The Names of Nova Scotian Fishing Boats

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> To Bob Strongman his boat was strictly a tool, a part of earning his living. He did not regard her as anything special at all. As far as he was concerned her status was pretty well the same as that of his big Chevrolet pickup which he changed every four or five years. He would no more think of giving her a name than he did the pickup. So, like the majority of the world's working boats, she has not got one. She is simply 'the boat' and he would never have used her for pleasure. In fact, he did not like driving her very much.[1]

These observations by Basil Greenhill about a Prince Edward Island lobster fisherman are a proper antidote for the excess of romanticism that twenty-years ago pervaded the study of nautical technology — and that still is too common today. I have no reason to doubt that they also correctly described Mr. Strongman's attitudes; fishing communities are sufficiently heterogeneous to contain at least one advocate for most points of view. But Greenhill's observations clearly are *not* true of the generality of fishermen in Canada's Maritimes. A few minutes in any fishing harbour will confirm that the great majority of the boats bear names. Conversation with their owners will reveal that many derive considerable pleasure from working at sea, at least when the weather is good, and that they take a great deal of pride in their boats; pride reflected in the paintwork, extra investments beyond the economic optimum, and the names painted on bow or stern.[2]

In 1990-1991 I had an extended opportunity for such conversations during a survey of hook-and-line fishermen, on contract to the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).[3] The survey was of owners and captains (in this fleet usually the same individual) of boats with groundfish longline licences issued by DFO's Scotia-Fundy Region, which covers Nova Scotia and New Brunswick between the northern tip of Cape Breton and the US border. In this paper, I will examine both the names these fishermen gave to their boats and the naming practices they reveal and will show that these conventions have close parallels in other periods and cultures. While there is far more to a man-boat relationship than can be deduced from a name, earlier studies have shown this to be a useful guide to the wider issues Greenhill raised.[4] The names recorded in the

survey are, therefore, examined here for evidence of the role of his boat in a fisherman's life. *

Data Source and Analytical Methods

The data are drawn from a survey of licensed groundfish longline fishermen in which 369 (selected on a stratified-random basis from the approximately 2400 in the Region) were interviewed. Among many other questions, they were asked the name of their current boat and, if they had that boat for less than five years, the name of their previous one. In addition to answering such formal questions, many volunteered extensive additional information. In a few cases, this included explanations for their choice of boat names.

These data were gathered in an attempt to relate other information to official records rather than to study boat nomenclature; as a result, the recording protocols were not ideal for present purposes. In most cases, names were noted on the basis of verbal reports rather than through checks of hulls or official documents. They were therefore recorded phonetically and may not exactly reflect the fishermen's intentions. Indeed, in those cases where the boat was seen by the interviewer, the name on the hull often diverged from that reported by the interviewee; the latter frequently simplified matters by dropping initials, numerals, ampersands or even words. By arbitrary convention, followed here, a reported "and" was always recorded as an ampersand and trailing numerals were noted in Roman characters, unless there was specific evidence to the contrary. In some cases, an interviewee's present boat was another's previous craft. These repetitions cannot be eliminated from the data since in other cases the same name is known to have been reused on another boat, while for most replications the boat's identity can only be guessed.[5] The two data sets thus were tabulated and analyzed separately, accepting the occasional duplication.

The various names are here classified into a straightforward set of groups which generally follow those employed by Bjarne Rogan in a study of the names of Norwegian yachts.[6] My classification was in some cases rather arbitrary. In dividing personal names by gender, for example, a number of androgynous designations were encountered which were placed in whichever sex seemed more likely.

The interviewees were also asked the years in which their present, but not their former, boat was built and purchased. Of the 355 boats for which a date of build is available, the median was 1983, the oldest having been built in 1958 while some were new in 1990. The interviewees' previous boats were presumably built earlier, on average, but this cannot be confirmed. Purchase dates of the 360 presently-owned boats for which such data are available ranged from 1967 to 1990, with a median of 1987.

Fishing Boat Names

In contradiction to Greenhill's statement, almost all the boats encountered were named: for only thirty-eight of the 363 in current use was no name recorded, and in some cases

this resulted from a flaw in the interview (such as an interviewee's refusal to answer some questions) rather than the actual lack of a name. Excluding two such examples, all unnamed boats in current use were under thirty-five feet in length and thus in the smallest class recognized by the Canadian licensing system. Indeed, of the remaining thirty-six, seventeen were among the twenty-three boats in the sample less than twenty-five feet long. Similarly, sixteen were among the thirty-seven boats powered by outboard motors and a seventeenth (and inactive) was the sole unpowered boat in the sample.[7] Thus, as expected substantial fishing boats were usually named, though dories and other small boats sometimes were not. The data on unnamed former boats are less reliable, inasmuch as several interviewees seemed unable or unwilling to recall the names of such boats, leading to some erroneous blank entries. Thirty of the 190 records of previous boats lacked reported names, but even this apparent difference is not statistically significant (X^2=3.27, P>0.05).

Personal Proper Names

The great majority of boats had personal (human) names, usually in some form of combination or construct (see tables 1 and 2). Female names outnumbered males by 179 to thirty-five, while a further fifty-four had combinations of male and female names (two names were of indeterminate sex).[8]

Table 1
Types of Names

Type	Present Boat	Former Boat	Total
Personal	179	93	272
Initials	18	5	23
Other Humans	37	19	56
Marine names	15	3	18
Pride and affection names	11	7	18
Quality names	12	5	17
Geographic names	2	5	7
Animal names	5	0	5
Company names	6	1	7
Humorous names	20	13	33
Other names	20	9	29
No name reported	38	30	68

Source: T.J. Kenchington and R.G. Halliday, *A Survey of Fishing Practices in the Scotia-Fundy Region Groundfish Longline Fisheries* (Canadian Manuscript Report in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences No. 2225, Ottawa, 1994).

Female personal names were most commonly encountered as a simple double name *{Claire Marie),* though many boats had the linked names of two females *{Kara & Koren)* or a single name followed by an initial *{Tracy L.).* With initials, it is not possible

to say how often it was the initial of a personal middle name as opposed to a surname. Other variants included a single name; a single name with the prefix *"Lady," "Miss"* or *"Little"* a double name with a prefix *(Miss Shelly Ann);* a single name with the suffix *"Girl;"* and a single name with a leading initial *(O. Patricia)*. Male personal names were more commonly a single name followed by an initial, though plain single names, simple double names, linked names and, in one case each, a name with a prefix *(Master Adam)* or a suffix *(Jamie Boy)* also occurred.

Table 2
Types of Personal Proper Names

Type and Sex	Present Boat	Former Boat	Total
Female			
Single name	0	1	1
Single name with numerical suffix	5	2	7
Single name with preceding initial	0	1	1
Single name with initial	15	10	25
Single name with initial and numerical suffix	6	2	8
Single name with "Lady" prefix	8	0	8
Single name with "Lady" prefix, numerical suffix	2	0	2
Single name with "Miss" prefix	2	0	2
Single name with "Miss" prefix, numerical suffix	4	0	4
Single name with "Little" prefix	1	1	2
Single name with "Girl" suffix	0	2	2
Double name	40	27	67
Double name with numerical suffix	8	4	12
Double name with "and"	22	9	31
Double name with "and," numerical suffix	3	2	5
Double name with "Miss" prefix	2	0	2
Total Female	118	61	179

Type and Sex	Present Boat	Former Boat	Total
Male			
Single name with numerical suffix	1	1	2
Single name with initial	8	5	13
Single name with initial ana numerical suffix	0	1	1
Single name with "Master" prefix	1	0	1
Single name with "Boy" suffix	0	1	1
Double name	2	5	7
Double name with numeric suffix	1	0	1
Double name with "and"	5	4	9
Total Male	18	17	35
Combination			
Joint names with "and"	25	7	32
Joint names with "and," initials	2	0	2
Joint names with "and," numerical suffix	2	1	3
Joint names without "and"	8	4	12
Joint names, numerical suffix only	1	0	1
Triple names	1	2	3
Triple names with numerical suffix	1	0	1
Total Combination	40	14	54
Formal	3	1	4

Source: See table 1.

The combinations of female and male names usually had a linking *"and"* or an ampersand *{Stephanie & Darryl),* but one-third did not. Such strange combinations as *Paula Wayne* may, however, have resulted from a casualness in spoken use of the *"and"* (indeed, there was a *Paula & Wayne IT).* There were two examples of linked combinations with initials *(Darcy R. & Sarah B., Catherine Charles R.),* the sole examples of such a name in any arrangement of sexes. The initials in the first case are presumably those of middle rather than surnames, while the latter appears to have a family initial. There were two examples of triple names of mixed sex *(Elaine Ann Blaine)* and another two which were probably of that form: *Loretta C. Ann II* and her homonymous predecessor. There

were three more formal personal names *(J.R. Lloyd, Baker McKay, L.E. Rose)* which, perhaps surprisingly, were all attached to boats of under thirty-five feet. The *"Lady"* prefix appeared once with an apparent family name *(Lady Robichaud)*.

Figure 1: Inshore fishing boats at Port LaTour, NS, winter 1991. *Irene Ann's* name is included in the present analysis as a personal proper name; *Jody Allen* was not included in the interview survey but it would have been classed as a formal personal name.

Source: Courtesy of the author.

Of the 272 names in this "personal" category, forty-seven had some trailing numeral indicating repeated use. Of these, thirty-eight were female, four male, and five combinations. Among both female and male names, numerals were significantly more common with simple single names than with other forms, presumably because such simple names invite additional complexity while inherently more complex names become aesthetically too involved (or perhaps too intricate to report fully) if given a numeral.[9] This trend was not detectable with names that combined the sexes. There were neither any obvious nor statistically significant differences in the frequencies of different forms of personal proper names between those borne by boats in current use and those on the interviewees' previous boats (x^2=19.63, 6.07 and 11.30 by sex category, P>0.05).

In most cases, it is impossible to say for which humans these boats were named. The few specific reports offered by interviewees were, as expected, of naming for children or grandchildren, and that seems to be most common. It is, however, likely that some were named for wives or other close relatives. In particular, simple single female personal names were rather uncommon (eight cases, including those with trailing numerals, most of which were imperfectly-remembered names of former boats), but single female names with a following initial were quite frequent (thirty-three cases). There were no cases of double female names with initials. This relationship was highly statistically significant (X^2=87.70, P<0.001). The same trend applied to male names but less strongly (x^2=16.80, P<0.001). This may be a matter of taste (a lone single name is rather plain whereas a double name with initials is too complex), but many of the thirty-three cases may be the names of wives with the initial of the marital surname (a common form of name on Dutch barges) while the linked names seem more likely to be of descendants.[10]

Table 3
Types of Names Formed from Initials

Type	Present Boat	Former Boat	Total
Single with numerical suffix	1	0	1
Single with "Lady" prefix	1	0	1
Single with "Lady" prefix, numerical suffix	0	1	1
Double	3	1	4
Double with "and"	1	1	2
Double with "and," numerical suffix	1	0	1
Triple	5	1	6
Triple with numerical suffix	2	0	2
Triple with "Miss" prefix	1	0	1
Quadruple	0	1	1
Constructs	3	0	3

Source: See table 1.

Initials

A curiously large number of boats carried initials, presumably referring to specific individuals, in place of personal names (see table 3). These boat names were never composed of a single letter but they did range from a single letter with a numerical suffix to quadruple initials, plain double or triple initials being the most popular *(CSA)*. Both the

"Miss" and *"Lady"* prefixes were used with initials *(Miss JSN)*. There were three apparent constructs from initials: *Double* it, *4 JWL* and *4 C's II*. Initial names appear to have been less common among former boats, suggesting an increase in their popularity in the late 1980s, but the trend was not statistically significant ($x^2 = 1.69$, P>0.05).

Table 4
Other Types of Names Referring to People

Type and Sex	Present Boat	Former Boat	Total
Female with male collective	8	1	9
Female with female collective	4	0	4
Male with female collective	2	2	4
Male (prefix "little") with female collective	1	0	1
Male with male collective	1	0	1
Indeterminate with male collective	1	0	1
Numerical collective *(Four Brothers)*	3	1	4
Numerical collective with numerical suffix	1	1	2
Other collectives	4	3	7
Other collectives with numerical suffix	1	0	1
Constructs	2	1	3
Constructs with numerical suffix	0	1	1
Veiled reference	9	9	18

Source: See table 1.

Other References to Humans

Apart from straightforward personal names and initials, a considerable number of boat names were constructs that obviously refer to particular humans (see table 4). There was a slight tendency for these to refer to females rather than males, though only by a narrow and statistically insignificant margin (thirteen boats to eleven: $x^2 = 0 1 7$, P>0.05), while sixteen boats were named for a combination of the sexes (plus ten named in reference to people whose sex could not be determined). Whatever the reluctance to name boats for men and boys, it does not seem to apply to these constructs.

The most common form of these names was composed of one personal name and a descriptor of multiple other people. These were often a named female and a collection of males *(Sonya & Brothers, Julie & Boys* or *Patsy & Sons),* which may refer to a lone daughter and multiple sons or a wife and sons. There were also several examples of a named female and a collection of other females *(Hannah & Sisters, Debbie & Girls),* which presumably refer to a wife and daughters. Names of lone males and groups of females *(Matthew & Sisters)* were less common, though there was the interesting variant *Little Bruce & Sisters,* which presumably referred to one son and multiple daughters or one grandson and multiple granddaughters. There was a single all-male construct *(Ed & Boys)* and one of partly indeterminate sex *(Bobby & Sisters).*

Another form entailed a numeric count of individuals of the same sex: 7 *Girls* or *Two Daughters.* One, *Four Brothers,* was a rare case in which the fishermen seem to have named the boat after themselves rather than members of their families (though it is possible in this case that the joint-owners' father selected the name). Essentially, the same name occurred in French: *Les Quatre Frère,* attached to an Acadian fisherman's boat, was the only example of a non-English name recorded.
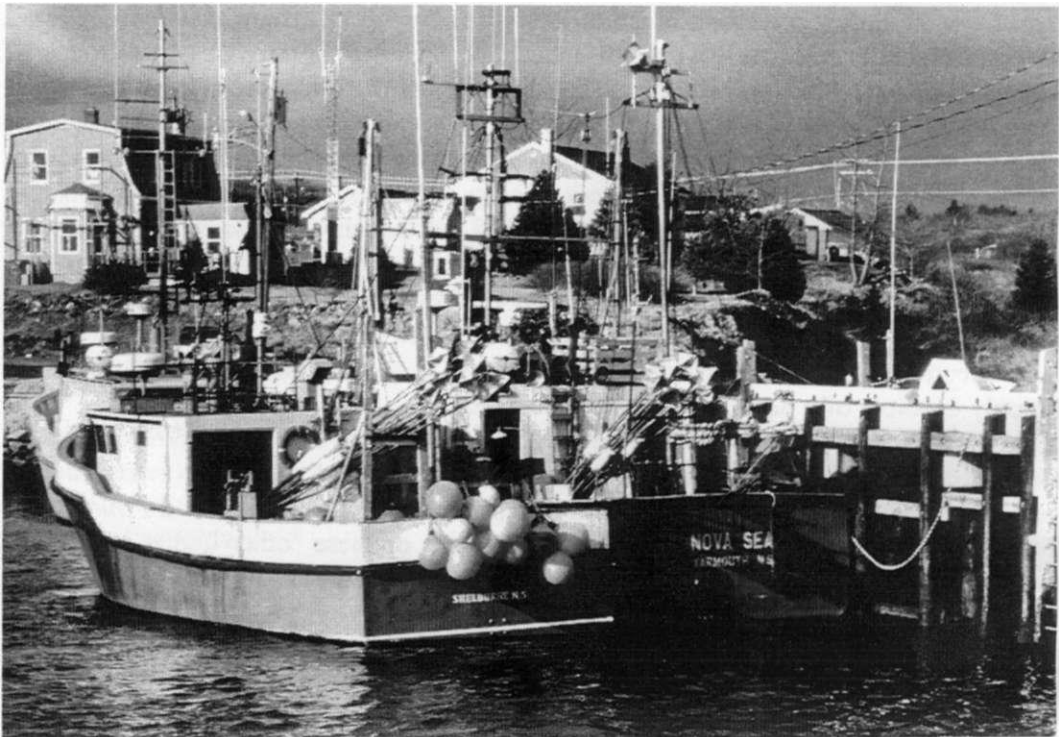
There was an assortment of related names, such as *Three T's, Gramp's Girls, Smith Brothers, J.J. Sisters* and *Sons of Erin.* In this group, *B.C. Twins* (a reference to west coast grandchildren perhaps) had been replaced by *B.C. Twins II* and *Four Sisters II* by *Four Sisters III* — three of only four examples of these "other human reference" names with numeric suffixes. There were two names that seemed to be artificial constructs from personal names *(Branalyn, Kar Phil Dan III),* perhaps attempts to incorporate the names of three individuals into a single boat name of acceptable length." *King Gregory* and *Lorraine & I.* also appear to be references to individuals though their meanings are unclear. The "7" in the latter is an initial, although it may also be a pun on the owner.

Several other boats carried names that were probably veiled references to particular people, although only their owners would know the identity.[12] Indeed, some names are sufficiently obscure that it is not always certain whether they do refer to people. As best as can be judged, however, there were thirteen boats with names of this type, including *3 Devils* (perhaps named for unruly, though much loved, grandchildren), *My G.A.L. '$* (named for three females with the convenient initials), *Snow Boys* and possibly *Yankee Jack. Eight Bells* appears to be a pun, combining reference to eight females ("belles") with a nautical theme (the signal for the end of a watch; possibly an analogy with the owner's approaching retirement). It could thus equally qualify as a marine or a humorous name. *Trout King IV* looks like a proud sport fisherman's reference to himself while *Cookie* was probably a reference to a human, though it could be an affectionate diminutive related directly to the boat.

Marine Names

Other than personal names and other references to individual humans, there were a number of categories of names that expressed romantic conventions. The most frequent

was a group that can be considered "marine:" *Western Wave, Whitecap III, Blue Dawn* /and the like. This group graded into others, with as geographic *(Fundy Spray)* or quality *(Distant Thunder)* names. The classification adopted was necessarily in part arbitrary.

Figure 2: Groundfish longliners sheltering from bad weather alongside the Sambro wharf, December 1990. *Nova Sea* was not included in the interview sample, but would have been classified as a marine name.

Source: Courtesy of the author.

Pride and Affection Names

A substantial number of boats carried direct statements of their owner's pride in their craft, as in *Captain's Pride, Farmer's Pride* (owned by one of the few farmer/fishermen in Nova Scotia) or *Harbour Pride II.* There was a handful of other names that implied something of the same emotion, perhaps mixed with affection, without expressing either directly: *Eastern Queen, Blue Lady, Misty Maid II* or *Fiddler's Dream* for example. One fisherman owned two boats in succession, each called *Seawife I,* which suggests something much more than a casual relationship between man and boat. Noticeably, these pride names (which relate only to the boat and not to some human) were occasionally

female ("queen," "lady" or "maid") but never male. A number of names have here been counted in this "pride" category, though they could just as well be veiled references to people, such as *Trinity Lady, Little Darling* and *My Girl.*

Quality Names

Another frequent category contained names that appear to express some perceived or desired quality or positive attribute of the boat: *Endurance I, Star Finder* or *Daring Spirit,* for example. It is not always clear whether a name should have been counted in this category or whether it was really a veiled reference to a person *(Eastern Hunter,* for instance, might be owned by a dedicated deer hunter). Some names tended to be self-deprecating *(Sea Drifter)* but more were expressions of strength, success or (surprisingly) speed, such as *Surf Ace, Black Jet* or *Flying Dart.* The only names in this category that made reference to fish or fishing (with the possible exception of *Eastern Hunter,* if that really referred to the hunt for fish) were *Fin Fever* and *Crustacean Queen.* If this form of name is a wish for luck, fishermen seem reluctant to tempt fate by choosing names calling for fishing success.

Geographic Names

A handful of boats were named for local geographic features, either directly *(West Head, Cape Smokey, East Bay I)* or in some combination that also managed to capture the owner's feelings for his boat: *Miss Cove Rd.* (owned by a resident of that road) or *Smokey Queen (a* boat based in the shadow of Cape Smokey). The latter may also incorporate a humorous element, if the boat was notorious for producing smoke from its muffler. These geographic names were much more common on previous than current boats, suggesting that this may be a style that is going out of fashion in the fishing fleet.

Animal and Plant Names

Five boats were named for animals - all birds - such as *Wild Goose, Silver Eagle* (one of the few aluminum boats in the fleet, with much unpainted metal visible) and the inevitable *Seagull. Fish Hawk III* came as close as any name to expressing success in fishing; certainly no boat was named for a fish, unless one were to count *Crustacean Queen.* All five bird names were on boats in current use. There was one possible botanical name, *Narcissus,* reported in relation to a previous boat, but that is a curious plant to have chosen and the name may have carried some other connotation.

Company Names

The large Nova Scotia fishing companies each have a standard form of name for their major vessels. The one such company in the longline fisheries begins all its boat names

with *"Atlantic."* Five of its boats, with names like *Atlantic Horizon,* were included in the survey. Only two other boats had company-related names. The owners of *Sou 'West Fibre* were associated with a company of that name, while *Dive Con I* was named during an earlier role as a commercial diving tender with a firm that uses that style for all its craft.

Humorous Names

The remaining recognizable category of names includes all those obviously intended to be humorous. Since the humour sometimes relies on allusions to people or common styles of non-humorous names, they would sometimes fit almost equally well into other groups. The forms were varied: there were examples of marine *(Dip and Dive* or *Miss Settling,* which had a tendency to sink), fishing *(Jig and Jog, Sleep Robber IV),* financial *(Not Paid For* and its converse *All Mine)* and self-deprecating humour *(Total Confusion, Gone Bananas, Hobo, Almost* and *Almost II).* As well, some names expressed success *(Right Combination)* or at least ease *(No Sweat, Idle Oars II).* A common kind of humorous name was linked to relationships within fishermen's families. Thus, *The Last* was named for a promise to the owner's wife that when the boat was retired he would be too. *Mama Tried, Last Claws* and *All Done* may have similar implications. *4 US* carried a firm expression of joint ownership.

Some of these humorous names took the form of diminutive references to the boats — presumably affectionate, though this is not certain. Thus, *Orange Peel* was a bright orange fibreglass boat. *Baby Duck* (perhaps with a secondary allusion to the sparkling wine sold under that name), *Sea Smurf* (for the cartoon characters), *Little Chip* (perhaps a personal reference), *Corn Cob* and *Rusty Nail* appear to fall into this category. There was a single reference to alcohol *(Whiskey Baron)* and one to playing cards *(Ace of Spades:* perhaps an expression of luck). This group also included the enigmatic *Katch Me in a Second* (possibly a reference to a favourite expression) and *Glomar* (a humorous linkage of a thirty-foot boat to the Hughes Corporation's drill ships?).

Other Names

Finally, there was a large group of names that defy classification or interpretation. *Come by Chance* looks like a place name - its owner was a native Newfoundlander - but he said he had chosen it because it was chance that took him to Cape Sable Island where he settled. *Northern Kirk* may be an expression of Presbyterianism but *Comanche, Golden Dome* and *KitKat,* while having obvious meanings as words, do not immediately reveal their significance to the owners. *French Fisher* looks like a self-reference by an Acadian fisherman, which it may originally have been, though by the time of the survey the boat was owned by an anglophone from Cape Sable Island. The man who named two boats in succession *John Bull* evidently saw some significance in the name, though it is not clear what nor whether it relates to the mythical embodiment of Englishness. *Penny Lane III* and *Moody Blue I* may hint at popular songs of the 1960s, while *Karma I* could

indicate some familiarity with Hindu philosophy or a humorous reference to the owner being fated to work at sea. *Artemis II* similarly hints at a familiarity with classical myth. None of these interpretations can be relied upon, however, without confirmation from the people who named the boats. Many other names, such as *Hahopper, Mabaca, Flodo I, Half Raspy,* and *The Peng,* are not even interprétable as words. Some may be acronyms or constructs (perhaps from the names of particular people, as is common with Norwegian yacht names) but their derivation is not evident to the uninitiated observer.[13]

Name Changes

Most of these boats had more than one owner during their working careers, as a comparison of the dates of build and purchase by the present owner (median dates 1983 and 1987, respectively) confirms. At least some of the new owners retained the existing names. Indeed, although it is not possible to say that none of the boats' names were changed when they were sold, no specific reports of such alterations were recorded during the survey.[14] This raises the strange situation of many fishermen operating boats named for someone else's wife, grandchildren or other family members.

Discussion

This brief overview of boat names is sufficient to disprove the generality of Greenhill's assertion that working boats are not normally named, at least as regards Nova Scotian groundfish boats. Yet just because a boat has a name painted on its bow and entered on its registration papers, which its owner can report during an interview, does not prove that he uses it. Thus, these reported names do not themselves contradict Greenhill's real point, which was that Mr. Strongman saw his boat as an utilitarian tool rather than something more special.

A few of the interviewees did seem rather unsure of what they called their boats. Indeed, one whose boat was laid-up in his driveway went so far as to suggest that I check the name as I left his house. During the interviews, however, it was abundantly clear that most fishermen were fully aware of these names, used them regularly and referred to other's boats by their names, though not to the exclusion of references by the names of their owners ("Charlie's boat"). Even some of the occasional reluctance to provide a clear report of a name may have been an understandable reticence to display illiteracy, a trait still distressingly frequent among inshore fishermen.

The nature of most of the names reported, particularly those of close relatives, leaves no doubt that they would only be applied to something special. No one names his utilitarian tools after his favourite granddaughter, nor does he call such a tool his "pride." Thus, to the degree that a fisherman's relationship with his boat can be judged from the name he gives it, most of the interviewees saw their boats as more than just utilitarian.

There are limits to this relationship. A few interviewees were awaiting new boats at the time of the survey and in the interim had officially linked their licences to small

open boats.[15] Others had done so while awaiting their present, larger boats and reported the smaller one as their former boat. When asked for the names of these small boats, several interviewees expressed surprise at the idea that such a thing would be named. Similarly, the fishermen of Tiverton, in Digby County, whose fishing boats are kept at swinging moorings, use small injection-moulded rowing boats (locally known as "skiffs") to get from their larger boats to the shore. They name their fishing boats but apparently do not name their skiffs. There does not seem to be a firm distinction between a boat that thus deserves a name and one that does not, though the possession of an inboard engine (and hence a length of more than about twenty-five feet) seems usually to qualify a boat for naming.

For those which are named, there are very strong standardizing tendencies in the nomenclature. Of the 489 recorded names, 276 were the proper names of particular people, probably members of the owners' families. Indeed, as classified here, no less than 355 of the 489 appeared to be some form of reference to individuals and, if explanations of some of the more obscure were available, that would probably prove to be an underestimate. Even within this broad class of names, certain forms were notably common. Double personal names, often linked with *"and,"* and single names followed by a single initial, were particularly common. These two sub-groups, combining all of their varieties, alone accounted for 227 of the names, or very nearly half. Of the straightforward proper personal names, 179 were exclusively female and thirty-nine male. For other types of names, such a sex ratio is hard to quantify but indications of femaleness were consistently more common than those of maleness.

The types of names popular in the Nova Scotian fishing fleet in 1990 had surprisingly close parallels in other places and times. Jojada Verrips has examined the names of inland trading barges in the Netherlands and found the same high frequency of personal proper names, usually female.[16] Simple single female names used to be the normal form. More recently, the captain/owner's wife's first name is often used with the initial of her husband's family name; the "single name with initial" form that was also common in Nova Scotia. Since the 1930s, when many wives moved aboard their spouse's barges to substitute for expensive hired deckhands, many barge names have been abbreviated combinations of the names of the couple. This form has yet to appear in the Nova Scotian fishery, perhaps because wives have only recently started to fish with their husbands and the practice is still rare. Moreover, there appears to be a reluctance, which does not exist in the Netherlands barge fleet, to name these fishing boats after people aboard.

Other references to people were used as names in the Dutch fleet, just as in Nova Scotia. In some cases, such as *The Three Brothers* (a barge) and *Four Brothers* (a longliner), virtually identical names can be found in the two fleets. Other barges were given quality, place, animal, corporate or water-related names, forms of which also occurred in Nova Scotia. Additional classes of names recorded by Verrips but not seen in the present study (except for the Nova Scotian *Artemis II)* included mythological and biblical names, signs of the zodiac, names of famous people and numbers. Conversely,

the barges did not carry any of the humorous or pride names seen in Nova Scotia, while initials (other than as parts of longer names) seem only to be used as part of corporate numeric designations, not in reference to individual humans.

Rogan has made a similar analysis of Norwegian yacht names in both 1890 and the 1980s.[17] In the earlier period, twenty-three percent of yachts had female proper names, thirteen percent male proper names, eleven percent mythological proper names, three percent literary proper names and forty percent desired qualities, while ten percent had other types of names. By the 1980s, the predominance of proper names had declined, with sailing yacht names being twenty-two percent female, one percent male, two percent mythological and three percent literary, while motor yacht names were thirteen percent female, 2.5% male, one percent mythological, 2.5% literary and 4.5% proper names of pets.[18] The Nova Scotia fishing fleet has a greater predominance of proper names, though with relatively less bias towards females. Mythological, literary and pet names were almost unknown in the present study, however, with only *Artemis II, Sea Smurf* and perhaps *Kit Kat* fitting those categories.

Besides his survey of existing names, Rogan interviewed the yachtsmen to find the reasons for their choices. More than one-third reported that their boats were named after family members, either directly or as some construct, acronym or other veiled reference. Naming boats after family members is traditional in Norway but the use of these veiled references is a late-twentieth-century development that is being matched in Nova Scotia. Of the remaining Norwegian yachts, ten to fifteen percent were not named at all. Among those that were, seabird names were popular both in 1890 and the 1980s, while botanical ones were rare in both periods. The same was true of Nova Scotia craft in 1990. Many yachts had names that were intended to be humorous, ranging from flippant to vulgar but often relying on some incongruity. Although humour does not usually translate well between cultures, there is a remarkable degree of similarity between humorous Norwegian yacht names and some of those applied to Nova Scotian fishing boats. There was, for example, a yacht *Sokken (The Sinker)* to compare with the Nova Scotian *Miss Settling,* the Norwegian *Still Crazy* with the fishing boat *Gone Bananas,* and particularly the "financial humour" names common on Norwegian yachts *(Bankens [The Bank's]* and *Crita [On Credit]),* which had their parallel with the Nova Scotian *Not Paid For.* Yet the relative proportions of the various forms of humour do seem to have been different on the two sides of the ocean. Not surprisingly, alcohol-related names were common on the yachts, while among Nova Scotian fishing craft only the *Whiskey Baron* bore such a name.

One Norwegian trend with no parallel in Nova Scotia was the use of foreign language. Nearly one-third of Norwegian yachts in the 1980s had names in alien languages, usually English. In Nova Scotia, all but one of the boat names encountered appeared to be English, when they were in any language at all. The Norwegian use of foreign words is a reflection of a wider trend in national culture with no direct equivalent among English-speaking Nova Scotians. Perhaps, however, the use of English names on

the boats of the few Acadian fishermen interviewed in 1990 can be seen as a consequence of the same sort of penetration of an outside language as in the Norwegian yacht fleet.

Apart from Verrips and Rogan, there have been few other formal studies directly comparable to the present one. William Baker has provided extensive lists of vessels built in Maine during the eighteenth century which can serve as a data source on watercraft nomenclature in northeastern North America during that early period.[19] While many of these vessels were smaller than many modern Nova Scotian fishing boats, they were all large craft for their day and thus probably owned by merchants or mercantile captains rather than inshore fishermen (who used small open boats, the construction of which was rarely recorded). Baker's listed names might therefore be expected to be more formal than those in the present study on this ground alone, besides any effect of the general change in societal attitudes. A non-quantitative overview of these names suggests, though, that there has been rather little change in the last 200 years. About half the names in Baker's lists were single female personal names, sometimes with the prefix *"Charming."* About one-fifth were quality names, though these were desired attributes of society at large *(Industry, Success, Desire, Unity, Defiance, Union, Friendship, Neutrality, Hope)* rather than those of the named vessel. Ten percent had mythological names *(Cicero, Mars, Minerva),* a proportion that may have been increased by the prestige of contemporary warships which often bore such names. A further ten percent had animal names, among which *Dolphin* was common. The animals included birds, as on modern fishing boats (including one *Fish Hawk,* a name also recorded in 1990), but also land mammals *(Fox)* and a few of the fish so notably absent from the present survey *(Sculpin, Shark).* The remaining eighteenth-century names were a mixture of place or patriotic names *(Columbia, Hibernia),* a few male personal names of private individuals *(Jolly Phillip),* collective references to particular people of the same forms seen in 1990 *(Two Brothers, Two Sisters, Two Friends),* names of famous people *(Robespierre, General Wayne),* the self-advertisements then common in the packet trades *(Dublin Packet)* and a scattering of others *(Merry Meeting, Rambler).* It is not hard to see differences between this collection and the names of Nova Scotia fishing boats in 1990 but the similarities are also strong, especially considering the broad time spread and the dramatic changes that have occurred in many other aspects of life in northeastern North America over the past two centuries.

Still further from Nova Scotia, I have elsewhere given an informal report on artisanal fishing boats in El Salvador, where I noted that a few had humorous or other names similar to those seen in Nova Scotia *(Bismark* for comparison with *Glomar),* but most bore saints names, something missing in the present survey data.[20] Pending a more detailed study in Central America, however, the question remains of how often fishermen choose a saint who shared the name of a family member. Fifteenth- and sixteenth- century Bordeaux ships were also likely to bear saints names (but often those of saints thought to have particular relevance for travelers) or other Christian religious names *(Saint-Esprit),* while the remainder of such vessels had quality names *(Bonne-Adventure),* animal names, occasionally plant names or were named directly for members of the owner's family.[21] Interestingly, apart from references to dolphins, the animal names were usually those of

terrestrial, and often domesticated, species. As with Nova Scotia boats, fish names were unusual. Finally, I prepared a draft of this paper while working in Bangladesh and, while I have no ability in Bangla nor the script in which it is written, it was evident that most of the local fishing boats bore names. Moreover, I was assured by local colleagues that many were personal names. At least one owner with whom we had close contact named his two boats for his daughters.

While there thus are obvious differences between the names of modern Nova Scotia fishing boats and those of Dutch barges, modern and nineteenth-century Norwegian yachts, eighteenth-century New England vessels, modern fishing boats in Central America and South Asia, and 400-year old Bordeaux ships, there are also strong parallels. It is not likely that traditions or superstitions hold sufficiently constant across time and culture to explain these. Rather, they appear to be the reflection of some deep human inclinations. The nature of this naming imperative is a matter for psychological research that must go far beyond the present limited study.[22] If it exists, however, then Greenhill was wrong in more than just the obviously overgeneralized claim that most working boats are unnamed. People do feel a need to name their boats and often seek to express their pride in, and affection for, both the boat and some person or thing in their lives through that name. Boats named in such a way must have some individual importance to their owners; they are far more than simple utilitarian tools.

It is not only boats and ships that are so named, nor only in the marine sphere that larger, more individual units receive names when smaller or more mass-produced ones do not. Large steam locomotives were usually named but small ones often were not, nor usually are modern diesel and electric ones. Unusually significant passenger trains traditionally have individual names; freight trains and local passenger services do not. Modern farm tractors are not named but old traction engines and even large horse-drawn wagons sometimes were. Few examples of what Greenhill termed a "Chevrolet pickup" carry individual names but some privately-owned heavy road vehicles do. Whatever the reasons for bestowing names, they seem to run widely through the human experience.

NOTES

*   Trevor J. Kenchington is a fisheries scientist with wide interests in maritime matters. To ensure full disclosure, he wishes to confess that each of his (pleasure) boats has been named (two for marine mammals, one cryptically for himself, one with dubious humour and one with a marine-romantic name bestowed by an earlier owner's wife). He is indebted both to Dr. R.G. Halliday, Marine Fish Division, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, for permission to use the data analyzed in this paper, and particularly to the many fishermen who provided them. Since boats' names are public information, DFO's usual confidentiality controls which prevent the publication of information on individual boats do not apply to the data here.

1. B. Greenhill, *Archaeology of the Boat. A New Introductory Study* (London, 1976), 47.

2. T.J. Kenchington and R.G. Halliday, *A Survey of Fishing Practices in the Scotia-Fundy Region Groundfish Longline Fisheries* (Canadian Manuscript Report in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences No. 2225, Ottawa, 1994), 304-307.

3. *Ibid,* 1-27, 345-410.

4.   See, for example, J. Verrips, "On the Nomen-clature of Dutch Inland River Craft," *Maritime Anthropological Studies,* III, No. 1 (1990), 106-118; B. Rogan, "Father and Clown: On the Nomen-clature of Norwegian Pleasure Craft," *ibid.,* V, No. I (1992), 36-52.

5.   For example, one fisherman has owned two boats in succession, both called *Farmer's Pride,* while another has had two named *Sheila & Heidi II* and a third, two *Seawife Fs.*

6.   Rogan, "Father and Clown," 39-40.

7.   Statistically, there are very significant associ-ations between a boat being unnamed and being less than twenty-five feet long or having no inboard engine (x^2=105.46 and x^2=53.18 respect-ively, P<0.001 in each case).

8.   Statistically, the numbers of male and female names represent a highly significant deviation from equality: x^2=96.90, P<0.001. The relative propor-tions of the three categories (male, female and combinations) did not differ significantly between present and former boats (x^2=4.85, P>0.05). As has often been noted — and as is apparent in the pres-ent study — in a male-dominated technological world the names given to important machines are often female. Verrips, "On the Nomenclature," 112-115, attempted to account for this tendency in the naming of Dutch barges by suggesting that their male captains identified their own feminine aspects with the physical existence of their barges. That seems improbable. I suspect rather that most societies discourage overt male/male affection, even between fathers and sons, so that most men are more comfortable honouring a daughter in the name of their boat or expressing their affection for the boat in terms of a male/female bond.

9. x^2=6.50, p<0.025 for females and x^2=690, P<0.01 for males, depending on the name form contrasted with simple single names.

10. Verrips, "On the Nomenclature," 111.

11. Further boats which may have had names con-structed in a similar way are listed under "Other Names" below.

12. Rogan, "Father and Clown," 40-42, has shown that many Norwegian yachts are named for particu-lar people, albeit in ways that make the boat's appellation unrecognizable as a human name.

13. Rogan, "Father and Clown," 40-42.

14. The only internal evidence for such a change in the name data would have been if a boat had been re-named to match the style of the new owner's previous boat's name. But in every recorded case where the present and former boats had names that were part of an ongoing series *(Almost* and *Almost II,* for example), the current boat had been bought new, or at least in the year in which it was built.

15. Under some circumstances, a licence with no accompanying boat can be cancelled by DFO.

16. Verrips, "On the Nomenclature," 106-118.

17. Rogan, "Father and Clown," 36-52.

18. To achieve this continued level of literary proper names, Rogan had to include the names of cartoon and television characters in this class.

19. W.A. Baker, *A Maritime History of Bath. Maine and the Kennebec River Region* (2 vols., Bath, 1973).

20. T.J. Kenchington, "Some Observations on the Artisanal Fishing Craft of El Salvador," *ARGO-NAUTA,* IX, No. 1 (1992), 6-8.

21. J. Bernard, *Navires et Gens de Mer — Bor-deaux (vers 1400-vers 1550)* (Paris, 1968), cited in P. Pope, "The Sixteenth-Century Fishing Voyage" (Unpublished report for the Nova Scotia Depart-ment of Tourism and Culture, 1992).

22. Rogan, "Father and Clown," 41-43, has sug-gested that boat names have value in singulariza-tion, communication and ritual, which is doubtless true but hardly advances our understanding.