story. First, we had developed a model for creation and management of MPAs that both environmental and fishing stakeholders trusted and supported. We made sure that the fishing industry, both local and national, was part of the stakeholders who were regularly consulted. That gained us wide political support. Secondly, because of that trust, we had the support of anglers and industry to eventually pass legislation, the first of its kind in the Gulf of Mexico, to protect marine habitat over vast areas. This would not have been possible without that broad stakeholder support.

Further development of MPAs in Texas was all but eliminated by what has happened in California, beginning with the Marine Life Protection Act of 1999. The controversy surrounding the establishment and subsequent implementation of the MPAs resulting from that act effectively removed the tool from many a fisheries manager's toolbox, including mine. That controversy ignited angry and vocal response from both commercial and recreational fishers because they were excluded from that process and, according to many accounts, consistently misled by the process.

MPAs can be an effective management tool, but when they are used to advance a specific agenda, like the elimination of fishing, rather than as a science-based management tool, the negative consequences may echo for years. Some uses of MPAs in fisheries management are straightforward, like protecting spawning aggregate sites and nursery sites, examples of how I have mostly used such designations. Other subtleties of fisheries biology and ecology demand more careful assessment and clearly defined objectives for the successful creation of an MPA as a fishery management tool. While there is not enough time to debate the efficacy of MPAs as an effective strategy over the full range of fisheries management, I

would quote from one relatively recent peer-reviewed study by Buxton et al, published in 2014, to illustrate my point.

These researchers studied the concept that spillover from marine reserves benefits fisheries, the premise being that not allowing fishing in a defined area would result in production of such excessive numbers of fish they would expand into adjacent areas, improving fishing all around the MPA. This is often a stated value of no-take MPAs. The researchers concluded that spillover benefits from reserves had been detected only "when the fishery is highly depleted, often where traditional fisheries management controls are absent." They further concluded "that reserves in jurisdictions with well-managed fisheries are unlikely to provide [such] a net spillover benefit." I believe that fisheries management in Canada would be defined as such a well-managed jurisdiction.

● (0855)

I've found that traditional fisheries management practices can achieve nearly any fisheries management objective within an MPA, unless the goal is simply to end recreational fishing. This view is consistent with that of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' policy statement on marine protected areas. That policy strongly advocates an open and transparent process that defers to the North American model of conservation as a guiding principle. The policy strongly advocates leaving fish use management to the experts while establishing MPAs. Resources agencies in all of Canada's provinces are members of that association.

I see many of these summarized tenets in Canada's MPA strategy and policy. I urge that they be followed. Those tenets and the association's policy recognizes that effective MPAs are possible without restricting low-impact recreational fishing, that working with the angling community and industry creates committed advocates to help sustain those conservation efforts.

On retirement of TPWD, I accepted the position of executive director at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies. HRI is part of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi system, located at the head of the Laguna Madre on the Texas southern coast. Both HRI and I have been significantly involved with MPA issues using our Harte model of multidisciplinary research to develop science-based solutions to Gulf problems. We do believe that people are part of the environment and solutions to environmental problems must include people to be successful and sustained. Our ability to sort out science and policy issues regarding MPAs has been compromised by the controversy now surrounding them.

I hope Canada can avoid those missteps that we have experienced in the U.S.A., to what I believe is our continued loss. Marine conservation need not be divisive. Recreational anglers are conservation-minded, and they will support measures that they might deem not to be personally beneficial if they are presented with a sound argument and a consistent, transparent process. If time allowed, I could present numerous examples to illustrate that commitment, many of which I presented to the U.S. Congress in recent testimony on October 24, 2017, regarding the future of recreational fishing in our country.

In conclusion I would offer four recommendations for your consideration.

First, I would urge you to incorporate the tenets of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' policy statement on marine protected areas into any MPA development and implementation. It represents the combined wisdom and experience of some of the most successful conservation experts in the world, including those from Canada.

Second, where MPAs that exclude recreational fishing are proposed, they should be reviewed closely for their scientific merit, using a peer-review process that ensures an unbiased assessment. The recent history of agenda-driven actions in creating no-take MPAs makes this necessary to minimize potential controversy over what might be a sorely needed conservation measure.

Third, most fishery-related issues within MPAs can be handled with existing management tools and enforcement strategies. Perhaps as many as 80% to 90% of anglers, I have found in my experience, will follow rules on their own, if they know what they are and why they are necessary.

Fourth, ensure that your MPA process has a defined and meaningful stakeholder process that provides an opportunity for the input from recreational anglers and the industry they support. You will find them to be your strongest ally in conservation. When they are part of a transparent process in which their participation has an impact, they will make whatever sacrifice is needed to ensure success.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I've included within my written submission copies of the documents to which I referred. I'm certainly happy to answer questions as this evolves.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. McKinney. We appreciate that.

Now we're going to go to Mr. Lansbergen for 10 minutes or less, please.

Mr. Paul Lansbergen (President, Fisheries Council of Canada): It will be less than 10 minutes.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear this morning. This is an important study. It can inform how Canada continues to move forward to establish individual marine protected areas, as well as broadening its network of MPAs.

Before I begin my formal remarks, I want to quickly introduce myself. I'm new to the Fisheries Council and new to the sector. I started at the end of November, after 15 years in the forest industry. In my short time with the fisheries sector, I've seen some similarities between the forest industry and the fisheries sector.

Sustainability is paramount to both sectors, and in both cases Canada leads the world, in many respects, in terms of third-party certification of sustainability.

The most obvious discrepancy or complication with the fisheries sector is that fish move around and trees don't. With that highly technical comment, and in the context of my two fellow presenters, I should point out that my background is economics and not science.

I have given the clerk a written submission. I apologize for not having it completed in time to either translate it ourselves or for the translators with the committee to have it, but it is there if you would like to look at it for further information.

The Fisheries Council of Canada has been the voice of the fishery sector since 1915. We have members across the country on three coasts and inland waters—all small, medium, and large companies, as well as indigenous enterprises. We process the fish, and some of our members also harvest the fish.

The primary concern of the fisheries sector is how Canada balances the desire for conservation with the socio-economic benefits that we derive from our precious ocean ecosystem and our fish resources. While we have that conversation, we must also remember that Canada is helping to feed the growing global population and demand for protein, and fisheries is a sustainable source of that protein.

The recommendations I wish to make on behalf of the Fisheries Council of Canada recognize and build on the existing elements within the processes to establish individual MPAs and the broader network. However, the driver for our recommendations is really to enhance the effort we make to strike that appropriate balance between marine conservation and the socio-economic benefits.

This will become a more difficult struggle going forward, and it will require more effort by all parties: by the government, industry, and other stakeholders.

My first recommendation is to use science-based decision-making, which recognizes the role of the fisheries sector in sustainable fisheries management and in contributing to a healthy ocean ecosystem. As you well know, DFO's approach to sustainable and responsible fisheries management is science based. It applies the precautionary approach. It addresses ecosystem considerations and is risk based.

On top of that, as I mentioned earlier, Canada is a global leader in the adoption of third-party certification of sustainable fisheries management. The Marine Stewardship Council, which is the gold standard or leading standard, is what we use. As of 2014, although this might be a little dated, two-thirds of Canadian landings were from fisheries that were certified under the MSC label. That represents almost all major stocks and about 80% of the food produced by our fisheries.

This is in the context that only about 10% of the world's fisheries are certified, so this should be a point of pride for us. I'd like for you to think of us as a partner in conservation, not an adversary.

My second recommendation is to incorporate the socio-economic considerations, which recognizes the economic importance of our sector and other users. The Canadian seafood industry creates about 80,000 direct jobs, mainly in coastal and rural communities, and accounts for nearly \$7 billion in exports. The industry has a significant presence in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, followed by BC, Nunavut, and some freshwater fishing concentrated in Manitoba and the Great Lakes. Our members are often key employers in their communities, providing jobs and creating an economic base for other local businesses.

• (0900)

Looking more globally, the OECD views the ocean as a new economic frontier. The Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers agrees with this statement, in quoting the OECD in its June 2017 report on Canada's network of marine protected areas. Dominic Barton, the finance minister's adviser, also believes that agrifood can be a source of significant economic growth for Canada, and fish and seafood is part of that growth opportunity. Where things get challenging is when a specific fishery is impacted by an individual MPA. The impact on individual operators, whether an independent fisherman or an offshore company, gets very real very quickly, and finding that win-win is important.

Our third recommendation is to take a flexible approach in selecting the right conservation tool for the situation, regardless of whether it's under the Oceans Act, the Fisheries Act, or some other authority. This flexible approach is needed to meet the range of conservation and protection objectives while allowing for sustainable use. While MPAs may have a role in protecting unique features or high concentrations of sedentary corals and sponges or representative marine biodiversity areas, there is emerging scientific evidence—and I think Dr. McKinney alluded to this—that MPAs can be a blunt instrument. In the conservation and management of commercial species, we have more effective fisheries management techniques and tools, whether altering gear configurations, seasonal adjustments, temporary rotational or longer-term closures, or other measures. We can look at many things.

I should also mention that the FCC supports Canada's efforts in the international discussions to instill more flexibility in what measures are recognized as marine conservation in our international commitments. As I said, we recommend using the best measure regardless of whether it counts or does not count toward our international commitments.

I'll conclude my formal remarks and look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Thank you.

• (0905)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lansbergen. I appreciate that very much.

We're now going to Washington, D.C., where I think we have Dr. Jessen.

Ms. Sabine Jessen: No, not yet. I'm still working on it.

The Chair: We now go to the future Dr. Jessen—

A voice: Oh, oh!

The Chair: —for her opening remarks in 10 minutes or less.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Thank you, and good morning, everyone.

I'm really pleased to be here today representing the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, also known as CPAWS. We're a national grassroots conservation charity, with 13 chapters across the country and a national office in Ottawa. We've worked for over 50 years to conserve Canada's public land and oceans, using the best available science to protect ecologically important areas for generations to come.

We have supported the establishment of many MPAs in Canada, including Gwaii Haanas, the Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound glass sponge reefs, and St. Anns Bank. We were also involved in the passage of the NMCA Act. While we celebrate these successes, we also continue to advocate for effective protection of other sites, such as the Laurentian Channel, Scott Islands, and the Southern Strait of Georgia. We work with communities, indigenous people, scientists, other stakeholders, and decision-makers to find science-based solutions and to practise respectful advocacy.

Our 13 chapters are embedded in their local communities. We attend community events. We work with passionate community volunteers to inform and to engage the public in MPA planning and design processes. We work to give a voice to the public and to provide a platform for Canadians to share their views with decision-makers.

I have personally worked on MPAs for over 30 years and have been involved in all aspects of their establishment, from identifying candidate sites through to developing final management plans, and supporting monitoring and enforcement of sites once established. I have represented the conservation sector on numerous advisory committees for individual sites and have worked collaboratively on a variety of ocean policy issues.

MPAs are a tried and tested marine conservation tool. According to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, or IUCN, MPAs provide for the in situ conservation of biodiversity. A wealth of scientific evidence demonstrates that strongly protected MPAs protect vulnerable species, and help ecosystems and populations to recover and rebuild, and to produce more, larger, and more diverse communities of fish and other marine species. They can also produce benefits for fisheries, but only when they are well managed and strongly protected.

A recent global analysis of MPAs led by Dr. Graham Edgar demonstrated that the most effective MPAs are fully protected no-take areas that are well-enforced, large, mature, and isolated. The authors found that 59% of the MPAs they studied had only one or two of these features and showed no difference in biomass or diversity from fished areas. Numerous studies show that partially protected areas provide only limited benefits. They may help to prevent future degradation of marine ecosystems, but they are unlikely to support the recovery of populations.

CPAWS has also conducted reviews of Canadian MPAs, and we have found that less than 0.1% of our ocean is fully protected. This undermines their ability to provide the ecological and economic benefits that we're looking for.

Although there is an increasing body of science on best practices for MPA design and management, there are currently no protection standards for MPAs in Canada. Levels of protection can vary considerably, from fully protected no-take areas to partially protected multiple-use areas, to paper parks with little or no regulation of activities.

I'm currently here in Washington, DC, working with the IUCN to develop a set of international standards for MPAs that will be shared with IUCN member countries, including Canada, as well as with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The lack of protection standards for MPAs in Canada is a significant challenge to their designation and effectiveness. As a result, every single activity must be negotiated for each MPA, even when they may be in direct contravention of the conservation objectives for that MPA. This has affected the consultation process. It has dragged it out. It has increased conflict, and it has resulted in very lengthy designation processes for MPAs in Canada.

We support the recommendations by several scientists and conservationists who have testified to you and called for MPA protection standards. As I mentioned, protection measures in Canada's MPAs vary considerably. In St. Anns Bank, for example, there are measures to fully protect ecosystems from fishing in over 75% of the area, and all of it is protected from oil and gas. However, in the proposed Laurentian Channel MPA, the current proposal is that oil and gas activities would be permitted in 80% of the area.

● (0910)

Scientific studies, as was mentioned, have clearly shown that MPAs with weak protection will not result in conservation or economic benefits. Based on the evidence, we believe that protection standards should prohibit bottom trawling, oil and gas activities, and

deep-sea mining. All MPAs should be managed to ecological integrity and include mandatory and significant no-take areas.

Over the past year we have seen tremendous effort by the government to meet its marine conservation targets, including proposed amendments under Bill C-55 to the Oceans Act to establish interim protection for sites while they are being considered. Without these measures, harmful activities continue to damage ecosystems while the MPA is being developed. While freezing the footprint may prevent damage from new activities, it would not stop damage from existing activities, even when they have been scientifically proven to pose significant threats to known ecological values. For example, during the designation process of the glass sponge reefs MPA in B. C., scientists observed increasing damage from bottom-contact fishing gears, like prawn traps and long lines. The reefs are thousands of years old and may take hundreds of years to recover from damage, if they ever do. The glass sponge reefs were known to be at risk for 15 years before they were designated as an MPA. The longer an MPA consultation process takes, the more species and ecosystems remain at risk.

Over the past decade we've seen a global push to establish MPAs. Countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, Mexico, Chile, and Palau have embraced large, effective MPAs. After years of slow progress, Canada is running to catch up to meet the international targets while we lag behind many countries in the world in MPA coverage. Most of our MPAs are small, and current protection standards have been weak.

Over the past two years Canada has increased protection from 1% to 7%, according to DFO numbers. We would point out, however, that this number also includes a large number of existing and new fisheries closures recently announced as "other measures", rather than as MPAs, and less than 1% of these areas are fully protected, no-take areas. It's worth remembering that even if we protect 10% of Canada's oceans from all extractive activities, 90% still remains open to business. However, in order to get there, Canada's pace and standards must change significantly if we are to protect our ocean ecosystems, and species like the southern resident killer whales on the B.C. coast and the north Atlantic right whales that rely on those healthy ecosystems.

The government's amendments to the Oceans Act are a good start, and we are pleased that your committee has added "ecological integrity" as a criterion for the establishment of MPAs. After years of advocating for these improvements, CPAWS is also pleased to see interim protections also incorporated and measures to support the prohibition of oil and gas activities. We're very pleased that Minister LeBlanc has announced his intention to establish a ministerial advisory panel on protection standards for MPAs.

We are just beginning to catch up with the international community. Canada has an upcoming opportunity to demonstrate global leadership in ocean conservation during its presidency of the G-7. We urge the government to encourage G7 nations to adopt the 2016 IUCN resolution passed by 100 countries at the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii that calls for the protection of 30% of ocean territories by 2030. Not only would this make good ecological sense, it would also make good economic sense. In its report on MPA economics, management, and policy, the OECD cites a recent global study by Brander et al, published in 2015, which calculated the total ecosystem service benefits of 10% coverage by MPAs at between \$600 billion to \$900 billion U.S., and found that the benefits of expanding no-take areas to 10% and 30% exceeded any costs.

With some improvements to Canada's MPA legislation, stronger protections, and more protected areas, we can ensure that Canada will be an international leader, and that Canadians will benefit from healthy and productive oceans for generations to come.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

• (0915)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam. We appreciate that. Ms. Jessen, we'll come back to you during the questions.

Just as an explanation to our witnesses, in the round of questioning to follow, each party will get a chance. In the beginning, the first round will be seven minutes each.

Again, we do have someone who is joining us by video conference. I would like to remind my colleagues that if you're asking Ms. Jessen questions, you may want to say her name first so that she's aware that you are talking to her, because sometimes that can get a bit confusing.

Before I get into that, I would like to publicly send our best wishes to our dear colleague Mr. Todd Doherty, who is in the hospital right now recovering from surgery. What was found at the beginning of his gallbladder surgery turned out to be much worse, if you've seen the news. I'm just going to quote from a CBC news story where he said, "You can't help others if you're not well yourself." I think that's good advice, not just for politicians, but everybody.

Todd, we wish you all the best and we'll see you soon, of course, and thanks for those wise words.

That said, we also have Mr. Liepert with us, who is filling in from the riding of Calgary Signal Hill. Is that correct?

Mr. Ron Liepert: That's correct.

The Chair: All right. Thank you for joining us.

Mr. Ron Liepert: I don't know anything about fish, but I like to eat them.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Yes, that's right, Calgary being the fisheries hotbed that it is.

Mr. Ron Liepert: That's right.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I'm sure it is, on every plate in every restaurant.

Mr. Lansbergen brought up a good point, the difference between forestry and fish. I can honestly say that, quite frankly, being involved in fisheries management or around it for a long time, there's no problem managing fish if they could stop swimming. It would be much better, right?

Now we go to Ms. Jordan, for seven minutes to start.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here today.

Dr. McKinney, thank you so much for your really interesting presentation. In your testimony you said you established dozens of MPAs, mostly to protect nursery areas and commercial species. Was there commercial fishing in those areas? You talked mostly about anglers and recreational fishing. One of the challenges we face here with MPAs is the number of commercial fisheries that will be impacted. Did you have to deal with the commercial fishery, as well as the anglers and recreational fishery, or was it strictly a recreational fishery?

Dr. Larry McKinney: No, it was primarily commercial for the nursery areas in that perspective. In our state, shrimping is a significant industry, and we have two types of shrimping industries: an inshore fishery within our bays and estuaries, and an offshore fishery, where the shrimp move when they become adults. The problem with the inshore fishery is that the fishers are very overcapitalized and will fish anywhere they can and drag a net wherever they can, and so they were taking very small shrimp from areas in nurseries that could not make it offshore.

As a result, we went through about a five-year study period to figure out where the most important nursery areas were, and we closed and changed all of them. We have an ongoing monitoring program. We have one of the best monitoring programs in the world, with 30 years of continuous data. Now it's more like 45 years, and we were able to detect changes in those populations in those nursery areas very quickly over a period of a year, so we could adjust the size of those areas.

I'm sorry for the long answer.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: No, that's great. Thank you.

I'm not sure if your MPAs are set up the same way that ours are. Are they permanent, or are they reviewed over so many years and then you determine whether or not an area can be re-opened? Or are they strictly closed now, and thank you very much?

• (0920)

Dr. Larry McKinney: No, all our marine protected areas are sunsetted and must be positively reinstated. Five years is our typical period. We've done one that went for 10 years. That gives us an opportunity to make sure that the agency staff is doing their job, that they are collecting data on a regular basis, and having to prove that yes, this is still necessary.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: At the end of five years, have any of them ever reverted from being an MPA?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Yes, two of them have. One, as I mentioned in my testimony, was a marine protected area that we set aside because of powerboats with their props going across shallow seagrass—most of our water is very shallow—creating scars that would erode those types of things. That was one we put in place, and within the five years, the legislature was convinced that it would work, that it was effective. They decided to take that law and make it statewide. As a result we were able to sunset that MPA because the same protection for that MPA went to our entire state of several million acres.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Thank you. I have one final question for you.

We all recognize the value of recreational fisheries and commercial fisheries. Was your process driven from the grassroots? Was it the fishers who came to you and said, we need to start protecting these areas, or was it a top-down effort to do this? We've heard different testimony throughout the country about what does and doesn't work, and when there's a grassroots movement to protect an area, there seems to be a lot more buy-in from communities. I'm just wondering if that was your experience as well.

Dr. Larry McKinney: I know it is. It's a combination of them. Every year, our program, our fisheries division, would review all our scientific information that we collect on a regular basis and make proposals of various types, some establishing MPAs, others fishing regulations. Then we go through an elaborate process where we bring in stakeholders and have them review it, but they also have an opportunity to propose changes in different rules. We listen to that and by the end of that process, what usually comes out is a combination of proposals from our scientific staff and from the community about the things they were seeing.

We did both.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Thank you.

Mr. Lansbergen, welcome. Congratulations on the new job, moving from the forestry committee to our fisheries committee.

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: Thank you.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: It's always important to be involved in natural resources.

You talked a lot about the sustainability of the fishery. We've heard varying testimonies over the past number of months that being

sustainable isn't enough. It's not enough to just keep something the same way; we need to grow it. What does a sustainable fishery look like?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: That's a good question. I'm not quite sure how to answer that at this point in time. As you said, everyone has a different perspective. For us, certainly in the fisheries sector, it would be to make sure that we're not doing damage to the fisheries stocks, that the stocks are sustainable, that they are stable if not growing.

I guess how you do that is a bigger question. We operate under the rules and regulations of DFO as well as our own moral obligation to do no harm and to leave the oceans better for our children than they are today. How you do that, I think, is always a challenge. It's very easy to point to past instances where, collectively, we've failed. How to go forward to make sure those types of things don't happen again is very challenging.

Also, in my experience with the forest industry, we can think that we're doing the best job, based on the best available information and science, but Mother Nature will remind us that she reigns supreme and change things on us. That's the difficulty.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Thank you.

Ms. Jessen, I'd like to go to you now for a second. You talked a lot about other countries that have brought in MPAs and are very successful with them.

We've heard testimony from people from the U.K., professors who were involved with marine protected areas who have said that although it's great that they are protected, they're not being enforced. There's a challenge because it's not enough to just say, "This is what we've done, and here are your boundaries". You have to be able to enforce it.

Can you elaborate on that a bit because we hear of all of these other countries that have done wonderful things by having these percentages met, but are they actually seeing the difference in the long term to those boundaries if the areas are not being enforced?

• (0925)

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Certainly enforcement is a key element in the long-term management of a marine protected area. There are many elements to that, and there are different ways to do it. I know that in Australia they use overflights, and there are a lot of electronic tools that fishing boats now need to carry in order to ensure that they're not going inside marine protected areas. As the technology improves, I think there are a number of ways to ensure that the rules around the marine protected areas are enforced.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jordan.

Now it's Mr. Arnold for seven minutes please.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I have talked to Mr. Doherty. I've been in touch with him a little bit. He is slowly recovering, but it's a tough go for him. Thank you for recognizing that.

First of all, for Mr. McKinney and Mr. Lansbergen, comparatively speaking, are Canada's and North America's fisheries better managed than other international fisheries around the world, particularly those in developing or underdeveloped countries that may not have the same management regime as we have in Canada? Are MPAs more necessary or more effective in those areas where there are less managed fisheries? I'd like to hear your comments on that.

Dr. Larry McKinney: I appreciate that. I'll start. The simple answer is absolutely, yes. We are fortunate, both in Canada and in the U.S., in that we have developed our wildlife management approaches based on the North American model, which has evolved over about a 130 or 140 years.

I've studied fisheries all around the world, and we have some of the best managed fisheries in the world. It's just evident with what we have and the abundance in dealing with it.

That is primarily because of the tenets of that model, which basically looks at fish and wildlife resources as a public trust resource that should be managed on a scientific basis for access to all. It's just like any approach. It's had its ups and downs over the years, but it has produced some of the most significant conservation victories, if you will, in the world.

Mr. Mel Arnold: The overall tighter protection is somewhat here already. Is there more of an impact in those less managed countries where the fishing pressure may be less species-specific?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Absolutely, and I have worked in many of those areas, particularly in Meso-America, South America, and in other countries, and even in Mexico, to some extent. The problem is that reinforcement almost doesn't exist. You can't depend on many of the normal management-type tools, so that's the easiest way to approach it, to just to do that.

It does have a particular tool and a useful tool in places like that, where there is a lack of what we'd call "traditional fisheries management".

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

Mr. Lansbergen.

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: I would point to the reputation of our government, Fisheries and Oceans, in fisheries management and the principles that underlie that, as well as our record in third-party certification. Again, with my experience in the forest industry, third-party certification can be a piece of evidence on how you operate, above and beyond the legal requirement.

In the fisheries sector, our leadership in adopting third-party certification, I think speaks to how well we perform. Are we perfect? No. Do we have room for improvement? Yes. Do MPAs have a role to play to better protect certain aspects of our ocean ecosystem? I would say yes. The challenge is how do you balance that conservation with the economic benefit of, in my case, the commercial fisheries sector.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Thank you.

Ms. Jessen, you mentioned the southern resident killer whales in the context of the MPAs. I'm just wondering how you think an MPA with linear boundaries could help protect a species that moves in and out of an area.

I met with stakeholders recently who do a lot with the southern resident killer whales. They identified areas that had been historically recognized as summer feeding areas for the southern resident killer whales as having being blocked off. Over the past couple of years, the whales simply haven't been there because the food isn't there.

What benefit would an MPA have there?

● (0930)

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Certainly, their food supply does need to be protected. From the research that's being done by scientists studying the southern resident killer whales, we now know their critical habitat. The scientists have defined an area that the whales rely on when they spend are in the Strait of Georgia. It could help them if we could provide better protection to some of that and try to reduce the impacts of some of the activities that are going on in that habitat that is essential to them.

Certainly they're going to be moving in and out of that, and that is part of what happens, but, but protecting elements of their habitat is really important.

We also have other species on land that move and we still use protected areas to protect them, species like bears and wolves that move great distances. We have seen that protected areas can make a big difference for those kinds of species as well.

Mr. Mel Arnold: The marine protected areas would do almost nothing to protect the feed species, with the prime species the chinook salmon, which only spend a limited amount of time in that area. Their numbers are down because of other impacts, so I'd like you to explain how a small protected area for killer whales would make any difference if they're not going to be there because the food isn't there.

Ms. Sabine Jessen: They can't necessarily protect all elements, and certainly a lot more needs to be done on the chinook fishery to protecting chinook stocks. A whole lot of interrelationships here need to be addressed and a number of threats to the killer whales beyond just.... There's the food, the issue of noise as well, and shipping issues too.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Okay.

For our other two witnesses who are here in the room, especially Dr. McKinney, you've noted that these large no-take zones have a lesser impact or lesser benefit if the fisheries around them are better managed. Can you elaborate on that a little?

Dr. Larry McKinney: I think this is a result of my looking at the scientific literature on this, and I quoted one study my testimony, where they've looked at that type of thing.

I think the point is that if you have access to what we would call “traditional fisheries management” tools for how we manage this, and you can effectively enforce them—it would be a combination of the two, I think—you can achieve everything you want as far as restoring or maintaining those fisheries is concerned, and not allowing them to be fished or areas to be closed.

That's what the scientific information data would tell us in all the reviews that I've done.

The Chair: Okay. I think your question was to both of them, wasn't it?

Mr. Lansbergen, do you want to weigh in on that very quickly?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: No, I'll leave it at that.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Donnelly, for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Happy new year to committee members, since I haven't had a chance to say that.

Thanks to our witnesses for being here on this important subject.

Dr. McKinney, I'll start my questions with you. In your opinion what are the biggest factors driving the negative impacts on fisheries and ocean ecosystems in Canada?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Well, I'm not going to say I'm an expert on Canada, but fisheries are fisheries around the world, and the most significant one is usually overfishing. They have been overfished, or there has been habitat lost in those sectors. I am almost sure that those are the two issues that Canadians as well as U.S. biologists have to deal with.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thank you.

You mentioned developing a model of consultation. Is it possible that you could forward to the committee details of how that model would work so that we have it in writing? Do you have a link to it, or could you send us a paper?

Dr. Larry McKinney: I can do that. In fact, it was a significant part of my testimony before the Senate committee in the U.S., and we talked long about it. I have written that up and I'd be glad to share that submitted testimony with you.

• (0935)

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Yes, we've heard lots of comments from witnesses about consultation and how important it is to get that right, so getting that to us would be helpful.

My last comment is that you mentioned that under your watch, you've never closed an area to recreational fishing, but I think there was comment that you did close some areas to commercial fishing. Is that correct?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Yes, sir. I've actually closed areas in recreational fishing as well, but not because of recreational fishing

impacts. For commercial areas, the MPAs were to protect nursery grounds for shrimp, primarily, which is our primary species, because that's where the eggs settle and the young larvae grow up. That's on the commercial side.

In regard to the recreational fishing side, we didn't make MPAs to stop fishing, but we did try to control access—powered craft—in shallow waters that were destroying seagrass, so we came at it from that direction. People could continue to fish there; they just couldn't drive their big, powerful boats through the seagrass and plough it up.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Jessen, thanks for your work and your testimony.

We know—and I think you alluded to it—that the government has commented about protecting 7% of Canada's oceans, but you used the term “full protection”, saying that Canada has protected less than 0.1%. Do I have that right?

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Yes.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Can you elaborate on the difference between what you're talking about in terms of full protection, and what the government is talking about with 7% protection?

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Yes, certainly.

“Full protection” means that all fisheries would be closed and all industrial uses would be prohibited in an area. Based on the analysis we've done at this point, that's about 1% of the ocean in Canada. We think there is still some way to go to provide better protection for some of the areas the government has identified so far.

We're still going to do a more detailed analysis and issue another report this year, so we'll be in touch when we do that, but that's based on our quick look at those areas.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Okay. Could you make sure you send that detailed analysis to this committee so we get a copy of that?

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Yes, of course.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: But it was 1% you said that you've calculated

Ms. Sabine Jessen: I believe about 1% now is fully protected, yes.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Okay.

There was a discussion about monitoring and enforcement and how important that is. Because you have alluded to other jurisdictions around the world, do you have any suggested models of monitoring and enforcement that are effective, and cost-effective, that you could provide the committee with?

Ms. Sabine Jessen: Certainly I could provide some information on that. It's my intention to submit a written brief with full references, and I could certainly look into that further for you as well.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Great.

As a final comment about minimum standards, you mentioned you were happy to see that the minister has announced that a committee on minimum protection standards will be established. What would you like to say to this committee and the government right now on minimum standards and their importance going forward, given that this committee is going to happen at some point in the future, hopefully?

Ms. Sabine Jessen: It's interesting that this meeting is happening right now in Washington, to look at that more clearly and to provide some more detailed recommendations. We've been thinking about this for a long time, and certainly industrial-type activities don't belong in our protected areas, whether they're on land or in the ocean. That's where we've really flagged activities that destroy habitat and that we definitely know have consequences for marine life. At a minimum, activities like bottom trawling shouldn't be allowed. Oil and gas, mining, and finfish aquaculture, we don't think any of those are compatible with achieving the conservation objectives of a marine protected area.

We really like the idea that we're managing to ensure that the long-term ecological integrity of an area is maintained through its protection. That's the standard we use for national parks, and we think that should apply in the ocean as well.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thank you.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

• (0940)

The Chair: Mr. Hardie, you have seven minutes, please.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to everybody.

Dr. McKinney, I'm really interested in the concept of adaptive regulation. We all like to work on the basis of the best available information, but the ocean is deep and mysterious, and everything else. Quite often we have to fall back on the precautionary principle that if we don't think we should do it, we shouldn't do it.

Where's the balance there? Is the precautionary principle used as a crutch because we simply will never have enough science to act?

Dr. Larry McKinney: That's probably a fair statement.

I always come at these kinds of issues, whether they're marine protected areas or fisheries management, in a very linear way, which most scientists would. That is, what's your objective? What are you trying to achieve? What are you trying to protect? I start with that. Then I begin to step back. If we can define that, then how do we do that?

It can come to that point of, I'm assuming, a precautionary principle approach, but I've found that you're going to have to make the case that something there needs protecting. That's the very first thing you do. What is it? Then you define it. That's how I start.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I have a couple of anecdotes. I recall that probably about 20 years ago—maybe more—all of a sudden there was this craze for blackened fish, and in no time, within just a year, news reports were coming out that whatever species they were using was in steep decline and threatened. Is that a common phenomenon?

First of all, did that happen? Have you seen other examples of it?

Dr. Larry McKinney: That did happen, and it was in Louisiana. It was Paul.... I can't think of Paul's last name, but he was a famous chef who started it. At that time I was managing the fishery, and the fish he started with was called a redfish, which is the class of drum. The market value of those went off the chart, and we had to look at that. Fortunately, as I testified, we have a very long, continuous database of information on the status of fish and we noticed right away that they were affecting the redfish, particularly spawning fish.

We took one of the most drastic actions that our commission ever did. We completely decommercialized, if you would, the red drum and made it strictly a recreational fish.

In the U.S., and perhaps not here in Canada, there's a distinction that the states—Texas in this case, because of its previous status—can manage fisheries out to 12 miles. The federal agencies manage fisheries beyond that. The federal agency at that time didn't take that action, but we, within our state, did. Eventually the federal agencies followed, and they put a strict limit and made it non-commercial as well.

I don't know if that's getting at your point, but that's exactly what happened.

Mr. Ken Hardie: You mentioned that you look at fishers and environmental concerns, and that some natural tensions will develop with agencies that have agenda-driven approaches.

With that, I'm going to turn to you, Ms. Jessen. This may not be a fair question, but I'm going to ask it anyway.

The duty of a government, obviously, is to try to approach things by listening to all parts, and to come up essentially with a reasonable balance. The reasonable balance is fair process on the one hand, because you are dealing with people who make a living in communities that depend on, or have depended on, certain activities, versus the need to be expeditious, to get things done very quickly.

In your experience and observations over an extended time with MPAs, where does the balance lie? As I said, that may not be a very fair question, but give it your best shot.

Ms. Sabine Jessen: I think up until now we've actually taken quite a lot of time to do consultations with stakeholders, to gather the relevant information and science, and to review that during the process. It has taken quite a long time. Many stakeholders are around each of the tables for each individual site, so there are lots of opportunities to have those conversations.

I've read some of the previous testimony by other stakeholders and I don't think there is consensus around that, but when it takes seven to 10 to 15 years, in some cases, to finish a marine protected area in Canada, I don't know how you could take more time. I think it would be better if we took less time, because there are places that are threatened and there are really important areas that need protection but are not getting it while we're having those conversations.

• (0945)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Then to you, Mr. Lansbergen, rather than perhaps look at a situation where obvious stress is recognized, and then all of a sudden everybody springs into action, would your organization consider an ongoing review of everything, through observations, citizen science, etc.? Would you review all of the things that we would need, along with perhaps some beefed up capability from the DFO to do a better job of monitoring fish stocks?

Should we really just take a whole-of-ocean approach rather than wait for the hotspots to emerge, and how could that work?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: I guess in an ideal world, yes, but I think you would very quickly learn that it would be very challenging to devote enough resources to be able to do that, which is why we haven't done it already.

I would agree with Ms. Jessen that the processes thus far do take a long time, and I'm not sure if anyone is entirely satisfied or happy with that.

The challenge, I guess, is from the fisheries sector, and particularly where there is more of an impact on inshore than offshore fishermen. The offshore is represented more by larger companies that would have some capacity to participate in these types of consultations in a very thoughtful and longstanding or ongoing manner.

When you look at the inshore, I think you see that it's very fragmented and very difficult for the independent fishermen. They're family owned businesses, for the most part, and they're struggling to be successful in running their businesses day to day. Trying to keep up with everything that different levels of government are doing can be a challenge. They don't necessarily have the same scientific background, but they do have a lot of experience because most of them are getting on in age. We have one of the oldest workforces.

I think it's just very challenging. How do you instill or accommodate all of the different stakeholders to ensure that they are participating in a meaningful way and to keep the process moving along at a reasonable pace?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

Folks, we have time left for about two questions. We'll go to Mr. Miller for five minutes, and Mr. McDonald, if it's okay if I play with the order of speakers.

Mr. Donnelly, would you like a couple of minutes at the end for a very quick question?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Sure.

The Chair: Is that okay with everyone?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Miller, for five minutes, please.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thanks to our witnesses for being here.

I only have five minutes, so I'll try to hurry along here.

Mr. McKinney, what is the primary purpose of an MPA? Make it a short comment, if you could.

Dr. Larry McKinney: The purpose of a marine protected area is to set aside special regulations for some particular purpose, and there can be a whole range of issues, but your goal there is trying to conserve or protect some specific species or habitat.

Mr. Larry Miller: Thank you.

My next question you've already answered. Is it necessary to ban recreational fishing in an MPA? Your response was pretty clear that no, you don't, which is contrary to what Ms. Jessen said.

Could you elaborate on what kind of scientific data is required before establishing an MPA or other types of protection zones? With that question, in all of the MPAs that you've worked on setting up or implementing, has somebody ever just said, "Oh, we're going to protect 5% or 10% of this." Did you ever do it that way? It would sound to me that it's not a very scientific way of doing it.

• (0950)

Dr. Larry McKinney: You had a series of questions there. I'll make sure I get to them.

Again, in looking at marine protected areas, the first step is, what is your objective? What are you trying to accomplish? Once you define that, it tells you what information you need to look at, be it habitat or particular species and those types of things. The next step, of course, is to look at what data and information you have available in that regard and take actions appropriately; time-wise, I think we get at that.

I'm sorry, but what was the last part of that question?

Mr. Larry Miller: When the people you were working with decided that a MPA was needed, did you ever just pick a number out of the air and say, "We have to do it this way"? Or was it always based on science?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Well, if you're establishing some percentages, then to me that makes some sense to me that you have a goal in mind and it needs to be stated. To be just looking at percentages, no, I think that's not an approach. I'm not saying that those who are using those percentages aren't looking at it that way. I certainly would not do that, just setting a certain percentage aside. Unless you can describe the objective, the goal you're trying to reach, and why that percentage has an impact—and that's typically scientific data—then no, you wouldn't do that.

Mr. Larry Miller: Thank you.

Do MPAs need to be permanent?

Dr. Larry McKinney: I'm not going to say no anywhere, but in cases I've worked with, I feel that the sunset issue is a way to make sure that attention is being paid to what you were trying to achieve in those MPAs, and also to continue to basically aim at agencies that may be responsible for that—the agencies that collect the data and information that would justify an MPA's continuation or not—to make sure they put in the resources and time to continue to look at and justify that need.

Mr. Larry Miller: There are a lot of claims being made out there, or that have been made, portraying MPAs as basically a solution to habitat and fishery management problems, problems that may or may not actually exist. How do we distinguish between credible science and bogus science?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Well, the base idea for that is that we use peer-reviewed literature—that type of literature—and then you have a better feel that whatever information has come out of it has been looked at in an objective way. You start with that business first, and then there's the next part of that. Sometimes that's not available, and then it's just about having a transparent process. Everyone lays out on the table what they know and what they have in a transparent way and they allow others to look at that. Sometimes you do have to go that way.

Mr. Larry Miller: In your role when you were creating MPAs, during the process did you ever have outside groups or specific groups or organizations that basically tried to hijack the process or whatever? If so, how did you handle that?

Dr. Larry McKinney: Yes, and in particular, for the types of MPAs I've worked with, commercial fisheries always wanted to do that. Of course, whether they knew that they would be dealing with nurseries there.... That happened. Basically, you have to make sure that all of the stakeholders at the table are given equal time and access. That's what we do. We just try to make sure that we know the range of stakeholders and have them all given access.

Mr. Larry Miller: I have one last question. In your experience with MPAs and fisheries in general, do you know of a case where recreational fishing was the main perpetrator or the main cause of the collapse or potential collapse, say, of a fishery? Do you know of that ever being the case? We all know what overfishing by commercial fisheries can do, but on recreational....

Dr. Larry McKinney: No. My experience has been that overfishing issues have been more at the commercial level and those types of things, not in recreational fishing. That's certainly been my experience. I'm not going to say that it does not exist in other places, but fortunately I've not had to deal with that.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. McKinney.

Thank you, Larry.

Mr. McDonald, please, for five minutes.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of really quick questions, and then I'll share my time with Mr. Finnigan.

Mr. Lansbergen, does your industry represent anyone involved in the aquaculture industry?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: No. Well, I guess the short answer is no, until one of my companies launches a joint venture with an aquaculture company. There is a separate association.

• (0955)

Mr. Ken McDonald: Okay.

On the persons you represent, I know for a fact that you represent the offshore fleet that fishes off our coast. How small a fleet do you represent? Do you represent fishers who are involved in the 40-and-under fleet, say, in more of the inshore fishery versus the offshore?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: To be completely honest, I'm not sure how many of my members have any inshore boats. Certainly my members who have the processing plants onshore are supplied by the smaller fishermen, if that answers your question.

Mr. Ken McDonald: Yes, to some extent.

You would be more about the bigger boats that go offshore to catch, even though they bring their catch inshore to be processed. It wouldn't be the inshore fishers that live in the communities and depend on that fishery for that community they reside in.

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: Certainly the harvesting capacity would be larger from my offshore members, yes.

The Chair: Mr. Finnigan.

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Thank you.

Thanks, everyone, for being here. I would really like to ask everyone some questions, but I know my time is limited.

Mr. Lansbergen, your background in forestry is important to me. Full disclosure: I certainly support the fisheries in my area because it's a major economic driver. However, I would say that some would argue that the best forest management practice is maybe not sustainable, that instead of a forest, we now have a garden, where one species is the main goal and it's what we want to harvest. How does that relate to the ocean?

We have large species that we want to protect, and they're very obvious, like the Atlantic right whale that is having problems, but there are also a lot of smaller organisms that are also important but that we sometimes don't see.

How would you describe your experience in the forestry compared to what we're trying to do in the ocean?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: That's a good question.

First, my response on the forestry practices is that in Canada we operate in a natural forest and that a lot of the management practices and planning try to mimic that natural dynamic. The harvesting is done in such a way as to mimic natural disturbances, so that the natural character of the forest is maintained. That's quite different from other jurisdictions. How well we do that may certainly be debatable.

I'm still relatively new to fisheries and it's difficult for me to give a fulsome response. From what I've seen, we do a pretty good job of trying to manage the individual stocks. Are we taking a fulsome, holistic approach with how that individual stock interacts with other species in the same habitat? I really don't know enough at this point to give you an accurate response.

Mr. Pat Finnigan: I'll maybe do a follow-up. You're talking about the MSC. I understand they do a great job in making sure their harvest is sustainable. However, there are some MSC-certified products that some would argue are not sustainable, like trawling for sea cucumbers and scallops, for example. How do we make sure that the seal represents a sustainable harvest?

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: I think the certification standards have to stand on their own merit. If the certification council is independently governed and its standard is developed in an open, transparent, informed process, then people will accept and have confidence in it. Whether they like everything about it or not, I think people will always find something they would care to complain about and say that it's not quite good enough, that it doesn't meet their expectations. We all have individual perspectives.

Just the fact that we have such strong certification levels in Canada, where only 10% of the ocean's fisheries are certified to any standard, I think speaks in itself to our strong performance.

• (1000)

Mr. Pat Finnigan: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Finnigan.

Mr. Donnelly, ask a quick question. Certainly no more than two quick questions.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Thanks Mr. Chair.

I was going to allow maybe 30 seconds for each witness for their final recommendations or comments to the committee.

Dr. McKinney, as you've given us more recommendations in your testimony, which are very helpful, I will maybe start with Ms. Jessen. Do you have any final comments or recommendations?

Ms. Sabine Jessen: I think that one place where Canada could really do better is by providing stronger protection for our MPAs,

and I'm glad that more attention is being paid to that need right now. We really do need to begin implementing marine protected area networks and move from this site-by-site kind of approach that we've been taking. That is another way that we could potentially speed up the process. We do have a lot more information about the ocean to be able to do that.

I do think Canada has an opportunity to be an international leader.

Mr. Paul Lansbergen: Just to sum up, I'd encourage all parties, government, industry, together with us and other stakeholders, to try harder to find that win-win in a reasonable time frame so that we can all contribute to the overall objective.

The Chair: Dr. McKinney, if you want to add—

Dr. Larry McKinney: In the interests of time, I will waive my time on that and point to the testimony.

The Chair: I want to thank all of our witnesses.

Dr. McKinney, thank you so much for coming to us all the way from Texas A&M University.

Thank you to Mr. Lansbergen from the Fisheries Council of Canada, and, of course, to soon-to-be Dr. Jessen from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Best of luck on that. We thank you again.

Colleagues, we're going to clear the room for committee business.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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