

# Canada-Quebec planning for the establishment of marine protected areas

Projects under study in the Estuary and the Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence by 2020

Information Session  
2019

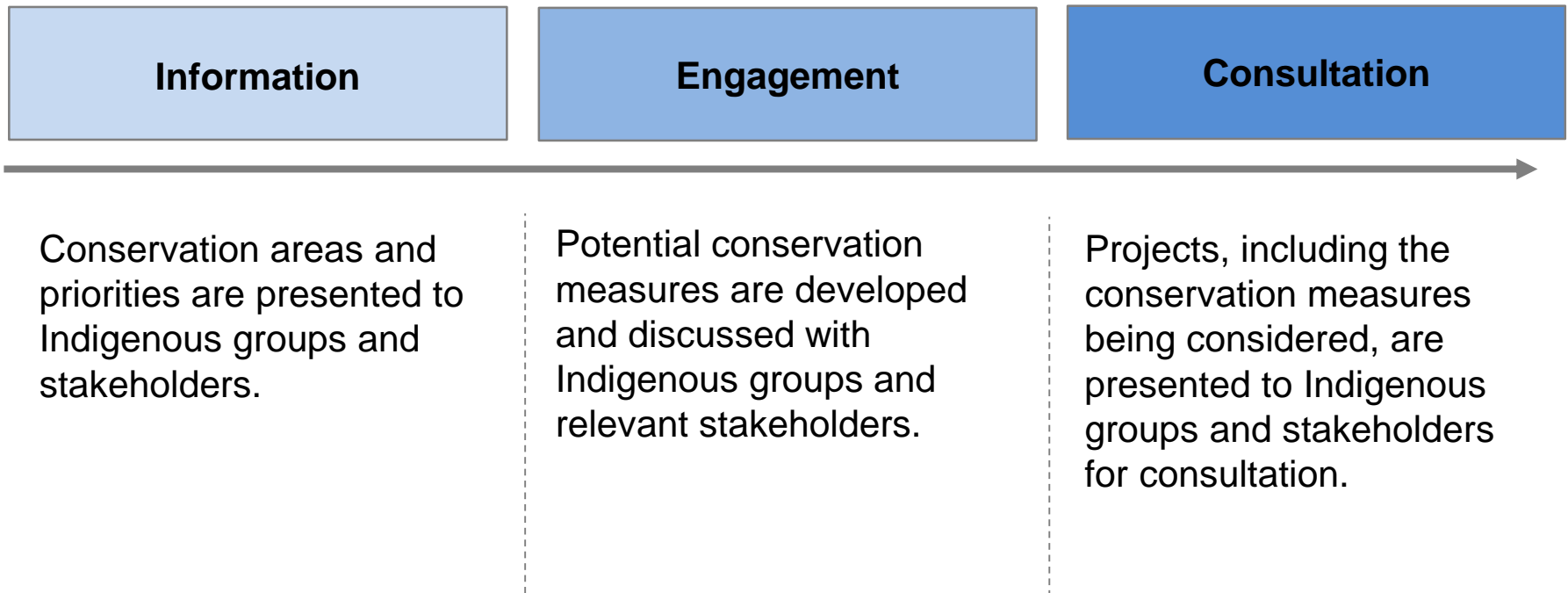
# Purpose of the session

- Inform you about Canada-Quebec collaboration, the joint projects for marine protected areas under study and the next steps.
- Listen to you and gather your initial comments.

# Session background

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It is part of a multi-step process:



# Presentation outline

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## 1. Background

## 2. Projects under study

- Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence
- St. Lawrence Estuary

## 3. Next steps

# Part 1. Background



# Government commitments

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The governments of Canada and Quebec are committed to:

- Protecting **10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020** to meet the international targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
  - ✓ Canada: establishment of marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (e.g., marine refuges).
  - ✓ Quebec: establishment of a representative network of marine protected areas.

# A few concepts

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A **marine protected area** (MPA) is:

- a clearly defined **geographical space**, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means,
- to achieve the long-term **conservation of nature** with associated **ecosystem functions, services and cultural values.**

# Some concepts

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An **other effective area-based conservation measure (OEABCM)** is:

- a **defined geographical area** that is subject to management measures to achieve positive long-term results,
- for the **conservation of biological diversity**, including related **ecosystem functions and services**, as well as **cultural, spiritual and socio-economic values**.

For example : some fisheries management measures



# Marine protected areas of Quebec

## Main tools:

- Aquatic reserve (*Natural Heritage Conservation Act*);
- Threatened or vulnerable wildlife species habitat (*Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife*);
- Natural settings designated by a plan (*Natural Heritage Conservation Act*);

*An MPA may also be designated by an ad hoc law (e.g., the Saguenay-Saint-Lawrence Marine Park)*

# Marine protected areas of Canada

## Main tools:

- *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Areas (*Oceans Act*);
- Marine Wildlife Areas (*Canada Wildlife Act*);
- National Marine Conservation Areas (*Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*);
- National park with a marine component (*Canada National Parks Act*).

*An MPA may also be designated by an ad hoc law (e.g., the Saguenay-Saint-Lawrence Marine Park)*

# Canada's new standards

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In any new federal MPA, certain activities will be prohibited from the outset:

- oil and gas activities,
- mining,
- dumping,
- bottom trawling.

These standards are based on the recommendations of the National Advisory Panel on Marine Protected Areas Standards.

# Current situation

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## Marine protected areas in Quebec (1,3%):

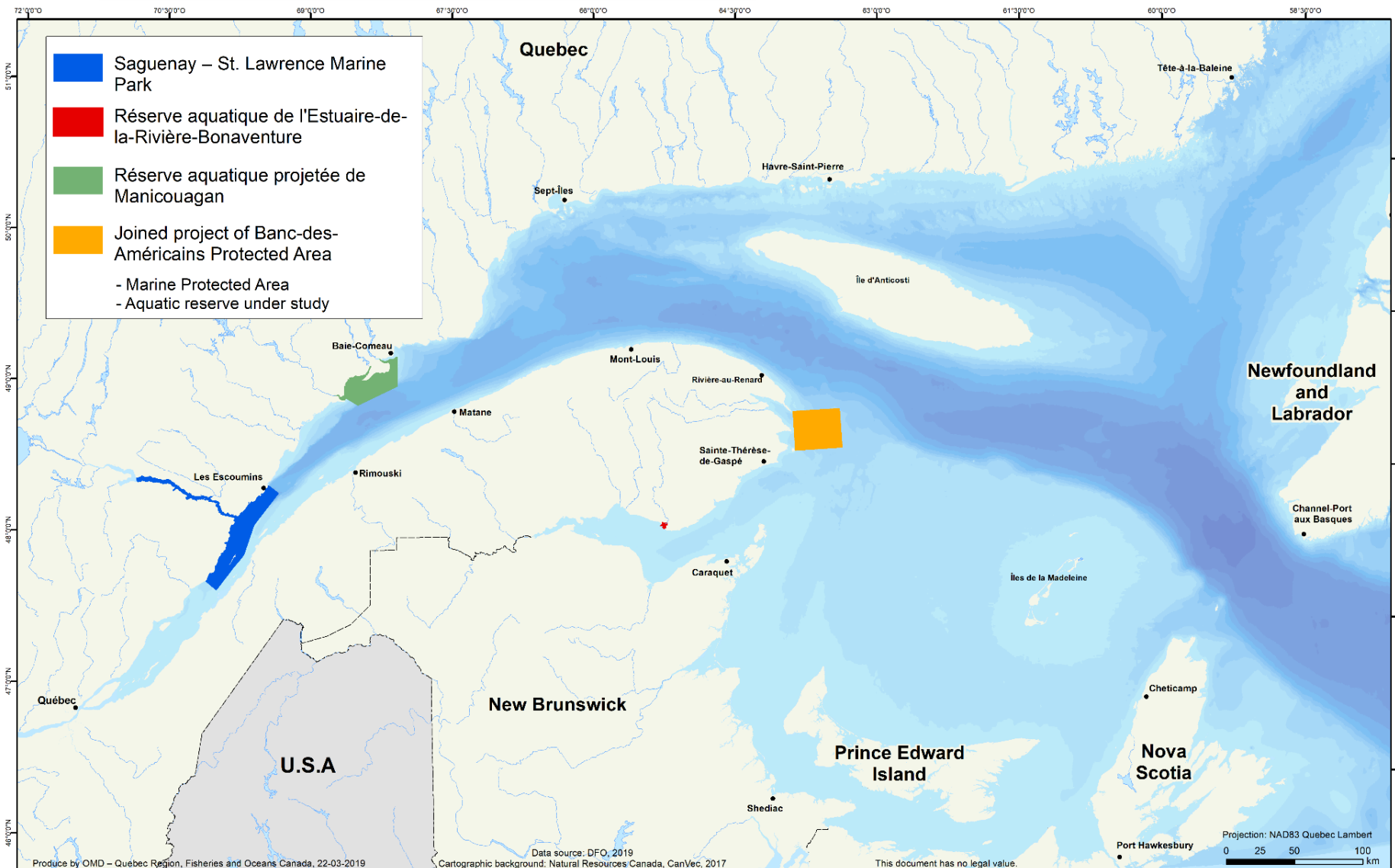
- Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park (Canada-Quebec, created by “mirror” laws);
- Bonaventure River Estuary aquatic reserve;
- Proposed Manicouagan aquatic reserve.

## Ongoing joint project (0,6%):

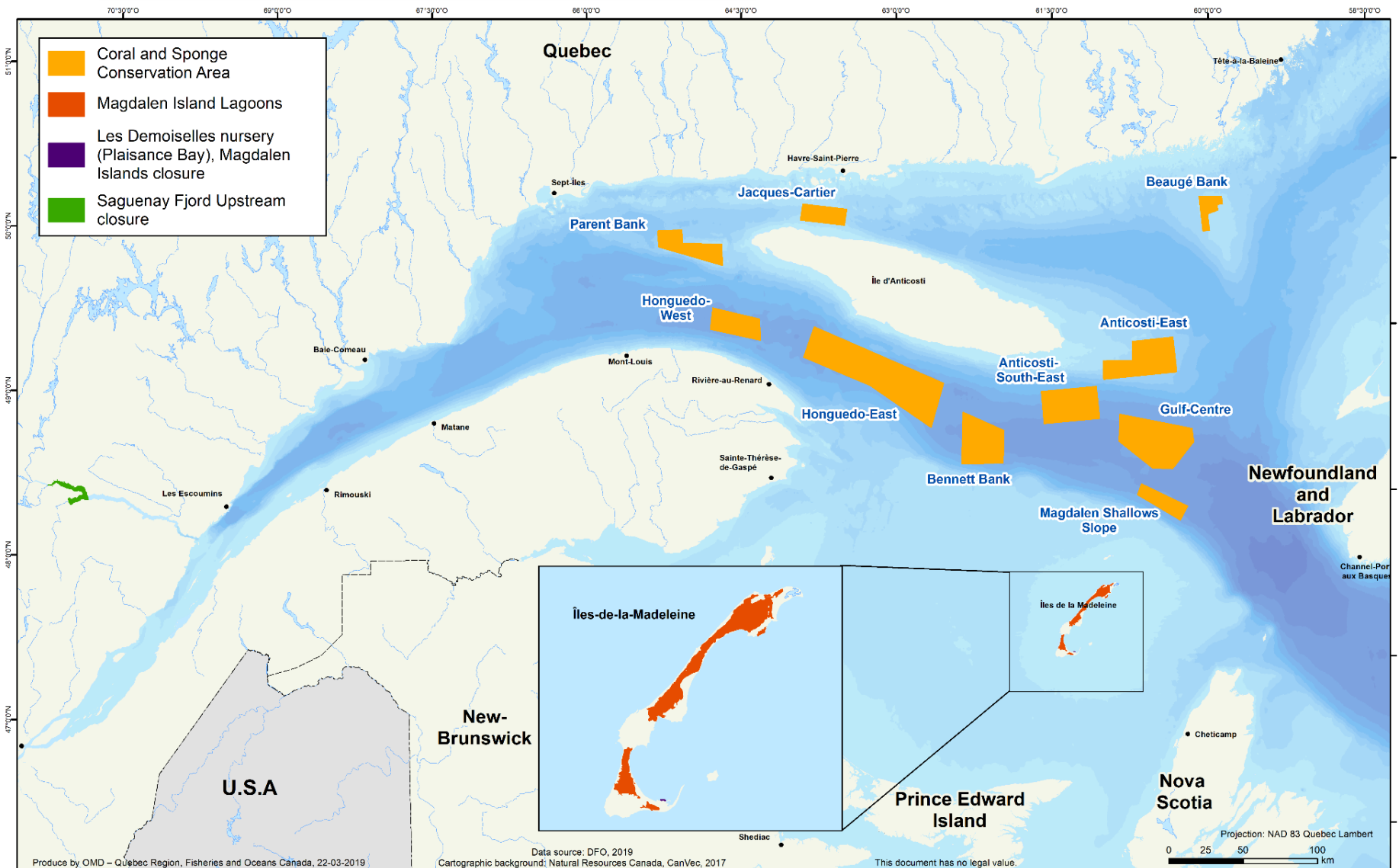
- Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area
  - ✓ Marine protected area
  - ✓ Aquatic reserve **under study**

Other effective area-based conservation measures including marine refuges for coral and sponge conservation.

# Marine Protected Areas in Quebec



# Marine refuges in Quebec



Produced by OMD – Québec Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 22-03-2019

Data source: DFO, 2019  
Cartographic background: Natural Resources Canada, CanVec, 2017

This document has no legal value.

# Canada-Quebec collaboration

In order to work together and in a complementary manner, the governments have signed the *Canada-Quebec Collaborative Agreement for the establishment of a marine protected areas network in Quebec* (March 2018).

This agreement:

- provides a collaborative framework for identifying, planning, establishing and monitoring marine protected areas on a joint basis;
- makes it possible to coordinate information, consultation and consultation processes.

# Canada-Quebec collaboration

The Canada-Quebec Bilateral Group on Marine Protected Areas (GBAMP) brings together the following departments to coordinate the Agreement :

## Canada

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO);
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC);
- Parks Canada Agency (PCA).

## Quebec

- Environnement et Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MELCC);
- Forêts, Faune et Parcs (MFFP);
- Agriculture, Pêcheries et Alimentation (MAPAQ);
- Énergie et Ressources naturelles (MERN).



# Joint planning

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The governments of Quebec and Canada have developed a joint planning in order to reach their respective conservation targets:

**Two new joint marine protected area projects** are under study in the St. Lawrence, **one in the northern Gulf** and **one in the Estuary.**

*The Îles-de-la-Madeleine project is under discussion and will be the focus of a separate information, engagement and consultation process.*

# Benefits of MPAs

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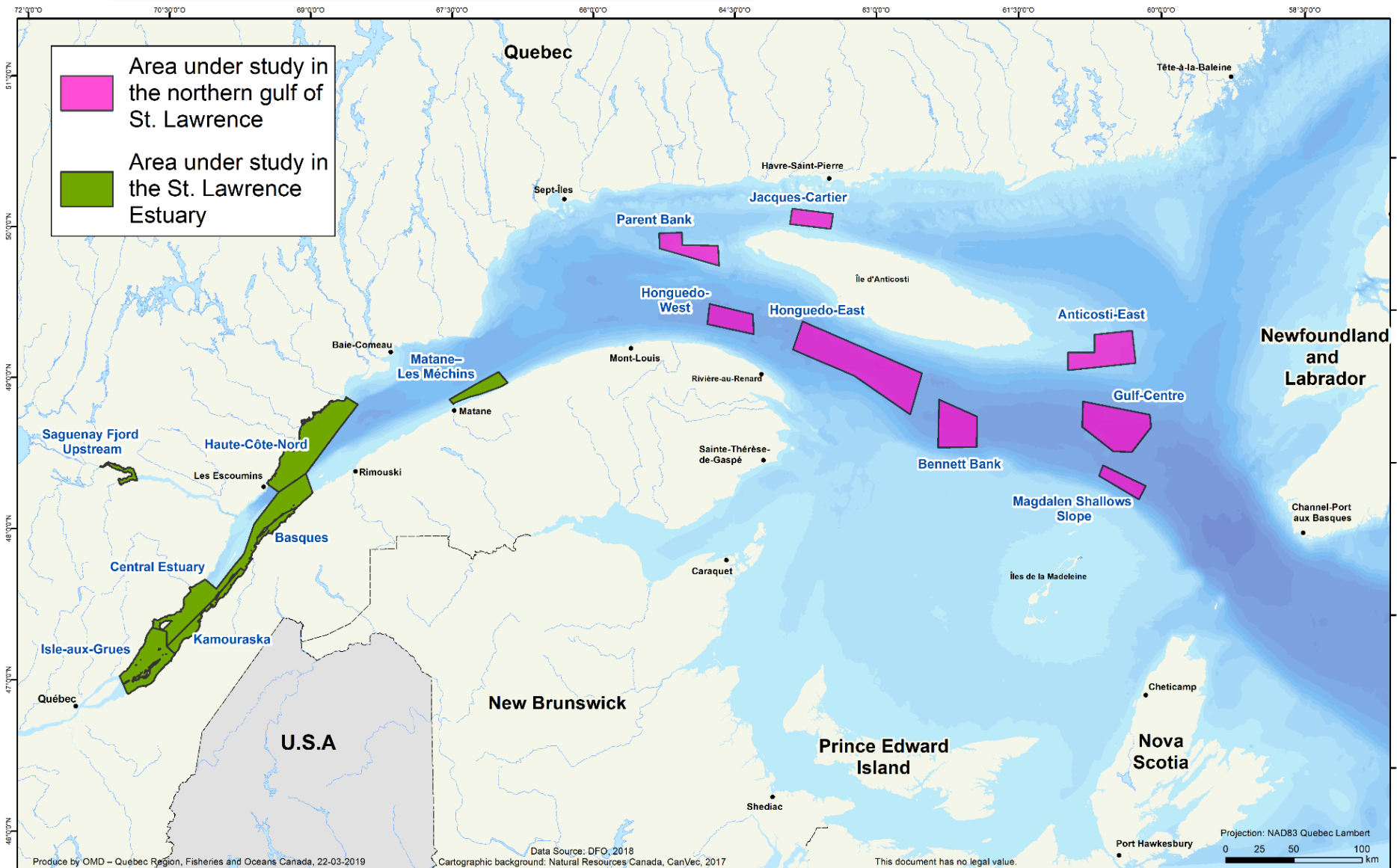
MPAs provides numerous environmental, social and cultural benefits, such as:

- Maintaining biodiversity and essential ecological processes;
- Promoting sustainable fisheries;
- Diversifying local and regional economies (tourist and leisure activities);
- Stimulating scientific research, education and outreach activities;
- Mobilizing key actors to act more broadly at the system or landscape level.

## Part 2. Projects under study



# Projects under study



# Projects under study

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The two projects under study :

- Are the result of spatial analyses of important biological components in view of the conservation priorities determined by the GBAMP.
- Take into account the representativeness of the different habitat types found in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence.

# Northern Gulf of St. Lawrence Project

# Conservation priorities

The project aims to increase the protection of **cold-water corals and sponges** and the **ecosystems** that support them, in some of the marine refuges established in December 2017.

# Video presenting the coral and sponge conservation area of the Eastern Honguedo Strait



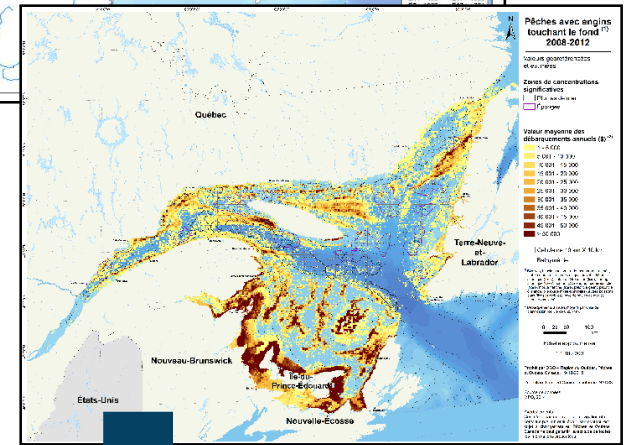
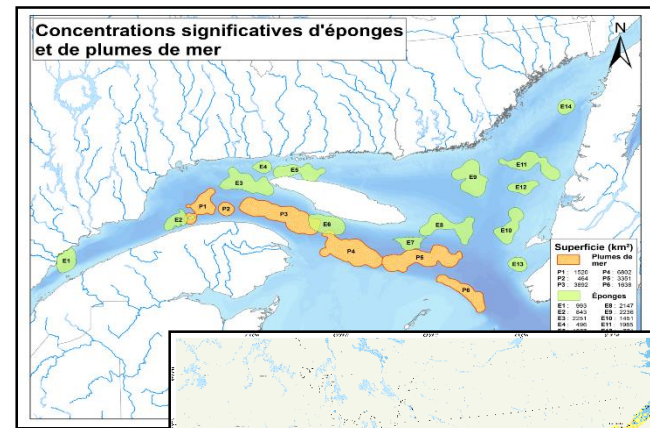
# Corals and sponges

- Several species: hard (1) or soft (3) coral, sea pens (4), sponges (+).
- Are not very mobile and their growth is slow, making them vulnerable to seabed disturbance.
- Provide a number of other species with habitat that can be used for breeding, feeding and shelter.

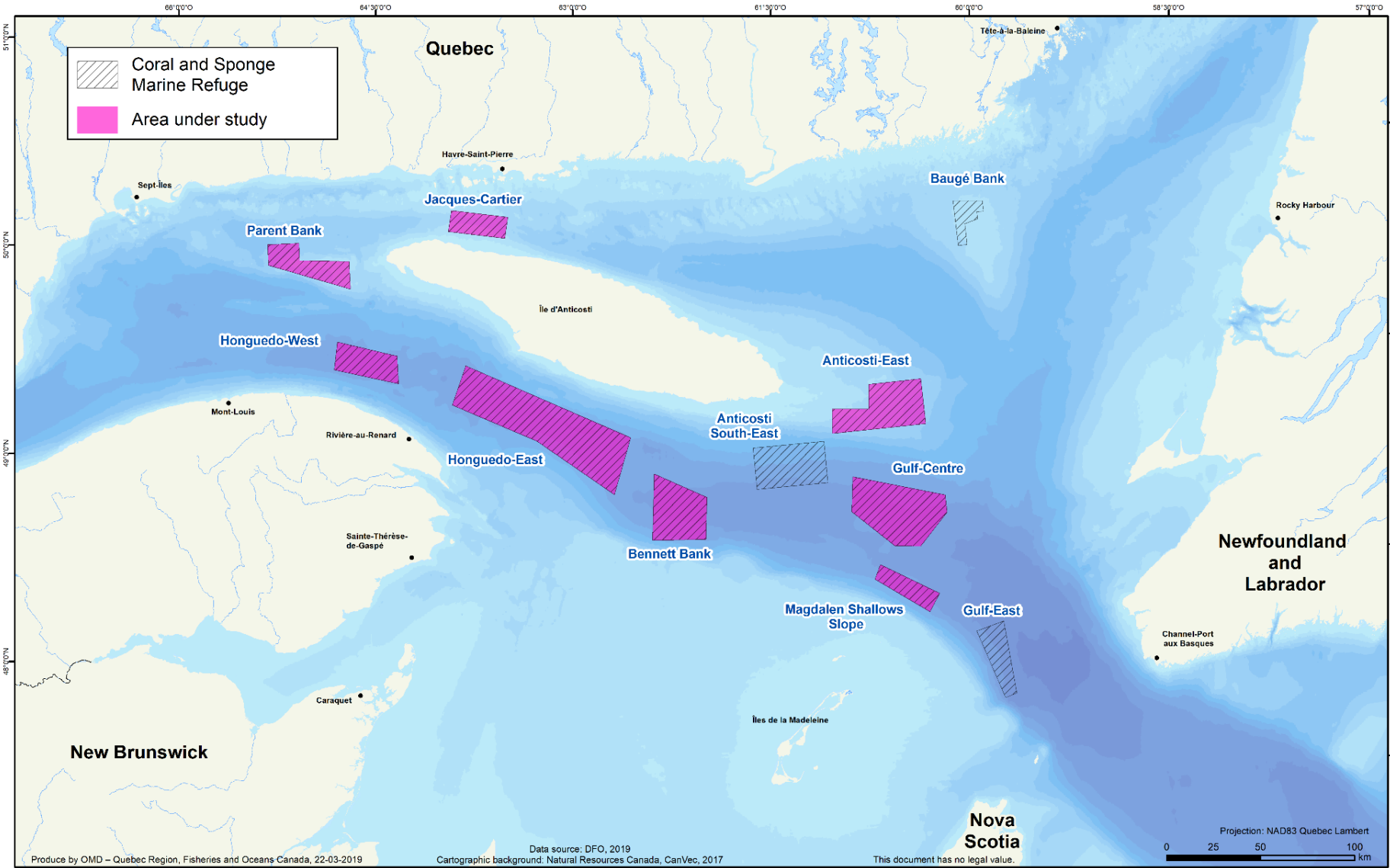


# Choice of areas

- Marine refuges established in December 2017, taking into account:
  - ✓ Significant areas of corals and sponges and their ecological values;
  - ✓ Fishing activities;
  - ✓ Comments from Indigenous groups and stakeholders.
- The Canada-Quebec planning provides an opportunity to strengthen the protection of some of these areas while taking into account the representativeness of habitats.



# Areas under study



Produced by OMD – Québec Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 22-03-2019

Data source: DFO, 2019  
Cartographic background: Natural Resources Canada, CanVec, 2017

This document has no legal value.

Projection: NAD83 Quebec Lambert  
0 25 50 100 km

# Activities already prohibited

Fishing with the following gear :

- ✓ Bottom trawl
- ✓ Dredges
- ✓ Bottom seines
- ✓ Traps
- ✓ Bottom longlines
- ✓ Gillnets

*These prohibitions would be maintained in a future marine protected area.*

## Activities to be prohibited or supervised

**Certain activities** that may harm cold water corals and sponges, as well as the ecosystems that support them, **would be prohibited** :

- ✓ Oil and gas exploration and exploitation;
- ✓ Mining;
- ✓ Dumping;
- ✓ Commercial or industrial production of electricity.

**Other activities will be examined**, including :

- ✓ Installation and maintenance of bottom contact structures;
- ✓ Anchoring of vessels;
- ✓ Scientific research.

# Completed steps and upcoming steps

- Identify **conservation priorities** and **areas of interest**;
- Complete the **overview of human activities** and assess their **impacts** on conservation priorities;
- Develop potential **conservation measures** and assess the **socio-economic impacts**;
- Meet with **Indigenous groups** and **relevant stakeholders** to discuss potential conservation measures;
- **Consult** Indigenous groups and stakeholders on the **overall project** (boundaries, conservation priorities and conservation measures).

# St. Lawrence Estuary Project

# Conservation priorities

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## Protecting **marine mammals at risk** and their **habitats**:

- Beluga whale
- Blue whale
- Fin whale

## Protect **prey species** of these marine mammals at risk and their **habitats**:

- Zooplankton: krill
- Fish: Atlantic herring, capelin, rainbow smelt, sand lance

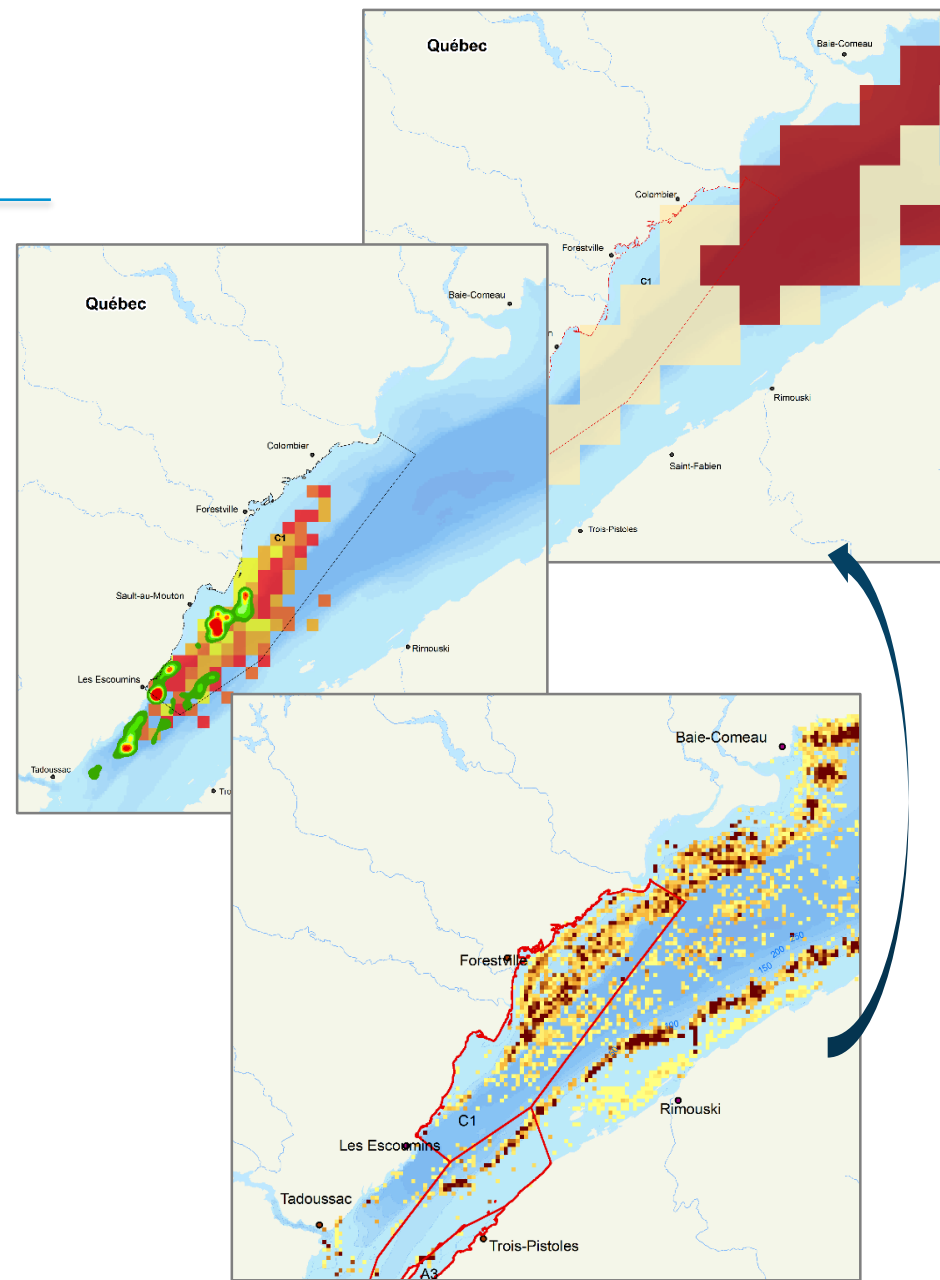
## Protecting **fish species in a precarious situation** and their **habitats**:

- Striped bass
- American shad
- Lake sturgeon
- Atlantic sturgeon

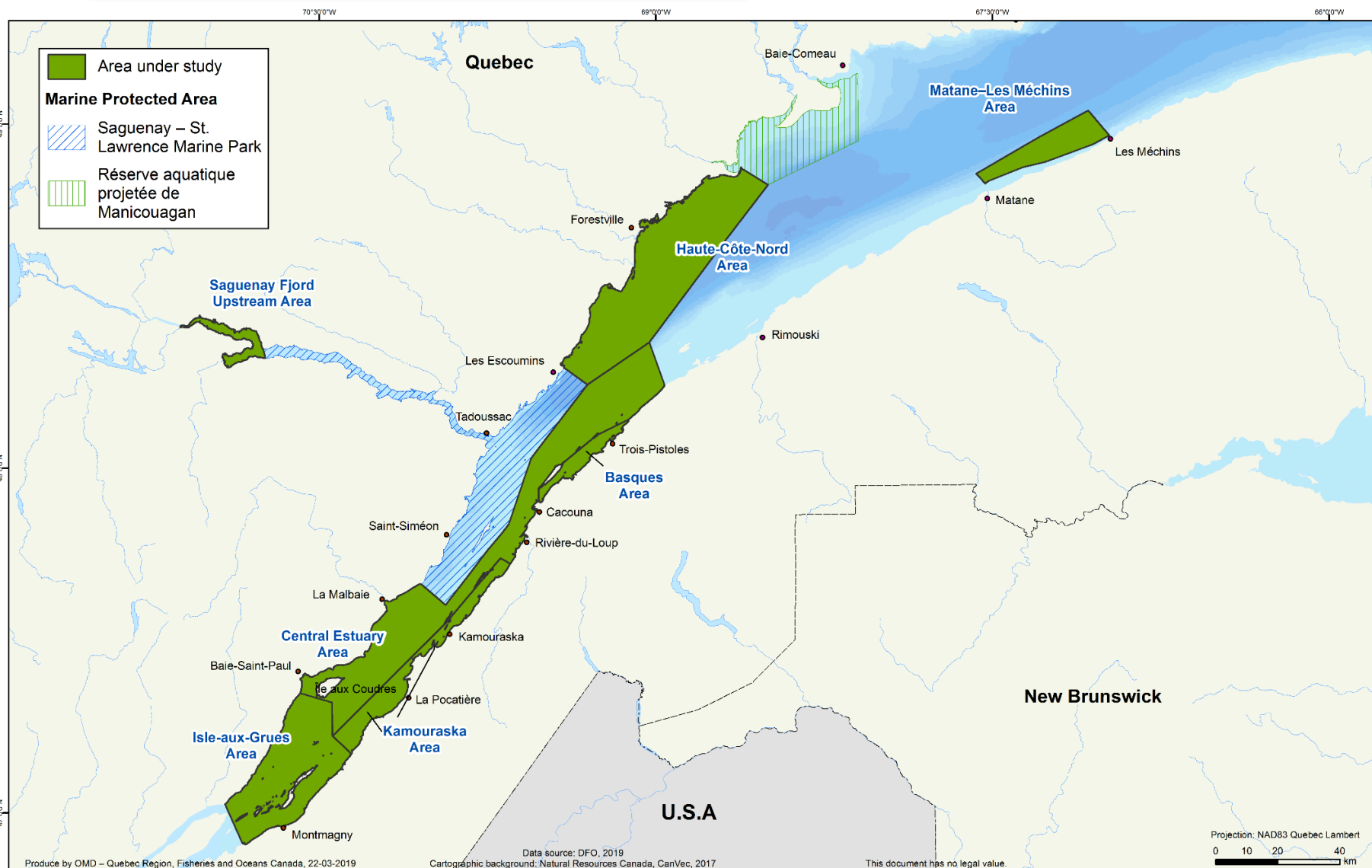


# Choice of areas

- **Areas of ecological interest** were identified through an analysis of biological data (e.g. krill concentration area and blue whale sightings).
- The **analysis of human activities** (impacts and value) **is to be completed** and will be used to define the project.

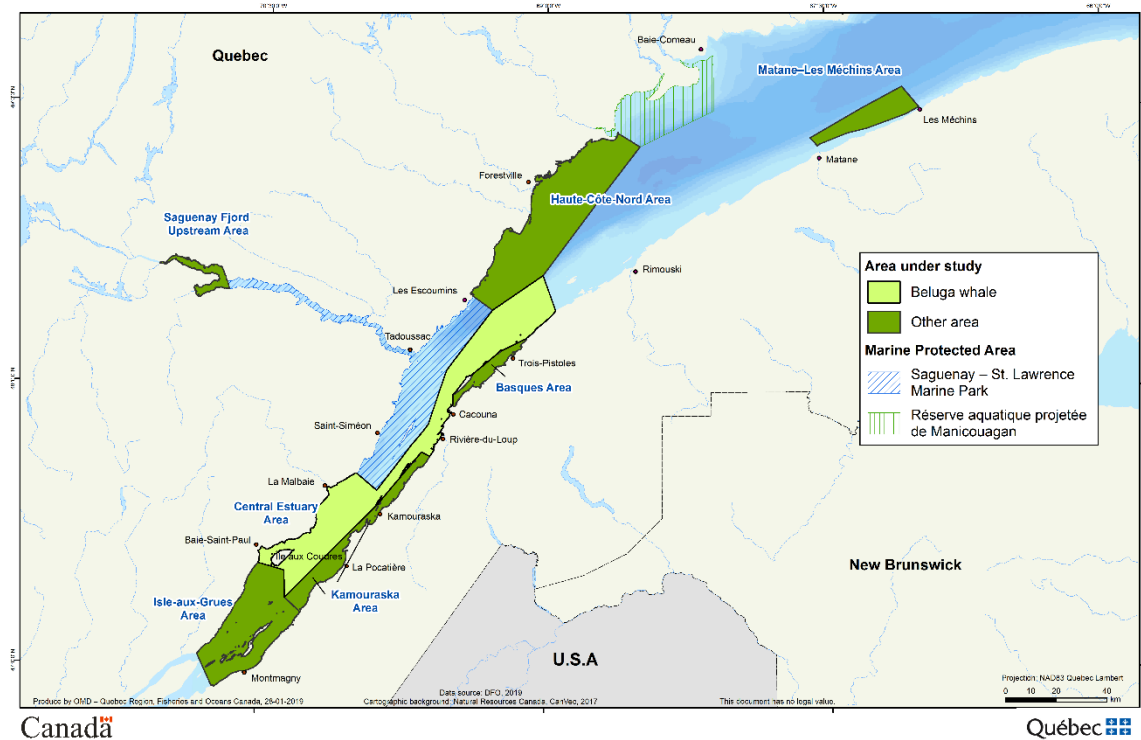


# Areas under study



# Central Estuary Area

Conservation priorities :  
to protect  
the beluga  
whale and  
beluga prey  
species

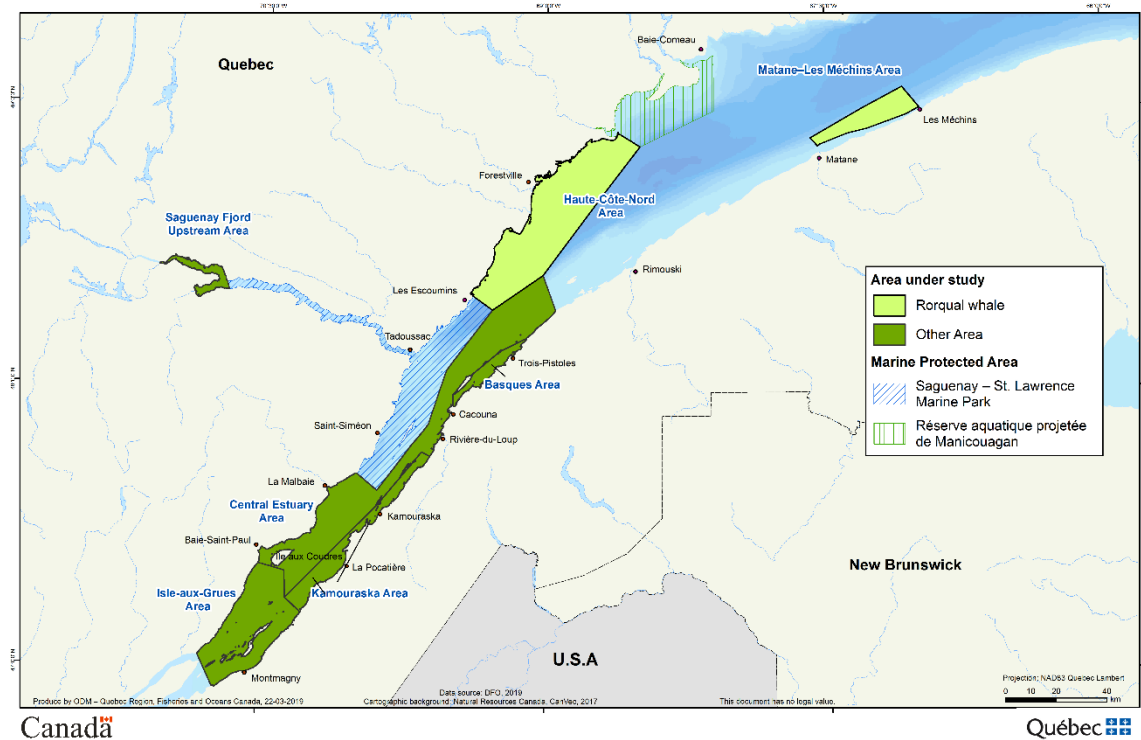


Includes the **critical beluga whale habitat** outside the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park and **an area around île aux Coudres**. Also an important reproduction and growth area for **several beluga prey species**.

# Upper North Shore and Matane-Les Méchins Areas

Estuary project

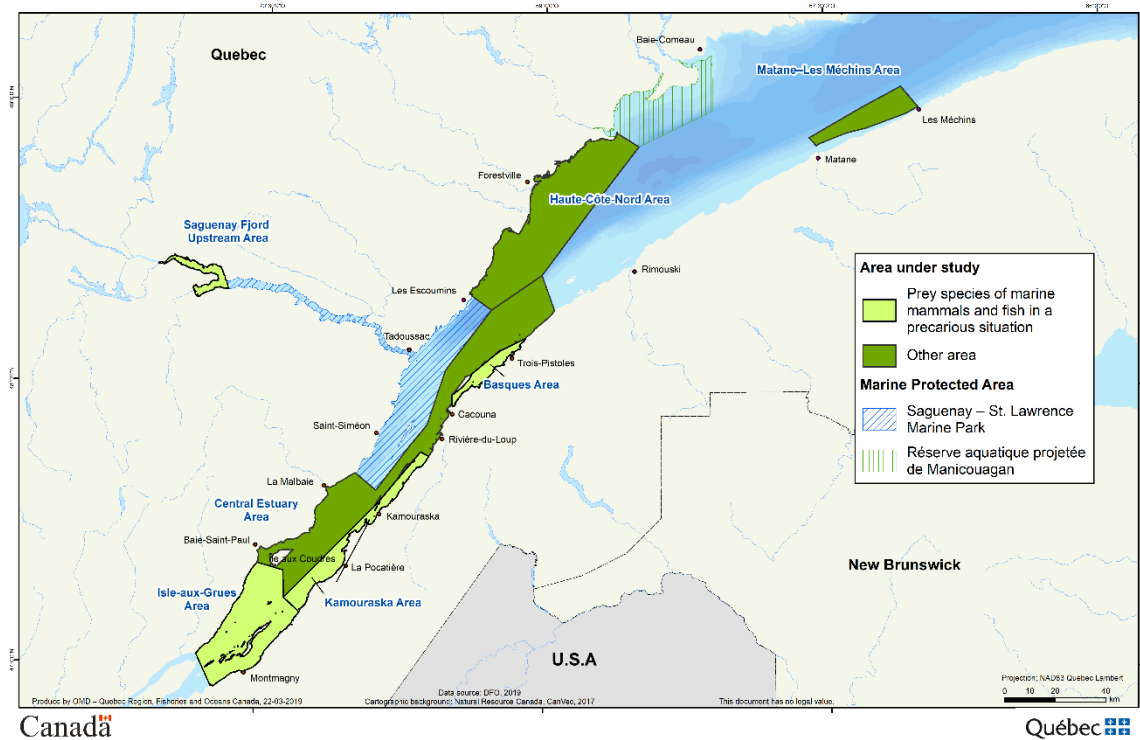
Conservation priorities :  
**to protect blue whales and fin whales**



Cover **whale feeding areas** (concentration of krill and prey fish).

# Four Other Areas

Conservation priorities : **to protect fish species in a precarious situation or beluga prey species**



Includes **important habitats for a number of fish species**, particularly spawning grounds and nursery areas.

## Activities to be examined

Activities that may harm marine mammals at risk, their habitats and prey, as well as fish species in a precarious situation and their habitats, particularly:

- ✓ Shipping and recreational boating;
- ✓ Marine observation activities;
- ✓ Fishing (mainly fishing that impacts prey species of marine mammals or habitat);
- ✓ Development activities (e.g. harbour construction and dredging);
- ✓ Scientific research.

# Development of conservation measures

Conservation measures will be :

- developed **through engagement** with Indigenous groups and key stakeholders;
- **specific to the conservation priorities** of each of the identified areas (zoning);
- developed with a concern for **harmonization** with measures in existing marine protected areas.

# Completed and upcoming steps

- Determine **conservation priorities** and **areas of interest**
- Establish the **overview of human activities** and assess their **impacts** on conservation priorities;
- Define **geographical boundaries**;
- Develop potential **conservation measures** and assess their **socio-economic impacts**;
- Meet with **Indigenous groups** and **relevant stakeholders** to discuss project boundaries and potential conservation measures;
- **Consult** Indigenous groups and stakeholders on the overall project (boundaries, conservation priorities and conservation measures).



# Part 3. Next steps



# Next steps

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Indigenous groups and concerned stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide comments and make recommendations **throughout the process**.

- Presentation of **projects under study** and conservation priorities from June 2019.
- **Discussion** with Indigenous groups and relevant stakeholders on conservation measures (Gulf: autumn 2019 | Estuary: 2020).
- **Consultation** on the projects, including proposed conservation measures.

# Next steps

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- Conservation measures will be specific to the conservation priorities established for each project.
- **The socio-economic impacts of conservation measures will be assessed** and taken into account.
- If necessary, conservation tools other than MPAs could be considered.

# Thank you!

## To submit comments or ask questions:

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Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
1-877-775-0848

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