



## Quebec Region – Fisheries management

# Conservation Harvesting Plan

## REDFISH - UNIT 1 ESTUARY AND GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE SHRIMP HARVESTERS FLEET 2024-2025 SEASON

Approved on July 10, 2024  
Amended on October 31, 2024

### 1. Application

This Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP) applies to groundfish mobile gear licence holders, members of the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence shrimp harvesters fleet from the Quebec and Gulf regions fishing redfish in Unit 1 during the period May 15, 2024, to May 14, 2025.

### 2. Fishing area

The Unit 1 fishing area includes NAFO Divisions 4RST as well as sub-division 3Pn and 4Vn from January 1 to May 31.

Fishing areas coordinates are detailed in the *Conditions of licence* and on the map of fishing areas available at the following link: <https://inter-101-uat.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/infoceans/en/commercial-fisheries>.

#### 2.1 Area and depth restrictions:

- In Divisions 4RST, fishing is authorized in the area between 59° and 65° longitude West from June 15 to December 31.
- In sub-divisions 3Pn and 4Vn, fishing is authorized between January 1 and March 31.
- From June 15 to October 31, fishing activities must be carried out at depths greater than 240m (131 fathoms).
- From November 1 to March 31, fishing activities must be carried out at depths greater than 183m (100 fathoms).

### 3. Fishing closures

#### 3.1 Coral and sponge Conservation Areas in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence

On December 15, 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) 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 directed redfish fishing activities, including midwater trawling, are prohibited in these conservation areas.

For more information and maps of the eleven coral and sponge conservation areas, please visit the dedicated DFO website: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/ceccsr-cerceef/egsl-eng.html>.

#### 3.2 Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area

On March 6, 2019, DFO created, jointly with the Quebec government, the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area (MPA) in order to ensure the conservation and protection of this marine ecosystem.

Provisions of the *Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area Regulations* apply to licence holders. In order to comply with them, please refer to the clauses that apply to your fishing activities: [Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area Regulations \(justice.gc.ca\)](http://www.justice.gc.ca).

#### 3.3 Other closures

The area closed in Division 4T, as defined in the *Notice to Fish Harvesters* issued on August 11, 2009, is maintained. Directed redfish fishing is therefore prohibited in the area bounded by the following coordinates:

1.	48° 36' 44" N	62° 16' 49" W
2.	49° 07' 42" N	63° 47' 19" W
3.	48° 58' 22" N	64° 12' 48" W
4.	48° 51' 38" N	63° 51' 20" W
5.	48° 22' 10" N	62° 55' 02" W
6.	48° 16' 28" N	62° 16' 49" W
7.	48° 36' 44" N	62° 16' 49" W

Since July 27, 2017, a new closed area in Division 4T is in effect. Directed redfish fishing is thus prohibited in the area bounded by the following coordinates:

1.	49° 12' 50.40" N	65° 00' 00.00" W
2.	49° 25' 01.20" N	65° 00' 00.00" W
3.	49° 25' 00.22" N	64° 39' 57.64" W

---

4.	49° 07' 42.00" N	63° 47' 19.00" W
5.	48° 58' 22.00" N	64° 12' 48.00" W
6.	48° 54' 35.03" N	64° 00' 42.29" W
7.	48° 45' 23.17" N	64° 10' 05.59" W

#### 4. Fishing season

In order to protect redfish during spawning, fishing activities may only begin as of June 15 and end no later than March 31.

The fishing season established above will be effect for the duration of this CHP. It represents the maximum duration of fishing periods, subject to, among other things, variation orders and specific closed seasons. As such, openings may vary according to particular circumstances such as industry requests and TAC announcement while closing dates may be advanced according to factors such as the reach of quotas or when risks of exceeding them are high. The precise periods will be confirmed through usual communications means, particularly *Notices to Fish Harvesters* or *Variation Orders*.

As a reminder, during the period in which fishing is authorized, it is the captain's responsibility to become familiar with the marine safety notices, among others by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Transport Canada, as well as the standards and the best practices in marine safety, and to take all measures to ensure safe fishing.

#### 5. Quotas

The Unit 1 redfish allocation for shrimp harvesters in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence (EGSL) totals 5,500 t in 2024-2025. It is distributed as follows:

Fleet	Share	Allocation (t)
Quebec	42 %	2,310.0
New-Brunswick	21 %	1,155.0
Newfoundland & Labrador	37 %	2,035.0

#### 6. Management Regime

Competitive fishing regime.

#### 7. Fishing Gear

From June 15 to December 31, all types of otter trawl (including bottom trawl, semi-pelagic trawl and midwater trawl) are authorized.

From January 1 to March 31, only midwater trawls are authorized.

The cod-end and extension piece of all trawls used for fishing must have a minimum mesh size of 90 mm.

## **8. Management measures to minimize the risks of interactions with the North Atlantic Right Whale**

Since 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada 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:

### **8.1 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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (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 <https://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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) within 24 hours of returning to port at the end of the fishing trip. Reports of lost gear must be submitted to Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) by completing the section reserved for that purpose in its electronic logbook.

#### 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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) through the *Fishing Gear Reporting System* available online at <https://internet.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/en> 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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) by completing the section reserved for that purpose in its electronic logbook.

## **8.2 What to do if you observe a North Atlantic right whale**

First of all, 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](mailto: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, behavior of the individual, details on the weather and the state of the sea, etc.).

## **9. Marine mammal interaction reporting**

Licence holders must provide information regarding all interactions with a marine mammal that occur during fishing trips 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](mailto: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 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (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.

## **10. Hail prior to departure**

Hail prior to departure is mandatory for all licence holders.

Licence holders must contact the Fisheries and Oceans Canada hail out system by telephone at 1-833-699-2013 or 1-506-431-3223 (satellite) at least 12 hours prior to the departure time of each fishing trip.

## **11. At-sea Observer**

Between June 15 and October 31, the industry-funded At-sea Observer Program is implemented based on a minimum coverage of 25% of fishing trips.

Between November 1 and March 31, 100% coverage is required.

## **12. Catch and effort data declaration**

### ***12.1 Report at sea (daily catch report)***

When at sea, all licence holders are required to complete a daily catch report no later than noon (12 p.m. local time) by submitting by e-mail the form available online at the following address: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/reports-rapports/schedule-2/index-eng.html>.

### ***12.2 Electronic logbook***

The use of an Electronic Logbook (ELOG) is mandatory for all the inshore licence holders (less than 19.81m fleet). Fish harvesters must use a client application approved by DFO for their respective region. In addition, fishers must obtain their ELOG key and have it registered in their client application to enable transmission of their data to the Department.

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

To consult the list of client applications approved by the Department and to obtain your ELOG key, visit Fisheries and Ocean’s web page at the following address: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/nir-nei/elog-index-jbe-eng.html>

To request changes to data transmitted to DFO, please communicate with the client support service at 1-877-535-7307.

### ***12.3 Combined form (logbook)***

Licence holders in the midshore fleet (19.81m to 30.48m) can obtain their Combined Forms booklet from the DFO prequalified suppliers, listed at

<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/nir-nei/log-suppliers-eng.html>. Mid-shore fleet licence holders may also use an approved elog application, in accordance with the above-mentioned instructions for the inshore fleet.

The Logbook section must be completed before arrival at port and the completed form must be sent to DFO after each fishing trip.

### **13. Dockside monitoring**

A hail-in call is mandatory at least one hour before arrival and dockside monitoring is mandatory for 100% of landings.

Prior to the start of a fishing trip, the licence holder must have come to an agreement for the calling in and landing of fish with a company legally designated by DFO. Landings must be made at one of the designated dockside monitoring ports.

When using an ELOG, you must communicate your unique ELOG Identifier to the Dockside Monitoring Company before hail in and provide it to the dockside observer.

### **14. Vessel Monitoring System**

Vessels must be equipped with an active Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) approved by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Each licence holder must register their approved VMS with DFO prior to commencing fishing activities. Data must be transmitted every 15 minutes.

The list of approved units, as well as the procedure and form for registering VMS with DFO, are available at the following address: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/vessel-monitoring-surveillance-navire/index-eng.html>

### **15. Incidental Catches**

Bycatch is defined as the weight of a species caught as a bycatch divided by the weight of the directed species, in this case redfish.

The groundfish by-catch limits for directed redfish fishing Unit 1 are:

- 4TVn Cod 1% per fishing trip
- 3Pn34RS Cod 1% per fishing trip
- 4T American plaice 1% per fishing trip
- 4T White hake 1% per fishing trip
- 3Pn4RSTVn Atlantic halibut 1% per fishing trip
- 4RST Greenland halibut 1% per fishing trip
- Other groundfish species 5% per fishing trip

If bycatch limits per fishing trip are exceeded, the fishery may be closed, and legal proceedings may be initiated.

Bycatch limits for 3Pn4RS cod, 4T white hake and 4TVn cod have been established to guide the management of the Unit 1 redfish fishery. The bycatch caps applied to the redfish fishery by the shrimp harvesters fleet area as follows:

	<b>3Pn4RS Cod (kg)</b>	<b>4T White hake (kg)</b>	<b>4TVn Cod (kg)</b>
QC	775	698	581
NB	388	349	291
NL	683	615	512
Total for the EGSL shrimp harvesters fleet	1,846	1,661	1,384

Once the bycatch cap(s) per fleet has (have) been reached (see table above), the Department will assess whether additional by-catch quotas can be reallocated. If not, the Unit 1 redfish fishery may be closed to the concerned fleet for the remaining part of the fishing season.

By-catches of other species/stocks will be counted against existing quotas for each of the mobile gear fleets, depending on the category of the licence used (<19.81m or 19.81m to 30.48m).

Groundfish bycatch cannot be released unless explicitly authorized by *Conditions of licence*.

The Department monitors the discard of groundfish at sea. If an individual or fleet is suspected of discarding at sea, there could be an increase in industry-funded at-sea observer coverage in addition to other regulatory options, including fishery closures and legal procedures.

## 16. Small Fish Protocol

The minimum size of fish under the small fish protocol is:

- Cod 43 cm
- American plaice 30 cm
- Witch flounder 30 cm
- White hake 45 cm
- Winter flounder 25 cm
- Yellowtail flounder 25 cm
- Atlantic halibut 85 cm
- Greenland halibut 44 cm



➤ Redfish

22 cm

All specimens of Atlantic halibut less than 85 cm must be returned to the water immediately and, if the fish is still alive, handled in a manner that causes it the least harm.

Areas may be closed to fishing for the fleet or parts of the fleet when the number of undersized fish reaches 15% of the catch of any of the aforementioned species.

### **17. Catch monitoring and test fishing**

Closures due to excessive catches of small fish or exceeding by-catch limits are for a minimum of 10 days. The cost of test fishing is assumed by the industry. If a fishery is closed, it will not be reopened until DFO is satisfied that it can be effectively monitored and controlled. If a fishery is closed twice in the same season due to exceeding by-catch limits or excessive catches of small fish, it may remain closed for the remainder of the season.

### **18. Exclusivity of participation**

A licence holder participating in the Unit 1 redfish fishery can only fish under one allocation at a time.

### **19. Quota reconciliation**

Under quota reconciliation, any quota overruns in a given year, whether within an individual quota system or in a competitive fishery, are counted against the quota established for the following season.

Quota reconciliation facilitates the management of all fisheries and helps ensure that the catch limits are respected. It helps to achieve resource conservation objectives, to ensure that quota overruns by one fleet or fisherman do not affect others, and to make the industry more accountable for conservation objectives.

### **20. 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).

## **21. Crew registry**

Since April 1st, 2021, all inshore Independent Core 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, to midshore licence (19.81m to 30.48m) nor 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 or contact the Licensing Office at 1-877-535-7307 or [fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

## **22. 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 *Notice to Fish Harvesters* : [NEW CONDITION OF LICENCE RELATING TO DISCHARGE OF GARBAGE \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fishing-peche/condition-of-licence-relating-to-discharge-of-garbage)

## **23. 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](mailto:fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

## **For additional information**

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