



Discussion on the Newfoundland and Labrador Inshore Fishery



What We Heard - A Summary of Comments from
Public Discussions on the Future of Newfoundland
and Labrador's Inshore Fishery.

© Her Majesty the Queen in the Right of Canada, 2019.

PDF:

Dept. catalogue number: DFO/2018-2019

GC catalogue number: Fs144-51/2018E-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-28198-8

Executive Summary

In November 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) in the Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Region began a series of harvester engagement sessions throughout the province focused on the future of the inshore fishery. These sessions were implemented to respond to industry's desire for more communication with the Department on broader issues than the current consultation structure allowed. Through 21 well-attended meetings, DFO received a significant amount of valuable input and feedback on policies and management measures. It was clear to all who attended that harvesters are passionate and knowledgeable about their industry and that the Department and stakeholders have a common goal in creating a strong fishing sector and prosperous coastal communities throughout NL.

In this document, DFO reflects what was heard from stakeholders, and the Department has also endeavoured to address many of the issues raised. This document will help to inform future discussions related to fisheries management measures, policies and operations.

As the Department and harvesters work together to enhance the fishery in NL now and for the future, a collaborative approach is required for success.

DFO's relationship with industry is built on honesty, transparency and respect.

When making management decisions, DFO takes into consideration the input of all stakeholders including harvesters, along with the latest science advice and other factors. The feedback received regarding the engagement sessions was positive; harvesters throughout the province want further opportunities to speak directly to DFO representatives and bring forward their ideas and concerns about the inshore fishery. DFO recognizes that it is essential to have continuous dialogue with harvesters who have first-hand knowledge, expertise and experience. While the current management cycle includes numerous opportunities for formal consultation as well as informal discussion, DFO is committed to continuing to conduct these outreach meetings in 2019.



Executive Summary

Through 21 well-attended meetings, DFO received a significant amount of valuable input and feedback on policies and management measures.





Summary



From the meetings and written input several themes emerged:

- **Communications:** A desire for better communication between the Department and harvesters including clearer explanations of how decisions are made and the historical context that informs decisions, management measures, policies and regulations. Information should be more accessible.
- **Harvester Knowledge:** Harvesters asked DFO to recognize their knowledge of what is happening in the ocean and view it as a valuable component in decision-making.
- **Foreign Overfishing and Inter-provincial Access:** Harvesters are concerned about foreign overfishing and fishing by vessels from other provinces in waters adjacent to NL.
- **Science:** Harvesters requested greater transparency of fisheries science, and to be provided more information on DFO Science and the allocation of fish for scientific research.
- **Management Measures:** Harvesters would like to see more flexible fishing dates and aspire to be included in the process to determine these dates. They would like a review of buddy-up and professional certification guidelines as the established restrictions limit harvesters.
- **Fees:** Harvesters expressed the importance of keeping fees consistent across the province.
- **Oil and Gas:** With the increase in oil and gas exploration and operations in NL waters, harvesters questioned the effects of seismic testing on the marine environment and want the fishing industry to remain an important industry within the province.

Specific comments heard from the public and fish harvesters who attended the inshore outreach meetings are organized below by species groups, such as groundfish, invertebrates, and pelagics.

Throughout the document DFO responds to the comments by noting the status or actions being taken to address the items where applicable.

► Atlantic Halibut

What we heard:

Harvesters in 4R indicate that they are seeing an increase in halibut abundance and requested an increase in the 4RST Atlantic halibut quota. Concerns were also widely expressed regarding the management of Atlantic halibut bycatch in the cod and turbot fisheries. Harvesters requested that DFO permit the retention of all halibut caught, establish a harvest cap fishery, and increase the bycatch allocation.

DFO Response:

The 4RST (Gulf of St. Lawrence) Atlantic halibut total allowable catch (TAC) is established on a two-year cycle, after careful consideration of stock assessment advice from DFO Science and advice from the fishing industry through the Gulf Groundfish Advisory Committee. Presently, harvester interest is high and the 4R allocation of the Gulf Atlantic halibut resource is fully utilized. Once the TAC for Atlantic halibut is taken, harvesters are not permitted to retain halibut.

What we heard:

Harvesters would like to see changes to the provisions of the Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan (AHSP), including the fees involved, the use of tags, the requirement of choosing a fishing period and doing so months in advance, the eligibility requirements, 3-way buddy-ups, the advertisement process, and the application process.

DFO Response:

Since 2013, the Atlantic halibut fishery in 4R has been managed under an Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan (AHSP) which is a pilot project that DFO, in collaboration with the Fisheries Science Stewardship and Sustainability Board, endeavour to improve every year. It was developed to address conservation challenges (including quota overruns) associated with the Atlantic halibut fishery in this area, and to provide harvesters with the flexibility to better utilize the limited, but highly valuable, halibut resource thereby contributing to an improvement in fish harvester income levels and the economic viability of fishing enterprises.

Proposals to change management measures for Atlantic halibut should be discussed through the advisory committee process.



Groundfish



Proposals to change management measures for Atlantic halibut should be discussed through the advisory committee process.

► Atlantic Halibut

What we heard:

Concerns and objections were voiced regarding special allocations of Atlantic halibut to fund scientific research programs in 3Ps and 4R.

DFO Response:

Section 10 of the *Fisheries Act* provides the Minister with the authority to allocate fish or fishing gear/equipment for the purpose of financing collaborative science or fisheries management activities that contribute to the proper management and control of the fisheries and the conservation and protection of fish. Further information can be found on DFO's website at:

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/fish-allocation-finance-poisson-eng.htm>.

The DFO office in Corner Brook can provide information on the operation and financing of the DFO-industry collaborative science programs for Atlantic halibut in 4RST and 3NOPs4VWX5Zc.

All scientific assessments are conducted through the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) and the results are published on the DFO website at

<http://www.isdm-gdsi.gc.ca/csas-sccs/applications/Publications/index-eng.asp>

What we heard:

Difficulties experienced with the National Online Licensing System (NOLS) were raised, such as not being able to find and print the correct licence conditions for the Atlantic halibut fishery as they were not available until almost the beginning of the fishing week.

DFO Response:

With respect to the difficulties experienced by some harvesters printing the correct licence conditions, DFO reminds harvesters to read their licence conditions carefully to ensure they have selected and printed the appropriate conditions. If unsure, harvesters can contact their local DFO office. The timing of the availability of licence conditions for weekly openings in the Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan is constrained by the need to accommodate requests from participants to fish during a certain period and flexibility provided for participants to change their selected fishing period.



Groundfish

All scientific assessments are conducted through the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) and the results are published on the DFO website.



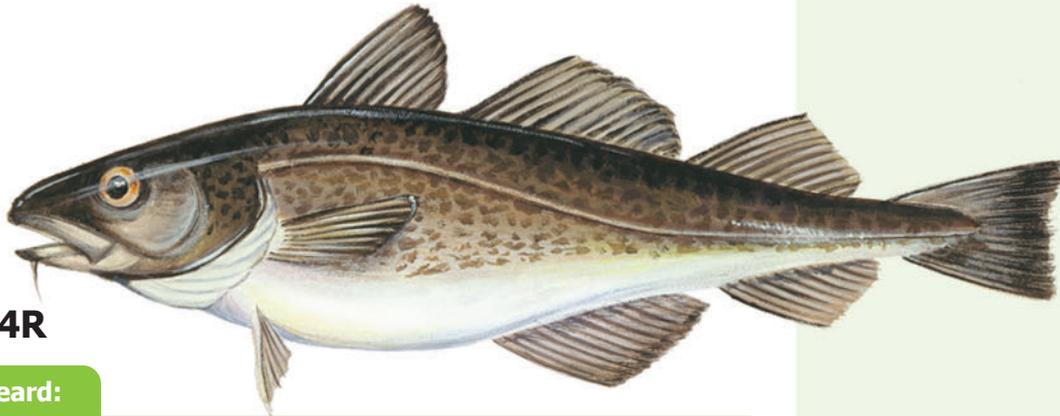
► Atlantic Halibut

What we heard:

There were concerns raised about Nova Scotian companies operating in 3Ps.

DFO Response:

Nova Scotia based enterprises have a history of fishing access and activity in 3Ps and are licensed to do so; they are required to respect all the conditions of their licences.



► Cod - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters in 4R noted their preference for an increase in the quota for Northern Gulf cod (4R3Pn) as well as an increase in the permitted number of gillnets from 6 to 25.

DFO Response:

The allowable catch limit will be established based on the latest science advice. The management measure with respect to the permitted number of gillnets was implemented as a conservation measure. While the department has no plans to change the gear amount permitted, requests for changes to the current Conservation Harvesting Plan and management measures can be brought forward to the relevant advisory committee.

What we heard:

Harvesters also felt that the timing of the 4R3Pn cod fishery is too restrictive and requested flexibility for a fishery from May to September or later.

DFO Response:

Any requests for changes to the current Conservation Harvesting Plan and management measures can be brought forward to the relevant advisory committee. DFO is planning to have a groundfish meeting with 4R3Pn harvesters in the winter of 2019.



Groundfish

► Cod - 4R

What we heard:

Concerns were expressed about allocations of cod for the cod quality programs.

DFO Response:

There is no special allocation for the cod quality programs. Fish taken through the cod quality program is included in the overall harvest amount. In 2017, the cod quality project represented approximately 3% and 2% of recorded cod removals in 4R3Pn and 2J3KL respectively.

What we heard:

Harvesters believe there is insufficient research being conducted on Northern Gulf cod and on the forage species that cod eat.

DFO Response:

While Northern Gulf cod science is completed in another region, the Department is confident in all its scientific research and its peer review process. However, recent investments in capelin science are allowing the Department to improve its understanding of the species and conservation of the stock. This included the hiring of 2 new capelin scientists in the NL Region, focused on understanding environmental factors impacting young capelin, and enhancing the ability to predict capelin abundance.

► Cod - 3Ps

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed displeasure with the opening of the 3Ps cod fishery to the mobile gear fleet in November 2017. They requested the exclusion of the mobile gear vessels until the TAC reaches 10,000 tonnes. Some also suggested that the 3Ps cod fishery close completely by mid or late January.

DFO Response:

The mobile gear fleet has traditionally had quota allocations and is an active participant in the 3Ps cod fishery. The opening in 2017 was not new access. There is no established minimum quota threshold that removes the mobile gear fleet from this fishery.



Groundfish

Recent investments in Capelin science are allowing the Department to improve its understanding of the species and conservation of the stock.



► Cod - 3Ps

What we heard:

Some feel that it is unfair to be excluded from parts of 3Ps, namely 3Ps (a), which is restricted to local fishers (west of Pass Island) with homeports in 3Ps (a) and (b) during the spawning period, while the Fortune Bay fishers can go anywhere.

DFO Response:

With respect to the restriction of the cod fishery west of Pass Island, the closure was established to protect the Northern Gulf cod stock that moved into the area in the winter. The closure was based on a longstanding recommendation of the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC) and later endorsed by the 3Ps Advisory Group.

What we heard:

Concerns were expressed with the way individual quota reallocations ("bumps") were administered and managed during 2017.

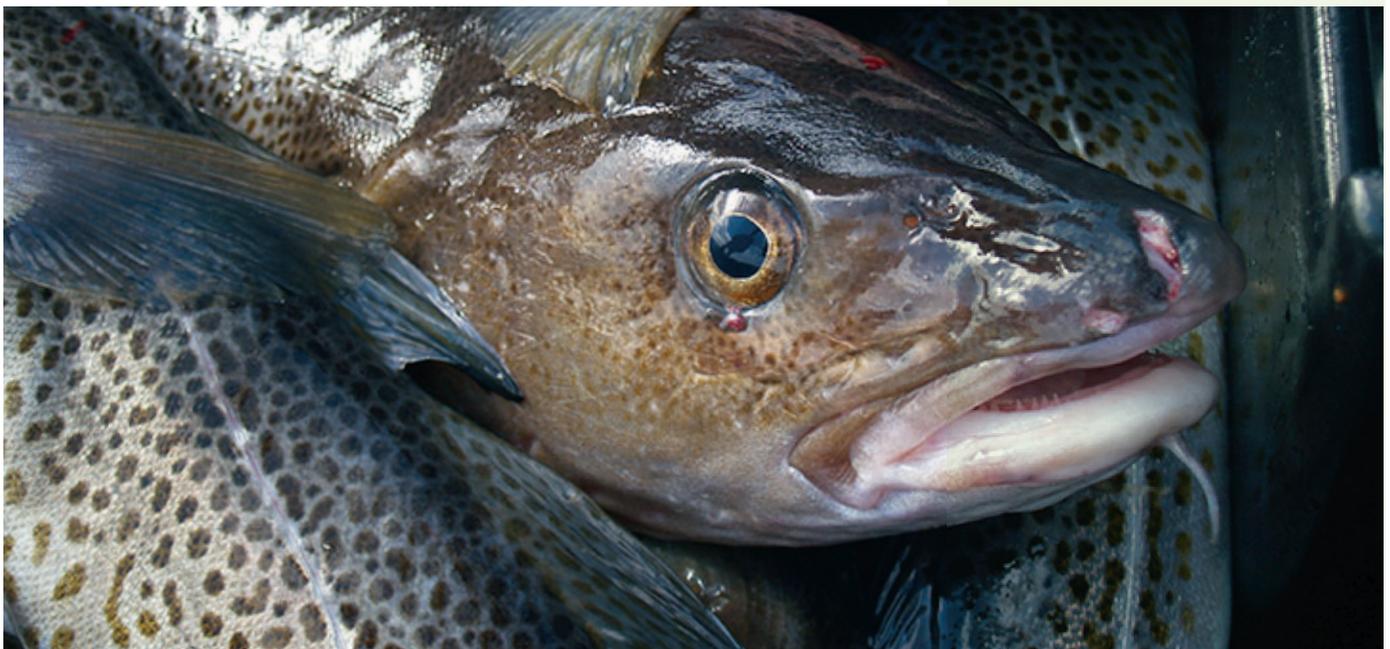
DFO Response:

The changes to the 3Ps pilot re-allocation project in 2018 were made to ensure participation in the project was restricted to active harvesters. Harvesters were only eligible for one re-allocation equivalent to 100% of the initial individual quota (IQ), when 75% of the initial IQ was landed.



Groundfish

The restriction of the cod fishery near Pass Island was established to protect the Northern Gulf Cod Stock.



► Cod - 2J3KL

Weekly Limits

What we heard:

There was considerable discussion on various approaches for managing the 2J3KL cod fishery. Some harvesters prefer an individual quota system that allows them to catch their fish when convenient, including many in Labrador who noted the nature of the fishery in their area and distances to travel. Other harvesters suggested the possibility of doubling or tripling the weekly limits (from 2017 limits) for the duration of the fishery in Labrador due to the shortness of their fishing season. There was some support for establishing bi-weekly or monthly limits that could be fished at any time during the month, including from larger vessel owners who find the present system unfeasible to travel further in search of cod. There was also support for the present weekly system.

DFO Response:

The 2018 management approach for the Northern Cod Stewardship fishery for NAFO Divisions 2J3KL was a one-year decision for 2018 only. The approach for 2019 will consider the results of the regional stock assessment and stakeholder perspectives; including those received during the outreach meetings as well as the Northern Cod advisory meeting.

What we heard:

Harvesters from Labrador are aware of the amounts of cod harvested by southern enterprises and are looking for some mechanism to allow them an opportunity to harvest an overall similar amount of cod.

DFO Response:

The management approach for the Stewardship Cod fishery has been developed based on consultation with stakeholders and industry representatives. The system of weekly limits was implemented in 2016 to provide consistent landings over an extended period. For 2018, the weekly limit for harvesters based in division 2J was 3,500lbs, which was 1.5 times that of the harvesters in division 3K during the peak summer period. The management approach acknowledged that the fishing conditions in Labrador are challenging and do not necessarily provide the same opportunity as in other areas. The higher weekly limits established in Labrador were intended to provide equitable access.



Groundfish

Management plans are the primary tool DFO uses to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources – they integrate all the factors that lead to good decision-making.

► Cod - 2J3KL

Season Dates

What we heard:

Harvesters discussed the challenges they experienced with respect to season dates in 2017. These include market challenges as the dates for cod fishing overlapped with other fisheries, specifically capelin. Also, harvesters noted that openings in the northern areas of 3K were too late and they were unable to benefit from the fall portion of the fishing season due to environmental conditions. They also felt they were unable to benefit from the increase in weekly landing limits due to weather and migration of fish out of the area at that time of year. In addition, harvesters expressed some desire to fish earlier in the year when they had traditionally fished cod. Harvesters requested inclusion in the process to determine season dates for the Northern cod stewardship fishery.

DFO Response:

Fishery season dates are agreed upon through annual consultation with industry to provide harvesters with the ability to harvest cod in a structured manner while taking advantage of the periods of the year when fish are prevalent along the coast. As with most fisheries that interact with other species and are influenced by environmental conditions, the ideal time for harvesting a particular species is based on factors that are difficult to anticipate.

► Greenland Halibut (Turbot)

What we heard:

Concerns were expressed regarding the management of the 2J turbot fishery, and that foreign vessels overfish turbot allocations in 2J resulting in reduced quotas for NL fishers.

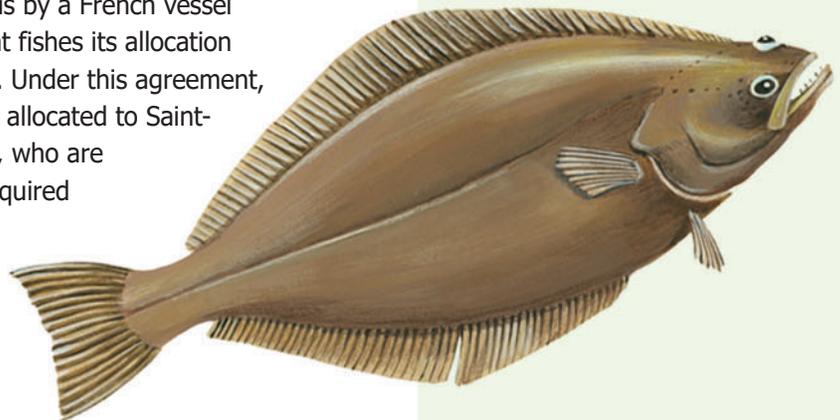
DFO Response:

The only foreign activity that occurs in 2J is by a French vessel (on behalf of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon) that fishes its allocation outlined in the Canada-France Agreement. Under this agreement, 3% of the Canadian allocation in 2J+3K is allocated to Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. French licence holders, who are licensed to fish in Canadian waters, are required to follow the same conditions of licence as Canadian licence holders.



Groundfish

Fishery season dates are agreed upon through annual consultation with industry.



► Greenland Halibut (Turbot)

What we heard:

Concerns were raised regarding historical access and the way draws/access are administered in the 3KL Turbot fishery. There were also requests from harvesters in 3KL to allow more access to those in the less than 40-foot fleet, either through the 3L Zone 1, 2, & 3 test fisheries or to open access into the bays.

DFO Response:

DFO will effectively communicate the current management measures and expression of interest/draw process for turbot. At the request of industry, an expression of interest was issued for the 3L test fishery in Zone 1 & 2 in 2018. All harvesters who were eligible to participate and who submitted an expression of interest were contacted; however, for various reasons no harvesters chose to participate.

What we heard:

Season dates were discussed, with requests for a later and longer fishing season as harvesters felt that the length of the season was too short and restrictive.

DFO Response:

DFO made significant changes to the opening dates for the 2018 turbot fishery so that it began earlier and allowed more flexibility on when harvesters could fish. The openings were linked to NAFO homeport area and began in early July for most areas. Also, the permit validity period was increased from 12 to 15 days.

What we heard:

There were concerns that NL turbot fishers in 4R are restricted to waters deeper than 140 fathoms while Quebec fishers can fish in waters as shallow as 125 fathoms. The access of 3Ps fishers to 2+3LMNO turbot was questioned.

DFO Response:

Depth restrictions were implemented in the turbot 4R area to avoid the capture of Atlantic halibut in the turbot fishery. Each region has different management measures for species for various reasons. DFO will discuss with industry changes to the water depth for fishing Greenland halibut as well as the possibility of opening up the inshore crab areas to fishing turbot by hook and line.



Groundfish

DFO made significant changes to the opening dates for the 2018 turbot fishery so that it began earlier and allowed more flexibility on when harvesters could fish.

► Greenland Halibut (Turbot)

What we heard:

There was criticism of the survey methodology used by DFO Science to assess turbot. Harvesters are also anxious to begin determining the status of flatfish stocks in the bays.

DFO Response:

Information on DFO Science fish population assessment methodology and findings is available on the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) website <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/index-eng.htm>.

Any suggested changes to management measures will be addressed at the annual industry advisory meetings. DFO is planning a groundfish meeting with harvesters in winter 2019.

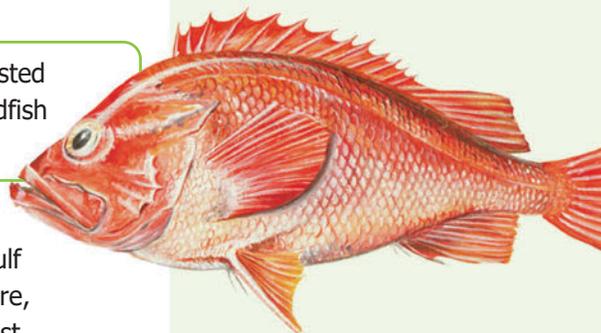
► Redfish

What we heard:

Access to redfish for mobile gear (<65') vessels in 4R3Pn was requested and some harvesters were dissatisfied that the Minister promised redfish to the Qalipu First Nation.

DFO Response:

There has been no decision on new access and allocations of Gulf redfish. In the event the fishery opens at some point in the future, the management approach for Gulf redfish will consider the latest science advice and stakeholder perspectives as well as input from the Redfish Advisory Committee. The management approach for Unit 1 redfish 2018 and 2019 includes maintaining the index fishery program with a 2,000t quota. It also includes an additional 2,500t experimental quota under an Experimental Redfish Fishing Plan for the purpose of testing gear to minimize capture of undersized redfish and bycatch, and to collect data on redfish species identification and reproduction.



► Lumpfish

What we heard:

Questions were asked about the abundance and the availability of science advice on lumpfish.

DFO Response:

The most recent stock assessment of lumpfish in 4RS3Pn occurred in 2015. The Science Advisory Report 2016/021 is available here: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2016/2016_021-eng.html



Groundfish

Suggested changes to management measures will be addressed at the annual industry advisory meetings.

► Skate

What we heard:

Harvesters in 3Ps questioned DFO's management of the skate fishery, including measures pertaining to bycatch.

DFO Response:

The Conservation Harvesting Plan provides direction on levels of bycatch and protocols to close various directed fisheries. Any requests for changes to the current Conservation Harvesting Plan and management measures can be brought forward to the relevant advisory committee.



► General

Conversion Factors

What we heard:

Harvesters in 4R stated their objections to the current groundfish conversion factors (round to gutted/head on) and requested that the factors be recalibrated.

DFO Response:

The conversion factors for groundfish are standard across Atlantic Canada and Quebec. The department has no plans to make changes at this time.



Groundfish

Any requests for changes to the current Conservation Harvesting Plan and management measures can be brought forward to the relevant advisory committee.

► General

Adjacency

What we heard:

Harvesters based in Labrador (2J) feel that they do not have equitable access to adjacent fisheries resources. There are very few species to be harvested in their area compared to other NAFO areas, and a future commercial cod fishery must benefit the harvesters and communities in Labrador adjacent to the resource. Harvesters also requested a turbot quota specifically for Labrador, noting that harvesters in 3KL are ready to fish turbot before those in Labrador are able to do so. They said that the turbot harvested in their adjacent waters largely leave the area and is taken back to processing facilities on the island. They recommended a working group or panel be struck to look at adjacent allocations similar to other regions.

DFO Response:

Each allocation decision considers a number of factors including: conservation, Indigenous and treaty rights, adjacency, historical dependence and economic viability. In the case of mid-shore and offshore fisheries, where the species fished are highly migratory and mobile, adjacency cannot serve as the only criterion for granting access, but must be considered along with other criteria, including historic dependence.

Additionally, the department is considering the establishment of a separate advisory process where Labrador based harvesters would have an opportunity to discuss Labrador specific issues.

Each allocation decisions considers a number of factors including:

- conservation,
- Indigenous & treaty rights,
- adjacency,
- historical dependence,
- economic viability.



Groundfish

► Scallop

What we heard:

Harvesters discussed a request by an enterprise to fish scallops in Area 14B (4R) in waters deeper than 20 fathoms, in order to avoid lobster habitat and due to concerns of lack of scallops in Area 14.

DFO Response:

DFO held a meeting with scallop and lobster harvesters in June 2018 to discuss the request to fish scallop in 14B. There was no consensus among lobster harvesters and scallop harvesters on opening the scallop fishery in 14B. The Department has analyzed the request and the feedback from local harvesters, and has decided to maintain the current management approach which includes opening the scallop fishery in 14B only after the quota is taken in 14A.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

What we heard:

Questions arose regarding the lobster-scallop gear conflict in Fortune Bay (3Ps). There were objections to the 30-fathom limit proposed by DFO in 2017.

DFO Response:

DFO continues to discuss gear conflict with lobster and scallop fishers with the aim to find an acceptable and fair solution for all parties involved.

What we heard:

Harvesters were not pleased with DFO's approach to the access and allocation of the various scallop beds and with the Nova Scotia vessels being permitted to harvest scallops in 3Ps.

DFO Response:

Allocations for various sea scallop beds in 3Ps were established in 2006 following the recommendations contained in the Hooley Report. The NL inshore fleet is allocated 100% of the quota on the North Bed in 3Ps, and the offshore scallop fleet, which had a history of fishing in this area, is allocated 100% of the quota on the Middle and South beds.

DFO continues to discuss gear conflict with lobster and scallop fishers with the aim to find an acceptable and fair solution for all parties involved.

► Recreational Scallop

What we heard:

Concerns regarding the scallop dive fishery in 3Ps were expressed, including the season being too short and a belief that the dive fishery removes too many scallops. Harvesters complained that the recreational scallop harvest is getting out of control and recommended more controls on areas and gear.

DFO Response:

An online public consultation on the recreational scallop fishery was held from February to April 2018. A decision on the management approach for the 2019 recreational scallop fishery will take into consideration the concerns raised.

► Snow Crab

Fall fishery

What we heard:

There were requests from harvesters throughout the province for a fall crab fishery.

DFO Response:

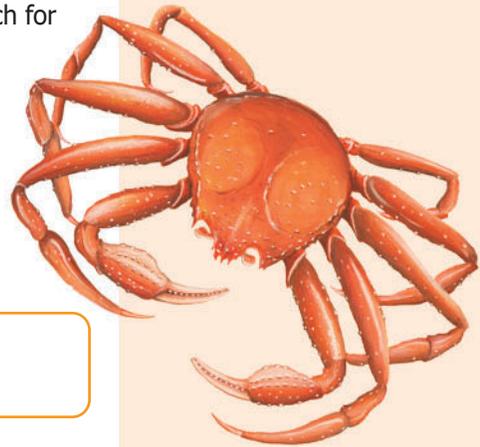
The snow crab fishery is a very important component of the NL fishery and DFO is committed to sustaining the resource. There have been numerous steps taken to date, including shortening seasons, implementing soft-shell crab closure grids, and advocating handling practices to reduce crab mortality.

The crab fishery is opened as soon as possible after the TAC is set. DFO aims to open the fishery in early April, but this is not always possible. A major consideration in determining the crab season duration is the avoidance of soft-shell crab in the fishery. Soft-shell crab represents recruitment that may contribute to the fishable biomass in the next season. Areas with a shortened season are generally those that have experienced high levels of soft-shell crab in the past and the shortened season is a management approach to avoid soft-shell crab in the future.

There are a number of reasons why a fall fishery is not implemented. The post-season snow crab survey indicates that the vast majority of crab encountered in the fall is new hard-shell crab (moulted that season) which will contribute to the fishable biomass in the following season. In most cases, the meat yield in the fall is medium to low and only improves after November. The low meat yield of crab entering the market can negatively impact the market prices for NL crab in the following season which can in turn be detrimental to the industry.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)



The snow crab fishery is a very important component of the NL fishery and DFO is committed to sustaining the resource.

► Snow Crab - 4R

Issues regarding 4R can be raised through the advisory committee process. All harvesters are welcome to attend the annual 4R snow crab advisory held each March.

What we heard:

Harvesters voiced concerns that Quebec-based fishers hold most of the snow crab quota in crab fishing area (CFA) 13, and criticized the snow crab allocation held by the North of Fifty –Thirty Association (NOFTA).

DFO Response:

Snow crab allocations in CFA 13 were determined by historical shares. NOFTA does not hold a snow crab allocation for CFA 13 or any other fishing area.

What we heard:

Crab harvesters in CFA 12, outside 8 miles, asked for relief and an opportunity to fish in Division 4S. There was a suggestion to switch these harvesters from individual quotas (IQ's) to a harvest cap system.

DFO Response:

In 1996, an IQ regime was implemented in the snow crab fishery based on the support of greater than two thirds of snow crab licence holders. DFO will require a similar level of support in order to consider discontinuing the IQ regime.

What we heard:

Harvesters requested more involvement in the 4R crab advisory process and to open the 4R crab fishery on April 1 without delays.

DFO Response:

All harvesters are welcome to attend the annual 4R snow crab advisory held annually in March. DFO endeavours to open the snow crab fishery as soon as possible after the TAC has been established.

What we heard:

It was asked why snow crab IQ fees in 4R are higher than the fees on the east coast of the province.

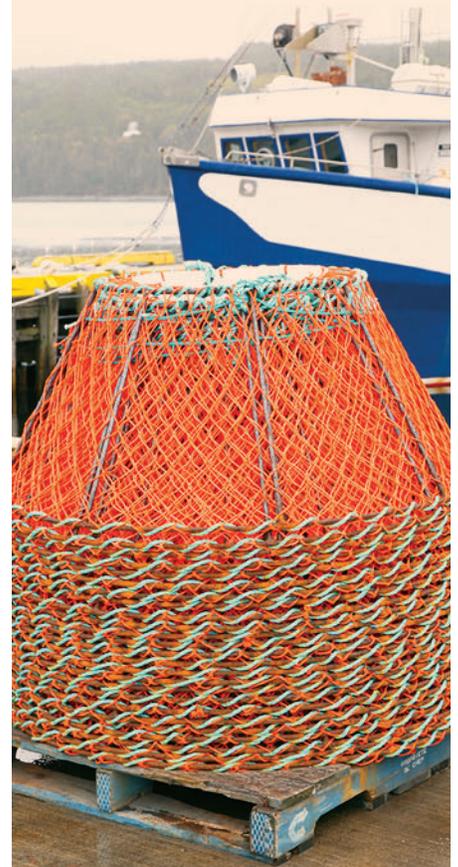
DFO Response:

The IQ fee structure is set out in the Atlantic Fishery Regulations. Changes to the fee structure and the regulations would be a lengthy process requiring consultation throughout Atlantic Canada with final approval by the Governor-in-Council. There are presently no plans to make changes to the IQ fee structure.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

Issues regarding 4R can be raised through the advisory committee process. All harvesters are welcome to attend the annual 4R snow crab advisory held each March.



► Snow Crab - 3Ps

What we heard:

Some harvesters requested April 1 opening dates for all vessel classes. Some suggested that the crab season in 3Ps should open as usual but run until the end of July, while others recommended that the crab fishery close in mid-August.

DFO Response:

A major consideration in determining the crab season duration is the avoidance of soft-shell crab in the fishery. Soft-shell crabs represent recruitment that may contribute to the fishable biomass in the next season. Areas with a shortened season are generally those that have experienced high levels of soft-shell in the past and the shortened season is a management approach to avoid soft-shell crab in the future.

What we heard:

There were objections to recent quota reductions and requests for a quota increase. There was also skepticism regarding the DFO crab assessment methodology.

DFO Response:

Harvest levels are established based on advice from the latest science assessment and the input received from stakeholders during the consultation process. Snow crab management measures are discussed extensively at the annual snow crab advisory meeting.

What we heard:

Observer fees in the less-than and greater-than 40-foot fleets should be the same.

DFO Response:

DFO designates individuals or corporations as observers to carry out observing duties within commercial fisheries. The program is delivered through a 100% industry-funded model and observer companies establish fees based on their individual business plan.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

Harvest levels are established based on advice from the latest science assessment and the input received from stakeholders during the consultation process.



► Snow Crab - 3K

What we heard:

Some harvesters requested an early opening for the crab fishery while others suggested the current opening dates be kept. Some want their season extended into late July or August, and others called on DFO for flexibility on the closing dates and crab retention. Harvesters in 3A (Canada Bay area) noted they often have to overnight at sea and the closing date can be problematic when they have to return with gear and there is a bad forecast.

DFO Response:

The season for Crab Fishing Area (CFA) 4 (Notre Dame Bay) opened as scheduled on April 16, 2018. In CFA 3A, the closing date was changed from the usual time of June 30 to July 15 prior to the beginning of the season. The fishery was extended until August 7 due to persistent heavy sea ice conditions that hampered the first few weeks of the fishery.

What we heard:

Harvesters in the White Bay and Green Bay area (3BC) want the quotas to remain stable in the inshore. Harvesters in the greater-than-40-foot-fleet would like an increase in the amount of crab they can catch.

DFO Response:

The quota for White Bay did not change this past year; the quota in Green Bay increased by 20%. Harvest quotas are established based on the advice from the latest science assessment and the input received from stakeholders during the consultation process. The overall snow crab resource has recently been declining and this trend is anticipated to continue in the near future. DFO must consider management measures that will result in improving the stock.

► Lobster

What we heard:

There were discussions on v-notching, including the need for a clearer definition of what a v-notch looks like.

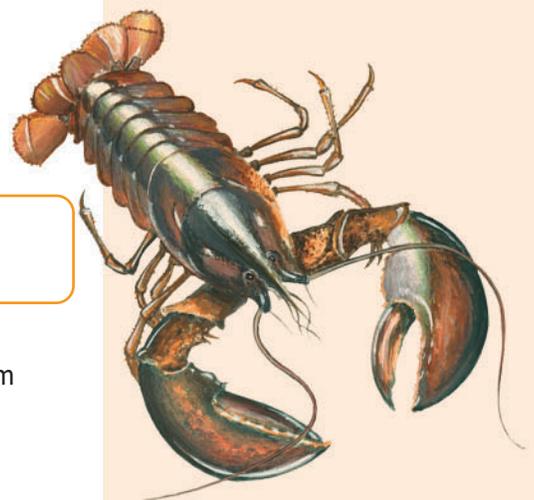
DFO Response:

C&P Fishery Officers continue to work with lobster harvesters to inform and clarify v-notching processes. Information on proper v-notching is available at all our C&P offices in the province.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

Information on proper v-notching is available at all our C&P offices in the province.



► Lobster

What we heard:

Harvesters stated that DFO was micro-managing lobster openings to avoid adverse weather.

DFO Response:

This is a highly lucrative and competitive fishery. For conservation reasons, the lobster season has a fixed number of days in each fishing area. When adjustments are made to the opening dates due to weather, it is to ensure that all harvesters have an equal opportunity to participate safely.

► Shrimp

What we heard:

Harvesters indicated that there is only a small amount of shrimp available to local harvesters. One harvester in 2J3KL stated that he was formerly permitted to harvest 930,000 lbs of shrimp, which is down to 89,500 lbs in 2018; and that accounts for basically two trips. Harvesters were concerned there is a shrimp plant in Charlottetown but there is not enough local shrimp available to keep the plant going.

DFO Response:

There has been significant quota reductions in shrimp fishing areas (SFA) based on the resource. Currently, the inshore fleet is allocated approximately 70% of the total quota in SFA 6.

► Squid

What we heard:

Harvesters remarked that squid were abundant in White Bay (3K) and on the west coast in 2017. There were also recommendations that restrictions be placed on the amount of gear the recreational harvesters can use, with harvesters remarking that the recreational squid fishery this year was actually a commercial one in many parts of 3K.

DFO Response:

The sale of squid caught from the recreational fishery is not permitted. Changes to gear limits would require an amendment to current regulations and there are presently no plans to revise gear limits; however, harvesters' concerns have been noted on this issue and will be taken into consideration going forward. C&P regularly monitors this fishery to ensure compliance with existing regulations.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

The lobster fishery is a highly lucrative and competitive fishery.



► Sea Cucumber

What we heard:

There was significant discussion and concerns about the temporary 2017 sea cucumber permit fishery in 3Ps, and the long-term future of the sea cucumber program.

DFO Response:

Based on the latest science advice in 2017, the TAC for 3Ps sea cucumber was increased and new temporary permits were issued to harvesters whose names were on the existing eligibility list.

► Sea Urchin

What we heard:

Bonavista Bay harvesters want the option to switch bays for conservation purposes. Harvesters also requested a meeting with DFO regarding the sea urchin fishery.

DFO Response:

A sea urchin advisory meeting was held in October 2018 where management issues were discussed with industry.

► General

What we heard:

Harvesters asked if DFO was planning to introduce electronic logbooks to speed up reporting.

DFO Response:

DFO does plan on implementing electronic log books. Information on DFO's plan to phase in the use of electronic logbooks can be found here: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/sdc-cps/nir-nei/logbooks-elec-journaux-eng.htm>



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)



► Capelin

What we heard:

Complaints were made regarding the delay in the 4RST capelin stock assessment.

DFO Response:

For all fisheries, DFO strives to conduct regular science assessments to inform the advisory process and allow for management decisions to be made in advance of the season opening. In some years, unforeseen events may cause delays.

What we heard:

The capelin sampling process was raised, with harvesters wanting a new process established. Sampling is now done by a few harvesters and it can get very expensive with no compensation.

DFO Response:

DFO is aware that there are costs associated with sampling methods in the 2+3 capelin fishery and is working with industry to provide a solution to this issue

What we heard:

In St. Mary's Bay (3L), harvesters questioned why their capelin fishery was not opened. They requested the opportunity to harvest their quotas if capelin becomes available.

DFO Response:

If capelin is present in commercial quantities and good condition, the fixed gear fishery is opened. This was not the case in St. Mary's Bay in 2017.

What we heard:

There were comments concerning the scarcity of capelin in the Labrador Strait and the absence of capelin spawning on beaches in 4R. It was suggested that the 4RST TAC was set too high and recommended that capelin be left in the water to benefit cod. Harvesters in 2J noted the absence of capelin in the past two years. Some harvesters in both 4R and 2+3 suggested that there should not be a commercial capelin fishery in order to benefit both capelin and cod, while others voiced strong support for a capelin fishery.

DFO Response:

Management measures for capelin are discussed at the various capelin advisory committee meetings. See <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/peches-fisheries/ifmp-gmp/index-eng.htm>



Pelagic Species (large and small)

For all fisheries, DFO strives to conduct regular science assessments to inform the advisory process & allow for management decisions to be made in advance of the season opening.



► Herring

What we heard:

Harvesters in 4R requested that separate herring fixed gear quotas be established for tuck seine fishermen and gillnet/trap fishers. Harvesters in the northern portions of area 14 would like the fixed gear sharing arrangements reviewed.

DFO Response:

Several years ago, the quota sharing arrangements for the fixed gear fleets between areas 13 and 14 were decided by an arbitrator. Tuck seines are considered fixed gear and at this time there is no opportunity for a further break down of that allocation.

What we heard:

There were complaints about grading systems and sampling protocols for small herring. It was felt by harvesters in 3Ps that changes to the minimum size and also the sampling tolerances in 2017 were not well communicated.

Harvesters noted changes in herring behavior, including that herring is being found in deeper water and is arriving later each year. Herring come into shallow water, spawn, and then go to deep water. They said more tagging studies are needed to understand the herring and mackerel stocks. There was also a request for more science work to be conducted on herring in St Mary's Bay (3L).

DFO Response:

Management measures for herring are discussed at the various herring advisory committees. They are available for review here: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/peches-fisheries/ifmp-gmp/index-eng.htm>

Any suggested changes to the current approach should be tabled at the advisory committee meeting by fleet representatives. Management measures for 4R herring announced in 2018 include:

- minimum size 24.76, consistent with the rest of NL Region;
- a new management cycle, April 1 – March 31; and
- an increase in the sampling tolerance for small fish from 10% to 20%.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

Any suggested changes to the current approaches should be tabled at the advisory committee meeting by fleet representatives.



► Herring

What we heard:

Disagreement was expressed with the requirement to set herring bait nets parallel to shore to avoid intercepting Atlantic salmon.

DFO Response:

Setting gillnets parallel to shore is essential to avoid the interception of migrating Atlantic salmon. Canada is committed to the conservation and rebuilding of Atlantic salmon. This measure related to the setting of bait nets is understood to have no major impact on the bait fishery while at the same time providing significant mitigation to the by-catch of Atlantic salmon.

► Mackerel

What we heard:

Questions were raised regarding the quota allowance and where vessels from Nova Scotia are permitted to fish.

DFO Response:

The Canadian commercial TAC for Atlantic mackerel in Atlantic Canada and Quebec regions was 10,000 tonnes (with a minimum commercial size of 263 mm) in 2017/18. This Atlantic wide TAC is not sub-divided by DFO Region or NAFO sub-Division. Harvesters are only permitted to fish in the areas outlined in their licence, and generally are restricted to fishing in waters near their own region.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

Canada is committed to the conservation and rebuilding of Atlantic salmon.



► Bluefin Tuna

What we heard:

Harvesters indicated that they are observing increased numbers of tuna in the waters of 4R and asked how to obtain access to licences and tags. Questions were asked regarding the pilot project for use of video cameras in the tuna fishery in 2017, and about the allocation transfer of tuna from Mexico to Canada.

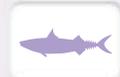
DFO Response:

Tuna is a limited entry fishery with no new licences available; however, licensing policy provides clarification on licence reissuance and this policy is available online. Additional questions can be directed to the respective Area Chief for Resource Management.

DFO Gulf Region implemented a pilot project in 2015 to test the use of on-board cameras. The objective is to improve compliance with management measures for the Bluefin tuna fishery. The use of cameras was expanded to the NL tuna fishery in 2017. The Atlantic Large Pelagic Advisory Committee (ALPAC) has been discussing the project with a view to expanding its application.

Since 2010, an allocation of tuna from Mexico has been transferred to Canada to be distributed amongst the Atlantic fleets, as per the sharing arrangement. The Mexican quota was transferred to Canada with a stipulation by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) that it be used to fund science.

Canada has an international obligation to use this quota to fund science which will directly support the ICAAT assessment of the Western Bluefin tuna stock. This work will be carried out through collaborative agreements (CA) with all fleets.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

A number of requirements and procedures must be followed before a new fishery can be initiated.

► Shark (Dogfish)

What we heard:

It was asked why there is a dogfish fishery in Nova Scotia but not in NL.

DFO Response:

Before a new fishery can be initiated, there are a number of requirements and procedures that must be followed. All of the details are outlined in the Emerging Fisheries policy that can be found here: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/efp-pnp-eng.htm>

► General

What we heard:

There were concerns that purse seine vessels operate too close to shore and are interfering with the fixed-gear (trap) fisheries. Trap fishermen have claimed that purse seines set in the bays intercept all the capelin before any can get to the traps, which are set even closer to shore. Fixed-gear (trap) harvesters in Southern Labrador (2J) demanded that seine vessels and tuck seine vessels be excluded from the bays along the Labrador Strait shore.

DFO Response

Fish harvesters of all gear types have indicated that they need access to inshore areas to be able to harvest capelin and herring. DFO does not plan to make any changes to the permitted fishing areas at this time.

What we heard:

There were also complaints that tuck and purse seine vessels are capturing salmon.

DFO Response:

C&P Fishery Officers continually monitor the fishery and while these allegations have not been substantiated, they are taken into consideration during regular patrols.



What we heard:

Concerns were raised regarding crab bycatch in purse seines.

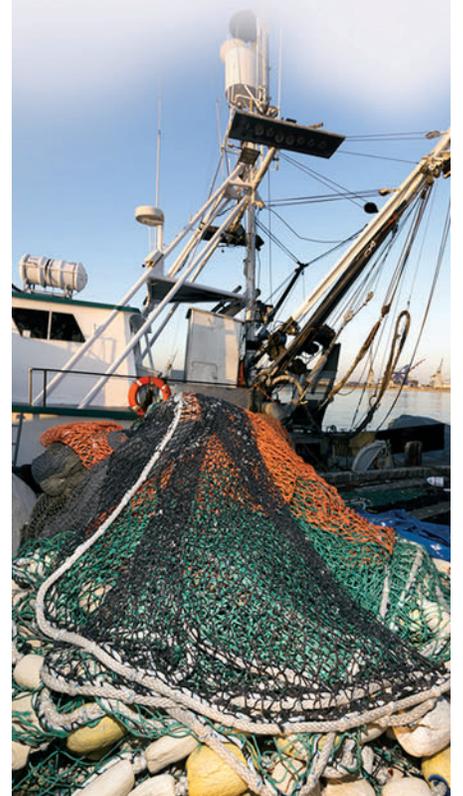
DFO Response:

While C&P Fishery Officers have found no evidence of crab bycatch in purse seines, they continue to monitor for these types of issues.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

DFO has a mandate to protect and conserve fishery resources and be vigilant in its efforts to prevent poaching.



► Marine Mammals

What we heard:

Harvesters felt that restrictions on entry into the seal fishery are too tough. Harvesters also requested that the freeze on new professional sealer registrations be lifted and that seal licences be transferable when the rest of an enterprise is transferred.

DFO Response:

Seal hunt management measures are discussed at several structured consultation meetings organised in the regions, and at one large Atlantic-wide Seal Advisory Committee meeting (ASAC). The ASAC will review the freeze on new licences in 2018/19. See <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/seal-phoque/reports-rapports/mgtplan-planges2011-2015/mgtplan-planges2011-2015-eng.htm#c3.1.6>

What we heard:

Large seals (possibly grey seals) are damaging lobster traps.

DFO Response:

In the event that a harvester finds their gear and catch damaged by seals, they may apply for a permit to destroy nuisance seals.

What we heard:

DFO monitoring activities (helicopters) are bothersome to sealers when they are sealing.

DFO Response:

C&P Officers conduct regular surveillance of the seal harvest and other fisheries to conserve and protect our marine resources.

► Striped Bass

What we heard:

Harvesters noted an increasing abundance of striped bass in the Labrador Strait and there were reports of the species being found in herring traps.

DFO Response:

The incidence of striped bass observed in 2018 was significantly less than in 2017. DFO will continue to monitor this issue.



Other

C&P Officers conduct regular surveillance of the seal harvest and other fisheries to conserve and protect our marine resources.



► Invasive Species

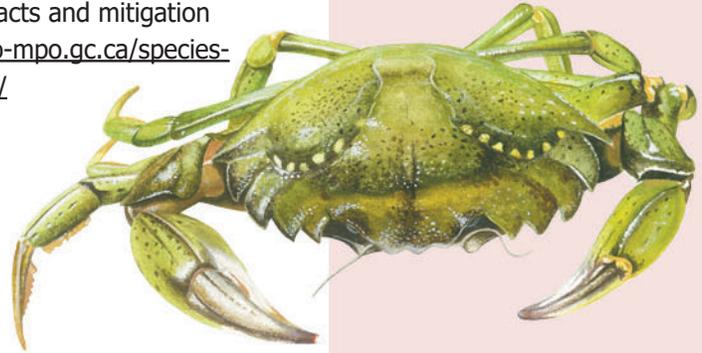
What we heard:

Harvesters noted that green crab needs to be effectively addressed and others requested greater transparency of what is being done to develop a fishery for the species.

DFO Response:

There is information on green crab, including impacts and mitigation measures that can be found here: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/publications/ais-eae/greencrab-crabevert/index-eng.html>

For information on policies and procedures for developing new commercial fisheries see the New Emerging Fisheries policy here: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/efp-pnp-eng.htm>



Other

► Sampling Survey Methodology

What we heard:

Harvesters asked that DFO address its stratified sample survey methodology, noting the environmental factors affecting fish migration patterns such as temperature.

DFO Response:

DFO Science has been advised of these concerns. However, consistency is critical in conducting assessment of fish populations. In order to make direct comparisons from year to year, researchers must conduct their scientific surveys at the same time of year, in the same areas, using their tools in exactly the same way, to keep their work consistent. This enables them to compare data recently collected to the data from previous years' surveys. It is important to note that DFO uses different gear than fish harvesters and scientists will collect samples across very broad areas. To be clear, DFO researchers are not targeting a specific species but instead sampling the environment and various fish species living in the ecosystem. This provides them with important information about how species and the ecosystem is doing and highlights patterns and trends. By keeping methods unchanged, scientists are able to evaluate fish population health and provide advice for sustainable fisheries.

► Closed Areas

Marine Conservation Targets (MCTs)

What we heard:

Harvesters raised the contradictory nature of the possibility that oil drilling might be permitted in the same areas to be closed to bottom contact fishing gear for the protection of corals and sponges. Disappointment was also expressed regarding the process taken to establish marine conservation areas and that there was inadequate consultation during the establishment of the areas.

DFO Response:

In NL, oil and gas activities are regulated by the Canada-NL Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB). Exploration and development activities are subject to rigorous environmental review processes before any activity can begin. DFO works with the C-NLOPB by reviewing project proposals and providing advice on issues such as working within sensitive benthic areas (e.g., corals and sponges), monitoring project activities, recommending project specific mitigation, advancement of science and best management practices associated with oil and gas activities, and more. All of this ensures impacts on the marine environment and fisheries are minimized.

What we heard:

A harvester understood the rationale for closing the Hawke Channel area to gillnets and otter trawling, but felt that longlines for turbot should be permitted. The Hawke Channel was first established for cod and was expanded to preserve crab. Longlining for turbot in the Hawke Channel would still preserve crab while having minimal impact on cod.

DFO Response:

DFO undertook a comprehensive consultation process in the establishment of marine conservation areas. Over 50 meetings were held with the fishing industry, Provincial Government of NL, Indigenous groups, and Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations.

The Hawke Channel and Funk Island Deep closures were reviewed based on the national guidance document for Identifying Marine Refuges or Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures. Based on these criteria, additional restrictions including those on groundfish handling and longlining were implemented in order for the closures to meet these guidelines.



Other

DFO works with the C-NLOPB by reviewing project proposals and providing advice on issues such as working within sensitive benthic areas (e.g., corals and sponges)



► Closed Areas

Marine Conservation Targets (MCTs)

DFO Response cont'd:

For more information on the criteria and guidance document, see the following link: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/publications/oeabcm-amcepz/index-eng.html>.

Information on the Hawke Channel and Funk Island Deep closures can be found on our website at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oeabcm-amcepz/refuges/hawkechan-nel-chenalhawke-eng.html> and <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/oeabcm-amcepz/refuges/funkisland-deep-fossedelilefunk-eng.html>

What we heard:

It was asked whether the closures to protect corals in 3NO are in effect for only five years.

DFO Response:

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization implemented the division 30 Coral closure and has scheduled a review of the closure in 2020.

► Closed Area near Blanc Sablon, Quebec

What we heard:

Details were requested regarding the closed area just east of the Division 4R-4S boundary.

DFO Response:

This particular closure was included in the Atlantic Fishery Regulations. It is in place to keep vessels greater than 12 meters away from the area to prevent gear conflicts with fixed gear vessels. In 2016-17, the same area was closed to all mobile gear vessels, including small purse seine vessels to protect spawning herring. Sampling later concluded that herring were not spawning in the area and so it was reopened to mobile gear vessels less than 12 meters.



► Seismic Testing

What we heard:

Harvesters raised concern about seismic surveying taking place in locations where fisheries are open, and requested more work be done on the effects of seismic testing on the ocean food chain. Some harvesters felt there was a lack of respect for fishers and their gear when seismic work was occurring.

DFO Response:

There is a national code of conduct that was developed by federal and provincial authorities responsible for the review and assessment of proposed seismic surveying in Canada. It addresses the public's concerns for potential impacts on marine life. Information on the effects and mitigation of seismic testing in Canadian waters is available here: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/publications/seismic-sismique/index-eng.html>

► Salmon Aquaculture

What we heard:

Harvesters noted concerns with the net pen salmon aquaculture industry in Bay D'Espoir and on the Connaigre Peninsula.

DFO Response:

Management of aquaculture in NL is a shared responsibility between the federal and provincial government. DFO worked with the Government of NL to develop the Code of Containment for the Culture of Salmonids in Newfoundland and Labrador. Both governments administer elements of the Code, and aquaculture companies must adhere to it as a condition of licences issued by the Provincial Government. The Code includes standards for equipment, handling practices, documentation and reporting, and mitigations including measures to recapture escaped fish.

► Indigenous Fisheries

What we heard:

Concerns were expressed with what is perceived to be flexibilities provided to Indigenous harvesters and a call for more controls to be in place for these harvesters.

DFO Response:

Commercial fishing licences issued to Indigenous groups are done so on a communal commercial basis. That means they are not issued to an individual but rather to the group. Unlike licences which are issued under the authority of the Atlantic Fishery Regulations, communal



Other

There is a national code of conduct that was developed by federal and provincial authorities responsible for the review and assessment of proposed seismic surveying in Canada.



► Indigenous Fisheries

DFO Response cont'd:

commercial licences are issued under the authority of the Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations. These regulations released Indigenous groups from some licensing policy; however, all licensing policies apply to individual Indigenous fish harvesters who are not fishing under the authority of a communal commercial licence.

► Licensing and Enterprise Structure

Overlap privileges

What we heard:

Harvesters in 2J expressed concern that they have groundfish licences for 4R but have been denied access to that area for years, while 4R harvesters have free access to participate in groundfish fisheries 2J. They asked for more information on the overlap privileges in 2J for harvesters in the Labrador Strait.

DFO Response:

Currently, groundfish harvesters in 2J do not have overlap privileges in 4R. There are presently no plans to alter this policy. While the Department's Sector Management Policy outlines overlap privileges for groundfish licence holders in NL, in some fisheries the overlap privileges have not been provided where stocks are experiencing low levels. More work is required to develop thresholds for the implementation of the privileges as stocks increase.

What we heard:

Harvesters from the 3K area would like to have access to 4R to fish cod, especially when the season is open in 4R and closed in 3K. With respect to overlap, the following recommendations were made:

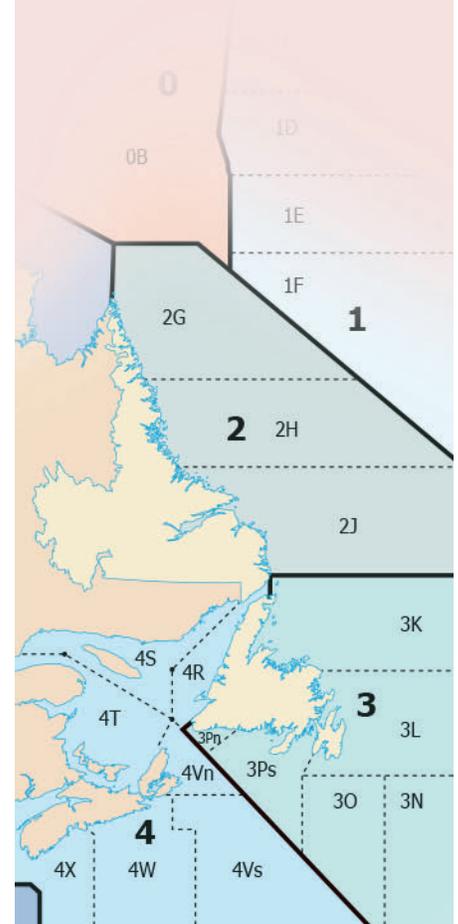
- The overlap area includes fishers whose homeport is between Cape Norman in 4R and Lobster Point in 3K.
- 3K fishers be allowed to fish in 4R when the 4R season opens in the overlap area.
- There be no* negative impact to 4R fishers who presently have overlap access in 4R and 3K.

DFO Response:

An overlap agreement was reached in 2011 for harvesters from L'Anse aux Meadows east to Cape Bauld, allowing them to fish a small portion of 3K while the 4R cod fishery was open. The agreement recognizes the traditional fishing areas of these harvesters and permits them to fish in the waters north and east of the White Islands to a point approximately one-half nautical mile north of Cape Bauld.



Other



► Licensing and Enterprise Structure

What we heard:

Harvesters in the St. Mary's Bay area (3L) requested greater flexibility regarding where they can fish cod. They do not want to be restricted to 3Ps. With the scarcity of fish, harvesters requested the ability to fish both areas.

DFO Response:

With respect to 3L and 3Ps, this restriction is based on applying the principles of the Hearn Report to prevent the total IQ's of overlap fishers from exceeding that of a resident fixed-gear fisher in 3Ps.

Proposals to change the current management approach with respect to overlap privileges can be tabled at the appropriate groundfish advisory committee meeting.

► Buddy-up and Enterprise Combining

Buddy-up and combining measures should be discussed at the appropriate advisory committee meetings.

What we heard:

There was strong support across the entire region for the implementation of buddy-up in the Northern Cod Stewardship fishery, especially along the northeast coast. Various reasons were given including economics (buddy-up reduces overhead costs), safety (fishers can choose to fish on a larger vessel), and crewing (difficult to recruit crew in this fishery).

Discussion was held on how such a system would be instituted. Some favored a system similar to snow crab that would be open to anyone regardless of past participation, whereas others preferred something that would limit those fishers that have not been participating in this fishery in recent years. There was support from both the greater-than and less-than -40-foot-fleets and some support that buddy-up be permitted across fleets.

DFO Response:

The Stewardship fishery was introduced in 2006 to obtain a better understanding of the 2J3KL cod stock by providing an opportunity for harvesters to collect information for stock assessment and to facilitate informed harvester participation in stock assessment processes. Due to the limited nature of the fishery, the harvest levels to individual harvesters are highly dependent on the participation level. Providing a buddy-up option would increase participation and in turn decrease the amount available to individual harvesters.



Other

Proposals to change the current management approach with respect to overlap privileges can be tabled at the appropriate groundfish advisory committee meeting.

► Buddy-up and Enterprise Combining

What we heard:

It was also asked that buddy-up and designation in the lobster fishery be addressed.

What we heard:

Greater flexibility and access with respect to DFO's combining policy was requested. There were requests from 4R-based harvesters to allow the combining of lobster enterprises so that enterprise holders could fish 500 pots instead of only 250.

DFO Response:

DFO discussed the buddy-up policy with fleet representatives in 2018; however, no changes to the policy are being considered at this time. Currently, policy does not permit combining in the lobster fishery.

► Groundfish Licence Re-issuance

What we heard:

Concerns were raised regarding the restrictions around the re-issuance of core and non-core groundfish licences. Harvesters feel that a groundfish licence is groundfish licence no matter what its designation. Also, the cost of getting a groundfish licence in some fleets/areas is greater than in other areas, which was viewed as unfair.

Frustrations were expressed regarding the freeze on quotas between the greater-than-40-foot and less-than-40-foot-fleets.

DFO Response:

The difference between Core and Non-Core enterprises and licences is a fundamental part of the policy to *Preserve the Independence of the Inshore Fleet in Canada's Atlantic Fisheries* (PIIFCAF). Under the Fisheries Licensing Policy NL Region:

12.18 GROUND FISH

General

Subsection 12.2 applies to the re-issuance of Core groundfish licences and associated validations.

Non-Core groundfish licences are not eligible for reissuance.

Non-Core groundfish licences remain non-Core, even when reissued to a Core enterprise that does not have a groundfish licence.



Other

Currently, policy does not permit combining in the lobster fishery.

► Groundfish Licence Re-issuance

DFO Response cont'd:

When a Level II fish harvester with a non-Core groundfish licence acquires a Core enterprise with groundfish, the non-Core groundfish licence is cancelled immediately.

The Fisheries Licensing Policy NL Region is available here:
<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/licences-permis/nfld-L-abrador-tn-labrador-eng.htm#toc2>

The annual licence fee for a competitive (non-individual quota) groundfish licence is set at \$30.00 in the Atlantic Fishery Regulations. This fee applies throughout Atlantic Canada.

The policy regarding groundfish licence reissuance applies only for the purpose of divesting and exiting through combining. Presently, policy will allow for the equal distribution of groundfish licences among fleets and geographic areas. Any discussion of changes to this policy should be brought forward to the appropriate groundfish advisory committee.

► Professional Fish Harvester Certification

What we heard:

There are concerns that professional fish harvester certification policies and procedures make it extremely difficult for young people to enter the commercial fishery and for retiring harvesters to pass their enterprises on to their children. The Professional Certification process is too restrictive, especially to new entrants. Harvesters raised issue with the requirement for harvesters to have 75% of the income for fishing during the fishing season, and what they feel are excessive and unnecessary education and training requirements. Harvesters called for greater opportunities to combine enterprises to make it easier for aging (60+) fish harvesters to exit the industry.

DFO Response:

The Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB) in NL is established under the authority of the provincial *Professional Fish Harvesters Act* (PFHA). The PFHA states that the board shall, with the approval of the minister, establish criteria respecting the certification of professional fish harvesters including different criteria respecting different classifications.

While DFO supports professionalization, and requires enterprise holders meet the professionalization criteria established by the board, the PFHCB establishes the criteria for fish harvester professionalization.



Other



► Professional Fish Harvester Certification

What we heard:

It was also suggested to extend the northern Labrador core policy to southern Labrador to include all of 2J.

DFO Response:

Policy to be reviewed.

► Vessel Length Restrictions

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed support for allowing the less-than-40-foot-fleet an increase in the size of their vessels. Their rationale included the need to enhance safety at sea for enterprise owners and the fact that many quotas are currently either individual quotas or restricted by daily or weekly limits. There was also a request for greater transparency regarding the change in the definition of vessel length overall (LOA).

DFO Response:

Face-to-face consultation with stakeholders in NL is planned to take place this winter. Following a regional consultation process, DFO made significant changes to its Vessel Replacement Policy in 2007, which resulted in an increase in vessel length eligibility for both the under and over 40-foot sectors. As in 2017/18, DFO plans to engage directly with harvesters through a series of outreach meetings where issues such as vessel replacement can be discussed. All input received through these meetings and other consultative processes are considered; however, changes to the current vessel replacement could have significant policy and fisheries management implications. While there are no plans to make changes to the current vessel replacement rules at this time, comprehensive fleet proposals will be given consideration.

See the Fisheries Licensing Policy NL Region B. Fleet Eligibility Rules 14.10 for the current vessel registration policy and recent history.
http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/licences-permis/nfld-labrador-tn-labrador-eng.htm#part_2



Other

Face-to-face consultation with stakeholders in NL is planned to take place this winter.



► Complaints about Excessive Controls

What we heard:

Harvesters felt that rules and regulations in the fishery are excessive and that Fishery Officers have been harassing certain harvesters.

DFO Response:

DFO's Fishery Officers are tasked to ensure compliance with the *Fisheries Act* and other regulations and legislation, including licence conditions established for the various fisheries. To ensure compliance, enforcement and compliance activities are carried out by fishery officers who conduct regular patrols on land and sea as well as in the air. Fishery Officers are also out in the communities encouraging shared stewardship and participating in educational and outreach activities to contribute to sustainable fisheries.

► Communication and Consultation

What we heard:

Harvesters throughout the province requested increased consultations and communication from the Department.

DFO Response:

DFO is open to receiving comments, suggestions, and requests from fish harvesters. The Department strives to provide a structured consultation process based on advisory committees composed of fish harvester representatives, processors, Indigenous groups and provincial government agencies, without imposing an onerous consultation process on stakeholders whose time is valuable.

► Face-to-face Meetings

Harvesters were invited to attend outreach meetings throughout the province through Notices to Fish Harvesters and Notices to the Public; anyone who would like to be included on this distribution list can contact Janet Warren at Janet.Warren@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

On the following page are complete schedules of the meetings that took place.



Other

DFO is open to receiving comments, suggestions, and requests from fish harvesters.



► Face-to-face Meetings cont'd



Other

4R3Pn

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Hawkes Bay	Maynard's Torrent River Inn	Mon., Nov., 6, 2017, 6-8 p.m.	44
L'Anse au Clair, Labrador	Northern Lights Inn	Tues., Nov., 7, 2017, 6-8 p.m.	16
Cow Head	Shallow Bay Motel	Wed., Nov., 8, 2017, 4-6 p.m.	9
Stephenville	Stephenville Lions Club	Thurs., Nov., 9, 2017, 2-4 p.m.	14
Corner Brook	Qualipu First Nation office	Thurs., Dec., 7, 2017	15

3Ps

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Placentia	Star of the Sea Hall	Mon., Nov., 20, 2017, 6-8 p.m.	35
English Harbour West	Lion's Club	Thurs., Nov., 23, 2017, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.	17
Marystown	Marystown Motel & Convention Centre	Tues., Nov., 21, 2017, 6-8 p.m.	26
Harbour Breton	Loyal Orange Lodge	Thurs., Nov., 23, 2017, 4-6 p.m.	10

3K

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
St. Anthony	St. Anthony Lions Club	Wed., Dec., 6, 2017, 6-8 p.m.	34
Baie Verte	Baie Vista Inn	Tues., Jan., 16, 2018, 6- 8 p.m.	42
Twillingate	Lion's Club	Wed., Jan., 17, 2018, 6-8 p.m.	28
Fogo Island	Church of Holy Spirit Parish Hall	Tues. Feb., 13, 2018, 10a.m-12 p.m	28

3L

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Hare Bay	Hare Bay Fire Hall	Fri., Jan., 19, 2018, 10 a.m-12 p.m.	23
Bonavista	Lion's Club	Mon., Jan., 22, 2018, 2-4 p.m.	42
Shearstown	Lion's Club	Wed., Jan., 24, 2018, 10 a.m.- 12 p.m.	52
Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay	Royal Canadian Legion	Wed., Jan., 24, 2018, 6-8 p.m.	21
Ferryland	Southern Shore Folk Arts Centre	Thurs., Jan., 25, 2018, 10 a.m-12 p.m.	47
Petty Harbour	Petty Harbour Fisherman's Centre	Thurs., Jan., 25, 2018, 6-8 p.m.	28

2J

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Cartwright	Labrador Fisherman's Union		
	Shrimp Co. Bunkhouse	Tues., Feb., 6, 2018, 1-3 p.m.	16
Port Hope Simpson	Alexis Hotel	Wed., Feb., 7, 2018, 9:30-11:30 a.m.	24