



Gulf and Quebec Regions

Notice to Fish Harvesters

2020 - SOUTHERN GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE SNOW CRAB CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN CRAB FISHING AREA 12E

Moncton and Quebec – March 25, 2020

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) releases the details of the 2020 Crab Fishing Area (CFA) 12E Conservation Harvesting Plan.

Quota

The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in CFA 12E is 239.37 t and is distributed to the existing fleet based on historic shares of 75% for New Brunswick (179.530 t), and 12.5% respectively for Quebec and Prince Edward Island (29.922 t each).

Quota reconciliation

Quota reconciliation is applied in this fishery. Quota overruns during the 2020 season by a licence holder will be deducted in 2021 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 has to make the necessary arrangements before departing for a fishing expedition to have quota to cover expected catches for the expedition.

Temporary transfers

Licence holders who are subject to the owner-operator policy may transfer up to 50% of his or her initial quota on a temporary basis, within one fishing season.

At-Sea observer coverage

At-sea observer coverage representing 20% of fishing trips will be required for 2020.

Partnership arrangements

The creation of partnerships is permitted. The trap limit for partnerships will be equal to the total traps of one licence, plus 50%.

Catch limit

Due to the exceptional situation caused by the Coronavirus, the snow crab fishery could be subject to a fishing trip catch limit. Industry will be notified by DFO in the event that catch limits are established.

.../2



2020 Management measures

The management measures in 2020 include, amongst others:

- The soft-shell crab protocol.
- Only one valid annual tag per trap. Tags from previous years must be removed. The color for original tags must be pink, while the color for replacement tags must be orange.
- 100% dockside monitoring.
- Landings weighed in kilograms on an electronic scale with a memory.
- Maximum mesh size of 75 mm.
- Authorized release of commercial-sized male crab with small claws back in the water.
- For proper management and control purposes, traps will be issued as described in the individual transferable quota (ITQ) program:
 - ITQ up to 45 tons: 100 traps
 - ITQ > 45 to 68 tons: 125 traps
 - ITQ > 68 to 90 tons: 150 traps
 - ITQ > 90 tons: 175 traps
- 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 use of a vessel monitoring system (VMS) with five (5) minutes reporting intervals. Harvesters are asked to register their VMS with DFO as soon as possible.
- The fishery will close on June 30, 2020 at 24:00 hrs (ADT). All gear must be removed from the water by the end of the day June 30, 2020, meaning that the **hauling of gear is prohibited after June 30th**, but landing of traps and crabs can occur on July 1st.

Gear Marking

Gear marking is in place in this fishery. Specific requirements are explained in the Notice to Fish Harvesters that was issued January 31, 2020 and details of these requirements can be found in your licence conditions.

2020 Management measures to minimize interactions with North Atlantic Right Whales

The Management measures to minimize interactions with North Atlantic Right Whales (NARW) can be found at the following link: <http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commercial/atl-arc/narw-bnan/management-gestion-eng.html>.

.../3



Permanent Fishing closures

Coral and sponge conservation areas: On December 15, 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada created eleven coral and sponge conservation areas in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence in order to protect areas with high concentrations of sponges and sea pens.

All fishing activities that use bottom-contact gear or gear designed to come into contact with the sea bed, including but not limited to bottom trawls, dredges, gillnets, bottom longlines, bottom seines and traps, are forbidden in the conservation areas.

For more information and maps of the eleven coral and sponge conservation areas, please visit the following website: <http://www.qc.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/golfe-gulf/coraux-eng.html>.

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