

**FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS RESEARCH SOCIETY
PRESS RELEASE**

Halifax -- March 18, 2003

FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS JOIN FORCES FOR GROUND FISH SENTINEL PROGRAM

The Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) are entering the seventh year of a Joint Project Agreement for a Sentinel Program in the NAFO 4VsW Division, which will provide valuable data on stocks under moratoria. The Program is a continuation of the Sentinel Program begun in 1995. The FSRS is a non-profit partnership between fishermen and scientists whose objective is to learn more about the health of fish stocks in the Maritimes Region.

The Joint Project Agreement seeks to continue the program into the future until it can become self-sustaining. Scientists would like to establish a series of catch rate and abundance indices which will be valuable in the assessment and management of primary groundfish resources. In addition to providing valuable data, Sentinel Programs foster a closer working relationship between fishermen and fisheries scientists and managers.

The 2003 Program will begin in June and will utilize up to twenty-four commercial longline fishing vessels, in all size categories up to 65 feet. The 2003 Program will consist of two components. One is a Sentinel (Stratified Random) Survey in which fishing locations are preselected randomly by computer. The second is a Commercial Index which will permit a limited amount of commercial fishing effort following fishermen's customary fishing patterns.

Information kits providing details on the 2003 4VsW Sentinel Program, including the structure and rationale of the project, opportunities available, vessel selection criteria, and the application process to participate in the program, are available by contacting the FSRS General Manager, Patricia King, at 902-876-1160 or on-line at www.fsrns.ca. Organizations and communities interested in having a presentation on the Program are encouraged to contact Ms. King to arrange a meeting.

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For more information:

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