Improving the Communication of Marine Environmental Information

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Environmental Information: Use and Influence

Case Studies

This poster draws its results from three graduate studies:

The State of the Scotian Shelf Report is a report series produced by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and co-published with the ACZISC.

Gulfwatch Contaminants Monitoring Program is a subcommittee of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment. The program is responsible for monitoring chemical contamination in the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy.

Coastal Web Atlases are online compilations of data sets, intended to amalgamate data sources into one map interface for use by the public, decision makers, or government agencies. The four studied were Massachusetts, Maryland, British Columbia, and Scotland.

Research Questions and Methods

All three case studies employed similar research questions and methodology:

How are information products produced and how are stakeholders involved in production?
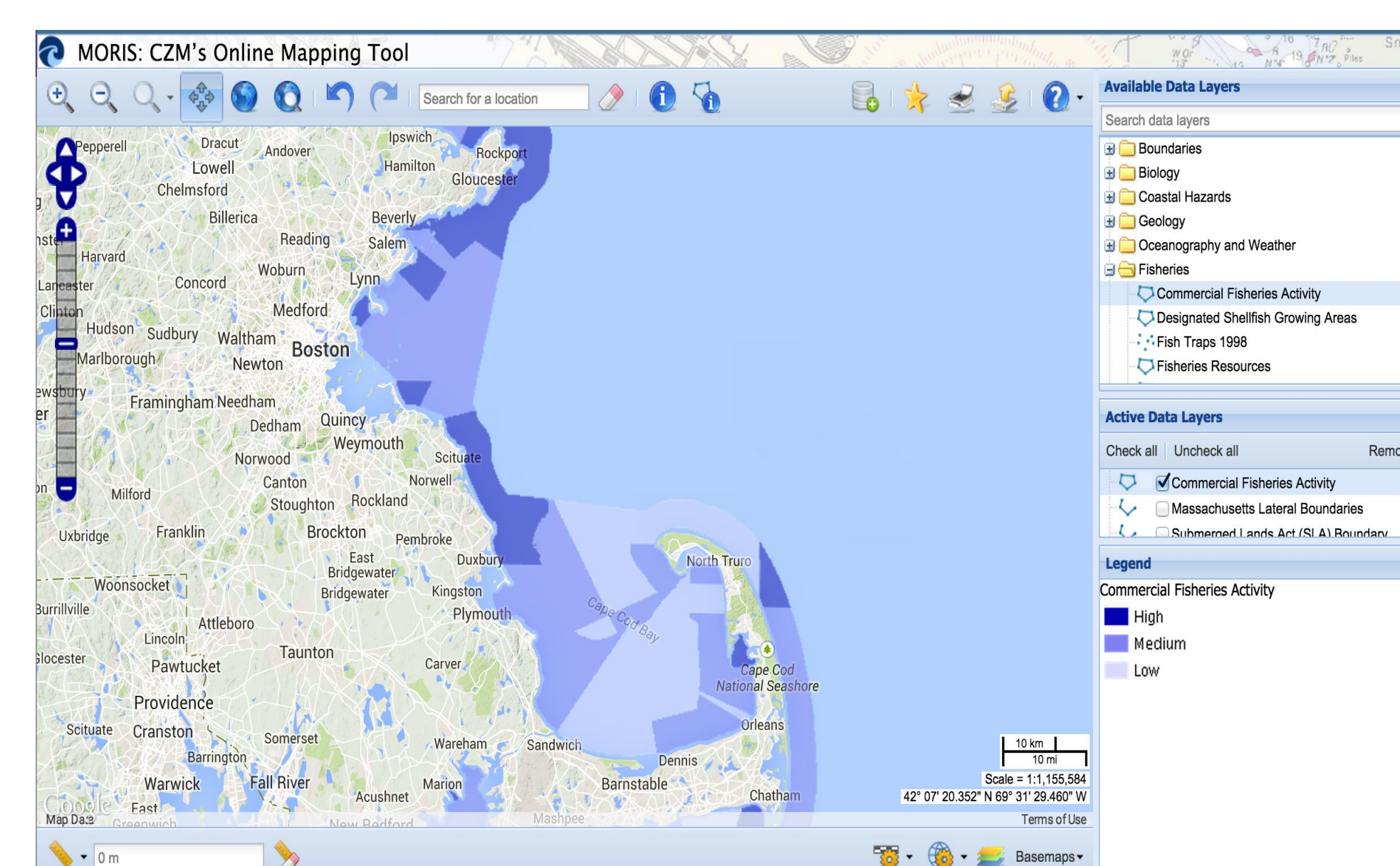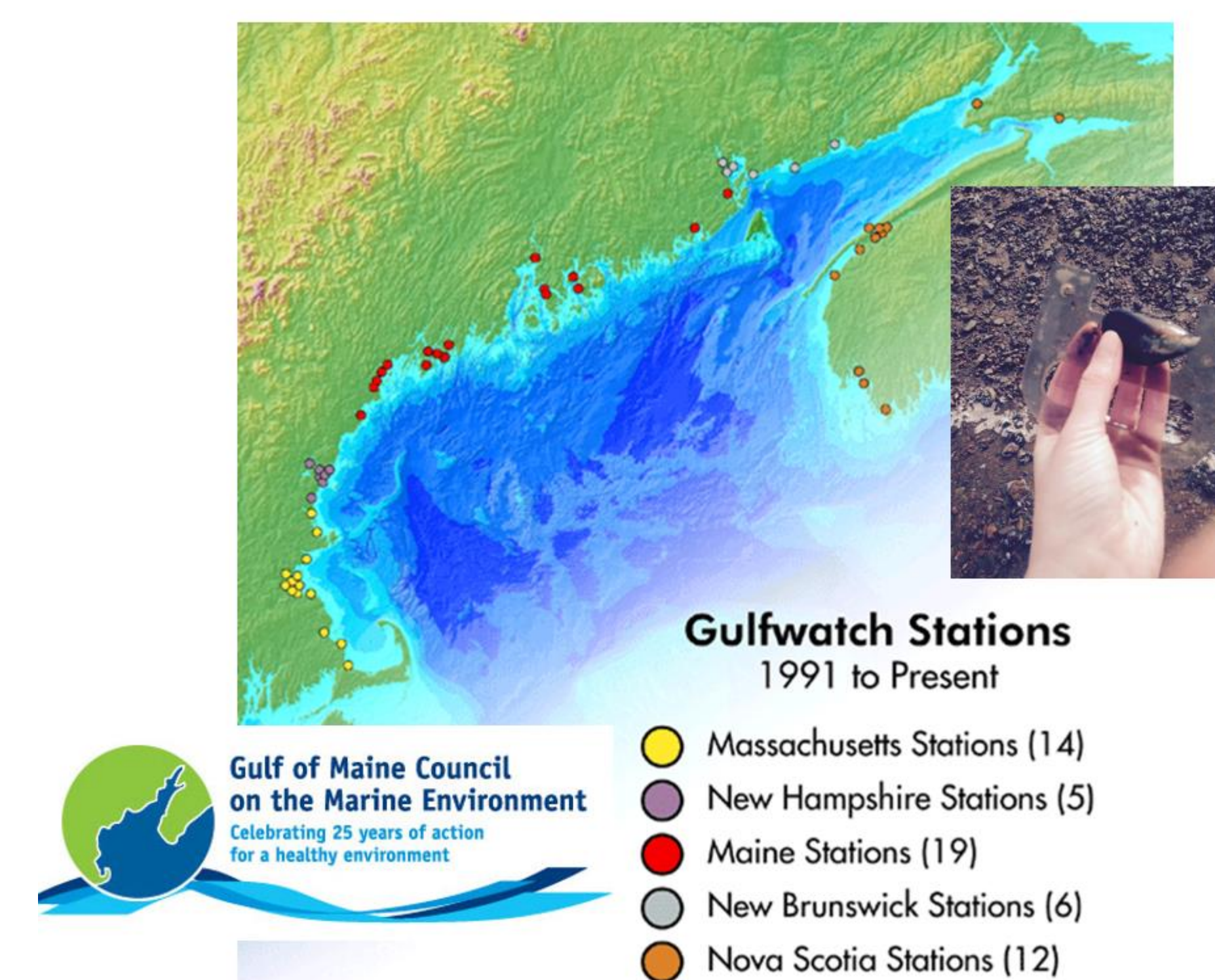
Who uses the information products and in what capacity?

Semi structured interviews of information producers/ users in person or over the phone

Analysis of the use of webpages that house the information products (how many users? what was downloaded? etc.)

Online surveys of potential users through Opinio

Common enablers and barriers to research use were identified between the three studies.

Gulfwatch Stations
1991 to Present

Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment
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- Massachusetts Stations (14)
- New Hampshire Stations (5)
- Maine Stations (19)
- New Brunswick Stations (6)
- Nova Scotia Stations (12)

Massachusetts Ocean Research Information System (MORIS)

Enablers

Availability of high quality environmental information

Regional/Provincial geographical scale is relevant to users

Digital distribution and availability of information products

Stakeholder engagement during development

Barriers

Timeliness of product release

Ability to interpret data/information by users

Appropriateness of the information for applications

Jurisdictional responsibilities do not line up

Information overload

Conclusions

In order to improve the use of information products of research, we propose the following recommendations:

- Promote information product over the product's entire life cycle

- Ensure publishing methods are what users prefer/improve user access

- Promote program goals by seeking engagement from potential users/collaborators

References

Photo Credit: Peter Wells

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