

B.C. Coastal Issues Poll Finds Strong Consensus on Future of Coastal Economy:

- **93% of British Columbians say marine conservation key to future of B.C. coastal economy.**
- **92% concerned about declining fish stocks.**
- **79% support the creation of more marine protected areas.**

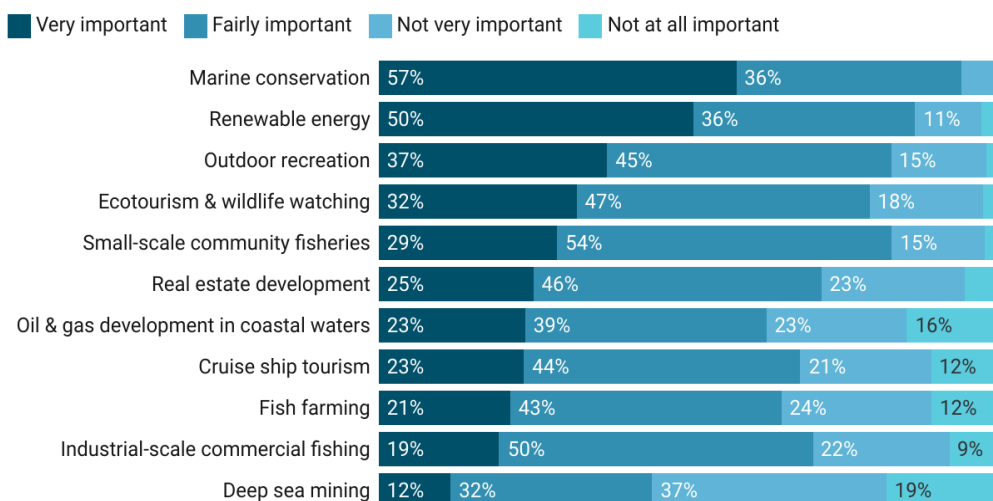
The findings reported here are based on a province-wide online survey of n=1,603 British Columbians conducted October 31 through November 8, 2023 by Mario Canseco and Research Co. The Bayesian credibility interval or margin of error equivalent for a sample of this size is ±2.4% 19 times out of 20.

1. A recent survey on coastal issues conducted by Research Co. finds marine conservation viewed as a priority for the future of the B.C. coastal economy.

Asked to rate the importance of various activities to the economic future of the B.C. coast, including commercial fishing, tourism, and oil & gas development, respondents across all regions and demographics put “marine conservation” on top.

Marine conservation and renewable energy seen as most important for the economic future of the BC coast

In your opinion, how important are each of the following to the economic future of the BC coast?



“Marine conservation” is rated by 93% as important to the future coastal economy, followed by “renewable energy” (86%), and “outdoor recreation” (82%). Rounding out the top five priorities are “small-scale community fisheries” (83%) and “ecotourism” (79%). At the bottom of the list are “fish farming” (69%) and “deep

sea mining” (44%).

2. On issues of concern to B.C. coastal communities, “declining fish stocks” tops the list, with 92% of British Columbians concerned, including 68% who are “very concerned”.

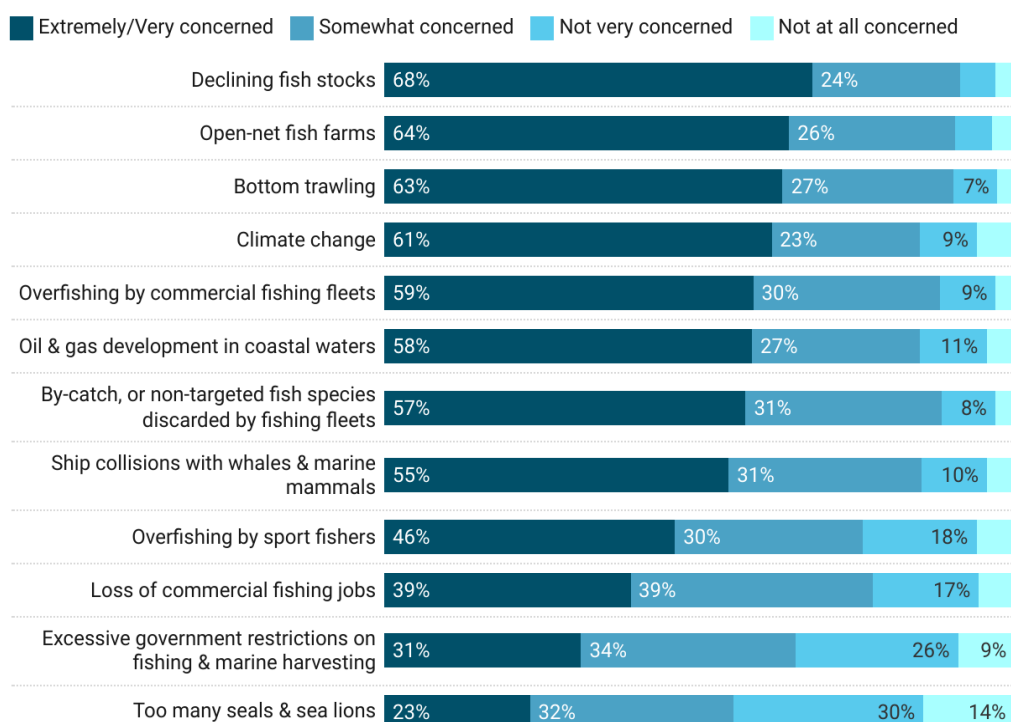
Reflecting a marked contrast between generations, respondents aged 65+ are 20 points more likely to say they are “extremely/very” concerned (77%) about declining fish stocks compared to those aged 18-34 (56%).

“Open-net fish farms” (90%) and “bottom trawling” (90%) are the second highest on the list of concerns, followed by climate change (84%). Residents of Vancouver Island, the Southern Interior, and respondents aged 65+ express the greatest concern about these issues, while residents in the North are significantly less worried. A strong majority of all party supporters are “very concerned” about open-net fish farms and bottom trawling, with supporters of the federal Conservatives and People’s Party being exceptions on the issue of climate change.

Lowest on the list of coastal concerns are “loss of commercial fishing jobs” (78%), “excessive government restrictions on fishing” (65%), and “too many seals and sea lions” (55%).

“Declining fish stocks”, “fish farms”, and “bottom trawling” are top coastal concerns

How CONCERNED are you, if at all, about the following potential threats to the BC coast & coastal communities?

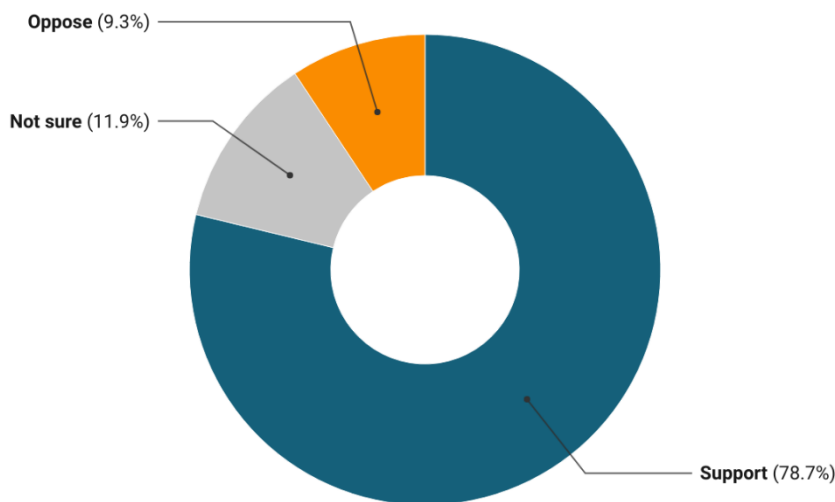


3. The survey finds strong support for a plan by Ottawa, B.C., and coastal First Nations to establish a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in BC’s northern coastal waters.

Nearly eight in ten (79%) of B.C. residents support this collaborative inter-governmental project, which proposes to protect nearly one third of waters off the province’s north and central coast. Just 9% of British Columbians are opposed.

Nearly 8 in 10 British Columbians support proposal to create an extensive network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in B.C. coastal waters

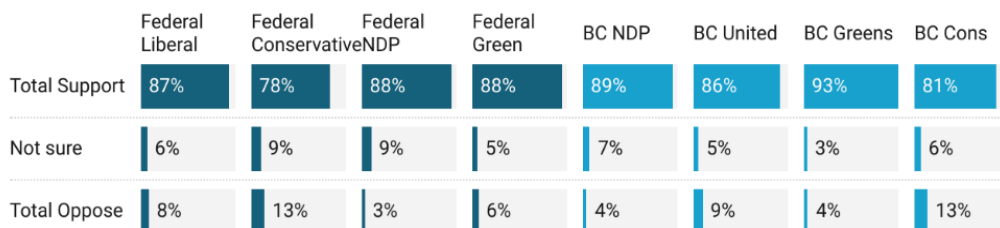
Given what you know, would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the creation of a network of Marine Protected Areas to protect a total of 30% of the waters of BC’s Northern Shelf Bioregion?



Politically, 78% of federal Conservative voters support the MPA network, versus 14% who oppose it. Among federal Liberals, there is 87% support, and among federal NDPers, there is 88% support.

Support for MPAs to protect coastal waters is strong across all federal and provincial parties

Given what you know, would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the creation of a network of Marine Protected Areas to protect a total of 30% of the waters of BC’s Northern Shelf Bioregion?



MPAs are apparently one issue that transcends partisan politics in a province

known for polarization.

4. British Columbians have confidence in scientists and environmental groups as sources of information on marine issues. Confidence in the salmon farming industry and fishing companies is weak.

The general public has the most confidence in scientists (77%), environmental groups (67%), and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (61%) as sources of information on issues like marine protected areas (MPAs).

A majority also have confidence in local First Nations communities (54%), the provincial government (54%), and whale watching guides (51%).

British Columbians have the least confidence in the fishing industry (39%), the salmon farming industry (32%), and fishing companies like Jimmy Pattison’s Canfisco (25%).

Scientists and environmental groups have the confidence of the general public on marine issues; the fishing industry does not

How much CONFIDENCE do you have in each of the following as a source of information when it comes to marine protected areas (MPAs) on the BC coast?

