

**Statoil Canada Ltd. - East Coast Operations  
Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Area  
Environmental Assessment Review for 2012-2013  
Drilling Operations**

**SH-CNO-0114-12**

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## 1 Introduction

Offshore oil and gas exploration and production programs generally encompass long periods of time and multiple, successive, operational steps. As a consequence of this environmental assessments of these programs address a variety of activities undertaken over a number of years.

This document is one of a series of annual reviews, committed to in the environmental assessment referenced in Table 1, of the status and ongoing validity of the environmental assessments currently in place for Statoil Canada Ltd. (SCL) activities in the Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area. These reviews are intended to assist the Canada-Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) in fulfilling its responsibilities under the CEA Act by ensuring that the scope of the assessment(s) and the mitigations committed to therein remain technically valid.

The following table identifies the relevant SCL environmental assessment, approved by the C-NLOPB, under which SCL may conduct offshore drilling operations during 2012.

**Table 1 - Environmental Assessment Approvals in Force for Statoil Canada Ltd. - January 2012**

Screening Determination Reference <sup>1</sup>	Temporal Scope	EA Report Title
<a href="#">CEAR No. 07-01-32083</a>	Year round 2008 through 2016	<i>Environmental Assessment of StatoilHydro Canada Ltd. Exploration &amp; Appraisal/Delineation Drilling Program for Offshore Newfoundland, 2008-2016</i>
September 27, 2012 Approval Letter from C-NLOPB RE: <i>Statoil Canada Limited Exploration / Appraisal / Delineation Drilling Program, 2008-2016 Environmental Assessment Amendment</i>	Year round 2008 through 2016	<i>Amendment to the Environmental Assessment of StatoilHydro Canada Ltd. Exploration &amp; Appraisal /Delineation Drilling Program for Offshore Newfoundland, 2008-2016. Document No. SH-CNO-0111-12</i>

The necessary information required to evaluate the validity of the environmental assessment listed in the foregoing table is provided in the following sections of this update.

<sup>1</sup> Follow the link to the C-NLOPB public registry to view the environmental assessments, amendments and regulatory determinations.

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## 2 Environmental Assessment of Statoil Canada Ltd. Exploration & Appraisal/Delineation Drilling Program for Offshore Newfoundland, 2008-2016

### 2.1 Project Description and Scope

#### 2.1.1 Activities Covered

This environmental assessment addressed the potential for drilling up to 27 delineation and/or exploration wells from semi-submersible or jack-up mobile drilling units or drill ships. It also assessed the effects of geo-hazard and remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys and vertical seismic profiles (VSP) associated with the drilling program.

#### 2.1.2 Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of the drilling program is depicted in Figure 1. The coordinates of the *Project Area* as depicted in that figure are as follows:

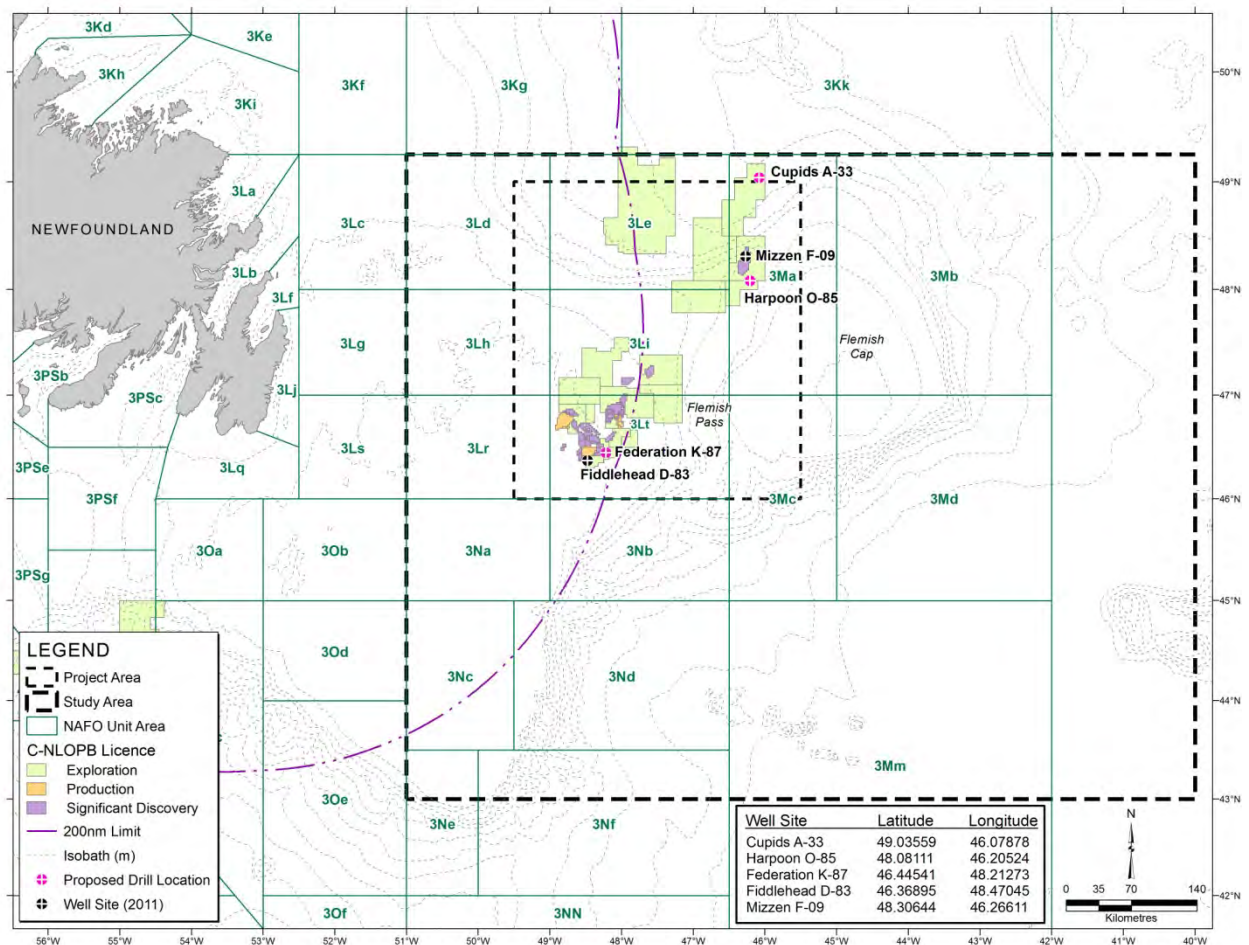
- 49° North & 49.5° West,
- 49° North & 45.5° West,
- 46° North & 49.5° West; and,
- 46° North & 45.5° West.

The *Study Area* (coordinates: 49.25°N & 51°W; 49.25° & 40°; 43°N & 40°W; 46°N & 49.5°W) depicted in Figure 1 encompasses an area potentially affected by an oil spill based on spill modeling undertaken for the original environmental assessment.

#### 2.1.3 Temporal Scope

Exploration and delineation drilling activities as outlined above could be carried out year round from 2008 through 2016.

**Figure 1: Geographic Scope of Project Area for CEAR No. 07-01-32083 with locations of 2011 and proposed 2012 drill sites**



### 2.1.4 Planned activities for 2012 and 2013

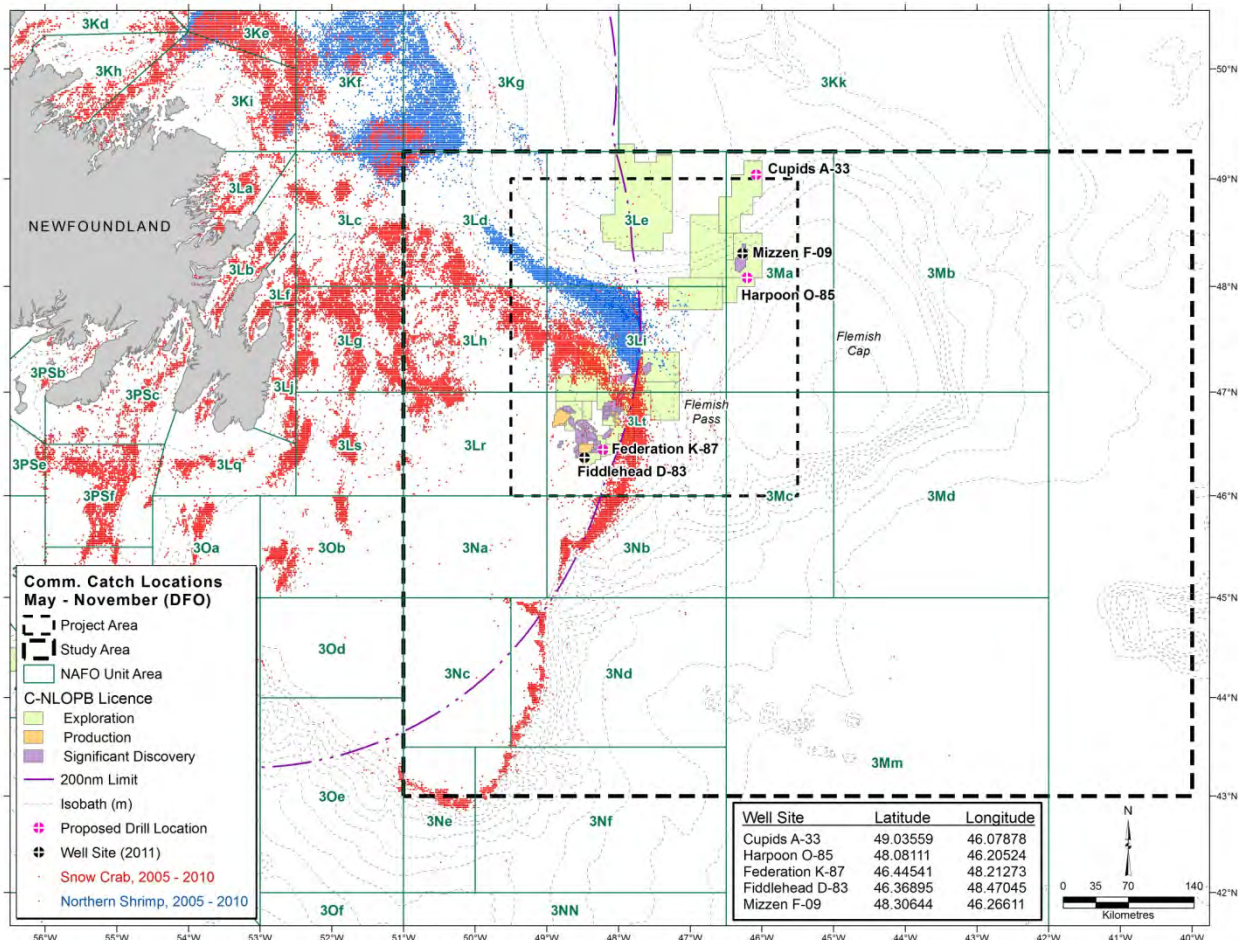
Beginning in late 2012 and into 2013 SCL plans to drill three (3) wells (shown in red in Figure 1) one is the Cupids A-33 prospect on the Flemish ridge (EL 1123), the second is on the Harpoon O-85 prospect (EL 1112) and the third is the Federation K-87 in the Jeanne d'Arc basin. Coordinate locations for all these prospects are provided in Figure 1.

The plans for these wells include provision for Vertical Seismic Profile (VSP) surveys. Current planning calls for these wells will be drilled sequentially by the [semi-submersible drilling rig West Aquarius](#) starting with Harpoon O-85 in December of 2012 followed by Cupids A-33 and finally, the Federation K-87 well. It is currently anticipated that drilling activities will begin in Q4 2012 and be completed before the end of Q3 2013. SCL may also conduct geohazard site surveys and/or ROV seabed surveys on its current land holdings during 2012. These surveys, if conducted, will likely occur during the months of May – October.

## 2.1.5 Fisheries

The nature and pattern of fishing activities in the study area have not changed significantly since the environmental assessment report cited in Table 1 was accepted and approved. Figure 2 provides a map of recently compiled fishing activity information that depicts a pattern of fishing activity for the key commercial species, snow crab and northern shrimp that is consistent with that documented in the original environmental assessment. This compilation, derived from Fisheries and Oceans data bases including research vessel and underutilized species information, was prepared by SCL in support of an application for the conduct of a seismic survey program and is consistent with recent environmental assessments by other offshore operators that overlap the geographic and temporal scope of SCL's environmental assessment (c.f. Section 4.2).

**Figure 2: Cumulative pattern of snow crab (fixed gear) and northern shrimp (mobile gear) fishing activity in relation to 2011 & proposed 2012 drilling locations**



While it will be noted that Figure 2 aggregates data over the May to November period from 2005 to 2010, this frame accounts for the vast majority of fishing activity during any one year.

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While the general patterning of fishing relevant to this assessment is generally the same over years, the following paragraphs note some points relevant to the interaction between the oil and gas and fishing industry within the scope of this environmental assessment.

Recent consultations relevant to this update were undertaken in February and March with Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW) and One Ocean to discuss fishing activities in the context of Statoil's proposed seismic surveys for 2012 in the same general area. Furthermore, discussions with Ocean Choice International (OCI) indicate that they plan to prosecute a redfish fishery in vicinity of the Flemish Cap and Pass in the early summer of 2012 and again later in the late summer and early fall however this may be complete before drilling operations get underway in 2012. However, in the November-December time frame Statoil understands that a 200 tonne cod quota will be taken in the Flemish Pass area by the same company. Statoil will keep in communication with Ocean Choice International directly and through One Ocean to help ensure each company is kept up to date with respect to the other's activities. Recent written consultation with OCI (R. Ellis, August 2012) did not reveal any concerns with respect to the drilling plans outlined in this update.

It is also important to note, with respect to the fishing industry, that SCL sits with members of the fishing industry on the One Ocean Executive and its Technical Working Group and thus has direct and regular engagement with representatives from the FFAW and seafood producer/processors sectors. Finally, as indicated in its drilling and other environmental assessments SCL continues to engage with stakeholders as circumstances require.

SCL understands that it is important to recognize that harvesters fish a resource, and not fixed points from year to year. Licenses are issued for large areas (e.g. NAFO subdivisions 3K or 3L) and fishing activity could take place anywhere within these areas and not just at the pattern of locations fished in recent years indicated by Fisheries and Oceans data. Hence this requires that the operator should continue to consult with the fishing industry on a regular basis to keep up to date with trends in fishing from year to year.

With regard to the conduct of any ROV or geo-hazard survey and anchor placement activities planned in 2012 and beyond SCL will continue to keep fishing interests informed of these activities during the operational planning phases. This will be done through the established One Ocean and FFAW contacts and others as deemed necessary or as advised.

### **2.1.6 Corals and Sponges**

The Harpoon O-85 well location is the only one that is near one of the recently established fishing exclusion zones established to protect known coral aggregations (DFO, 2010; c.f. also Kenchington et al 2010). The distance from this well location, to the North West Flemish Cap NAFO Coral Closure Area (Area 10) is approximately six (6) to seven (7) kilometers (Figure 3).

The consequence of 2012/13 drilling activities relevant to the coral and sponge component of the benthic community are drill cuttings discharges.



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With respect to synthetic based mud (SBM) drilling discharges the modelling of SBM drill cuttings deposition carried out under the current environmental assessment is still applicable. Section 7.2.1.5 of that environmental assessment states the following with regard to the modeling of the cuttings dispersion analysis:

*“The model results suggest that ocean currents in the vicinity of the Mizzen site would transport virtually all of the discharged fine material out of the 20 km square model grid, leaving only 8% of the original mass to settle on the seafloor over a radius of approximately 6 km (113 km<sup>2</sup>). Within this 6 km, however, all deposits are less than 0.13 mm thick (Fig. 3-4), and the area in which the deposit thickness is greater than 0.10 mm is approximately 0.1 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 3-4).”*

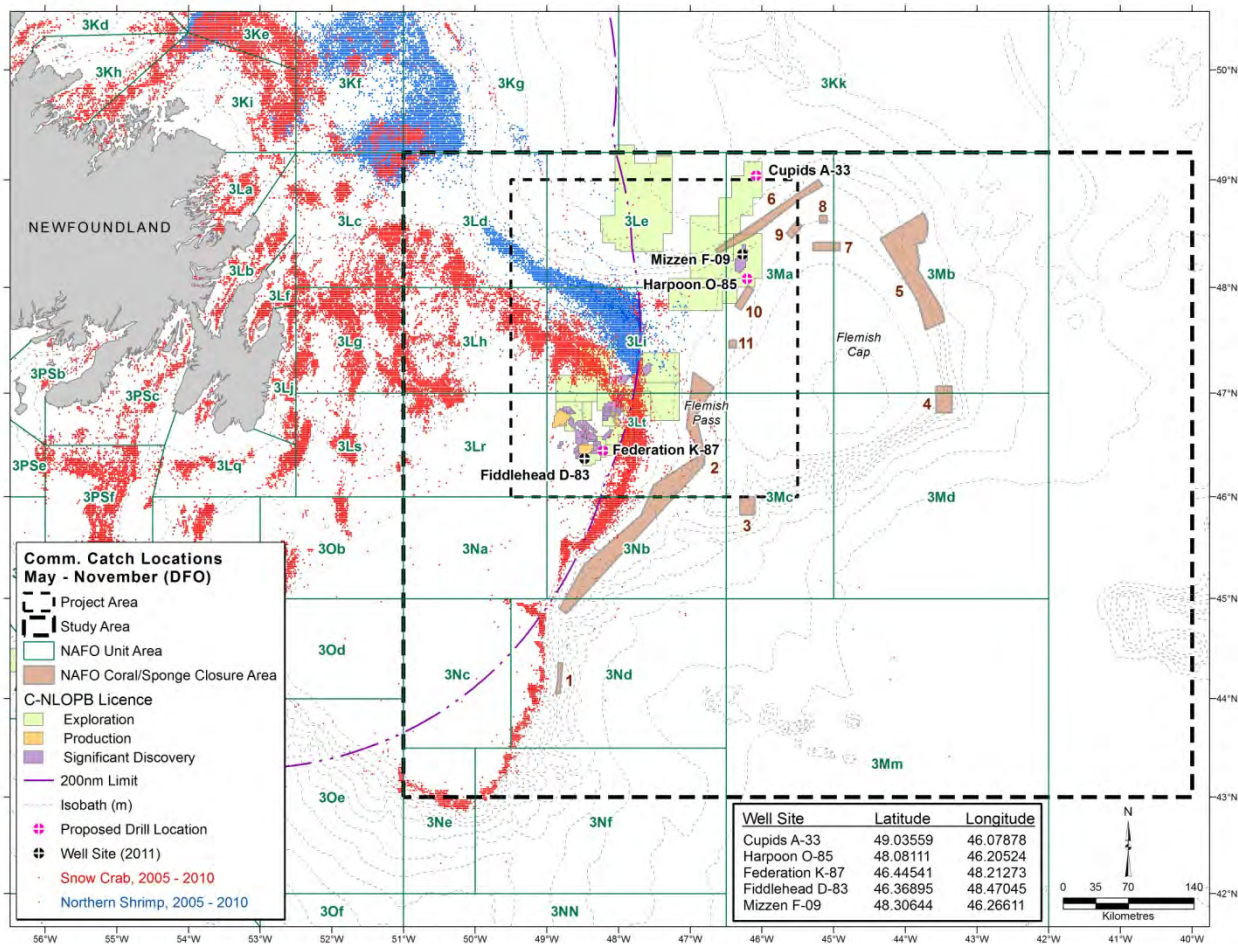
Water-based muds used in the upper drill hole sections and deposited at the seafloor are not subject to the same dispersion behaviour as the SBM drilling discharges discussed above.

The Harpoon O-85 well location is approximately 25 kilometers south-southeast of the Mizzen location in 1160 meters of water which is only marginally deeper than that for Mizzen. Modelling of SBM drill cuttings deposition for the original assessment, based on the Mizzen location indicated a deposition pattern of approximately 0.13 millimeters over a 6 kilometer radius from the well. The northern boundary of NAFO Coral Closure Area 10 is 6 to 7 kilometers from Harpoon O-85. Larrison and Purser (2011) showed that while corals, in this case a cold water coral *Lophila pertusa*, could clean itself of sediment comprised of drill cuttings to a large extent morbidity and mortality effects were detectable for accumulated deposition of approximately 6.3 millimeters a burial threshold used for risk analyses in Europe. While this was a controlled laboratory study with replication the potential effects of water flow that would occur in a natural setting could not be accommodated. Based on the modelling done for the original assessment the expected deposition within 6 kilometers is expected to be approximately 50 times less than that studied by Larrison and Purser.

The mitigation measure specified in the C-NLOPB's acceptance of the original environmental assessment, which calls for a survey of the spud location for corals and a setback of the final spud location by 100 meters from any coral colonies defined as either a *Lophelia pertusa* reef complex or 5 or more corals larger than 30 centimeters in height or width, still applies.

Given the location of the coral and sponge habitat closure areas, nature of drill cuttings deposition and the mitigation measure noted above, the conclusions of the current environmental assessment on this issue remain valid.

**Figure 3: Locations of NAFO Coral and Sponge Closure Areas**



### 2.1.7 Species at Risk

An updated listing of Species at Risk Act (SARA) and Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) listed species for the Grand Banks area of relevance to this assessment is provided in Appendix 1. SARA listed species with final recovery strategies in place are noted. None of the SARA listed species relevant to the scope of this assessment have an associated critical habitat description or an action or management plan in place. It is noted however that the North Atlantic Right Whale does have a critical habitat statement pursuant to SARA however it is rare in the study area considered under this environmental assessment (see Appendix 1 – footnotes). Appendix 1 also provides a listing of COSEWIC candidate species under consideration.

Since the last environmental assessment update **one new species was added to SARA Schedule 1 listing** the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*). With respect to COSEWIC one species the American Eel

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(*Anguilla rostrata*) was reclassified from *special concern* to *threatened* and the Kemp Ridley's sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) is noted as a low priority candidate for assessment (Appendix 1).

A review of the SARA species specific recovery plans and the one critical habitat statement in place, as noted in Appendix 1, does not indicate that any new or modified mitigation measures are required beyond those already committed to by SCL for the scope of the operations addressed by the environmental assessment.

### **2.1.8 Mitigations**

SCL considers the environmental predictions and consequent mitigations cited in the environmental assessment and subsequent significance determination that relates to [CEAR No. 07-01-32083](#) as valid and re-commits to implementing these mitigation measures for the activities to be carried out under the scope of this assessment this year.

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### **3 Concluding Statement**

The activities SCL plans to carry out in 2012/13 have been reviewed and assessed to be within the scope of the environmental assessment currently in place to address those activities, specifically:

- the scope and nature of activities planned and addressed under the approved environmental assessment have not changed;
- the nature of the species at risk in the Project and Study areas have been validated and although one new species has been added to Schedule 1 of SARA and there have been two changes under the COSEWIC listings as noted in this update no critical habitats for any of these species have been defined pursuant to the Species at Risk legislation;
- the nature and extent of the fishing activities being undertaken in the Project Area have been validated and have not changed such that project activities pose any potential effects not previously assessed; and;
- the mitigation measures defined and committed to in the environmental assessment are still valid and will continue to be implemented;
- SCL continues to consult with stakeholders directly affected by the activities planned under the approved environmental assessment.

SCL considers the environmental effects predicted in the environmental assessment to still be valid. SCL reaffirms its commitment to implement the mitigation measures proposed in the assessments and in the Screening Decision made by the C-NLOPB in consultation with other Federal and Provincial regulatory agencies.

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## 4 References

### 4.1 Original Statoil Canada Ltd. Environmental Assessments<sup>2</sup>

1. LGL Limited. 2008. Environmental Assessment of StatoilHydro Canada Ltd. Exploration and Appraisal/Delineation Drilling Program for Offshore Newfoundland, 2008-2016. LGL Rep. SA947b. Rep. by LGL Limited, Canning & Pitt Associates Inc., and Oceans Ltd., St. John's, NL, for StatoilHydro Canada Ltd., St. John's, NL. 292 p. + appendices.
2. Statoil Canada, 2012. Amendment to the Environmental Assessment of StatoilHydro Canada Ltd. Exploration & Appraisal /Delineation Drilling Program for Offshore Newfoundland.2008-2016. Document No. SH-CNO-0111-12

### 4.2 Previous Environmental Assessment Updates

1. Statoil Canada Limited East Coast Operations. Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Area Environmental Assessment Review for 2010
2. Statoil Canada Limited East Coast Operations. Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Area Environmental Assessment Review for 2011

### 4.3 Recent & Relevant Environmental Assessments Reviewed for this Update

1. LGL Limited. 2011. Environmental assessment of Statoil's Geophysical Program for Jeanne d'Arc and Central Ridge/Flemish Pass Basins, 2011-2019. LGL Rep. SA1121. Rep. by LGL Limited, in association with Canning & Pitt Associates Inc., and Oceans Ltd., St. John's, NL, for Statoil Canada Ltd., St. John's, NL. 227 p. + appendices.
2. Stantec. 2010. Hebron Project Comprehensive Study Report. Prepared by Stantec Ltd. on behalf of ExxonMobil Canada Properties

### 4.4 Relevant Species at Risk Recovery Strategies Reviewed for this Update<sup>3</sup>

1. Atlantic Leatherback Turtle Recovery Team 2006. Recovery Strategy for Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Atlantic Canada. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, vi + 45 pp.
2. Kulka, D., C. Hood and J. Huntington. 2007. Recovery Strategy for Northern Wolffish (*Anarhichas denticulatus*) and Spotted Wolffish (*Anarhichas minor*), and Management Plan for Atlantic Wolffish (*Anarhichas lupus*) in Canada. Fisheries and Oceans Canada: Newfoundland and Labrador Region. St. John's, NL. x + 103 pp.

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<sup>2</sup> Documents referenced in Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 are accessible on the Canada-Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board [website](#)

<sup>3</sup> Documents referenced in Section 4.4 are available on the Environment Canada Species at Risk [website](#)

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3. DFO (Fisheries and Oceans Canada). 2008. *Recovery Strategy for the Atlantic walrus (Odobenus rosmarus rosmarus), Northwest Atlantic population, in Canada. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series*. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, ON. x + 11 pp.
  4. Beauchamp, J., Bouchard, H., de Margerie, P., Otis, N., Savaria, J.-Y., 2009. Recovery Strategy for the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), Northwest Atlantic population, in Canada [FINAL]. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa. 62 pp.
  5. Brown, M.W., Fenton, D., Smedbol, K., Merriman, C., Robichaud-Leblanc, K., and Conway, J.D. 2009. Recovery Strategy for the North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) in Atlantic Canadian Waters [Final]. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Fisheries and Oceans Canada. vi + 66p.

#### **4.5 Other References**

1. Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization Conservation and Enforcement Measures NAFO/FC Doc. 11/1 Serial No. N5867 (updated 03 December 2010)
2. Kenchington, E., Lirette, C., Cogswell, A., Archambault, D., Archambault, P., Benoit, H., Bernier, D., Brodie, B., Fuller, S., Gilkinson, K., Lévesque, M., Power, D., Siferd, T., Treble, M., and Wareham, V. 2010. Delineating Coral and Sponge Concentrations in the Biogeographic Regions of the East Coast of Canada Using Spatial Analyses. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2010/041. vi + 202 pp..
3. DFO. 2010. Occurrence, susceptibility to fishing, and ecological function of corals, sponges, and hydrothermal vents in Canadian waters. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep.
4. Larsson, A. and A. Purser. 2011. Sedimentation on the cold-water coral *Lophelia pertusa*: Cleaning efficiency from natural sediments and drill cuttings. Marine Pollution Bulletin 62 (2011) 1159–1168

## 5 Appendices

### 5.1 Appendix 1 - Current Listing<sup>4</sup> of [SARA](#) and [COSEWIC](#) Listed Species in the Statoil Project Area(s)<sup>5</sup>

Species		New since last update	SARA Status noted as Schedules 1, 2 or 3			COSEWIC Status			
			Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	Candidate <sup>6</sup>
Common Name	Scientific Name								
<b>Birds</b>									
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnean</i>		1			X			
<b>Marine Fish</b>									
Northern wolffish	<i>Anarhichas denticulatus</i>			1			X		
Spotted wolffish	<i>Anarhichas minor</i>			1			X		
Atlantic wolffish	<i>Anarhichas lupus</i>				1			X	
Atlantic cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>				3				
Atlantic cod (Newfoundland & Labrador population)	<i>Gadus morhua</i>					X			
Atlantic Salmon (various regional populations)	<i>Salmo salar</i>					X	X	X	
Porbeagle shark	<i>Lamna nasus</i>					X			
White shark	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	●	X			X			
Roundnose Grenadier	<i>Coryphaenoides rupestris</i>					X			

<sup>4</sup> May 2012

<sup>5</sup> Green Shade means a final Recovery Strategy is in place but no Critical Habitat has been identified nor have Action or Management plans been finalized for these species with the exception of the North Atlantic Right Whale (see footnote 8). Note that two other species that have recovery strategies, the Atlantic Walrus and Grey Whale, have been extirpated from Eastern Canadian waters and therefore are not listed in the above table.

<sup>6</sup> Candidate COSEWIC species are classified as High (H), Medium (M) or Low (L) Priority Candidate (PC) species

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Common Name	Scientific Name		Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	Candidate <sup>6</sup>
Cusk	<i>Brosme brosme</i>						X		
American Shad	<i>Alosa sapidissima</i>								MPC
Alewife	<i>Alosa pseudoharengus</i>								MPC
Capelin	<i>Mallotus villosus</i>								MPC
Haddock	<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>								MPC
Shortfin mako shark	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>						X		
Blue shark	<i>Prionace glauca</i>							X	
American Eel	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>						X		
Roughhead grenadier	<i>Macrourus bergsila</i>							X	
Bluefin Tuna	<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>					X			
Spiny eel	<i>Notacanthus chemnitzii</i>								MPC
Pollock	<i>Pollachius virens</i>								MPC
Spinytail Skate	<i>Bathyraja spinicauda</i>								MPC
Ocean pout	<i>Zoarces americanus</i>								MPC
American Plaice (Newfoundland & Labrador Population)	<i>Hippoglossoides platessoides</i>						X		
Acadian Redfish (Atlantic Population)	<i>Sebastes fasciatus</i>						X		
Deepwater Redfish (Northern Population)	<i>Sebastes mentella</i>						X		
Spiny Dogfish	<i>Squalus acanthias</i>							X	
Basking Shark	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>							X	
<b>Marine Mammals</b>									
Blue whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>		1			X			



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Species		New since last update	SARA Status noted as Schedules 1, 2 or 3			COSEWIC Status			
Common Name	Scientific Name		Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	Candidate <sup>6</sup>
Humpbacked whale	<i>Megaptera movaeanglia</i>				3				
North Atlantic right whale <sup>7</sup>	<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i>		1			X			
Fin whale (Atlantic population)	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>				1			X	
Killer Whale (NW Atlantic & Eastern Arctic Populations)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>							X	
Sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>								LPC
Cuvier's Beaked Whale	<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>								MPC
Sowerby's beaked whale	<i>Mesoplodon bidens</i>				3			X	
Northern Bottlenose whale <sup>8</sup> ( Davis Strait/Baffin Bay/Labrador Sea)	<i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i>							X	
Harbour porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>			2				X	
Hooded seal	<i>Cystophora cristata</i>								LPC
Harp seal	<i>Phoca groenlandica</i>								LPC
Ringed seal	<i>Pusa hispida</i>								HPC
<b>Reptiles</b>									
Leatherback sea turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>		1			X			
Loggerhead sea turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>					X			
Kemp Ridely's sea turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	●							LPC

<sup>7</sup> A critical habitat statement exists for this species however it is rare in the study area considered in this assessment with one sighting of two individuals recorded in the DFO cetacean database.

<sup>8</sup> This species added at DFO's suggestion given that its general distribution encompasses the North-west Atlantic however apart from a localized population on the edge of the Scotian Shelf the nearest known population is along the northern coast of Labrador and into the Davis Strait.