**Experimental Fishing Plan Unit 1 Redfish**

**(2022 season)**

**Preamble:**

Participation in the experimental fishing plan does not provide priority access or priority consideration in any future access or allocation decisions related to the Unit 1 redfish fishery.

Participation in the experimental fishing plan will be authorized through a licence issued under either Section 52 or Section 7 of the *Fisheries Act* or, in appropriate circumstances, a communal commercial licence issued under the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations. Fishing activities will be managed consistent with the Department’s Sustainable Fisheries Framework policies.

Approved new experimental fishing projects for 2021 began in May 2021 and will expire May 14, 2022. Carry Forward of individual unused quotas from 2021/22 projects is not permitted.

A new round of applications is required for the 2022 season (May 15, 2022 to May 14, 2023). **Deadline for 2022/23 proposals is April 15th, 2022.**

**Objectives:**

Experimental quota provides for the opportunity for obtaining new information related to the sustainable use of the Unit1 redfish fisheries resource while ensuring conservation of the stock. The Experimental quota will be allocated for the following purposes:

1. collecting data on redfish species identification in standard commercial fishery catch;
2. testing gear techniques to minimize capture of undersized redfish (<22 cm);
3. testing gear techniques to minimize capture of bycatch species;
4. testing gear techniques to target redfish by species (e.g. *mentella* vs *fasciatus*); and,
5. collecting data on the reproduction stage and distribution of redfish at different times of the year.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

1. Existing groundfish mobile gear licence holders with access to the Unit 1 redfish and Gulf based Indigenous groups with a groundfish licence.
2. Proposals must be submitted from a proponent, regardless of the company/partnership configurations, that is majority owned (50%+1) by Canadians.
3. Proposals must be sufficiently detailed, comprehensive and demonstrate how they will **meet at least 3 of the 5 defined objectives** of the experimental redfish fishing plan.
4. The proponent’s ability to comply with all measures set out in the existing Conservation Harvest Plans (CHPs), conditions of licence and conditions as modified for the Experimental Fishing Plan, including but not limited to: At Sea Observer (ASO) coverage, Vessel Monitoring System, reporting requirements, *Species at Risk Act* conditions, Dockside Monitoring Program etc.

**Management Measures:**

In addition to measures set out in existing fleet CHPs the following measures will apply for the experimental fishing plan.

* Existing fishing and area closures in Unit 1 will be maintained.
* The seasonal closure in Unit 1 will be modified to allow some fishing effort in the fall, winter and spring months. Experimental fishing during the current copulation and larval extrusion period will be permitted on an effort and spatial distribution basis.
* Experimental fishing will not be permitted in 4Vn, 3Pn from June 1 to December 31, given these areas are part of Unit 2 for that period.
* 100% ASO coverage will be required on all trips for all vessels. Costs associated with ASO will be borne by industry.
* Vessel monitoring system (VMS) will be mandatory on all vessels.
* Small fish and bycatch protocol (i.e. Procedures for Monitoring and Control of Small Fish Catches and Incidental Catches in Atlantic Groundfish Fisheries) will apply depending on the scope of the project.
* Dockside monitoring is mandatory at 100% of the landings.
* Standard commercial gear specifications will apply (e.g. Minimum mesh size of 90 mm for all otter trawl).
* Bycatches will be counted against respective individual or fleet quotas for species under quota management.
* Mandatory release of all Atlantic halibut once bycatch fleet quotas are reached.
* Mandatory release of all Atlantic halibut for those who do not have access to Atlantic halibut by-catch quota.
* Bycatch measures for all other species including species at risk will be consistent with existing measures.

**Work Responsibilities:**

Fishing Organization:

1. Prepare and submit experimental project proposals;
2. Provision of a vessel, the vessel crew, the fishing gear, and other necessary equipment for experimental fishing and data collection purposes.
3. Contracting and funding of 100% At Sea Observers (ASO) coverage.
4. Within 2 months of the project completion date; provide a final report on the outcomes of the fishing activity relative to the experimental fishing plan objectives, including an analysis of gear selectivity results, as applicable to the project.

DFO:

1. Evaluation of project proposals
2. Issuance of Licences to fish experimental quotas
3. Provision of sampling protocols for redfish species identification as well as scientific guidance and consultation on the associated sampling protocol to At Sea Observers.
4. Consideration and analysis of redfish species identification and reproduction results through the relevant DFO science and management advisory processes.

At Sea Observers (ASO):

1. In addition to standard biological sampling and monitoring protocols, ASO will conduct the specified sampling protocol to collect data on species identification in redfish catches under the experimental fishing plan.
2. Provision of all data forms including additional forms related to species identification and reproduction to DFO through the ASO as defined by DFO.

**Application process:**

Eligible proponents will submit applications/proposals to the DFO email address: [DFO.Redfishexperimental-sebasteexperimental.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Redfishexperimental-sebasteexperimental.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) outlining how the objective(s) and management measures set out in the experimental fishing plan will be met.

Proposals **for the 2022/23 season** **must be submitted to the DFO email address** **by April 15, 2022.** Applicants should allow a minimum of 30 days for the review of applications.

Incomplete or insufficiently detailed applications/proposals will either be returned with a request for further information or screened out subject to submission deadline constraints. If any 2021 projects are recommended for renewal for the 2022 season, the approved 2022/23 quota levels could be adjusted subject to the DFO review process.

The names of successful applicants will be provided to the Minister for consideration in the allocation of experimental redfish quota. Once allocations are approved by the Minister, licences will be issued by the relevant DFO regional offices.

**Criteria:**

Upon the receipt of applications, DFO will initiate a review of the applications where each proposal will be evaluated against the following criteria:

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| **Criteria** |
| Meets eligibility criteria |
| Meets at least 3 of the 5 defined objectives defined for the Experimental Redfish Plan. Proposals outside the scope of the defined objectives will not be considered within the Experimental Fishing Plan. |
| **If both criteria are met, proposals will be further evaluated based on:** |
| Regional, seasonal and spatial distribution of projects/quotas |
| Performance of previous year’s project, if applicable, against the stated objectives. |
| Requested quota amounts must reasonably align with vessel capacity and actual effort required to complete the project. |
| Depending on the number of successful applicants, quota caps on individual projects may be required for the 2019 season to stay within the overall experimental quota limit. |

**Application Form**

**Experimental Redfish Fishing Plan - Unit 1**

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| **Name of applicant :** | |
| **Name of organization** (if applicable)**:** | **Date of application** (mm/dd/yyyy)**:** |
| **Address:** | |
| **Number/Street/P.O. Box:** | |
| **City:** | |
| **Province/Territory:** | |
| **Postal Code:** | |
| **Phone #:** | |
| **Fax #:** | |
| **e-mail:** | |
| **Start date of proposed fishing activity:**  (mm/dd/yyyy) | **End date of proposed fishing activity:**  (mm/dd/yyyy) |
| **Vessel Master**: | |
| **Vessel Name:** |  |
| **CFV/Registration #:** |  |
| **Fishing area: (**NAFO Division and Subdivision within Unit 1) | **At Sea Observer Company contracted and contract number:** |
| **Fishing gear** (e.g. otter trawl, pelagic trawl)**:**  (Include information appropriate to the gear type. e.g. mesh size, separator panels if any, and configuration etc...) | |
| **Provide detailed plan outlining proposed fishing activities and how the project will meet at least 3 of the 5 objectives of the experimental fishing plan and management measures:**   * Include information on data collection for redfish species identification, and/or reproduction and/or distribution. * Include information on mechanisms that will be applied to mitigate captures of small fish and bycatch as well as species selectivity (depth profiles) of fishing activity. * Include information on the number and duration of sets (hours and minutes of tows etc.) and the season(s) when the sets will be done. | |
| **Experimental Redfish allocation requested:**  Indicate total metric tonnes necessary to meet the objective of the experimental project.  Total Metric Tonnes | |
| **How will retained fish be used?** Provide information on product forms, onshore production if any, market distribution etc. | |
| **Send completed applications to:**  [**DFO.Redfishexperimental-sebasteexperimental.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca**](mailto:DFO.Redfishexperimental-sebasteexperimental.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) | |