

## **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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.
4. It will be a requirement that each participant acquire sufficient quota from another fisher taking part in the IS pilot fishery by March 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

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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).
  
7. Non – Indigenous participants in the GNS IS pilot project will not have access to any international Bluefin tuna quota transfers.

### **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?