

How do you know what you know?

We're looking for
the answer.



Fish-WIKS

understanding how **Western and Indigenous Knowledge Systems** can improve the sustainability of Canadian fisheries

What is Fish-WIKS?

Fish-WIKS research looks at understanding western and indigenous knowledge systems and explores how the different processes by which knowledge is acquired, transmitted and used can be harnessed to enhance Canadian fisheries policy. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the research aims to identify the commonalities and differences in indigenous knowledge systems across the Pacific, Arctic, Inland and Atlantic regions and in four distinct coastal communities in Canada (Tla-o-qui-aht, British Columbia; Naujaat, Nunavut; Nipissing, Ontario; and Eskasoni, Nova Scotia). The project also seeks to understand how indigenous and western knowledge systems can be used to improve the sustainability of Canadian fisheries.

Fish-WIKS Research Goals

- Examine how knowledge is valued, shared and used in both indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge systems
- Identify possible commonalities and differences
- Use the knowledge acquired to enhance decision-making affecting Canada's fishery resources for current and future generations

Focus on Tla-o-qui-aht Fish-WIKS Pacific research site

"Human skill, such as the graceful dance of Son of Deer, or human ego, such as that exhibited by Son of Raven, are ineffective models of communication between the spiritual and physical realms. That a trial and error process to discover an appropriate communication pattern was necessary indicates a natural condition of growth, knowledge acquisition, and skill development." **Umeeek**

The **Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation** (TFN), a Fish-WIKS community partner, is a Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation in Canada living on various reserves along the Pacific Rim National Park on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Tla-o-qui-aht is a thriving community that relies on marine resources for not only food and ceremonial purposes but also as a keystone to the economy.

The Fish-WIKS Pacific partner is the **BC First Nations Fisheries Council**. The Council was formed in 2007 by British Columbia First Nations as an outcome of the First Nations Fisheries Action Plan. The chief focus of the FNFC is to develop governance mechanisms from collaborative relationships among First Nations organizations, and working together to build a cohesive voice on fisheries matters.

Fish-WIKS contacts for the Pacific Region

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The Fish-WIKS project started in 2012 and runs for five years to 2017.

Key activities

- Engage in community-identified priority setting
- Conduct, analyze and interpret desk-top and field research related to fisheries decision-making
- Build awareness at each participating community site of Fish-WIKS and its goal of enhancing fisheries sustainability
- Recommend opportunities to enhance fisheries governance and management through shared knowledge

Key Outcomes

- Building long-term partnerships and mutual capacity based on trust and respect
- Identifying and using the best model or mix of models from western and indigenous knowledge systems to influence fisheries-related decision-making within a regional and national context
- Training and mentoring of 18 undergraduate, Master's, doctoral and post-doctoral candidates with priority to indigenous students
- An expanding network of fisheries governance scholars and practitioners across Canada
- Shared policy-relevant knowledge using oral and written communication formats
- Enhanced fisheries sustainability through effective governance



“Looking at the interplay of traditional knowledge systems and western knowledge systems, the academic literature often prioritizes one form of knowledge over the other. Fish-WIKS is about valuing knowledge systems equally and identifying how they both can be used to manage fisheries sustainably.”

Dr. Lucia Fanning, *Fish-WIKS Principal Investigator*

To learn more about Fish-WIKS and to get involved, visit fishwiks.ca or contact your regional representative.

fishwiks.ca

Regional Partners

Assembly of First Nations
BC First Nations Fisheries Council
Government of Nunavut
Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

Community Partners

Atlantic – Eskasoni, NS
Arctic – Naujaat, NU
Inland – Nipissing, ON
Pacific – Tla-o-qui-aht, BC

Academic Partners

Dalhousie University
University of Guelph
University of Toronto
Vancouver Island University

Fish-WIKS National Project Office

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