

**Gulf Nova Scotia Bluefin Tuna Fishery
Individual Shares (IS) Tuna Pilot Project
2023 Conservation Harvesting Plan**

Overview:

The fishery applies a precise weight based system to manage participant share's of the Gulf Nova Scotia (GNS) tuna quota. Each participant will be allocated an equal share of the GNS tuna fleet's initial quota. This will result in each receiving an initial share of 0.74% (1/135 GNS licences).

See Annex 1 - Terms of Reference- Gulf Nova Scotia Individual Shares (IS) Tuna Pilot Project

If Mexican quota, quota reconciliation, or quota carried forward apply for individual participants, the Individual Shares will be adjusted accordingly. Tags will be issued to the individual licence based on the estimated average weight of fish for the 2023 season (average of the previous 3 years combined).

Opening Date:

July 1, 2023 at 06:00 hours.

Closing Date:

December 31, 2023 - at 18:00 hours.

Participants/Quota /Tags:

The quotas indicated are preliminary and could be subject to modifications later during season.

Twenty-six (26) licences from the GNS Fleet have registered to participate in the pilot for the 2023 season. Each individual licence will be allocated an initial quota of .413 t (911 lbs).

Quota = 10.742 t (19.26 % of 55.774 t initial GNS Fleet quota) + .872 t (Carried Forward from 2022) + .186 t transfer from the Offshore + .174 t Adjustment.

Total Quota= 11.974 t

For the purpose of tag distribution in 2023, the estimated average weight used will be 243 kgs (536 lbs) per fish.

Mexican Quota

- Allocation to be determined at a later date.

Fish harvesters successful in the draw for Mexican quota tags are eligible to bring the estimated average weight for 2023, 243 kgs (536 lbs), to the IS fishery.

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Quota Transfers:

Temporary quota transfers of individual allocations are authorized in the IS fishery. Licence holders interested in transfers are required to contact Nadia MacInnis.

- **E-mail address:**
Nadia.MacInnis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
- **Phone: 902-872-0051**

Tag Availability:

Tag(s) fees will be available for payment through fish harvesters' National Online Licensing System (NOLS) accounts. Tags must be paid for online through fish harvesters' NOLS accounts.

Contact Nadia MacInnis, GNS Indigenous Programs Coordinator to arrange tag pick up or delivery. Arrangements and expense for tuna tag delivery will be incurred by the licence holder.

Dart tags shall be recorded in the Record of Tags along with the DFO issued tags prior to any fishing activity.

Hail- in/ Hail -out:

Commencing in 2023 fishing season, fish harvesters will be required to dial a new telephone number to hail out at least three (3) hours before departing for each fishing trip. The new telephone number **1-833-699-2013 (toll free) or 1-506-431-3223 (satellite phone only)** will need to be used for new hails, modified hails and cancelled hails. This will direct fish harvesters to a call centre and replace the Vessel Hail Out System (Interactive Voice Recognition System – IVR) until further notice. Licence holders must also hail in to a Dockside monitoring company prior to returning to port for every trip, regardless if a fish has been caught.

Mackerel Bait

Licence holders are permitted to catch and retain 20 live mackerel per fishing trip for bait purposes. This will be reflected in Conditions of Licence.

Ex-Sector:

Licence holders wishing to participate in the Ex-Sector Fishery must request their Conditions of Licence through their National Online Licensing System (NOLS) account.

Approved by: Alan Dwyer
Area Manager, Resource Management
Gulf Nova Scotia Area, Gulf Region
Fisheries & Oceans Canada

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ANNEX 1

Terms of Reference- Gulf Nova Scotia Individual Shares (IS) Tuna Pilot Project

Beginning in 2022, the Department will manage a Bluefin tuna Individual Shares (IS) pilot project that will run concurrently with the already established Gulf Nova Scotia (GNS) Bluefin tuna management system. This will be a voluntary pilot for GNS Bluefin tuna licence holders who are interested in participating. GNS licence holders who participate in the pilot project will receive an annual initial quota equal their percentage share of the overall GNS Fleet initial quota.

Duration – The Department will evaluate the project at the end of the 2026/2027 fishing season.

Participants – Open to Gulf Nova Scotia Bluefin tuna licence holders only.

Goal – provide fishers an opportunity to try a different management approach.

Parameters include:

1. Licence holders who wish to participate in the pilot (hereafter referred to as “participants”) must make this intention known to the Antigonish Area Office by April 30th for each year of the pilot.
2. Annually, each participant will be allocated an equal share of the GNS tuna fleet’s initial quota. This will result in each receiving a share of 0.74% (1/135 GNS licences) of the GNS Fleet’s initial quota.
3. Participants may carry forward 10% of their initial quota to the following year. Individuals with more than 10% remaining must reconcile with another fisher in the IS pilot fishery prior to March 31st of each year. If unable to do so, additional quota in excess of 10% will be divided among the IS pilot participants evenly. If the IS Pilot participants have more than 10% remaining collectively, any amount above the 10% will be transferred to the established management system if it has room to carry forward the quota. Conversely, if the established management system has more than 10% of initial quota remaining, any amount will be transferred to and divided evenly among the IS Pilot Participants who have room to carry forward quota.

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4. It will be a requirement that each participant acquire sufficient quota from another fisher taking part in the IS pilot fishery by March 31st of each year to clear up any overages. Participants who exceed their annual quota and have not reconciled will have their quota reduced by the same amount for the next fishing season.
5. Participants of the IS pilot are not permitted to transfer quota outside of those participating in the pilot.
6. Participants in the GNS IS pilot project will remain in the IS pilot project for the entire fishing season but can choose to fish under the GNS established management system the next fishing season as long as the participant has reconciled their quota (i.e., a participant cannot leave the pilot fishery if they are in an overrun situation). Participants wanting to leave the pilot program must make their intentions know to the Antigonish Area office by April 30th of each year of the pilot.

Evaluation Criteria

a) Participation rate:

1. An increasing trend in participation in the pilot over the duration of the pilot.

b) Economics:

1. Utilization rate of quota.

c) Enforcement/Conservation:

1. Were any conservation concerns identified (minor versus major infractions will be reviewed)?
2. Can these concerns be mitigated?