

Guidelines for the Use of Explosives in Canadian Fisheries Waters - An Introduction of the Guidelines and the Process of Their Development

Dennis G. Wright
Coordinator, Environmental Affairs
Conservation & Protection and Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Central and Arctic Region
501 University Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T 2N6

Abstract

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for Canada is responsible, under the Fisheries Act, for the protection of all marine organisms and their habitats. The detonation of explosives in or adjacent to fish habitat has been demonstrated to cause disturbance, injury and/or death to aquatic organisms, and/or disturbance, destruction or alteration of their habitats. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans recognizes that the use of explosives may be the most practical or cost effective method by which to complete a project and has undertaken the development of a set of guidelines that will prevent or minimize the destruction of or disturbance to aquatic organisms and their habitats while at the same time allowing scientific and industrial users of explosives to proceed with their projects.

The guidelines have been developed with the close cooperation of the explosives use industry to ensure that they will not be unduly restrictive on legitimate users but that will still provide the desired level of protection of aquatic life. This paper describes the guidelines, mitigation methods and practices encouraged by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to protect aquatic organisms from the destructive effects of explosives and the process by which the guidelines were arrived at.