

Environmental Stewardship Branch
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May 28, 2012

Ms. Elizabeth MacDonald
Environmental Analyst
Conservation Officer
Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board
1791 Barrington Street
6th floor, TD Centre
Halifax, NS B3J 3K0

**RE: Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Eastern Scotian Shelf
and Slope – Middle and Sable Island Banks**

Dear Ms. MacDonald,

As requested, Environment Canada (EC) has reviewed the Strategic Assessment for the Eastern Scotian Shelf and Slope – Middle and Sable Island Banks – Draft for Public Review and offers the following comments.

Section 6.3

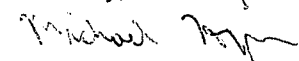
- The term "Species of Special Status" in section 6.3.1 is generally used in EA to include species at risk (i.e. species under SARA or provincial endangered species legislation) and species of conservation concern (i.e. species with Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre ranks) only. The inclusion of migratory birds and the Migratory Birds Convention Act under the Species of Special Status heading could be confusing to some.
- We would recommend that migratory birds as protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act therefore be listed as its own VEC.
- This would then require changes the addition of the term "migratory birds" where the term "species of special status" is currently used (Sec. 6.3.2, 6th bullet, Section 6.3.3, 7th and 8th bullets) and the removal of "species of special status" from the 10th bullet of sec. 6.3.3.

Appendix A, Section VI

- Since most seabirds in Canada are considered migratory birds and fall under the protection of the Migratory Birds Convention Act, Section VI of Appendix A becomes essentially redundant and should be removed. Once the scoping document has identified what birds are included, it becomes confusing to include a section identifying that no further assessment of seabirds shall be required.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael Hingston
Head, Environmental Assessment Unit
Environmental Protection Operations Directorate – Atlantic

Cc. R. Gautreau
C Gjerdrum
M. Raillard