



Challenges in creating ecosystem accounts for Canadian ocean areas and coastline

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Brief Description

This presentation discusses the challenges of creating ecosystem accounts for coastal and ocean ecosystems. These accounts are important in that they cover services provided by the environment that are not currently included in economic accounts.

Abstract

In typical economic accounting, the environment - if considered at all, is only included as a provider of resources such as timber, food, and water. Canada's new Census of Environment will be going beyond this view of the environment to consider the impact that ecosystems have on society in ways not currently measured in economic accounts. This will be done by building ecosystem accounts (using the UN System of Environmental Economic Accounting-Ecosystem Accounting framework) that will measure the extent, condition, and services of ecosystems in Canada.

As challenging as building these accounts is for land-based ecosystems in Canada, coastal and marine ecosystems provide another layer of complexity. Canada has the longest coastline in the world, much of which is thinly populated and highly inaccessible, making these accounts particularly difficult to compile.

This presentation will cover some of the main challenges the Census of Environment faces in acquiring data for coastal and marine ecosystems and in modelling variables for these accounts. We will also highlight the progress that has been made in the first year of the Census of Environment.