



Quebec Region – Fisheries management

Conservation Harvesting Plan

SNOW CRAB – AREA 12F SEASON 2023

Approved March 28, 2023

1. Application

This Area 12 F snow crab Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP) applies to traditional fish harvesters and to New Access fish harvesters from Quebec and Gulf Regions for the 2023 fishing season.

2. Fishing Areas

The Crab fishing area (CFA) 12F is part of Crab fishing area 12 delimited by the straight lines joining the following points in the order listed:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | 47° 50' 00" N | 61° 08' 27" W |
| 2. | 47° 26' 45" N | 61° 00' 00" W |
| 3. | 47° 30' 00" N | 60° 43' 20" W |
| 4. | 47° 32' 12" N | 60° 42' 15" W |
| 5. | 47° 18' 30" N | 60° 18' 00" W |
| 6. | 47° 21' 30" N | 60° 16' 00" W |
| 7. | 47° 44' 30" N | 60° 25' 15" W |
| 8. | 48° 02' 30" N | 61° 07' 00" W |
| 9. | 47° 58' 30" N | 61° 07' 30" W |
| 10. | 47° 50' 00" N | 61° 08' 27" W |

The fishing areas coordinates are listed in the *Conditions of licence* and are also indicated on the fishing areas maps, which are available at the following address:

<https://inter-l01-uat.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/infoceans/en/commercial-fisheries>

3. Fishing closures

The fishery remains prohibited in a buffer zone that separates Areas 12F and 19.

4. Fishing season

An opening committee, composed of industry and departmental representatives, is in place to discuss the opening date for the crab fishery in Area 12F. The opening date will

be confirmed by an Variation order following the final recommendation of the opening committee. The fishery will close on June 30, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. (ADT).

The season will be in effect for the duration of this CHP. Opening dates may vary according to particular circumstances such as industry requests and the TAC announcement while closing dates may be advanced according to factors such as if the entire quota of the fishing area has been caught or when risks of exceeding them are high. Opening and closing fishing dates will be confirmed through usual communication means, such as *Notices to Fish Harvesters* and *Variation Orders*.

It should be reminded that it is the responsibility of the captain to take into account the marine safety notices published by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Transport Canada, as well as with the standards and best practices in marine safety, and to take all measures necessary to insure a safe fishery during the period when fishing is authorized.

5. Number of licences

The crab fishery in Area 12F is conducted by five groups :

- 16 licences composed of the Traditional group and the New Access group, mobile gear, from Îles-de-la-Madeleine.
- 5 licences composed of the Traditional group from Nova Scotia.
- 2 licences from the New Access group, mobile gear, from Gaspésie.
- The New Access group - Lobster fishers - Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Associations).
- The New Access group – Nova Scotia (Associations and First Nations).

6. Access

The terms and conditions of access to fishing area 12 by Area 12F licence holders in case of closures for their fishing grounds resulting from the North Atlantic right whale protection measures remain in effect [2022 Criteria for access to Crab Fishing Area 12 by Areas 12E and 12F fish harvesters in case of closures of the fishing grounds \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](#). In 2023, this access will be defined in the condition of licence of the Area 12E and Area 12F licence holders.

7. Quotas

A sharing formula of the total allowable catch (TAC) between groups is in effect in Area 12F.

The sharing formula allocates a proportion of 84.91% to Traditional – Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Nova Scotia licence holders and 15.09% to New Access licence holders of Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Gaspésie and Nova Scotia.

In addition, a regional sharing, i.e. 68.75% for the Quebec region and 31.25% for the Gulf region, is applied.

The TAC for 2023 is set at 1,319.36 tons. This TAC is broken down as follows:

Titulaires de permis	TAC (tons)
Traditional and New Access, mobile gear group – Îles-de-la-Madeleine.	841.75
The Traditional - Nova Scotia	350.08
New Access group– Mobile gear group – Gaspésie	44.43
New Access group – Lobster fishers- Îles-de-la-Madeleine	20.88
New Access group – Nova Scotia	62.22

8. Management Regime

Following the stabilization of the sharing formula between traditional fishers and fisher harvesters of the New Access fleet in Area 12F, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) approved Administrative Guidelines that apply to fish harvesters in the New Access – mobile gear Group.

Over the next year, all Individual Transferrable Quota (ITQ) program Administrative Guidelines for the various groups must be updated. The terms and conditions indicated in the Notice to Fishers concerning the extension of the transitional measures published on January 23, 2019 remain in effect. The Notice to Fishers is available on the DFO Quebec Region website at the following address: [Notice to Fish Harvesters Administrative guidelines ITQ programs](#).

Temporary ITQ transfer :

For the New Access fleets in Quebec, the clause extending the authorization of temporary transfers to 100% remains in effect for the 2023 season.

For traditional licence holders, DFO allows temporary transfers of up to 50% of the licence holder's initial quota within a fishing season and are only allowed within the same DFO administrative area (Quebec, Nova Scotia).

9. Fishing Gear

Number of authorized traps

The maximum number of traps for traditional fishermen is 75. Additional traps may be allocated following the approval of temporary or permanent transfers, as set out in the ITQ Administrative Guidelines.

The maximum number of traps authorized for New Access licence holders is distributed as follows:

Less than or equal to 11.34 t (25,000 pounds):	35 traps
Between 11.34 t and 18.14 t (25-40,000 pounds):	50 traps
Between 18.14 and 31.75 t (40-70,000 pounds):	65 traps
Above or equal to 31.75 t (70,000 pounds):	75 traps

Maximum trap mesh size

Maximum trap mesh size is 75 mm.

Trap tagging

All traps used for fishing must bear a single valid annual tag (pink in colour) with unique identification number. License holders must obtain their tags from suppliers approved by the DFO, a list of which is available at: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/nir-nei/tags-supplier-region-eng.html>.

Fish harvesters will receive orange replacement tags equal to 10% of the authorized number of gears when they place their initial order. Other replacement tags will be available upon request.

It is prohibited to carry on board a fishing vessel an untagged fishing gear.

Biodegradable release mechanism

All traps must be equipped with a biodegradable release mechanism as described in *Licence Conditions*.

Gear soak time

It is the responsibility of fish harvesters to lift their gear at least every 72 hours.

10. Management measures to minimize the risks of interactions with the North Atlantic Right Whale

Since 2017, DFO has put in place additional management measures to protect marine mammal including the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale from entanglement in fishing gear and ship strikes. These measures take into account the best available scientific data and can be adapted if necessary to take into account future developments regarding interactions prevention.

The following requirements have been implemented in order to reduce the risk of entanglement of North Atlantic Right Whales:

10.1 Amount of Rope Floating on the Surface of the Water

The following requirements are in place to minimize the length of rope floating on the surface of the water and reduce the risk of North Atlantic Right Whales entanglements:

- A maximum of 3.7 meters (2 fathoms) of rope shall be used when attaching secondary buoys to a primary buoy.
- At the exception of the rope attaching secondary buoys, no rope attaching a fishing gear to a primary buoy shall remain floating on the surface of the water.

Note: A primary buoy is defined as a buoy or other floating device attached to a fishing gear. A secondary buoy is defined as a buoy or other floating device attached to a primary buoy.

10.2 Gear Marking

Licence holders using fixed gear must mark the rope used to attach a fishing gear to a primary buoy with colours specific to the region, targeted species and fishing area in which they are authorized to fish. This requirement is intended to facilitate the identification of the area where an entanglement has occurred. The following coloured markings are required for each fleet:

Fleet	Twine colours for marking
Snow crab area 12	Yellow-Orange
Snow crab area 12E	Yellow-Orange-Yellow
Snow crab area 12F	Yellow-Orange-Blue
Snow crab multiple areas	Vert-Orange-Jaune (Quebec) Bleu-Orange-Jaune (Golfe)

The gear marking requirement consisting of interlacing different coloured twine sections within existing rope must be implemented as follows:

- a) The first colour to identify specific Region – to be interlaced on the same segment of rope as the second colour.
- b) The second colour to identify target Species – to be interlaced on the same segment of rope as the first colour.
- c) The third colour to mark different fishing areas must be interlaced. The third colour must be interlaced immediately before or after the segment of rope containing the first two colours. The third colour must not be interlaced within the same segment containing the first and second colour.

The above coloured twine markings must be permanently interlaced within the rope. Each coloured twine must be interlaced in the rope on a minimum length of 15 cm. The use of paint or tape is not an admissible alternative to twine.

The minimum requirements regarding the number and position of colour markings are detailed in the *Conditions of licence*.

For more information

All the information on gear marking measures has been published in *Notice to Fish Harvesters*, available at the following link: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/doc/colour-notice-avis-couleur-eng.pdf>

10.3 Additional Identification of Buoys

In addition to the regulatory requirement to mark buoys with the vessel registration number (VRN), licence holders are required to add a sequential number on each primary buoy in order to be able to individually identify each fishing gear. This additional requirement will help identify and retrieve lost gear and could also help identify the sector where a NARW may have become entangled.

The sequential number shall be solid block Arabic numerals:

- Without ornamentation;
- Written in a smaller or bigger font size than the VRN so as to be capable of differentiating the number from the VRN; and
- In a colour that contrasts with the buoy's colour.

10.4 Requirement to report lost and retrieved gear

Lost gear reporting

Lost fishing gear is defined as any active fishing gear previously set by the licence holder and fishing vessel operator which was sought but not found.

The licence holder or fishing vessel operator must report any of their lost fishing gear within 24 hours of returning to port at the end of the fishing trip. Reports of lost gear must be submitted to DFO through the FISHING GEAR *Reporting system* available online at <https://internet.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/en/login> or by completing the *Lost fishing gear form* available online at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reporting> or in Annex of *Conditions of licence*, according to instructions on the form.

If the licence holder or fishing vessel operator is using an Electronic logbook, lost fishing gear must be reported to DFO within 24 hours of returning to port at the end of the fishing trip.

Retrieved gear reporting

The licence holder or fishing vessel operator must report the retrieval of any of their own previously reported lost gear within 24 hours of returning to port at the end of the fishing trip. Reports of retrieved gear must be submitted to DFO through the *Fishing gear reporting system* available online at <https://internet.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/en/login> or by completing the *Retrieval of previously reported lost fishing gear form* available online at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reporting> or in Annex of *Conditions of licence*, according to instructions on the form. Retrieval can only occur during the validity period of the *Conditions of licence* and only in relation to the specific type of gear authorized to be used by the *Conditions of licence*.

If the licence holder or fishing vessel operator is using an Electronic logbook, the retrieval of any of their own previously reported lost gear must be reported within 24 hours of returning to port at the end of the fishing trip. Reports of retrieved gear must be submitted to DFO by completing the section reserved for that purpose in its electronic logbook.

10.5 What to do if you observe a North Atlantic right whale

It is important to maintain a minimum distance of 100 meters from the animal and 200 meters if the whale is accompanied by a calve. Details regarding sightings of live and free-swimming right whales may be provided to DFO at: XMARWhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or by phone at 1-844-800-8568. If you observe this species, please send us your contact information and information about the sighting (date, time, geographical position, number of individuals, etc.). If possible, you can also send us photos or videos.

If you see a right whale entangled in fishing gear, you should not under any circumstances attempt to release it on your own. The behaviour of an entangled individual is unpredictable and dangerous. You should contact "Marine Mammal Emergencies" at 1-877-722-5346 as soon as possible to share information that will help to organize an

appropriate response by experts (time and position of the entangled animal, behaviour of the individual, details on the weather and the state of the sea, etc.).

11. Marine mammal interaction reporting

Licence holders must provide information regarding all interactions with a marine mammal that occur during fishing expeditions including: bycatch, collisions and all sightings of entangled marine mammals. To do this, the Marine Mammal Interaction Form must be completed and submitted by email to DFO.NAT.InteractionsMM-InteractionsMM.NAT.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca within 48 hours after the end of a fishing trip.

A copy of the form is attached to the *Conditions of licence* and can also be downloaded and submitted online at the following address: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especies/mammals-mammiferes/report-rapport/page01-eng.html>

The information provided on this form will be used by DFO to estimate levels of accidental mortality and injury to marine mammals. This information will allow DFO to better assess the types of threats that may affect Canada's marine mammals and to develop mitigation strategies.

In addition, if you observe a dead or distressed animal, please contact Marine Mammal Emergencies as soon as possible at 1-877-722-5346. If possible, do not hesitate to take photos or videos that will allow DFO to assess the situation and identify the species.

12. Hail Prior to departure

New in 2023 – Fishing trip telephone number

Beginning with the 2023 fishing season, fishers in the Gulf and Quebec regions will be required to call the following new telephone number: 1-833-699-2013 (toll free) or 1-506-431-3223 (satellite phone only) to make new, modifications and cancellations of hail-outs.

The exit call must be placed as indicated in the license conditions for the Quebec Region and for the Gulf Region.

13. At-sea observer

The minimum percentage of at-sea observer coverage is 15% of fishing trips. This monitoring program is funded by industry.

14. Dockside monitoring

Prior to the beginning of a fishing expedition, the licence holders must have entered into an entry call and landing agreement with a dockside monitoring company legally

designated by FDFO. The permit holder must contact the same company at least one hour before the scheduled time of arrival at the dock.

For Quebec Region licence holders, a list is available at: <https://www.gc.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/infoceans/en/designated-dockside-monitoring-ports>. For licence holders from Gulf Region, the list of designated ports is identified in *Licence conditions*.

When using an Electronic Logbook, you must communicate your unique Electronic Logbook Identifier (ELOG-UID) to the Dockside Monitoring Company before hail in and also provide it to the dockside observer. Catch and effort data declaration.

15. Reporting of fishing effort and catches

15.1 Combined form / Logbook

Licence holders must acquire their booklet of Combined Forms from a prequalified supplier, identified by DFO a list of which is available at : [Prequalified Logbook Suppliers \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](https://www.gc.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/prequalified-logbook-suppliers)

The Logbook section must be completed before arrival at port and the completed form must be sent to DFO after each fishing trip. The licence holder must forward, their completed Combined Form to their local Fisheries and Oceans Canada office after each landing.

15.2 Electronic logbook

The use of an electronic logbook (Elog) is optional in 2023. Fish harvesters must use a client application approved by Fisheries and Oceans Canada for the Quebec region for the form ELOG - Logbook - Crabs.

Furthermore, fish harvesters must have obtained and installed their Elog Key in their client application in order to allow data transmission to the Department.

The Elog must be completed for each fishing expedition and “closed” before arriving at port. A fishing expedition means a trip that begins at the time a fishing vessel leaves a port to engage in fishing and terminates at the time when the fish caught during that period are offloaded. Hence, when a fisher goes back to port for a reason other than for offloading fish and leaves the port again, the fishing expedition continues until fish are offloaded.

To consult the list of client applications approved by the Department and to obtain you Elog key, visit Fisheries and Ocean’s web page at the following address: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/elogs

To request a modification to data that has been transmitted to DFO, you must communicate with the client support service at 1-877-535-7307.

16. Vessel Monitoring System

The use of an active Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) approved by DFO is mandatory. Each licence holder must register his DFO-approved VMS unit prior to the beginning of his fishing activities. Data transmission every 5 minutes is required.

The current list of DFO-approved VMS units and the procedure and form to register a VMS unit are available at the following address: <http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/vessel-monitoring-surveillance-navire/index-eng.html>.

17. Discarding of white crab and juvenile crab

The discarding of white crab and juvenile crab (small claws) is allowed. These must be returned to the water, where they were captured, and if they are still alive, in a manner that causes them the least harm.

18. Soft shell crab Monitoring Protocol

A protocol for soft shell crab by sector is in place.

19. Boat

Fish harvesters may use a vessel with a maximum length less than 19.81 m (65 feet).

20. Partnership

Partnership agreements (buddy up) are authorized. Two licence holders may use a same vessel, with 100% of the traps of one licence holder and 50% of the traps of the other licence holder. Also, an Area 12F licence holder from Quebec region may, upon request and subject to various conditions, use the vessel of an Area 12 licence holder from Quebec to fish in Area 12F.

21. Quota reconciliation

DFO applies the quota reconciliation for snow crab in Area 12F. Thus, any individual quota overrun incurred by licence holders in a season will be deducted by a one-to-one ratio, from their individual quota for the following season. It is the responsibility of licence holders to track their quotas to ensure that catches taken in the course of their fishing operations comply with the quotas allocated to them.

22. Species at Risk Act

Pursuant to the *Species at Risk Act*, no person shall kill, harm, harass, capture, take, possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual or any part or derivate of a wildlife species designated as extirpated, endangered or threatened.

At the time this Conservation Harvesting Plan is promulgated, the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence species susceptible to being captured are the following: the Spotted Wolffish, the Northern Wolffish, the Leatherback Turtle, the Striped Bass (St. Lawrence River population) and exceptionally the White Shark (Atlantic population). New species could be added during the course of the year.

All incidental captures of species at risk must be immediately returned to the water where they were captured and, if the animal is still alive, in the manner that causes it the least harm. All incidental captures of species at risk must be recorded in the « Species at Risk » section of the logbook. Furthermore, all interactions with species at risk, notably the North Atlantic Right Whale, the Blue Whale (Atlantic population), the Beluga Whale (St. Lawrence Estuary population) and the White Shark (Atlantic population), must be recorded in this section of the logbook.

These requirements are additional to any obligation to declare an interaction with a marine mammal using the prescribed form (see section Marine mammal interaction reporting).

23. Crew registry

Since April 1st, 2021, inshore commercial licence holders, and their approved Substitute Operators, must keep records of all the crew members working aboard the vessel on every fishing trip. These records must be maintained by the licence holder for a period of five (5) years. This requirement does not apply to pre-1979 corporation licence and to any licence issued under the authority of the *Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations*. For further details, refer to the March 17th, 2021 Notice to Fish Harvesters at [Notice to Fish Harvesters - New inshore regulation](#) or contact the Licensing Office at 1-877-535-7307 or fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

24. Discharge of waste

Since 2022, all commercial fisheries in Canada have a new condition of licence relating to the discharge of garbage from Canadian fishing vessels. The licence holder is prohibited from discarding in Canadian fisheries waters from their vessel any item that may be harmful to fish or fish habitat. Please refer to the following [New condition of licence relating to discharge of garbage season 2022 \(2022-03-29\) \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](#)

25. Conditions of licence

To obtain their *Conditions of licence*, fish harvesters must access the National Online Licensing System. For National Online Licensing System assistance, please contact customer support by phone at 1 877-535-7307 or by email at fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Approved by:

Maryse Lemire
Fisheries Management Regional Director
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Quebec

For any question regarding this CHP

You may call at :

Îles-de-la-Madeleine area: 418-986-2095
Antigonish area: 902-863-5670

For additional information

Please visit our website at the following address: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/index-eng.htm>.