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John R. Hogg, EnCana Corporation, Calgary, AB

Exploration Offshore Nova Scotia Canada: Recent Exploration Drilling and Future Potential

The Scotian Basin, under Atlantic Canada's continental shelf and slope, encompasses a corridor 100 to 150 km wide by 900 km long on the southern margin of the province of Nova Scotia, Canada. One hundred and ten exploration wells have been drilled within the basin; the vast majority being located within the shallow water setting of the Sable Subbasin.

The Scotian Basin is divided into a series of geologically distinct Subbasins. Opening of the basin during the Middle to Late Triassic was in response to separation of North America from Africa. During this time, syn-rift red beds, restricted marine dolomites and halites of the Eurydice, Iroquois, and Argo formations, respectively, were deposited. From the Early Jurassic to the end of the Cretaceous, the basin continued to subside with significant quantities of fluvo-deltaic and marine sandstones deposited in proximal shelf settings. During lowstands, incision of the Cretaceous and Tertiary shelf carried sands down the paleoslope into deep marine environments where they were deposited in a variety of subaqueous facies.

Currently, exploration is taking place on a number of distinct exploration trends in the Scotian Basin. On the Jurassic carbonate bank, exploration drilling is following-up on the 1999 Deep Panuke discovery. In the Sable Subbasin, exploration is ongoing on the existing geopressure trend that is producing today. In addition to the existing trends, new exploration activity has begun in the deepwater portions of the Scotian Salt Province in water depths ranging from 400 to 2400 metres where the exploration targets are associated with movement of Argo Formation halite that produces swells, walls, ridges and domes, and subsalt that produce high quality exploration prospects.