

2025-2026

Annual Report

Fisheries and
Aquaculture





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, I am pleased to present the 2025-2026 annual performance report for the department. The reporting period spans from October 29, 2025, to March 31, 2026. This report was prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** requirements for a category one government entity and details the department's progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in our 2025-2026 strategic plan. As Minister, I am accountable for the results contained within.

The report outlines my department's progress in supporting the growth, sustainability and competitiveness of Newfoundland and Labrador's fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Through the dedication of our employees and strong collaboration with industry and partners, we advanced key initiatives that support innovation, market development, and responsible resource management.

Since being established as a stand-alone Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture in October 2025, the department has focused on strengthening the fishery while recognizing and advancing the significant potential of aquaculture. This includes commitment to joint fisheries management and collaboration with stakeholders; advocating for an expanded food fishery; investigating increased harvesting of seals; ensuring a world class regulatory regime for the aquaculture industry; and focusing on adding value to seafood products and identifying new markets.

I am confident that through the dedicated work of our valued employees, we will grow and strengthen our fishery and the aquaculture industry, for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Loyola O'Driscoll". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon. Loyola O'Driscoll
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture was established as a stand-alone department on October 29, 2025, following the former Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. As this report represents the final year of the 2023-2026 strategic planning cycle, it includes reporting goals, objective, and indicators established under that plan. Consequently, some initiatives, activities, and outcomes referenced in this report were advanced by the former Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, prior to October 29, 2025.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture supports the growth, development, and sustainability of the province's fishery and aquaculture sectors. The department develops and delivers and administers programs, policies, and legislation in these sectors through its Fisheries and Aquaculture branches and supporting divisions. Support to the departmental executives is provided by the Policy and Strategic Planning and Communications divisions. The organizational structure of the two branches and five divisions of the department is as follows:

Fisheries Branch:

- **Licensing, Inspection and Quality Assurance Division:** licenses fish processors and fish buyers and inspects licence holders to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and licence terms and conditions.
- **Sustainable Fisheries and Ocean Division:** provides strategic advice on the sustainable management of fishery resources, as well as on integrated coastal and oceans management related to regional and national priorities.
- **Seafood Marketing and Development Division:** provides market intelligence, supports market development initiatives, and administers seafood innovation and development programs.

Aquaculture Branch:

- Aquaculture Development and Administration Division: supports the sustainable growth of the aquaculture industry through the issuance and renewal of aquaculture licenses and compliance.
- Aquatic Animal Health Division: monitors and maintains the health of aquatic species cultured in the province.

For additional information, including copies of the Strategic Plans 2025-26 and 2026-29, please visit the departmental website at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fisheries/>

Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2026, the department had 79 employees and 126 positions. Several vacancies persist within fisheries inspection roles, primarily due to challenges in recruiting for seasonal positions and the geographic location of some roles. Some permanent positions are also being repurposed or redefined to support the new standalone Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and therefore remain vacant as of March 31, 2026. The distribution of employees by branch of the department is as follows:

Branches	Number of Staff
Fisheries	38
Aquaculture	28
Executive and Executive Support	13*
Total Department	79

* This number differs from the count presented in the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan as three policy positions were excluded at that time as a result of ongoing restructuring.

The department is headquartered in St. John's, with a total of 15 office locations in 15 communities throughout the province.

The department's budget for fiscal 2025-2026 was \$17,874,200 as shown below.

Branches	Budget
Fisheries	\$ 13,023,300
Aquaculture	\$ 4,054,200
Executive and Executive Support	\$ 796,700
Total Department	\$ 17,874,200

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

- On June 8, 2025, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador celebrated World Oceans Day. Celebrated internationally every year on June 8, World Oceans Day promotes awareness about the vital role of the ocean in our lives. In Newfoundland and Labrador, World Oceans Day was celebrated with several in-person and virtual ocean-themed events including the annual departmental World Oceans Day Art Contest.
- In April 2025, the department launched the Seafood Marketing Support Program to support global market diversification. The program's objective was to help proponents identify, assess, target, and develop new market opportunities in response to tariff threats from the United States and recent tariffs from China. The program supported 11 projects (totalling \$544,974) aimed at diversifying markets and capitalizing on new opportunities in domestic and international markets.
- In April 2025, the department launched the Lobster Technology and Innovation Funding to invest in new technology, processes, and innovation to support the growth and sustainability of the Newfoundland and Labrador lobster fishery. The program funded 10 projects (totalling \$439,324) aimed at advancing and optimizing live handling and storage practices as well as developing value-added products.
- In 2025-2026, the department continued to support the federal-provincial cost sharing program, Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF), that was launched in 2017. Over the course of the fund (2017-2026), \$113 million was invested across 557 projects, including pan-Atlantic projects.
- In August 2025, the department brought into force the Aquaculture Act, 2023 along with the Aquaculture Regulations, 2025; Aquaculture Administrative Regulations; and Aquaculture Ticket Offences Regulations. Together, this modernized legislative and regulatory framework provides greater guidance and direction to support the

continued growth and development of Newfoundland and Labrador's aquaculture sector. The updated legislation supports the orderly and environmentally sustainable development of the aquaculture industry while strengthening regulatory oversight, improving public transparency, and enhancing biosecurity and aquatic animal health measures. The framework also helps build public trust and positions Newfoundland and Labrador as a leader in aquaculture health, management, and production.

- In March 2026, the department implemented a streamlined licence application and exemption process which reduced barriers for applicants. A new conditional processing facility licence was also implemented which will support licensing applicants in buying or constructing a fish processing facility. It removed the ability for companies with a primary processing licence to obtain a fish buyers licence. The Fish Processing Licensing Policy Framework has also been updated to reflect these changes.

Partnerships

- Throughout 2025-2026, the department supported the seafood industry's participation in major international trade shows and market development initiatives to increase the visibility of Newfoundland and Labrador seafood products and strengthen export opportunities in key markets. This support was delivered in collaboration with industry partners, the Atlantic provinces, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
- The department supported Newfoundland and Labrador participation at Seafood Expo North America (Boston), Seafood Expo Global (Barcelona), Seafood Expo Asia (Singapore), China Fisheries and Seafood Expo (Qingdao), and Conxemar (Vigo, Spain). Provincial representatives, including the Premier and Minister, joined industry delegations at Seafood Expo North America and Seafood Expo Global, meeting with seafood buyers, government officials, and international partners to promote Newfoundland and Labrador's high-quality seafood products and strengthen business relationships in established and emerging markets.

- The province also participated in the European Export Café Series, a pan-Atlantic initiative that delivered targeted marketing and promotional activities to support market diversification and foster new international business opportunities.
- The department provided ongoing support to the Fur Institute of Canada through its Seals and Sealing Network, advancing initiatives that promote and market high-quality, sustainable seal products.

Report on Performance

Issue 1 – Development and Growth of Renewable Resources

Newfoundland and Labrador's abundance of renewable resources continues to be a significant source of economic, cultural and recreational value for residents of the province. The department will continue to respond to the needs of renewable resource sectors by continuously pursuing strategic opportunities and seeking to remove barriers to better support sector growth and cultivate conditions that foster increased business activity and stimulate employment in these sectors. Where necessary, this will include modernizing legislation and developing policies to support industry growth. The growth of the renewable resources industry translates into real socio-economic benefits for our rural, coastal, and inland communities.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will have supported development and growth of renewable resources for the socio-economic benefit of the province.

Goal Indicators

- Supported industry diversification, growth and development in Fisheries and Aquaculture.
- Modernized legislation and policies to support industry development and growth.
- Researched the impacts of climate change on renewable resource sectors and identified potential mitigations to minimize impacts.

Results

As this report represents the final year of the 2023-2026 strategic planning cycle, results are reported against goals and indicators established under that plan. Some activities and achievements referenced below were initiated or completed by the former Department of

Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture prior to the establishment of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture in October 2025. The table below outlines how indicators met or exceeded those outlined in the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.

Indicator 1: Supported industry diversification, growth and development in Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The department's Multi-Species Research and Development Fund supported industry diversification and innovation by assisting several companies with research and development activities focused on new species development. During 2023-2026, four projects were supported, with a total of \$150,000 disbursed to proponents undertaking research initiatives within the aquaculture sector.

The department's Aquaculture Development Division completed field assessments at various locations throughout the province to collect biophysical information on potential aquaculture development sites. This work supports ongoing industry expansion by identifying and evaluating areas suitable for future aquaculture activities.

The department completed 108 field trips, as part of ongoing shellfish site monitoring activities, to collect environmental and biological information for existing aquaculture operations. The data collected supported site production evaluations, site management and development decisions, site utilization assessments, and the establishment of base timelines for monitoring potential Aquatic Invasive Species introductions.

In 2025-2026, the department approved four licence amendments to support industry growth and development. These amendments enabled operators to undertake site improvements, including expanding site boundaries to accommodate new and larger cage systems, and increasing approved biomass levels to support higher production volumes.

Indicator 2: Modernized legislation and policies to support industry development and growth.

The **Aquaculture Act, 2023** was brought into force on August 8, 2025, along with the **Aquaculture Regulations, 2025**; **Aquaculture Administrative Regulations**; and **Aquaculture Ticket Offences Regulations**. This modernized the province's legislative framework for aquaculture, improving biosecurity, public transparency, aquatic animal health protection, and regulatory clarity. Together, these activities supported responsible industry growth and strengthened public confidence while contributing to employment, economic activity, and the continued development of rural, inland, and coastal communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

The department updated the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual for the 2026 season based on new policies introduced by the Minister. By improving the processes used for fish processing, for example licensing, inspections, audits and strong quality control practices, the department is increasing efficiency and transparency for affected stakeholders.

Indicator 3: Researched the impacts of climate change on renewable resource sectors and identified potential mitigations to minimize impacts.

Research on climate change impacts and mitigation in the aquaculture sector was supported through the Province's Multi-Species Research and Development Fund, which funded projects focused on new species development. By encouraging diversification and innovation, this work helped identify alternative species and practices that can enhance resilience and minimize the risks associated with changing environmental conditions.

The 2023-2025 Integrated Oceanographic Monitoring Program supported these efforts by improving understanding of how environmental variability may affect aquaculture sites. The findings highlighted the importance of ongoing monitoring and informed potential mitigation and adaptation measures related to aquaculture planning, biosecurity, and diversification. Together, these initiatives improved

understanding of environmental risks and opportunities while supporting the resilience of Newfoundland and Labrador's aquaculture sector.

2025-2026 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will have continued to develop and implement initiatives to facilitate the development and growth of renewable resource sectors for the socio-economic benefit of the province.

Objective Indicators

- Issued funding under the Multi-Species Research and Development Fund.
- Administered the Atlantic Fisheries Fund in support of the province's fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- Supported market diversification initiatives for the sustainability of the seafood industry.
- Developed and/or enhanced data collection and management tools.

Results

The table below outlines how indicators met or exceeded those outlined in the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.

Indicator 1: Issued funding under the Multi-Species Research and Development Fund.
The Multi-Species Research and Development Fund supported industry diversification and innovation by assisting companies with research and development activities. During 2025-2026, four projects were approved under the program, with a total of \$150,000 to proponents. The program supported industry growth, diversification, and long-term sustainability in Newfoundland and Labrador's aquaculture industry.

Indicator 2: Administered the Atlantic Fisheries Fund in support of the province's fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

In 2025-2026, in partnership with the Government of Canada through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF), the department strategically supported 17 new fisheries development projects and approved additional funding to three existing projects with a combined investment of \$4.8 million in the harvesting, processing, and aquaculture sectors. The projects focus on maintaining quality during harvesting and processing, the creation of value-added products, and improving harvesting and processing efficiency. The AFF also supported projects with a diversification focus, including the development of new aquaculture species, a nutritional analysis to acquire higher value from seafood products, and technologies that support market entry requirements for handling and product forms.

Indicator 3: Supported market diversification initiatives for the sustainability of the seafood industry.

In 2025-2026, the department continued to support the market diversification efforts of Newfoundland and Labrador seafood into new, emerging and high-growth markets across six coordinated marketing development initiatives and trade shows, covering markets in China, Europe and the Indo-Pacific. These events were the Seafood Expo North America held in Boston, Massachusetts, Seafood Expo Global held in Barcelona, Seafood Expo Asia held in Singapore; China Fisheries and Seafood Expo held in Qingdao, China; Conxemar held in Vigo, Spain; and a European Export Café Series, which focused on market diversification efforts for Newfoundland and Labrador seafood in high-growth markets.

In 2025, approximately five per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador's seafood exports were destined for the European Union, valued at over \$82 million. Newfoundland and Labrador's participation reflects ongoing efforts to strengthen the province's presence in European markets while also identifying new opportunities for Newfoundland and Labrador seafood products.

Between March 15-17, 2026, a delegation of Newfoundland and Labrador fishery representatives met with key buyers to maintain and strengthen key relationships at the Seafood Expo North America in Boston, Massachusetts. In 2025, approximately 72 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador's seafood was exported to the United States, valued at \$1.3 billion. Seafood from Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be highly valued by buyers for its diverse product range, harvested from pristine ocean waters and produced in accordance with rigorous quality, food safety, and sustainability standards.

On April 4, 2025, as the former Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, the department initiated the Seafood Marketing Support Program to promote market diversification activities in the seafood sector. The Seafood Marketing Support Program was developed in response to tariff threats from the United States and the retaliatory 25 percent tariff from China on Canadian seafood products. The objective of the program was to help proponents identify, assess, target and develop new market opportunities. The program supported 11 projects (totalling \$544,974) aimed at diversifying markets and capitalizing on new opportunities in domestic and international markets.

In April 2025, the former Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture established the Lobster Technology and Innovation Funding to invest in new technology, processes, and innovation to support the growth and sustainability of the Newfoundland and Labrador lobster fishery. The program funded 10 projects (totalling \$439,324) aimed at advancing and optimizing live handling and storage practices as well as developing value-added products.

Indicator 4: Developed and/or enhanced data collection and management tools.

The department contributed to the collection of critical data on capelin spawning habitats in Newfoundland and Labrador. Through funding provided under the Fisheries Research Grant Program, the department supported a long-term research initiative with the Marine Institute focused on identifying, sampling, and restoring capelin spawning habitats. Capelin is a key forage species in Newfoundland and

Labrador waters, serving as an important food source for a wide range of predators, including seals, whales, fish (such as Atlantic cod), and seabirds. Project activities were concentrated on beaches in Conception Bay and Placentia Bay, contributing to improved understanding and stewardship of these ecologically significant habitats.

The department supported the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Aquatic Invasive Species monitoring program throughout the province. This work included the deployment of 48 monitoring plates and ongoing surveillance activities to detect potential invasive species and support the protection and sustainability of the aquaculture industry. Support for Aquatic Invasive Species monitoring activities strengthened environmental protection and aquatic ecosystem health through ongoing surveillance and early detection efforts. These measures help reduce potential risks to aquaculture operations and marine environments.

Throughout 2023-2025 the Aquatic Animal Health Division's Oceanographic Monitoring Program collected and integrated data on chlorophyll, water column conditions (e.g., temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen), and hydrodynamics. During this period, the program expanded its geographic coverage across aquaculture regions in Placentia Bay, Fortune Bay, and Bays West. The oceanographic datasets collected support evidence-based aquaculture development and sustainability, reduce aquatic animal health risk and operational risk, and help proponents evaluate, adapt, or advance projects in alignment with local environmental conditions.

In 2025-2026, the program continued to improve its data collection and management capacity by addressing data gaps in the Burgeo and Placentia Bay regions through additional monitoring and survey activities and the acquisition of equipment and data management tools.

In 2025-2026 the Aquaculture Development Division completed 10 field work assessments at various locations to collect biophysical information on potential aquaculture development sites to support industry expansion by identifying and

evaluating areas suitable for future aquaculture activities. During this time the Division also completed 108 field trips, as part of ongoing shellfish site monitoring activities, to collect environmental and biological information for existing aquaculture operations to support site production evaluations, site management and development decisions, site utilization assessments, and the establishment of baseline timelines for monitoring potential Aquatic Invasive Species introductions.

Issue 2 – Sustainable Resource Management

Renewable resources must be protected and managed sustainably and in a manner that recognizes the cultural significance of these resources as well as the social, economic, and recreational activities related to them. The department will continue to make representations to and work with the federal government, which has primary responsibility and constitutional authority for marine fisheries, to promote these goals and will seek an expanded role for the Province in the protection and management of our fisheries resources. Additionally, the department will work to support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to support a sustainable and healthy fishery. By promoting sustainability the department will work to support a future where Newfoundland and Labrador's aquatic resources provide socio-economic benefits to future generations.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will have enhanced the sustainable management of renewable resources for the socio-economic benefit of the province.

Goal Indicators

- Improved sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Increased resilience to the effects of climate change on the province's renewable resources.

Results

The table below outlines how indicators met or exceeded those outlined in the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.

Indicator 1: Improved sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture.
All finfish aquaculture sites are required to comply with the Code of Containment for Salmonids in the province. The Code of Containment for Salmonids inspections helped ensure finfish aquaculture operators maintained appropriate containment systems and operational practices to minimize the risk of fish escapes. Escape prevention is important for minimizing impact to wild fish populations and supporting responsible aquaculture development. The department completed 4,363 inspections related to wild fish harvesting activities, aquaculture site marking, points of export, and patrol operations in the reporting period. These inspections demonstrate the department's ongoing commitment to regulatory oversight and monitoring, helping to ensure industry compliance with provincial standards and supporting the responsible management of the province's fishery resources.
Indicator 2: Increased resilience to the effects of climate change on the province's renewable resources.
The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Atlantic provinces entered into a Framework Agreement with the Government of Canada for an Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) from 2017-2026. AFF was cost shared at a 70:30 ratio between the Government of Canada and the Atlantic provinces. AFF has supported a range of research and innovation projects that have assisted in mitigating the impacts of climate change on Newfoundland and Labrador's fishing industry. Funded initiatives have contributed to reducing the carbon footprint of industry participants. Examples include the adoption of upgraded oil filtration systems to decrease vessel oil change frequency, the integration of hybrid energy solutions for aquaculture barges, and the use of historical fishing data to optimize fishing patterns and reduce fuel consumption.

The AFF has also supported research on climate-driven changes in the migration patterns of key commercial species, including cod and northern shrimp. One project focused on enhancing stock assessment methodologies for cod and examining the implications of ecosystem changes for the province's fisheries. The findings are expected to help address current knowledge gaps in fisheries science and improve understanding of ongoing shifts in the marine environment. A second project examined the effects of ecosystem change on shrimp stock status, distribution, and commercial shrimp fishery. This research was being conducted in support of Marine Stewardship Council recertification efforts.

The department also conducted inflow aquaculture wharf inspections to support biosecurity measures to allow for uncontaminated places for new equipment, feed and fish entries to the marine facilities. From 2023-2026, a total of 720 inflow wharf inspections were completed. These inspections help reduce the risk of biosecurity threats to the province's aquaculture sector and support aquatic animal health.

2025-2026 Objective

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will have continued to develop and implement initiatives to enhance the sustainable management of renewable resources for the socio-economic benefit of the province.

Objective Indicators

- Continued developing standards, policies and procedures for the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Continued marine life and disease surveillance and management for sustainability of aquatic animal health.
- Facilitated initiatives for sustainable fisheries in the province.

Results

The table below outlines how indicators met or exceeded those outlined in the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.

Indicator 1: Continued developing standards, policies and procedures for the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture.
With the introduction of the Aquaculture Act, 2023, the department has updated the Aquaculture Policy and Procedures Manual to ensure that departmental policies, procedures, and operational guidance are aligned with the legislative framework. The department continues to support effective regulation, sustainable industry growth, environmental stewardship, and consistent operational standards within the aquaculture sector. During the reporting period, the department updated the Fish Processing Licensing Policy Manual to reflect new policies introduced by the Minister with respect to the Fish Processing Licensing Board and the various licenses issued by the department. This work supported a more streamlined approach to administering fish processing and fish buying licences, including the removal of the Fish Processing Licensing Board from these processes. The framework was redesigned in an online user-friendly format to improve accessibility and navigation, with embedded links that allow users to quickly access specific topics and information relevant to their needs. It was posted online after the conclusion of the reporting period, increasing efficiency and transparency.
Indicator 2: Continued marine life and disease surveillance and management for sustainability of aquatic animal health.
The department supported the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Aquatic Invasive Species monitoring program throughout the province. This work included the deployment of monitoring equipment and ongoing surveillance activities to detect potential invasive species and support the protection and sustainability of the aquaculture industry.

Indicator 3: Facilitated initiatives for sustainable fisheries in the province.

The Fisheries Research Grant Program supports research that strengthens understanding of key adjacent fish stocks and reinforces the province's role in advancing sustainable fisheries management. In the reporting period, the department contributed to a research initiative examining whether waters off southern Labrador, particularly in the vicinity of the Labrador Straits, have evolved into productive lobster habitat because of broader ecosystem changes. Preliminary findings are promising, and further work is underway to assess the long-term viability of a commercial lobster fishery in the region.

This research reflects a proactive approach to identifying emerging opportunities and supporting evidence-based decision-making. Advancing potential new commercial fisheries such as this will help harvesters adapt to shifting marine conditions and changing species distributions, while supporting the sustainable growth and diversification of the province's fisheries sector.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

Opportunities in the provincial fisheries and aquaculture sectors include advancing species diversification to reduce reliance on a limited number of farmed species, improving resilience to changing environmental conditions, enabling access to new markets, and supporting infrastructure development by aquaculture companies to respond to challenges of climate change.

The Government of Canada launched negotiations to revitalize funding in support of the Canadian fish and seafood sector in March 2026. The province is working with the Government of Canada and Atlantic provinces to establish a revitalized Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) that provides sustained support for Newfoundland and Labrador's fish and seafood industry. The five-year renewal of AFF will allow Newfoundland and Labrador's fish and aquaculture sector to thrive in the face of global uncertainty, with an increased emphasis on industry and market diversification.

Challenges

A significant challenge for the fishery sector is achieving goals and objectives related to offshore resources that are frequently under federal jurisdiction. This means making representations to and working with federal counterparts to ensure the advice, research and interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are respected in decision making. It is essential that fisheries management decisions made by the Federal Government adequately reflect sustainable management of the Province's fishery and reflect the long-held provincial principles of historic attachment to the fishery, adjacency and local economic benefits.

In addition, Newfoundland and Labrador's fisheries and aquaculture sectors continue to face workforce challenges, particularly in rural and coastal areas. Challenges attracting and retaining skilled workers can affect harvesting, processing, aquaculture operations, and overall industry productivity. These challenges are further influenced by geographic

pressures, a competitive labour market, and the seasonal nature of employment within the industry.

International trade dynamics continue to pose risks for the province's fisheries and aquaculture sectors, particularly the possibility of new United States tariffs on Canadian seafood products and existing Chinese tariffs. Such tariffs could raise costs for importers, decrease profit margins, disrupt supply chains, increase seafood prices, and weaken demand. For example, in 2025 China imposed a 25 per cent tariff on Canadian seafood, creating additional market uncertainty and challenges for exporters. In 2026, China lifted the 25 per cent tariff on snow crab and lobster; however, all other Canadian seafood products exported to China remain subject to the 25 per cent duty. To reduce exposure to tariff related risks, it is essential to continue diversification efforts both internationally and domestically.

Regulatory uncertainty within the Canadian aquaculture sector also presents challenges for future growth and investment. Recent federal decisions in British Columbia regarding the phased closure of open net-pen marine aquaculture sites and transition toward land-based and closed containment systems by 2029, have created uncertainty across the sector. This has impacted investor confidence and may influence future investment decisions affecting aquaculture development opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Marine Atlantic transportation services remain critical to the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery and aquaculture industry. The industry depends on consistent ferry operations to transport fresh seafood products to domestic and international markets, as well as to receive equipment, feed, infrastructure materials, and other operational supplies from outside the province. Transportation disruptions or reduced service reliability impose a challenge in the sector and can negatively affect product quality, harvesting schedules, live fish transfers, market access, operational costs, and overall industry competitiveness.

Financial Information

	2025-2026 Estimates		
	Original	Amended	Actual
EXECUTIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES			
MINISTERS OFFICE			
Minister's Office	92,800	92,800	83,236
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION			
Executive Support	381,400	381,400	280,745
Policy, Planning and Administration	322,500	22,500	258,128
Revenue - Provincial - Policy, Planning and Administration	-	-	-
Administrative Support	-	-	-
Executive and Support Services Subtotal	796,700	796,700	622,109
FISHERIES PROGRAMS			
Marketing and Development	6,378,000	9,931,100	9,780,561
Revenue - Provincial - Marketing and Development	-	-	(809,991)
Licensing, Inspection and Quality Assurance	1,925,000	1,925,000	1,699,245
Atlantic Fisheries Fund	3,963,200	432,100	383,914
Revenue - Federal - Atlantic Fisheries Fund	-	-	(597,147)
Sustainable Fisheries and Oceans	757,000	713,000	656,752
Coordination and Support Services	100	100	-
Fisheries Programs Subtotal	13,023,300	13,001,300	11,113,334
AQUACULTURE			
Aquaculture Development and Administration	1,954,600	1,619,600	1,301,751
Revenue - Provincial - Aquaculture Development and Administration	(10,000)	(10,000)	(24,586)
Aquaculture Capital Equity Investment	100	100	(71,243)
Aquatic Animal Health	2,109,500	2,466,500	2,335,307
Aquaculture Subtotal	4,054,200	4,076,200	3,541,229
Department Total	17,874,200	17,874,200	15,276,672

