



Notice to Fish Harvesters

April 7, 2016

2016 - SOUTHERN GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE SNOW CRAB CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN CRAB FISHING AREA 12 (12, 18, 25, 26)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) releases the details of the 2016 Crab Fishing Area (CFA) 12 (12, 18, 25, 26) Conservation Harvesting Plan. The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in CFA 12 is 19,171.64 t. Refer to the attached table for the TAC distribution.

Quota reconciliation

Quota reconciliation is applied in this fishery. Quota overruns during the 2016 season by a licence holder will be deducted in 2017 on a one-for-one basis. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to respect the allocation granted while taking into consideration transfers and landings and to make the necessary arrangements before departing for a fishing expedition to have quota to cover expected catches for the expedition.

A change in the quota reconciliation procedure is in effect. DFO will no longer send a letter before the end of the management year to inform those who have experienced quota overruns:

- For licence holders in the Gulf Region, the *Schedule – Quota Table* document sent to licence holders each year prior to the beginning of the fishery will reflect any overrun incurred during the previous fishing season;
- For licence holders in the Quebec Region, an information note will be attached to their conditions of licence available through the National Online Licensing System will indicate whether or not reconciliation will be applied to their individual quotas.

Temporary transfers

Starting in the 2016 snow crab fishery, DFO will authorize licence holders who are subject to the owner-operator policy to transfer up to 50% of his or her quota on a temporary basis, within one fishing season. This decision follows the 2014 Ministerial decision to eliminate temporary quota transfers of up to 100% to respect the owner-operator policy which states that licence holders are required to fish their licences personally.

Temporary quota transfer mechanisms outlined in administrative guidelines for fleets under Individual Transferable Quota regimes will need to be revised and approved by DFO to ensure they are compliant with the new limit.

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At-Sea observer coverage

At-sea observer coverage representing 20% of fishing trips will be required for 2016.

Temporary flexibilities options

The creation of partnerships and trios, as well as the waiver of the 30-day minimum policy for transfer of vessels, will be permitted for the 2016 fishing season.

2016 Management measures

The management measures from 2015 are rolled over in 2016, which include, amongst others:

- The soft-shell crab protocol.
- Only one valid tag per trap. Tags from previous years must be removed. The color for original tags must be violet, while the color for replacement tags must be grey.
- 100% dockside monitoring.
- Landings weighed in kilograms on an electronic scale with a memory.
- The use of a vessel monitoring system (VMS). Harvesters are asked to register their VMS with DFO as soon as possible.
- Maximum mesh size of 75 mm.
- Authorized release of commercial-sized male crab with small claws back in the water.
- A delayed season opening to June 1 applies to an area in CFA 12 for one nautical mile bordering on CFA 19. The buffer zone between CFAs 18 and 19 remains in effect.
- The Irving Whale Exclusion Zone is maintained.
- For proper management and control purposes, the targeted total number of vessels for all fleets on the water at any time is 150 for the Gulf Region and 75 for the Quebec Region.
- For proper management and control purposes, traps will be issued on the same basis as in the past:
 - 150 for midshore vessels;
 - 75 for the traditional inshore Prince Edward Island fleet;
 - 75 for CFA 18;
 - New access and First Nations: those receiving quotas of up to 50 t will be entitled to 75 traps, while fish harvesters receiving over 50 t will be able to use 150 traps;
 - Additional traps may be permitted in accordance with the individual quota transfer program administrative guidelines or regional temporary flexibility options in effect.

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- The industry-led Opening Date Committee of the fishery is assessing conditions and will recommend a targeted opening date. Opening the fishery is subject to weather conditions and to DFO operational requirements. The opening date will be confirmed in a separate Notice to Fish Harvesters and by the issuance of a variation order.
- The fishery will close on July 14, 2016 at 24:00 hrs (ADT). All gear must be removed from the water by the end of the day July 14. Extensions to the fishing season will not be considered.

FOR INFORMATION:

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**2016 - DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH FOR
CRAB FISHING AREA 12 (12, 18, 25, 26)**

Distribution of the TAC	Percentage of TAC	2016 TAC (metric tons)
First Nations (Sub-Total)	15.816 %	3,032.187
• New Brunswick	8.700 %	1,667.982
• Quebec	6.239 %	1,196.064
• Prince Edward Island	0.877 %	168.141
Traditional Fleets (Sub-Total)	69.307 %	13,287.289
• Midshore, New Brunswick	39.408 %	7,555.210
• Midshore, Quebec	21.169 %	4,058.378
• Midshore, Nova Scotia	1.169 %	224.150
• Inshore, Nova Scotia	4.002 %	767.249
• Inshore, Prince Edward Island	3.559 %	682.261
New Access Fleets (Sub-Total)	14.877 %	2,852.222
• New Brunswick (Sub-Total)	7.129 %	1,366.746
○ MFU	6.162 %	1,181.261
○ ITQ groundfish specialists	0.713 %	136.672
○ Competitive groundfish specialists	0.255 %	48.813
• Quebec (Sub-Total)	4.837 %	927.332
○ Fixed gear and scallop fleets Gaspé Peninsula	2.166%	415.257
○ Fixed gear and scallop fleet Magdalen Islands	0.950%	182.035
○ Mobile gear fleet Gaspé Peninsula	0.113%	21.607
○ Mobile gear fleet Magdalen Islands	0.451%	86.427
○ Lobster harvesters Gaspé Peninsula : Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie (RPPSG)	0.886%	169.795
○ Lobster harvesters Magdalen Islands : Association des pêcheurs propriétaires des Iles-de-la-Madeleine (APPIM)	0.272%	52.209
• Nova Scotia*(Sub-Total)	0.913 %	175.037
• Prince Edward Island (Sub-Total)	1.999 %	383.297
○ PEIFA	1.867 %	358.004
○ Paul Anderson	0.132 %	25.293
Total (All)	100%	19,171.70

*Distribution of quota will be provided by the Gulf-Nova Scotia Area Office.