

Outer limits of Canada's continental shelf in the Atlantic Ocean

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In December 2013, Canada filed a partial submission defining the outer limits of its continental shelf in the Atlantic Ocean under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This submission identified an area of approximately 1.2 million km² of extended continental shelf, i.e., beyond the 200 nautical mile (nm) limit. It will take several years before the submission will be reviewed by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and Canada will receive their recommendations.

This presentation summarizes the main steps in defining the outer limits of the continental shelf and will also briefly describe what is included in Canada's extended continental shelf in the Atlantic. In the Labrador Sea, the extended continental shelf extends to the 200 nm limit of Denmark (Greenland). The continental shelf in the Grand Banks region extends beyond Orphan Basin, Orphan Knoll, and Flemish Cap. The thickness of the sediments in the Sohm Abyssal Plain defines the outer limits of the continental shelf in the Nova Scotia region beyond the 200 nm limit. The area of the extended continental shelf in the Atlantic Ocean includes most of the deep sedimentary basins in the Grand Banks region, as well as offshore Nova Scotia and Labrador.