

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment: An Investigation of the Use of Its Grey Literature Publications

Bertrum H. MacDonald, Ruth E. Cordes, Peter G. Wells, & Danielle M. Cossarini

Dalhousie University Information Management, Resource and Environmental Studies, and International Ocean Institute

Abstract

Our research studies the influence of information produced as “grey literature” by the Gulf of Maine Council (GOMC). To date we have identified the types of GOMC publications, and examined their diffusion. We plan to extend our research by interviewing GOMC informants, and analysing policy documents and website use.

Introduction

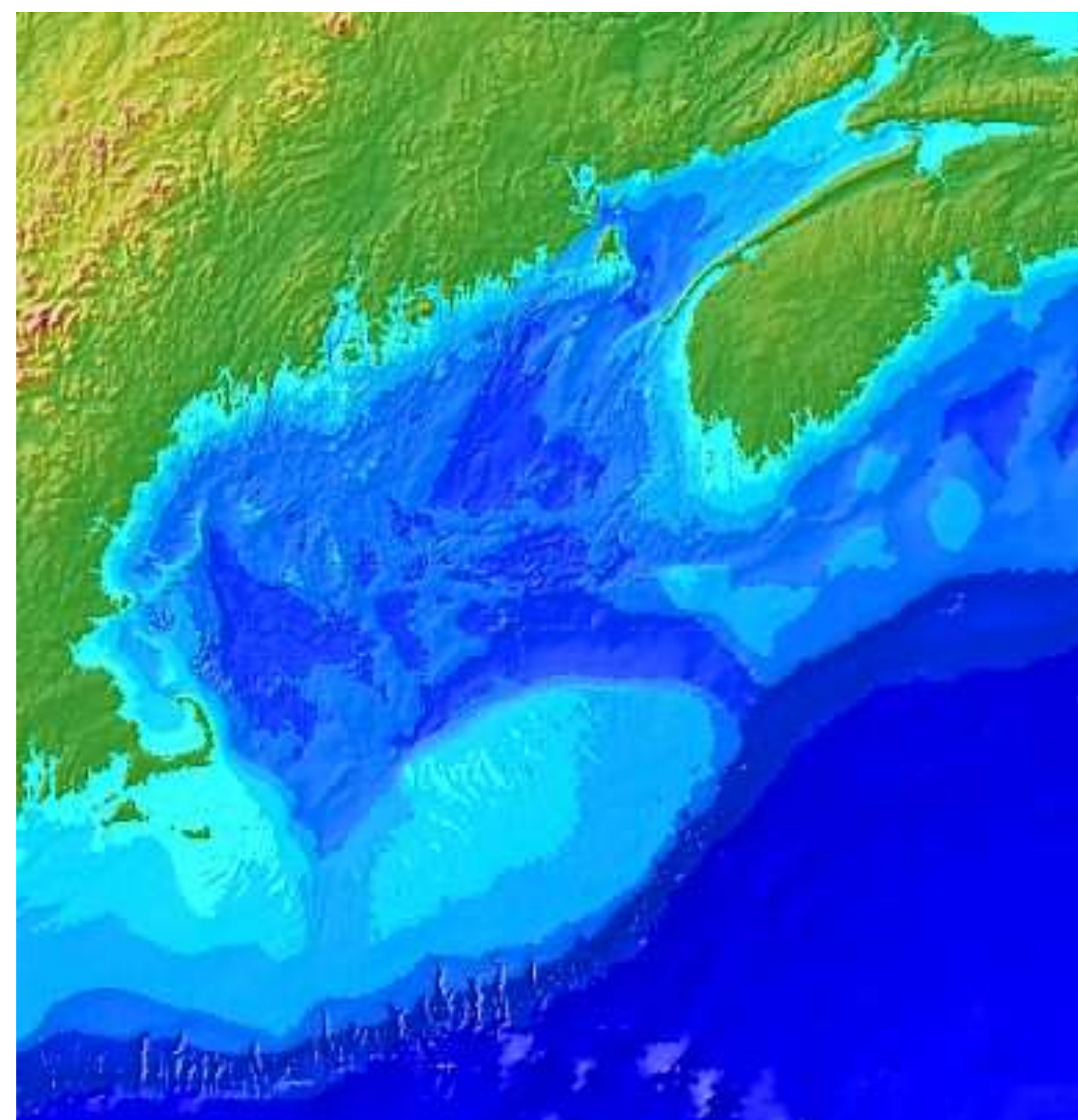
- GOMC is an international, intergovernmental body focused on the marine environment of the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy. The philosophy underlying the Council's work since 1989 is that activities on land ultimately affect the sea, especially in shallow coastal areas.

- GOMC produces grey literature both in print and online. With over 300 publications, GOMC provides a complex publishing history.
- Awareness of grey literature is problematic, despite powerful search engines and open access.



Guiding Questions

- What has GOMC published, where and how?
- What do citation analysis and other methods show about the distribution and use of GOMC publications?



Methods

Our methods have included:

- Identifying GOMC publications by searching
 - the GOMC website
 - library catalogues
 - web search engines
 - article databases
- Locating citations to GOMC documents by searching
 - Web of Science
 - Scopus
 - Google
 - Google Scholar
- Analysis of citations

GOMC Publications

- GOMC has produced many types of publications (see Table 1).
- GOMC grants have supported publications produced by other agencies.
- GOMC work has been reported at conferences and in journal articles.

Table 1. Types and numbers of GOMC Publications*

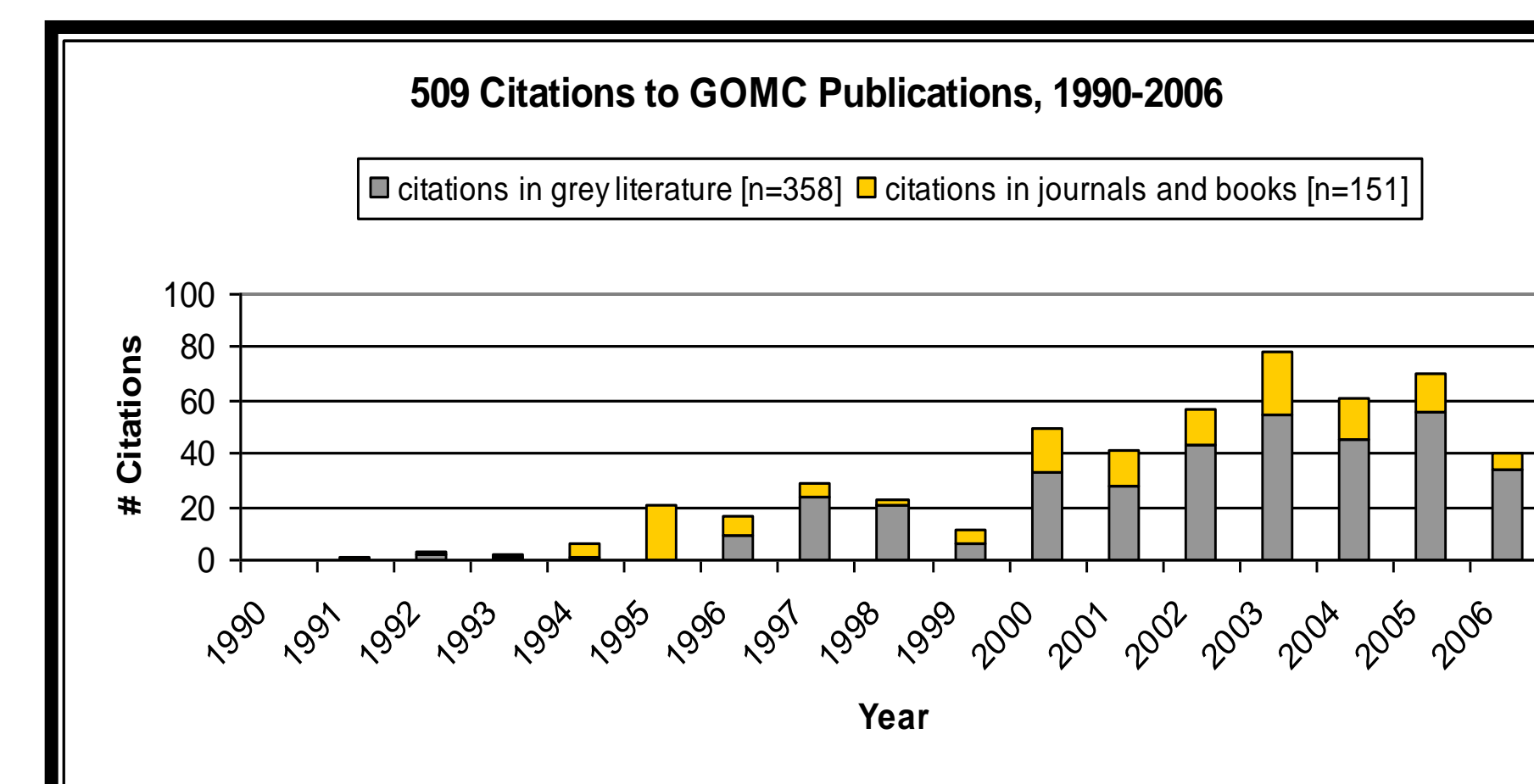
Council Publications	
Reports and fact sheets	122
Background documents	38
Action plans and annual reports	29
Brochures and posters	10
Serials	4
Miscellaneous	9
Council Supported Publications	
Reports and background documents	24
Miscellaneous documents	25
Reprints of Council authored documents	
Conference papers, journal articles and abstracts	37

* As of 15 November 2006

Current Findings

Citation data shows increased use of GOMC reports over time (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Frequency of Citations to GOMC Publications



Reports and journal articles describing GOMC's Gulfwatch Contaminants Monitoring Program were selected for further analysis.

Comparison of citations to Gulfwatch publications in grey literature (Fig. 2a) and in journal articles (Fig. 2b), show that grey literature is more likely to cite other grey literature.

Fig. 2a. GOMC Gulfwatch: Citations in Grey Literature

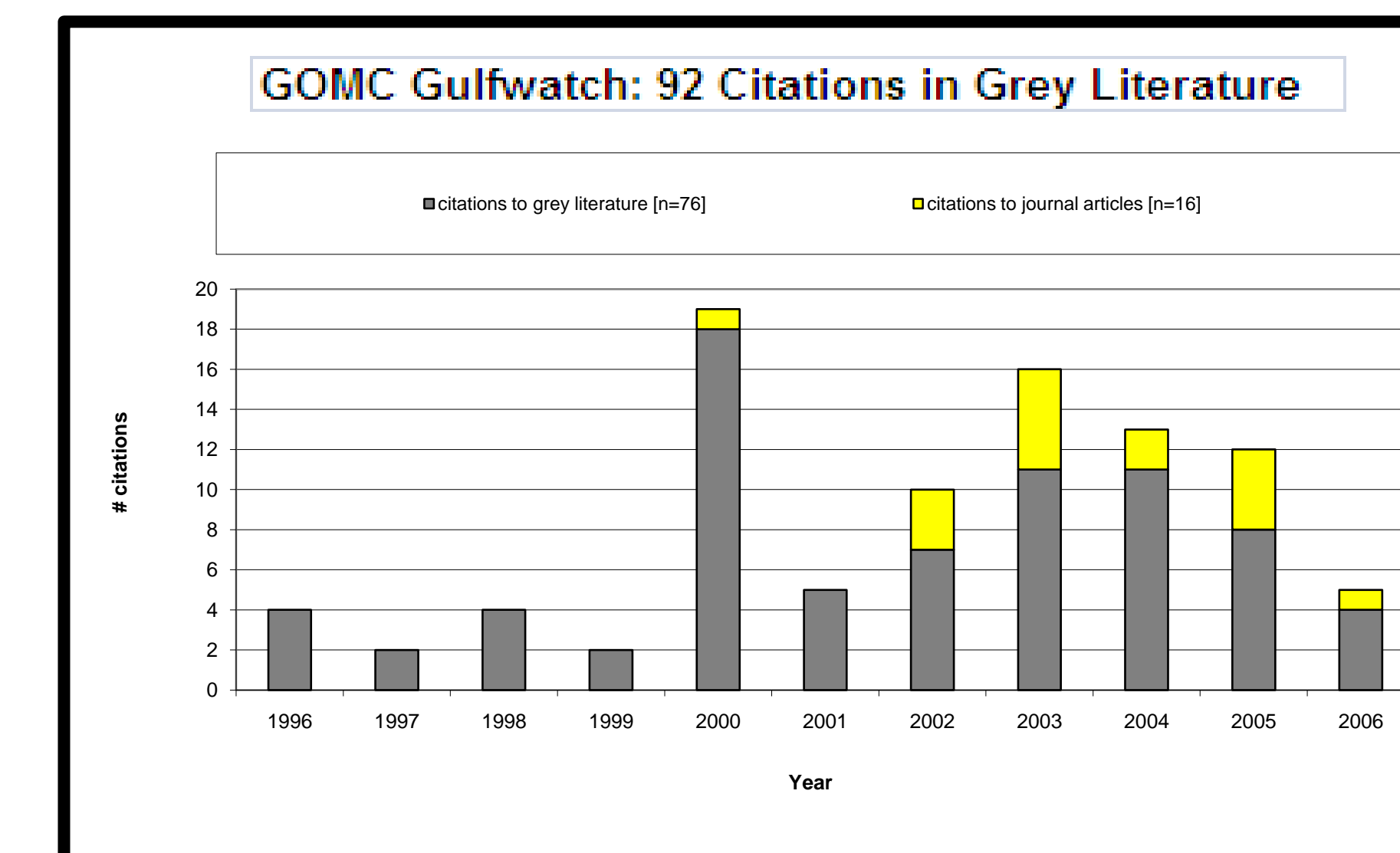
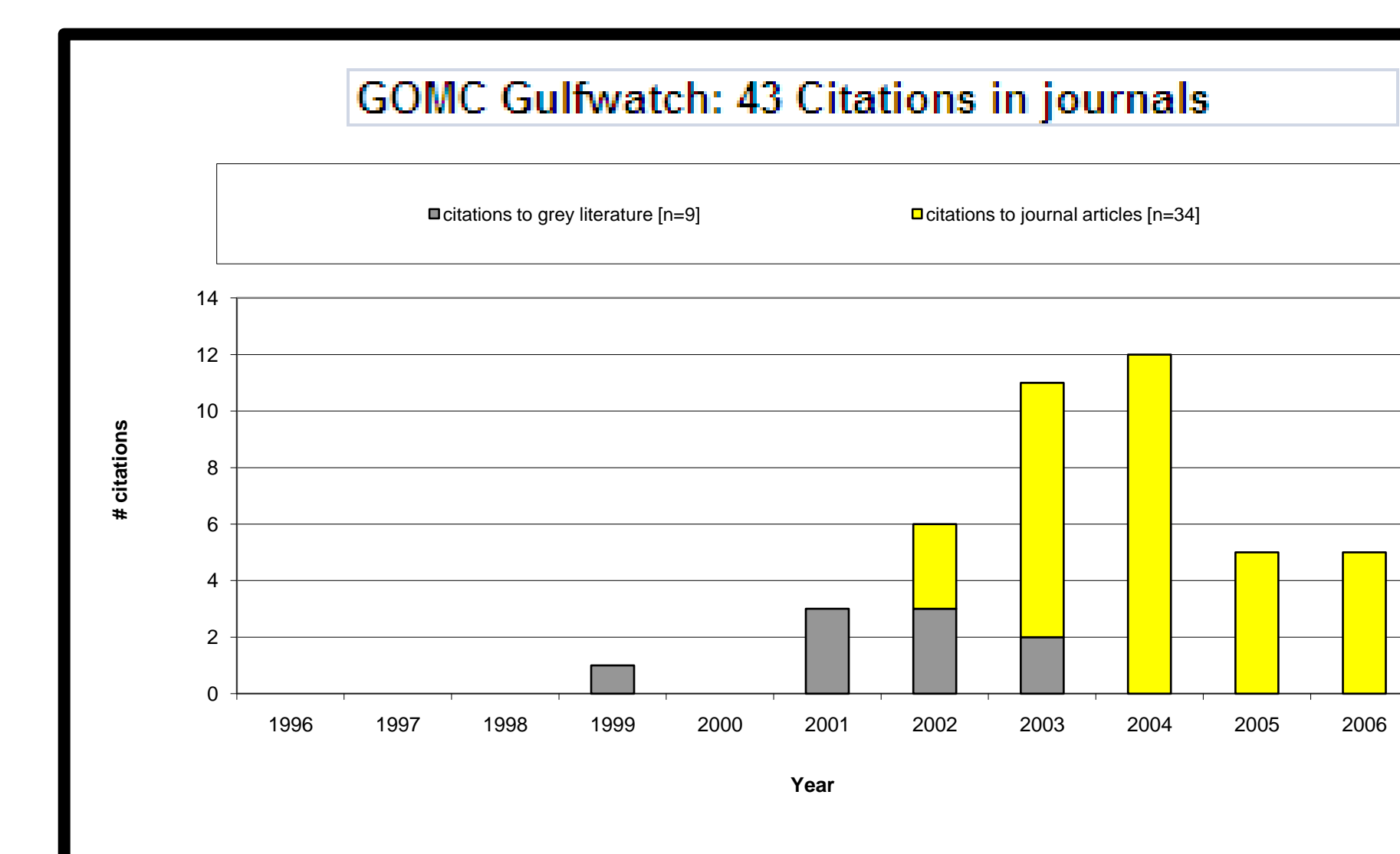


Fig. 2b. GOMC Gulfwatch: Citations in Journal Articles



Planned Research

Our continuing research includes:

- Interviews of key informants to document dissemination pathways of GOMC's print and online publications.
- Content analysis of public policy documentation to assess the use of GOMC's publications.
- Analysis of GOMC website use and surveys of readers of selected publications such as the *GOM Times*.



Selected References

- R.E. Cordes, B.H. MacDonald & P.G. Wells (2006) Gulf of Maine Council Publications and Their Use <http://www.gulfofmaine.org/council/publications/GOMCpublications-report-Cordes-2006.pdf>
- B.H. MacDonald, R.E. Cordes & P.G. Wells (2007) Assessing the Diffusion and Impact of Grey Literature Published by International Intergovernmental Scientific Groups: The Case of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment. *Publishing Research Quarterly* 23(1):30-46. <http://www.gulfofmaine.org/council/publications/Assessing-the-Diffusion-and-Impact-of-Grey-Literature.pdf>

Contacts

Bertrum MacDonald 494-2472
bertrum.macdonald@dal.ca

Peter Wells 237-0600
oceans2@ns.sympatico.ca



L to r: Wells, MacDonald (back); Cossarini, Cordes (front)

Supported by:



8th BoFEP Bay of Fundy Science Workshop
Acadia University, Wolfville, NS
May 26-29, 2009