# News Release

For Immediate Release

**The Government of Canada launches Call for Proposals for projects that protect aquatic species at risk**

August 10, 2021 Ottawa, Ontario Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Canada’s natural biodiversity plays an important role in our way of life. The health of the environment and wildlife supports our culture, our wellbeing and our economy. The Government of Canada is committed to taking further action to build on work already underway to protect and conserve at-risk species in our oceans, rivers, lakes, estuaries, and marshes to ensure their survival for future generations.

Today, the Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, announced a new Call for Proposals for the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk (CNFASAR). The fund aims to support the recovery and protection of aquatic species at risk by enabling multi-species, place-based and threat-based approaches to recovery. $28.95 million, through Budget 2021, will go toward CNFASAR projects as part of the Enhanced Nature Legacy initiative over five years, starting in 2021-22. This includes $4.15 million over five years to support the consideration of Indigenous knowledge and capacity building. These federal investments will directly support aquatic conservation and species at risk across the country and in Canada’s oceans.

Minister Jordan also announced expanded priorities for CNFASAR, which now include:

* New priority areas in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Arctic;
* Three new priority species have been identified – Atlantic salmon, Pacific salmon, and North Atlantic right whales – alongside continued support for all aquatic species at risk; and
* Consideration of Indigenous knowledge and support for Indigenous capacity-building related to these priorities.

Protecting at-risk aquatic species is a shared responsibility. Through this fund, the Government of Canada is continuing to build on a culture of conservation, empowering Canadian organizations to join in collaborative efforts to conserve nature. Project partners will be expected to provide matched funding. Interested parties are encouraged to review the [eligibility criteria](https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/criteria-criteres/index-eng.html) and submit a project proposal by the October 7, 2021 deadline.

**Quotes**“Protecting Canada’s aquatic species at risk means keeping our rivers, lakes, and oceans healthy for generations to come. Since our government launched this fund in 2018, it has provided vital support to partners and collaborators who are undertaking this important work across Canada, including efforts to reduce entanglements with fishing gear, better address issues related to bycatch, and restore natural habitats. By protecting our aquatic species at risk, we’re investing in our natural environment coast to coast to coast.”

*The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard*

## Quick Facts

* In partnership with Indigenous communities, community and non-governmental organizations, provinces and territories, industry and academia, the CNFASAR focuses on nine priority freshwater places, two priority marine threats, three priority species, and the consideration of Indigenous knowledge and capacity.
* Priority areas have been identified in:
  + [Fraser](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/fraser-eng.html) and [Columbia](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/columbia-eng.html) Watersheds Priority Place (British Columbia)
  + [Rocky Mountains’ Eastern Slopes Priority Place (Alberta)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/rocky-rocheuses-eng.html)
  + [Southern Prairies Priority Place (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/prairies-eng.html)
  + [Lower Great Lakes Watershed Priority Place (Ontario)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/great-grands-eng.html)
  + [St. Lawrence Lowlands Priority Place (Quebec)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/lawrence-laurent-eng.html)
  + [Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Rivers Priority  Place (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/gulf-golfe-eng.html)
  + [Bay of Fundy and Southern Uplands Watersheds Priority Place (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/fundy-eng.html)
  + NEW: Southern Newfoundland Priority Place (Newfoundland and Labrador)
  + NEW: Arctic Priority Place (Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Arctic Ocean)
* Two [marine priority threats](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/criteria-criteres/index-eng.html#marine) have been identified along our three coasts:
  + [Fishing interactions (includes entanglement and bycatch of aquatic species at risk)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/interactions-eng.html)
  + [Physical and acoustic disturbance (includes vessel collisions and marine noise)](http://wwwdev.ncr.dfo-mpo.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/profiles/dist-pert-eng.html)
* In addition to continuing to provide support for aquatic species at risk in general, three priority species have been identified (for projects outside of the priority areas and threats):
* Atlantic salmon
* Pacific salmon
* North Atlantic right whales
* Since formally launching in early 2019, CNFASAR continues to support a wide range of projects to protect and recover aquatic species at risk. All projects are described on [our website](https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/index-eng.html), and examples include:
* in New Brunswick, the Gespe’gewaq Mi’gmaq Resource Council is identifying priority habitats and restoring at-risk fish species in the Restigouche River watershed and its estuary;
* in Ontario, the Halton Region Conservation Foundation is reducing threats to Redside Dace and American Eel habitat in the Bronte Creek watershed and Sixteen Mile Creek through conservation activities including riparian planting projects, re-establishment of creek channels, and dam removal; and
* in British Columbia, the Fraser Valley Watersheds Coalition is working to protect and recover aquatic species at risk by restoring and creating aquatic habitat and improving fish passage in waterways in the Chilliwack area.

## Associated Links

* [Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/index-eng.html)
* [Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk – Priority Places and Threats](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/cnfasar-fnceap/priority-priorite/index-eng.html)
* [Canada’s Nature Legacy](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/conservation/nature-legacy.html)
* [Canada Nature Fund](https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/nature-legacy/fund.html)
* [*Species at Risk Act*](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=8BB77EC2-1)

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