



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.

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The cover is a photo of the Community of Belleoram, Newfoundland and Labrador
Photo by Dan Ficken, Environmental Officer

Executive Summary

A total of 18 inshore fishery consultation meetings were held throughout Newfoundland and Labrador during the winter and spring of 2019. This was the second series of open consultations with inshore fish harvesters, the first series took place in the fall and winter of 2017-18.

The purpose of these consultations was to provide a forum for individual harvesters and their representatives to raise concerns and ask questions on a wide range of fishery management topics. The meetings featured flexible agendas and allowed significant harvester participation.

During the meetings fish harvesters asked questions and offered their perspectives about various aspects of fisheries management and science. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) also took the opportunity to address the questions and concerns raised during the previous consultations in 2017-18.

Topics discussed and questions raised in the meetings centred upon five general themes:

- The timing of fishery openings and closures;
- The way fishery overlap privileges near the boundaries of major fishing zones are managed;
- Sharing arrangements for fish stocks, particularly those in which harvesters from neighbouring regions are allocated greater shares than harvesters from Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Permitting more buddy-up arrangements; and
- Vessel length restrictions and vessel replacement rules.

Although the objectives of these consultations was to discuss fisheries management measures, harvesters expressed concern regarding the DFO Science assessment process and the precautionary approach frameworks being developed for species such as cod and Snow crab.



Executive Summary

During the meetings fish harvesters asked questions and offered their perspectives about various aspects of fisheries management and science.



► Atlantic Halibut - 2J

What we heard:

Harvesters on the southeast coast of Labrador asked why they are excluded from the Atlantic halibut fishery in NAFO Division 4RST while harvesters from outside of Division 2J are allowed to fish in 2J for certain species.

DFO Response:

Currently, groundfish harvesters in 2J do not have overlap access in 4R. There are presently no plans to change this policy. While the Department's Sector Management Policy outlines overlap privileges for groundfish licence holders in Newfoundland and Labrador, in some fisheries, where insufficient quota is available, overlap access has not been provided. Further discussion is required to develop thresholds for the implementation of overlap access.

► Atlantic Halibut - 3Ps

What we heard:

Harvesters in 3Ps would like to see an increase in the bycatch share for the 3Ps fixed gear fleet, possibly through allocating future total allowable catch (TAC) increases to fleets in adjacent inshore areas. Others suggested changing the formula to 3% only, not 3% or 200 lb., whichever is greater, to lessen the incentive to target halibut when fishing other groundfish species. Others asked for the former 10% bycatch allowance to be reinstated. Other suggestions included dividing the bycatch share geographically, between east of Pass Island (Fortune Bay) and west of Pass Island.

DFO Response:

Current management measures for Atlantic halibut in NAFO Sub-Division 3Ps were developed in cooperation with the fishing industry and are in accordance with the conservation harvesting plan for this stock. For a portion of the year the Department authorizes inshore fixed-gear harvesters in 3Ps to retain halibut as bycatch. When it is authorized to be retained, the incidental catch of Atlantic halibut shall not exceed 3% or 200 lb., whichever is greater. These measures are in place to ensure catches of Atlantic halibut do not exceed the established quota. The Department will continue to consult with stakeholders regularly on current and proposed management measures for Atlantic halibut.



Groundfish



The Department will continue to consult with stakeholders regularly on current and proposed management measures for Atlantic halibut.

► Atlantic Halibut - 3Ps

What we heard:

DFO provided an information sheet on the Atlantic halibut DFO – Industry scientific collaboration in 3NOPs4VWX5Zc. Harvesters questioned the need for more research and asked that the program be shut down for five years, and that the 185 tonne allocation for scientific work be reallocated to harvesters.

DFO Response:

A key component of the science assessment process for 3NOPs4VWX5Zc Atlantic halibut is the Industry-DFO Atlantic Halibut Survey Program. This program, which is a collaboration between DFO Science and industry, provides important information on stock status to inform the effective management of the halibut resource. A portion of the TAC is allocated to support the program under Section 10 of the *Fisheries Act* (Use of Fish). The information collected is incorporated into the stock assessment and used to inform appropriate management measures. The program contributes to the development of reliable scientific advice for Atlantic halibut and also promotes a collaborative relationship between DFO Science and industry with respect to scientific research.

► Atlantic Halibut - 3Pn

What we heard:

Concern was expressed about Atlantic halibut bycatch in an expanded commercial Redfish harvest. It was suggested that panels and grids for avoiding halibut should be developed and tested. The Department was urged to be diligent about monitoring halibut bycatch in the mobile gear trawl fishery with observer coverage and 100% dockside monitoring.

DFO Response:

The management approach for Unit 1 redfish for 2019 includes 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. The outcomes from this plan will inform appropriate management measures to mitigate bycatch of non-target species in the redfish fishery.



Groundfish

A portion of the TAC is allocated to support the program under Section 10 of the Fisheries Act (Use of Fish)



► Atlantic Halibut - 3Pn

What we heard:

Harvesters asked why Atlantic halibut bycatch may be retained in the 4RST turbot fishery but not in the cod fishery. It was also suggested that halibut bycatch retention be permitted in the cod fishery.

DFO Response:

Management measures for Atlantic halibut were developed in collaboration with industry and are included in the *Groundfish Conservation Harvesting Plans* for fleets on the west and southwest coast of Newfoundland. Given the limited quota in the Atlantic halibut fishery for the inshore fixed gear fleet in 3Pn, there would be less halibut available in the directed fishery if the retention of halibut were permitted while directing for other species.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that scientific work on halibut in 3Pn could lead to a decision to roll the 3Pn halibut into the 4RST stock or the 3NOPs4VWX5Zc stock.

DFO Response:

There is currently no consideration being given to changing the management units for Atlantic halibut. A DFO-Industry research survey takes place annually throughout 3NOPs4VWX5Zc, 3Pn, and 4RST to enhance understanding of the Atlantic halibut resource through these areas, including with respect to stock size and distribution. This program was established, in part from a desire by harvesters for more scientific research on Atlantic halibut throughout Atlantic Canada, including in 3Pn. The data collected from these surveys will inform the consideration of appropriate management measures for the Atlantic halibut resource.

What we heard:

A harvester asked about the reason for implementing the 85cm minimum length for Atlantic halibut.

DFO Response:

The increase from 81cm to 85cm was recommended by DFO Science. It is the length at which 50% of the halibut reach sexual maturity. The 85cm minimum size applies only in NAFO Division 4RST



Groundfish



► Atlantic Halibut - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters questioned the requirement to pay for tags under the *Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan (AHSP)*, and asked why tags were required in the AHSP fishery in 4R but not elsewhere. Concerns with the requirement to choose one week-long fishing periods were also expressed. Harvesters indicated they need longer fishing periods in order to avoid severe weather.

DFO Response:

One of the elements of the *Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan* is a tagging program and catch reporting system that allows for improved monitoring of Atlantic halibut catches. The tagging requirements are intended to enhance the catch monitoring regime for the 4R Atlantic halibut fishery and provide more effective and targeted enforcement. The cost of these tags represent a small proportion of the administration fees associated with the *Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan*.

Lengthening the fishing periods could result in lower individual harvest caps, as in recent years the caps have been calculated on the assumption that not all harvesters will catch their full caps, and could result in higher DMP costs. Notwithstanding the possibility of lower harvest caps, in 2019 the fishing periods were lengthened to two weeks, with the final period in October lasting three weeks.

What we heard:

Fish harvesters questioned the rationale for the level of the quota for 4RST Atlantic halibut. They alleged that halibut are so numerous they are eating lobster.

DFO Response:

The Total Allowable Catch for 4RST (Gulf of St. Lawrence) Atlantic halibut is established after careful consideration of the stock assessment advice from DFO Science and the recommendations from the fishing industry through the Gulf Groundfish Advisory Committee.

What we heard:

Harvesters questioned why the individual harvest cap under the AHSP remained at 1200 lb., after the 4RST Atlantic halibut TAC was increased in 2017.

DFO Response:

The individual harvest caps under the AHSP depends on factors that include the available quota and the number of qualified participants in



Groundfish



One of the elements of the Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan is a tagging program and catch reporting system that allows for improved monitoring of Atlantic halibut catches.

► Atlantic Halibut - 4R

the fishery. In 2019, the individual harvesting cap was increased to 1,400 lbs.

Harvest caps in the *Atlantic Halibut Sustainability Plan*

YEAR	SINGLE OPTION (lb.)	BUDDY-UP OPTION (lb.)
2016	1100	1850
2017	1200	2400
2018	1200	2400
2019	1400	2800

In recent years participation in the fishery has been:

- 550 in 2016;
- 566 in 2017; and
- 584 in 2018.

What we heard:

DFO outlined the 4RST Atlantic halibut fleet shares during the outreach meetings, following which harvesters and their representatives expressed the view that every fish quota around the shores of NL should be reserved for the benefit of NL harvesters.

DFO Response:

The established sharing arrangement for the inshore fixed-gear Atlantic halibut fishery in 4RST is based on historical landings and adjacency of inshore harvesters to the resource. Following two review processes, the current sharing arrangement was determined to be the appropriate approach for distributing Atlantic halibut quota among the inshore fixed gear fleets.

What we heard:

Some harvesters wanted to know why more of the Atlantic halibut quota is not used as bycatch in fisheries for other groundfish species.

DFO Response:

The current management measures for Atlantic halibut in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were developed in collaboration with fish harvesters and are in accordance with the AHSP. The Department will continue to consult with stakeholders regularly to seek feedback on the management approach, including bycatch measures.



Groundfish

The Department will continue to consult with stakeholders regularly to seek feedback on the management approach, including bycatch measures.

► Cod - 2J

What we heard:

Harvesters requested the establishment of a separate cod quota for the east (2J) coast of Labrador as the fishing season is very short. It was stated that Labrador harvesters currently catch approximately 3% of the overall 2J3KL quota.

DFO Response:

The management approach for the Northern Cod Stewardship fishery is developed based on consultation with stakeholders and industry representatives. The current approach, with an earlier season opening and higher weekly limits established for harvesters fishing in 2J, acknowledges that the fishing conditions in Labrador are challenging.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that three-way buddy-ups and multiple designations are occurring in the Northern Cod Stewardship fishery, resulting in the use of some vessels to fish multiple licences.

DFO Response:

Buddy-up is not permitted in the Stewardship Cod fishery. The Department will review anomalies and exceptions to determine if any licencing policies were contravened.

Cod - 2J3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern regarding the management measures established for the 2J3KL Cod Stewardship Fishery in 2018, particularly the timing of openings and closures and the use of weekly catch limits rather than individual quotas. Harvesters were displeased that the weekly limits in 2J (3500 lb./week 5 Aug. – 20 Oct.) were higher at the start of the fishery than those in 3KL (2000 lb./week 12 Aug. – 1 Sept; then 3500 lb./week 2-15 Sept. and 22 Sept. - 3 Nov). Harvesters who chose the fall option (fish only from 30 September – 3 November but with double the weekly limit) did not get the amount of fish they expected.

Harvesters on the east side of the Great Northern Peninsula (3K) indicated a preference for the same cod fishery dates as those in Labrador, given the similar weather conditions. They did not want a mid-season shutdown as August and September are their best fishing months.



Groundfish

Buddy-up is not permitted in the Stewardship Cod fishery.



► Cod - 2J3KL

DFO Response:

The yearly management approach for the stewardship fishery is developed following consultation with fish harvesters. In 2018, a maximum authorized harvest level was set at 9500 tonnes with 25% set aside for harvesters who selected the fall fishery option. As part of the industry agreed Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP), a one week mid-season closure was planned. Due to high participation and catch rates in the beginning of the season, landings were much higher than anticipated. The summer quota was caught earlier than anticipated and a closure was necessary to ensure 25% of the maximum harvest level was available for the fall fishery option.

For more details, see the 2J3KL Stewardship cod fishery – Conservation harvesting plan (CHP) 2018 <http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/atl-arc/management-plan-gestion/CHP-cod-PP-AC-morue-eng.html>

What we heard:

Harvesters asked why DFO closed the 2J3KL Stewardship fishery with over 400,000 pounds of fish left uncaught.

DFO Response:

The 2018 2J3KL stewardship fishery closed on October 27, 2018, as the maximum authorized harvest level for the fishery was about to be reached. While total landings were slightly below the maximum authorized harvest levels, this level is not a quota.

What we heard:

Harvesters asked why buddy-up is not permitted in the Northern Cod Stewardship Fishery.

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 likely increase participation and in turn potentially decrease the amounts available to individual harvesters.



Groundfish

...management approach for the stewardship fishery is developed following consultation with fish harvesters.



► Cod - 2J3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters questioned the Northern Cod stock assessment process. They felt that the Limit Reference Point identified in the precautionary approach framework is not realistic and that DFO is trying to rebuild the stock to a level it never reached historically.

DFO Response:

A scientific peer-review of the Limit Reference Point established for northern cod was held in January 2019. The scientific review determined that the current Limit Reference Point remains valid and the most appropriate reference point for this stock.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed the view that Northern Cod Stewardship Fishery management measures are announced too late in the year. Fish harvesters do not get enough time to make necessary business decisions.

DFO Response:

DFO recognizes the importance of announcing management decisions as quickly as possible in a timely manner to facilitate the preparation of fishing activities. We work to establish management decisions as quickly as possible following science advisory processes and consultations with stakeholders.

What we heard:

Harvesters' representatives asked if mobile gear vessels would be permitted to re-enter the Northern cod fishery when the TAC reaches 115,000 tonnes.

DFO Response:

While there are some positive signs of rebuilding, Northern cod remains under moratorium and no TAC has been established. For 2019, a maximum authorized inshore harvest level was set at 12,350 tonnes.

DFO remains committed to working with stakeholders to ensure the sustainable utilization of the resource and to support a commercially viable fishing industry. In the meantime, issues related to access and allocations will continue to be given consideration through the 2+3KLMNO Groundfish Advisory Committee.



Groundfish

DFO recognizes the importance of announcing management decisions as quickly as possible to facilitate the preparation of fishing activities.

► Cod - 3K-4R overlap

What we heard:

Harvesters on the eastern side of the Great Northern Peninsula expressed concern that 4R harvesters are permitted to fish cod in 3K at times when the cod fishery is closed to 3K harvesters.

DFO Response:

In recent years there have been two overlapping arrangements allowing harvesters from the coast just west of Quirpon Island to fish cod in 3K.

1. 2J3KL Northern Cod Stewardship fishery - Groundfish licence holders with a home port in the 4R overlap area defined as Boat Harbour North to Cape Bauld are permitted to fish cod in 3K when the directed Stewardship/Bycatch fishery is open. They are subject to the conditions of the Stewardship fishery and may only fish in 3K north of Lobster Point. They may not fish in both 4R and 3K in the same week. When the Stewardship fishery is closed it is closed to harvesters from 3K and those from 4R. When they fish in the stewardship fishery their catch is charged against the stewardship fishery quota.
2. Groundfish licence holders with a home port in the area between L'Anse aux Meadows and Cape Bauld may fish cod in a defined area just east of Quirpon Island, between Quirpon Island and the White Islands, when the 4R3Pn cod fishery is open. Their catch is charged against the 4RS3Pn quota.

► Cod - 3Ps

What we heard:

Harvesters maintained that cod is abundant in 3Ps and the TAC should be increased to 8500 tonnes. Some recommended a 9500 tonne quota.

DFO Response:

The decision regarding the total allowable catch for 3Ps cod considered both the science advice and perspectives of fishing industry stakeholders.



Groundfish

The decision regarding the total allowable catch for 3Ps cod considered both the science advice and perspectives of fishing industry stakeholders.



► Cod - 3ps

What we heard:

Harvesters asked about the reallocations of quota from inactive to active harvesters and noted that the 3Ps cod fishery closed to the inshore fixed-gear fleets in January 2019 earlier than anticipated. It was suggested that only one reallocation per harvester be permitted and that it be limited to half of the harvester's initial individual quota (IQ). One suggestion was to stop reallocations for a fleet, e.g. Placentia Bay Area 10, or Fortune Bay Area 11, when it reaches 75% of its overall allocation. Another suggestion was to close the fishery to the harvesters who have had one reallocation but leave it open for those who have not taken their initial IQ.

DFO Response:

The management approach for the 3Ps cod fishery in 2019 considered the science advice and perspectives of stakeholders through the groundfish advisory process. To promote quota utilization for 3Ps cod, in 2019 a reallocation program was continued and made available to any 3Ps fixed-gear groundfish licence holder in the less than 65 feet fleet who wished to avail of available cod quota. To ensure total catches do not exceed the established quota for 2019, the Department introduced a provision which requires a review of the cod reallocation program once 75% of a fleet sector's allocation has been reached, with possible suspension of further reallocations pending fishing activity. This approach follows input from industry and is reflected in the Conservation Harvesting Plan for this stock.

What we heard:

Questions arose as to why DFO had begun enforcing a limit of 30 gillnets in the cod fishery in 3Psa, waters west of Pass Island. Some fish harvesters noted that 30 nets were sufficient for harvesters to catch their individual quotas.

DFO Response:

In December 2017, a temporary closure was established in the Pass Island area due to a high level of discarding associated with hagfish predation on cod. Following consultation with industry, the Department amended licence conditions to limit the total number of nets used in all groundfish fisheries in 3Ps (a) and (b) to a maximum of 30 in the water at any one time from November 15 to February 28. The change in the number of permitted nets has coincided with a significant reduction in the observed level of discards.



Groundfish

The management approach for the 3Ps cod fishery in 2019 considered the science advice and perspectives of stakeholders through the groundfish advisory process.



► Cod - 3ps

What we heard:

Harvesters around the region questioned the relevance and utility of the sentinel cod fishery. They demanded to see the scientific results and conclusions of the sentinel surveys. Some recommended it to be discontinued and the fish reallocated back to the stewardship fishery.

DFO Response:

The inshore sentinel survey began in 1995 and provides DFO with critical scientific data which informs cod stock assessments in northeastern Newfoundland (2J3KL), southern Newfoundland (3Ps) and the northern Gulf of St. Lawrence (4RS3Pn). The information collected contributes to the study of the distribution, migration, condition and age of fish. In the DFO Newfoundland and Labrador Region, fish harvesters participate in the sentinel fishery and harvest and sample fish under systematic, well-defined and rigorous scientific protocols.

Summary data and conclusions from sentinel surveys are included in DFO cod stock assessment reports published by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS).

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

► Cod - 4R3Pn

What we heard:

Harvesters questioned the need for the Cod Quality Project and asked how long it will continue. They felt that the fish allocated to this program should be shared among all harvesters.

DFO Response:

The Cod Quality Project is approved as a part of the annual management approach and allows inshore harvesters to test various harvest methods to improve the quality of products provided to market.

There is no specific allocation associated with the program. Fish taken through the project are accounted for within the overall authorized harvest level.



Groundfish

... fish harvesters participate in the sentinel fishery and harvest and sample fish under systematic, well-defined and rigorous scientific protocols.

► Cod - 4R3Pn

What we heard:

A harvester recommended the prohibition on gillnets in the groundfish fishery west of Johnson's Cove in Bay St. George be rescinded, as it was felt that gillnets would have better catch rates than hook and line gear.

DFO Response:

The prohibition on using gillnets west of Johnson's Cove was introduced at the request of fish harvesters to improve quality of the catch.

► Greenland Halibut (Turbot) - 2J

What we heard:

Harvesters asked to be permitted to buddy-up in the 2J3KL turbot fishery. Harvesters also asked for a distinct Labrador quota for turbot.

DFO Response:

Requests for changes to the management measures for the inshore turbot fishery should be brought to the Turbot Working Group as a first step, and then to the 2+3KLMNO Groundfish Advisory Committee. A meeting of this committee was held in late November 2019 and the Department also intends to hold a consultation process with Labrador harvesters in winter 2020, which will provide an opportunity to provide input on management measures for turbot.

► Greenland Halibut (Turbot) - 3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that there was no quota for Greenland halibut available to harvesters in 3L, while the allocation for Indigenous harvesters increased.

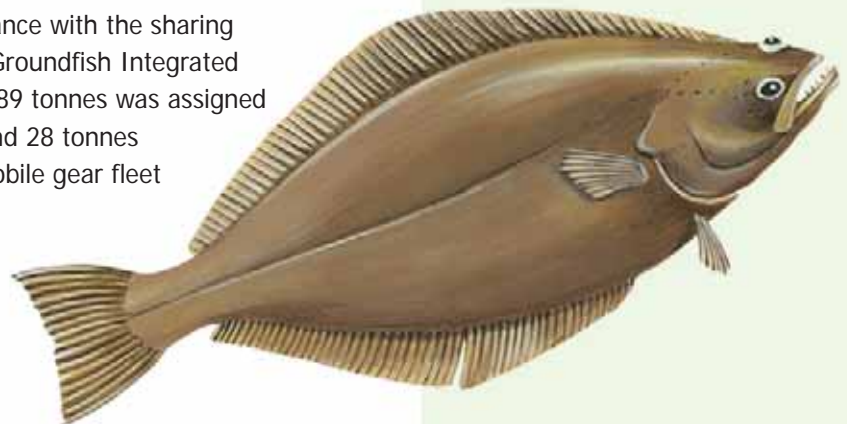
DFO Response:

In 2018, quotas were allocated in accordance with the sharing arrangement outlined in the 2+3KLMNO Groundfish Integrated Fishery Management Plan. A quota of 1,089 tonnes was assigned to the less than 65 feet fixed gear fleet and 28 tonnes were allocated to the less than 65 feet mobile gear fleet in 3LMNO.



Groundfish

In 2018, quotas were allocated in accordance with the sharing arrangement outlined in the 2+3KLMNO Groundfish Integrated Fishery Management Plan.



► Greenland Halibut (Turbot) - 3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters asked if the area closed in 2018 (to conserve cold water sponges and corals) would reopen to Greenland halibut fishing in 2019.

DFO Response:

The Northeast Newfoundland Slope closure was implemented to protect corals and sponges and contribute to the long term conservation of biodiversity. Corals and sponges are fragile, slow to recover, structure-providing species, and the high concentrations of these structure-forming species provides habitat for many other species.

To ensure the long term conservation of these areas, the area will not be open to Greenland halibut fishing or any other bottom contact fishery.

What we heard:

Harvesters asked whether a test fishery for Greenland halibut would go ahead in 3L.

DFO Response:

Due to a lack of interest and participation (no one took part in this fishery in 2018), DFO did not issue an expression of interest for permits in 2019.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that the validity period for fishery permits was too short. The fishery in 2018 was open for 18 weeks but the permits were only valid for two weeks.

DFO Response:

The validity period for permits for the turbot fishery depends on factors such as participation levels and catch rates. Additional permit draws are held when there is available turbot quota remaining for the fleet. The validity period may be shorter for additional permits that are issued to ensure total catches do not exceed the available quota for the fleet.

For 2019, the validity period for the initial permits was increased from two weeks to one month, taking into consideration recommendations from the 2+3K and 3L Greenland halibut working groups.



Groundfish

The Northeast Newfoundland Slope closure was implemented to protect corals and sponges and contribute to the long term conservation of biodiversity.

► Greenland Halibut (Turbot) - 3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed interest in a hook and line fishery in White Bay (3K).

DFO Response:

Greenland halibut may be fished with hook and line in waters deeper than 160 fathoms outside the inshore crab zones. Gillnets may be used in water deeper than 300 fathoms. Proposals regarding management measures for groundfish should be brought forward to the 2+3KLMNO Groundfish Advisory Committee for consideration. The next meeting of this committee is planned for fall 2019.

What we heard:

Harvesters indicated that their proposal for a hook and line fishery in 3L had not been approved.

DFO Response:

In 2019, after consulting with the 3L Turbot Working Group, the Department permitted the use of longlining for turbot in water depths below 160 fathoms in waters outside the inshore crab zones, similar to measures implemented in 2+3K.

► Greenland Halibut (Turbot) - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters commented that when harvesters from 4S or 4T (Quebec and Gulf Regions) fish in 4R they should be limited to the same quantities permitted to harvesters from Newfoundland and Labrador.

DFO Response:

Greenland halibut stock in 4RST is a Gulf-wide stock. The local abundance of Greenland halibut varies from year to year. The fleet allocations for Gulf turbot are in accordance with the established sharing arrangement for this stock. Individual fleets are free to propose their own harvest plans and strategies within their respective allocations.



Groundfish

Individual fleets are free to propose their own harvest plans and strategies within their respective allocations.



► Greenland Halibut (Turbot) - 3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters asked why Japanese vessels had been permitted to fish turbot within the Canadian 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

DFO Response:

No Japanese vessels were authorized to fish turbot inside the Canadian EEZ and all fishing by Japanese vessels took place in the NAFO Regulatory Area (NRA) outside Canada's 200 mile limit.

NAFO members are able to exchange quotas of NAFO managed species. These arrangements are typically a result of agreements between industry partners. DFO reviews quota transfers to ensure that they support economic opportunities for the Canadian industry, and are in the best interests of Canada. Any quota transferred to Canada from another NAFO Contracting Party is fished by the Canadian industry.

► American Plaice - 4R

What we heard:

A harvester requested that the American plaice fishery be reopened in 4R. He said Atlantic halibut can be avoided by fishing plaice in waters deeper than 30 fathoms.

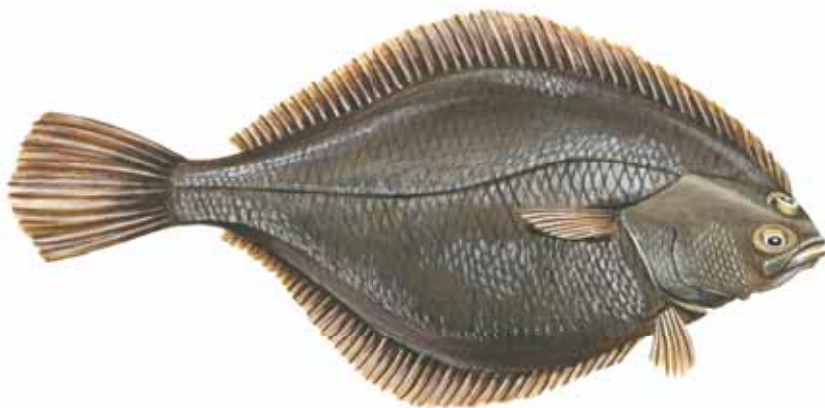
DFO Response:

Management measures for American plaice in 4R were developed in collaboration with industry and are in accordance with the Conservation Harvesting Plans (CHP) for 4R3Pn groundfish fisheries.

The current Groundfish Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP) for 4R3Pn restricts fishing for American plaice to waters deeper than 25 fathoms except between Cape Ray and Johnson's Cove where fishing is permitted only in water depths between 20 and 40 fathoms.



Groundfish



► Redfish - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that many fleet sectors, regional groups and Indigenous groups are vying for shares of a commercial redfish fishery that is expected to open in a few years and that inshore harvesters from Newfoundland and Labrador may be denied access.

DFO Response:

Management measures for redfish will continue to consider the science advice and perspectives of industry stakeholders, including Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters. For 2018 and 2019, the management approach for Unit 1 redfish has included an Experimental Redfish Fishing Plan which includes testing fishing gear to minimize the capture of bycatch. The outcomes from this experimental plan will inform appropriate management measures to mitigate bycatch of Atlantic halibut and other species in the redfish fishery.

What we heard:

Harvesters and their representatives raised concerns about Atlantic halibut bycatch in an expanded commercial redfish harvest. They urged DFO to be diligent about monitoring halibut bycatch in the mobile gear fishery, suggesting observer coverage and 100% dockside monitoring. They also suggested that the Department develop panels and grids for avoiding halibut, similar to the Nordmore Grate used in the shrimp fishery.

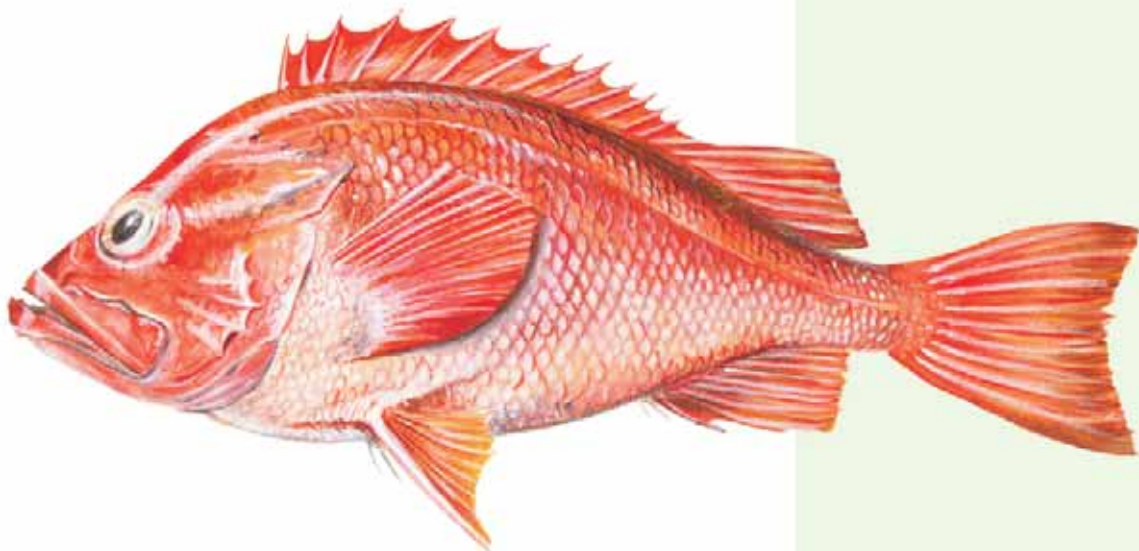
DFO Response:

DFO recognises the importance of managing bycatch effectively and will consider both gear and monitoring methods in any expanded redfish fishery.



Groundfish

DFO recognises the importance of managing bycatch effectively and will consider both gear and monitoring methods in any expanded redfish fishery.



► Recreational Groundfish

What we heard:

Harvesters raised concern with the perceived lack of monitoring and enforcement over the recreational groundfish harvest, and alleged widespread abuse by participants. They asked DFO to provide a reliable estimate of the recreational catch.

DFO Response:

The recreational groundfish fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador involves thousands of small vessels and tens of thousands of anglers each year. Through the Citizen Science Cod Project, DFO science samples fish caught in the Recreational Groundfish Fishery and collects data on recreational catches. However, the program covers only a small part of recreational groundfishing activity. More work needs to be done to develop estimates of recreational groundfish catches around the region.

The Department operates a robust recreational groundfish monitoring program, which includes:

- Over 300 patrols by fishery officers each season;
- Over 1,000 vessel inspections per year, with thousands of persons and catches checked; and
- Patrols carried out by land, sea and air.

Fishery officers have laid charges related to 30 to 60 violations each year, mostly for anglers exceeding their daily catch limit. In some instances, vessels and vehicles are seized.



Groundfish

Fishery officers have laid charges related to 30 to 60 violations each year, mostly for anglers exceeding their daily catch limit.



► Snow Crab - 2GHJ

What we heard:

Harvesters asked for a distinct Labrador share of the snow crab quota because of the later start to the fishery in their waters each spring.

DFO Response:

Separate snow crab quotas already exist in Labrador for:

- 2GHJ North of 56°00N;
- Communal 2GHJ North of 54°40'N;
- Full-time Supplementary 2J South of 54°40'N; and
- Inshore 2J South of 54°40'N.

► Snow Crab - 3K

What we heard:

Harvesters asked that the fishery in Area 3Ka (East side of the Northern Peninsula) take place later, opening 1 May and closing 31 July. They said the closing date is most important. In most years harvesters cannot start until early May due to ice coverage.

DFO Response:

In 2018, the Snow crab season closure date in crab fishing area 3A was moved from June 30 to July 15. In 2019, this measure was rolled over and near the end of the season a one week extension was provided to harvesters in that area who were impacted by sea ice and weather. No further extensions were required.

► Snow Crab - 3L

What we heard:

Harvesters in Trinity Bay said their committee had managed the resource well. They did not want their resource to be lumped together with that in other bays and have the quota reduced. In their opinion no reduction was warranted in Trinity Bay.

DFO response:

As with other species, Snow crab quotas are established after consideration of the latest science advice and stakeholder input. Due to conservation concerns the Snow crab quotas in Trinity Bay were reduced for 2019, Trinity Bay inner 6A was reduced by 11% and Trinity Bay outer 6B was reduced by 9%.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)



As with other species, Snow crab quotas are established after consideration of the latest science advice and stakeholder input.

► Snow Crab - 3L

What we heard:

Harvesters in 3L and other parts of the coast expressed concern about the lateness of scientific advice on Snow crab stocks and the lateness of the advisory committee meetings.

DFO response:

DFO science requires log book data as well as data from the post-season surveys to prepare the annual stock assessment advice. This information is not available until late in the year. During the winter, scientists prepare the assessments which are reviewed during the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) peer-review process. The peer-reviewed advice is ready in early March and then consultations with stakeholders take place.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concerns with the new Precautionary Approach Framework under development and asked why it needs to be introduced.

DFO response:

Canada committed to the Precautionary Approach (PA) as enunciated in the *United Nations Fishing Agreement*. A precautionary approach framework brings transparency to decisions made in the management of a fishery.

Since 2012, a DFO-stakeholder working group has been studying the implementation of a PA framework for Newfoundland and Labrador Snow crab. The working group has advised that alternative approaches from conventional biomass-based frameworks be pursued for the NL Snow crab resource, such as one that strives to promote fishing efficiency in resource extraction. In response, DFO scientists developed an approach focused on three key resource metrics of stock status: 1. female egg clutches, 2. fishery catch per unit of effort (CPUE); and 3. fishery discards.

DFO is continuing its work with fish harvesters as we finalize this management and decision-making framework. To date, the limit reference point of the proposed PA has been finalized through a peer-reviewed science process and DFO Science provided advice on other elements of the PA including the upper limit reference point and harvest control rules. A working group for the Snow crab PA has been established and discussions will continue on other aspects of the PA before any implementation.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

A precautionary approach framework brings transparency to decisions made in the management of a fishery.



► Snow Crab - 3L

The PA is a widely accepted management framework, which is an essential component of a sustainably managed fishery, and is directly linked to the competitiveness of Canada's fishing industry. It is important to note that the precautionary approach is a method that is used in the management of many key commercial species in Canada, including Northern shrimp and Northern cod in this region.

What we heard:

Some harvesters urged DFO to avoid modifying Snow crab fishery openings and closures because of weather or ice conditions. They advocated opening the fishery on a set date and leaving it to harvesters to decide when to start fishing.

DFO response

The Department recognises the highly competitive nature of many commercial fisheries including those operated on an individual quota basis. The Department is concerned that some harvesters will take risks and decide to fish in risky weather or ice conditions and other harvesters will feel economic pressure to do the same. The Department will continue to consider weather, ice, and advice received from stakeholders in making decisions to delay fishery openings.

► Snow Crab - 3Ps

What we heard:

Harvesters based in 3Ps asked for access to Snow crab in NAFO Sub-division 3NO. They asked why harvesters from 3K were allowed to fish there but not harvesters from 3Ps.

DFO response:

No crab harvesters based in 3K are permitted to fish in 3NO. A number of 3L based harvesters do have access to Snow crab in 3NO (inside and outside the 200 nautical mile limit).

What we heard:

A harvester asked about the possibility of a trap limit reduction for the offshore 3Ps Snow crab fleet.

DFO response:

A proposal such as this, relating to gear limits, should be brought to the 3Ps Snow crab Advisory Committee meeting in the spring.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

The Department will continue to consider weather, ice, and advice received from stakeholders in making decisions to delay fishery openings.



► Snow Crab - 4R

What we heard:

A crab harvesters' representative noted that observer coverage in the 4R Snow crab fishery had been low in 2018 because some harvesters had failed to pay their observer fees, although payment of observer fees is a condition of their licences.

DFO response:

Adequate observer coverage is an essential element of a responsible management system for Snow crab. The Department reminds harvesters that a letter of arrangement of observer coverage must be attached to the licence in order to validate the licence conditions.

► Lobster - 3L

What we heard:

A harvester expressed concern that V-notched female lobsters are becoming too large and they destroy smaller lobsters when caught in a trap with them.

DFO Response:

Research on the v-notching of female lobsters in Newfoundland waters has shown that:

- the highest reproductive potential occurs at a carapace length of 112mm;
- the range in size of v-notched lobsters is greater than that of non-v-notched lobsters;
- there are more v-notched lobsters in larger size classes than non-notched lobsters; and
- reproductive potential increases as lobster size increases.¹

¹Goetting, Kathryn The effects of v-notching on reproductive potential in American lobsters (*homarus americanus*) in Newfoundland. Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance RESEARCH REPORT http://www.curra.ca/documents/Goetting-Effects_of_V-Notching-web_version.pdf

There is an economic trade-off between harvesting large female lobsters sooner but foregoing increases in lobster reproduction.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

There is an economic trade-off between harvesting large female lobsters sooner but foregoing increases in lobster reproduction.

► Lobster - 3L

What we heard:

A lobster harvester related that about 15 years earlier harvesters in LFA 9 (Trepassey Bay and St. Mary's Bay) had asked DFO to close the fishery for a few years due to poor catches. Some harvesters dissented so they were allowed to continue fishing in their part of the area. After a few years the closed area was re-opened but DFO split LFA 9 into two areas, 9A (Trepassey Bay) and 9B (St. Mary's Bay). The area that had remained open was granted a limit of 200 traps and a season two weeks longer; while the area reopening was limited to 200 traps and a shorter season. Those who tried to protect the fishery say they have been penalized ever since. The harvesters in the latter area want the same trap limits and season length as their counterparts in the other area.

DFO Response:

A meeting was held with the lobster harvesters in the area and recommendations were submitted to the department. This issue was also discussed at the lobster advisory committee meeting held in fall 2019. The request is still under consideration.

► Lobster - 3Ps

What we heard:

A harvester asked why DFO does not allow buddy-ups in the 3Ps lobster fishery.

DFO Response:

The current *Fisheries Licensing Policy* for Newfoundland Labrador Region allows buddy-ups for lobster only in Lobster Fishing Areas 12 to 14C (4R3Pn). To date there has not been strong industry support for buddy-ups in the 3Ps (LFAs 10 and 11) lobster fishery.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

A meeting was held with the lobster harvesters in the area and recommendations were submitted to the department.



► Lobster - 3Ps

What we heard:

Harvesters asked about the escape mechanisms on lobster traps, having heard that the required escape opening had been widened.

DFO Response:

The dimensions of the required escape mechanism have not been changed for Newfoundland and Labrador Region. The Atlantic Fishery Regulations provide that:

61.1 In Lobster Fishing Areas 1 to 22 [LFAs 1-14 are in Newfoundland and Labrador] and 27 to 41, no person shall fish with, or have on board a vessel, a lobster trap unless the trap

- **(a)** has in one exterior wall of each parlour an escape panel that provides, when removed, an unobstructed opening not less than 89 mm in height and 152 mm in width and that is fastened to the lobster trap with
 - **(i)** untreated cotton or sisal twine that does not exceed 4.8 mm in diameter, or
 - **(ii)** uncoated ferrous metal wire, other than of stainless steel, that does not exceed 1.6 mm in diameter; or
- **(b)** is a wooden lobster trap that has in one exterior wall of each parlour two softwood laths that are adjacent to each other and that are not treated with a wood preservative.

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-86-21/page-7.html#docCont>



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

The dimensions of the required escape mechanism have not been changed for Newfoundland and Labrador Region.



► Lobster - 3Ps

What we heard:

A fish harvester's representative asked what the lobster trap limits are in each lobster fishing area (LFA).

DFO Response:

Lobster trap limits in effect in 2019 are as follows:

LFA	AREA DESCRIPTION	Fishing Days	Trap Limit
3	Cape Charles – Cape St. John	63	200
4A	Notre Dame Bay West	56	200
4B	Notre Dame Bay East	56	200
5	Bonavista Bay	65	150
6	Trinity Bay	72	100
7	Conception Bay	65	150
8	Southern Shore	64	100
9A	Trepassey Bay	57	200
9B	St. Marys Bay	63	100
10	Placentia Bay	61	200
11E	Fortune Bay East	54	185
11W	Fortune Bay West	54	185
12	Cinq Cerf to Cape Ray	69	135
13A	Cape Ray to Cape St. George	71	180
13B	Cape St. George to Cape St. Gregory	72	220*
14A	Cape St. Gregory to Point Riche	57	250
14B	Point Riche to Big Brook	57	250
14C	Big Brook to Cape Bauld	57	300

*Note: Under the Fishing Income Improvement Program (FIIP), two Area 13B lobster harvesters retired their enterprises; and as a result the Fisheries Science, Stewardship and Sustainability Board (FSSSB) made "lots" of 10 lobster traps available for purchase to other 13B lobster harvesters. Twenty-five 13B lobster harvesters each purchased a "lot of 10 traps" for a trap limit of 230 traps each.

► Lobster - 3Pn

What we heard:

Harvesters in Lobster Fishing Area 12 (3Pn) said that, some years before, they had offered up a reduction in trap limits of 15 as a conservation measure. They were told they would be given the opportunity to buy them back at a future date. Now they would like to re-purchase their 15 traps.

DFO Response:

The harvesters were referring to the Conservation and Sustainability Plan for the Newfoundland Lobster Fishery implemented in 2012 for



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

► Lobster - 3Pn

Lobster Fishing Areas 11 and 12. This plan included:

- a voluntary trap reduction of 15 traps per licence in the two areas; and
- a buyback of a limited number of fishing enterprises that included lobster licences.

The trap reduction represented the contribution of harvesters to the plan. The buyback of enterprises was funded by equal cash contributions from DFO, through the Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Measures (ALSM) program, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. There was no provision in the Conservation and Sustainability Plan for subsequently allowing remaining harvesters to buy back the retired traps.

Lobster landings in LFA 12 were less than 30 tonnes in the years prior to 2006. Landings exceeded 200 tonnes in 2018.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern about uncertainty and variability in the way DFO enforces the prohibition on retaining v-notched lobsters.

DFO Response:

The Department concentrates on education and awareness to encourage fish harvesters to v-notch berried females.

► Lobster - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters asked about the rules regarding the times vessels may leave port and the times lobster traps may be set on fishery opening days.

DFO Response:

Vessels may not leave port prior to 06:00 a.m. on the day the fishery opens. They may set traps any time after the 06:00 a.m. opening time but may not haul any traps until 48 hours after the opening time.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

There was no provision in the Conservation and Sustainability Plan for subsequently allowing remaining harvesters to buy back the retired traps.



► Lobster - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters had questions and comments on a vote held recently in LFA 14B (Point Riche to Big Brook) in which lobster harvesters voted for a requirement of a minimum of five traps per line. The proposal had been submitted to DFO for review and a decision on whether to implement it as a condition of licence. Harvesters wanted to know if the five trap minimum is in effect in any other jurisdictions.

One harvester noted that numerous large wooden traps on the same line in a 20 ft. boat is a safety issue. Five on a line is too many for a small boat. The maximum should be three or four.

DFO Response:

DFO is still reviewing the proposed five trap per string minimum. No decision has been announced.

What we heard:

A harvester asked if the Department would allow lobster licences to be moved in Lobster Fishing Area 14C.

DFO Response:

In the 1990's DFO allowed a small number of harvesters to acquire licences and move them into LFA 14C. A number of lobster licences were taken out of the system through enterprise reductions under the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) program. Since 2001, there have been only five licences in 14C. In recent years fewer than five lobster licences have been active. There are no plans to issue new lobster licences in 14C or allow lobster licences to be transferred into the area.

► Scallop - 3L

What we heard:

A harvester asked why Trepassey Bay is closed to dragging for scallops.

DFO Response:

Conflicts between scallop harvesters and lobster harvesters for access to the same seabed areas are common in several areas of the Newfoundland and Labrador Region including Placentia Bay and Fortune Bays (3Ps) and the Great Northern Peninsula (4R). Full discussion is needed at lobster advisory committee meetings before the Department will consider allowing scallop dragging on traditional lobster habitat.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)



► Scallop - 3L

Harvesting scallops by diving is more selective and easier to accommodate in lobster habitat areas.

► Scallop - 4R

What we heard:

A harvester asked about the cause of empty scallop shells, known as clappers.

DFO Response:

Starfish are a common predator of scallops. It is also possible that green crab are consuming scallops.

What we heard

A harvester asked if DFO would be carrying out a survey of sea scallops.

DFO Response:

New scientific advice will be available on sea scallops in Area 14 (4R north of Cape St. Gregory) this year. An Area 14 Scallop Advisory Committee meeting was held in fall 2019.

What we heard:

A harvester asked whether sea scallop licences are available for Bay St. George.

DFO Response:

There are no new commercial scallop licenses available in Scallop Fishing Area 13. A fish harvester resident in Area 13 could acquire an Area 13 scallop license through reissuance from an exiting harvester. In Area 13, a scallop license may be reissued from the less than 40 foot fleet to the greater than 40 foot fleet and vice versa. In Area 14, scallop licenses may not be reissued between fleets. Scallop licenses are not permitted to be moved between areas.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

Starfish are a common predator of scallops. It is also possible that green crab are consuming scallops.

► Sea Cucumber - 3L

What we heard:

Fish harvesters in the southern Avalon Peninsula asked for DFO to provide harvesting opportunities for new and emerging species. They expressed concern that the requirement for 100 per cent observer coverage in emerging fisheries is too costly for harvesters to bear.

DFO Response:

The Department is receptive to proposals to develop emerging fisheries and will issue emerging fishery permits in response to sound proposals from stakeholders. Observer coverage is an essential element of any emerging fishery project to ensure sustainability of the resource. Observer coverage has been fully funded by the fishing industry since 2013.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed the view that DFO had demonstrated too much flexibility in applying the bans on designations and leases in the emerging fishery for Sea cucumber, which was unfair to harvesters who had refrained from applying to the draw because of these requirements.

DFO Response:

Any exceptions to licencing policy are considered case by case where there are extenuating circumstances.

► Sea Cucumber - 3Ps

What we heard:

A harvester asked for Atlantic halibut bycatch to be allowed in the sea cucumber fishery. He claimed that halibut bycatch may be retained in the whelk fishery.

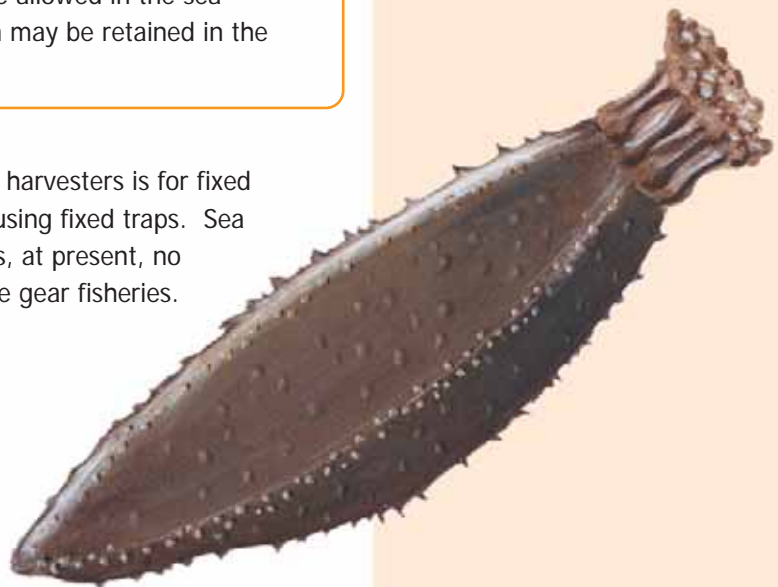
DFO Response:

The Atlantic halibut bycatch allowance for 3Ps harvesters is for fixed gear, not mobile gear. Whelks are harvested using fixed traps. Sea cucumber is fished with mobile drags. There is, at present, no bycatch allowance for Atlantic halibut in mobile gear fisheries.



Shellfish
(invertebrate species)

Observer coverage is an essential element of any emerging fishery project to ensure sustainability of the resource.



► Capelin - 3KL

What we heard:

Harvesters criticised the TAC reduction in 2018 and recommended that the reduction be reversed in 2019.

DFO Response:

The TAC decision in 2018 was influenced by the indications of reduced abundance identified in the stock assessment carried out in 2017. The quota in 3KL was reduced in 2018 and then increased in 2019.

YEAR	ZONE	CAPELIN QUOTA (tonnes)	ZONE	CAPELIN QUOTA (tonnes)
2017	3K	10,720	3L	17,624
2018	3K	6968	3L	11,460
2019	3K	8013	3L	13,174

► Capelin - 4R

What we heard:

A harvester criticised the TAC reduction for 4RST capelin in 2018, saying the commercial catch is a small portion of what is in the ocean.

DFO Response:

The decision to reduce the TAC in 2018 was informed by the stock assessment carried out that year as well as the steep decline in landings in 2017.

What we heard:

A harvester noted that the fixed gear (trap and modified bar seine) fleet had been forced out of the bays while the large purse seine vessels were allowed to fish anywhere.

DFO Response:

The fixed gear and mobile gear capelin fleets have separate quotas. A portion of the Bay of Islands is closed to pelagic fixed gear fishing to prevent the interception of migrating salmon. In addition, all capelin fishing is prohibited inshore of fishery caution signs posted near the mouths of salmon rivers.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

The decision to reduce the TAC in 2018 was informed by the stock assessment carried out that year as well as the steep decline in landings in 2017.



► Capelin - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern about the late timing of the 4RST Capelin Advisory Committee meeting and TAC decision. The imposition of interim quotas, followed by the final TAC decision, obliged one harvester to dump capelin to avoid an overrun.

DFO Response:

In 2020 DFO will endeavour to hold the Capelin Advisory Committee meeting earlier in the year to receive recommendations from stakeholders.

What we heard:

Harvesters asked what needs to be done to convince the public that purse seine vessels are not intercepting migrating salmon.

DFO Response:

DFO monitors the capelin purse seine fishery through a variety of means, including at-sea observers and dockside monitoring, and has found little or no interception of salmon in this fishery. A possible additional surveillance option would involve mounting video cameras on the decks of seine vessels to provide a digital record of the fish being pumped out of the seine into the vessel.

► Herring - 3K

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that uncaught herring had been left in the water; and urged DFO to reallocate uncaught quota to other harvesters in the future.

DFO Response:

As of 2019, the management cycle for herring in NAFO Divisions 2J3KLPs opens on April 1 and closes on March 31, or when the quota has been taken. The new management cycle consists of two seasons: April 1 - May 31 and August 15 to March 31. The new cycle and seasons will help facilitate the utilization of the herring quota.

The Department is working with industry through the herring advisory process to develop management measures to allow the maximum amount of herring and other species to be harvested.



Pelagic Species
(large and small)

In 2020 DFO will endeavour to hold the Capelin Advisory Committee meeting earlier in the year to receive recommendations from stakeholders.

► Herring - 3K

What we heard:

A harvesters' representative recommended that DFO reverse the management measures relating to bait nets as harvesters say they are unable to catch any herring for bait.

DFO Response:

Herring bait nets must be set parallel to the shore and no part of the bait net can be within 120 feet (20 fathoms) of any shoreline at the low water spring tide mark. Bait nets must also be set with the head ropes not less than one fathom below the surface. These measures are essential to minimize the bycatch of migrating Atlantic salmon.

► Herring - 4R

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed the concern that large seine vessels (greater than 65 feet) are fishing herring in Bonne Bay too intensively. They recommended that all vessels be allowed to take only half their quotas in Bonne Bay. Others noted that intensive fishing by large seine vessels means there is no bait available for the lobster fishery.

DFO Response:

A 20,000 tonne TAC was approved for 2018 and 2019. The fleet quota sharing arrangements between fixed and mobile gear fleets have stabilized in the 4R herring fishery. The greater than 65 feet mobile gear fleet share is 55% and is fished under individual transferrable quotas; the less than 65 feet mobile gear fleet share is 22% and is fished under individual quotas; and the fixed gear share is 23% and is fully competitive. Fifty tonnes of the fixed gear quota is allocated for herring bait in areas 12,13 and 14.

The fixed gear herring fishery uses gillnets, traps and modified bar seines known as "tuck seines" and occurs in specific areas or bays. Fixed gear fish harvesters are only permitted to fish in their Herring Fishing Area of residence (any one area of HFAs 12 to 14).

The mobile gear fleet is composed of less than 65 feet and greater than 65 feet purse seine vessels. Mobile gear fish harvesters living on the west coast may fish in Herring Fishing Areas 13 to 14. The mobile gear fleet targets concentrations of herring as the fish follow their migratory route. While the mobile fishery can occur in Bonne Bay the fishery is not concentrated in any one specific bay.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

The fixed gear herring fishery uses gillnets, traps and modified bar seines known as "tuck seines" and occurs in specific areas or bays.



► Herring - 4R

What we heard:

A harvester expressed concern that reducing the size limit for 4R herring will result in killing the spawners.

DFO Response:

The management plan for the 2018 4R herring fishery included a reduction in the minimum size from 26.5 cm to 24.76 cm, consistent with the minimum length in effect in Herring Fishing Areas 1 to 11. Given that the fall-spawning biomass of 4R herring had remained within the healthy zone, DFO Science endorsed the industry recommendation to reduce the minimum size to 24.76 cm.

What we heard:

A harvester expressed concern that the individual herring harvest caps are causing problems. Allowing cap increases in mid-September is too late. By then the herring leave Bonne Bay and go to the Labrador Strait where they are difficult to catch. Caps are necessary but should be increased earlier in the season.

DFO Response:

The cap system was implemented in the fixed gear herring fishery to give everyone (including trap and gillnet harvesters) a chance to catch some herring. There is now more time to catch herring as the herring fishery management plan implemented in 2018 includes a management cycle running from 1 April to 31 March. DFO will continue to consult with fleet representatives on the timing of increases to the caps.



Pelagic Species (large and small)

The cap system was implemented in the fixed gear herring fishery to give everyone (including trap and gillnet harvesters) a chance to catch some herring.



► Mackerel - 3K

What we heard:

Harvesters and their representatives said that the quota reductions in recent years were not warranted.

DFO Response:

Atlantic mackerel has been in the Critical Zone since 2011. During the 2019 stock assessment (Science Advisory Report 2019/035), the 2018 spawning stock biomass was estimated to be at 77% of the Limit Reference Point. Recruitment in 2017 and 2018 was estimated to be at all-time lows. Fishing mortality remains above reference levels.

It is generally accepted that high fishing mortality, record low spawning stock biomass, and poor recruitment are the main factors hindering rebuilding the northern contingent of Atlantic mackerel. A reduction in fishing activity, in combination with implementation of other proposed management measures, will support rebuilding efforts to bring this stock out of the critical zone. The reduction of TAC to 8,000 tonnes will support rebuilding of the stock.

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed the view that mackerel arrived early in the northern bays of 3K before the fishery opened. By the time the fishery opened the mackerel was no longer in the bays. They recommended that the Atlantic mackerel quota be sub-divided and allocated to various geographic areas.

DFO Response:

The Department will work more closely with industry representatives to ensure that the competitive fishery is opened on a timely basis when mackerel are present in local waters. This can be done once the total allowable catch is approved.

Recommendations on management measures will be reviewed by the Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Plan Working Group and the Atlantic Mackerel Advisory Committee (AMAC).

► Mackerel - 3L

What we heard:

Harvesters expressed concern that when mackerel arrived in their areas, they were not allowed to fish it because the quota was exhausted and the fishery had been closed.



Pelagic Species
(large and small)

The Department will work more closely with industry representatives to ensure that the competitive fishery is opened on a timely basis when mackerel are present in local waters.



► Mackerel - 3L

DFO Response:

The Department must manage the fishery within the approved quota levels. Once the TAC has been reached fishing must cease. The Atlantic mackerel fishery opened in the NL Region on August 1, 2019 and closed September 7, 2019. Fifty percent of the Canadian mackerel quota was landed in the NL Region during 2019.

► Bluefin Tuna - 3K

What we heard:

Harvesters said that tuna are present in 3K waters. They have been blamed for damaging herring traps. Harvesters asked if there was ever a tuna fishery in 3K. They wanted to know if 3K fishers could be granted access to tuna in 3K and issued tuna tags.

DFO Response:

DFO manages the Canadian Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery with advice from the Atlantic Large Pelagics Advisory Committee. The allocation set for Canada by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is 469 tonnes for 2019. Of this amount, the inshore fleet quota for Newfoundland is 12.84% or 66 tonnes. This fishery is fully subscribed and no new licences or tags are available. Access to NAFO Division 3K for current license holders will be discussed at the upcoming Conservation Harvesting Plan meeting.

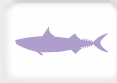
► Bluefin Tuna - 3L

What we heard:

A harvester asked about the use of video cameras for monitoring on board tuna vessels.

DFO Response:

An "Electronic Monitoring System" (EMS) is a video or photo capturing system capable of recording continuous unobstructed video or photos of all fishing activities aboard a fishing vessel. The EMS captures images of the retrieval and tagging of tuna. It also captures the dates and times of all recordings and images. A fishery officer reviews the digital information and then erases it in the event no violation is detected. Video cameras were installed in five vessels in the tuna fishery in 2018.



Pelagic Species
(large and small)

This fishery is fully subscribed and no new licences or tags are available.



► Invasive Species - 3Ps

What we heard:

A harvester asked about the latest developments in the campaign against green crab and how they could participate.

DFO Response:

Harvesters interested in obtaining an experimental permit to catch green crab should contact Cynthia Mackenzie, Aquatic Invasive Species lead in DFO Science, St. John's at Cynthia.McKenzie@dfo-mpo.gc.ca. There is no cost for the permit but there is a requirement to complete log sheets.

What we heard:

Harvesters asked how green crab spread to the waters of western Newfoundland.

DFO Response:

Green crab on the west coast of the island are genetically different from those in Placentia and Fortune Bays. It is believed the west coast green crab were introduced from Prince Edward Island or the Magdalen Islands as they are most closely related to those populations.

► Seismic Testing

What we heard:

As in the series of meetings in 2017-18, harvesters expressed concern about the effects of seismic surveying on fish and catchability. For example, when seismic vessels came over the Greenland halibut (turbot) fishing grounds between 53°30'N and 53°40'N (southern part of 2J) in 2017 the fish disappeared.

DFO Response:

Seismic testing in the waters around Newfoundland and Labrador is regulated by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (CNLOPB), not by DFO. There is a national code of conduct developed by federal and provincial authorities responsible to review an assessment of proposed seismic surveying in Canada. It addressed the public's concerns for potential impacts on marine life. Information on the effects and mitigation of seismic testing in Canadian waters is available at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/publications/seismic-sismique/index-eng.html>.



Other



Green crab on the west coast of the island are genetically different from those in Placentia and Fortune Bays.

► Seals - 3Ps

What we heard:

Harvesters asked about any plans of DFO Science to survey and assess populations of harbour seals and grey seals in the waters south of Newfoundland, namely NAFO sub-divisions 3Pns and 4VnsW.

DFO Response:

A survey of harbour seals in Atlantic Canada is beginning in 2019. This year, DFO will survey only the Gulf of St Lawrence, including the west coast of Newfoundland. Scientists are collecting grey seal observations at the same time.

After this survey in the Gulf DFO will survey harbour seals in Maritimes Region and the rest of NL region in 2020 and 2021. When DFO begins the 4VsW harbour seal survey, counts of grey seals will also be recorded.

A winter survey of grey seals in Atlantic Canada is tentatively scheduled for January 2020. This survey will include special flights along the southern and southwestern coasts of Newfoundland to check for evidence of grey seal pupping. The winter grey seal survey will include all pupping sites in 4Vn and 4VsW (as well as the Gulf of St Lawrence). In addition, DFO has been doing work on harbour and grey seals in Placentia Bay and the Burin Peninsula to determine distribution in preparation for the harbour seals survey.

► Fisheries Science

What we heard:

Harvesters asked why no DFO scientists were present at these inshore fishery meetings.

DFO Response:

The purpose of the inshore fishery consultation was to discuss fishery management issues.



Other

When DFO begins the 4VsW harbour seal survey, counts of grey seals will also be recorded.



► Fisheries Science

What we heard:

Harvesters and their representatives expressed concern that entry to DFO Science regional (stock) assessment peer review meetings has been restricted.

DFO response:

DFO Science peer review meetings are designed to offer scientifically trained people a carefully structured opportunity to review the research methods, data and conclusions used in fisheries stock assessments. Over the years, the number of participants at stock assessment meetings increased considerably. To ensure the scientific integrity of the process, DFO has reverted to the original structure of the meetings. Participants are required to have knowledge and expertise related to the topic (e.g. species, stock assessment methods, mathematical modeling) under review.

DFO Science also holds technical briefings after the peer review meetings. These briefings offer industry, Indigenous groups and other stakeholders an opportunity to review the stock assessment results. Once the science advice is finalized, a Science Advisory Report is produced and made available on the DFO CSAS website.

The appropriate venue for fish harvesters to express their perspectives on the condition of fish stocks and how to manage the harvests is at species advisory committee meetings.

What we heard:

A harvesters' representative expressed with DFO operating collaborative surveys and science programs, such as sentinel surveys and post-season crab surveys, with industry associations in Newfoundland and Labrador and in other regions. The representative recommended that the Department end collaboration with harvesters' organisations and recruit harvesters directly to participate in the surveys and scientific programs.

DFO Response:

Collaborating with fish harvesters' organisations is an efficient way to engage experienced fish harvesters in collaborative scientific work and to ensure an efficient exchange of knowledge and techniques regarding fish surveying and sampling.



Other

DFO Science peer review meetings are designed to offer scientifically trained people a structured opportunity to review the research, methods, data and conclusions used in fisheries stock assessments.



► At-Sea Observer and Dockside Monitoring

What we heard:

A harvester in 4R asked about the fee structure and payment mechanisms for monitoring in neighbouring regions.

DFO Response:

At-Sea Observer fees

In Newfoundland and Labrador Region at-sea observer fees are set as a fixed annual fee for each particular fishery, for example:

- groundfish 4R3PN Fixed Gear Vessels less than 65 feet: \$90
- capelin or herring or mackerel Area 12 -14 (greater than 65 feet Purse Seine): \$375

The exception is crab. The fee in all areas is based on the size of the individual quota and is set at 0.67 cents per pound.

In Maritimes Region some observer companies charge by the trip. In some fleets fees are set based on fishing activity or size of the quota and the funds are pooled. The observer companies consider their fee levels confidential business information and do not make them public.

Dockside Monitoring fees

In Newfoundland and Labrador Region dockside monitoring fees are set by species on a cents per pound basis, for example:

- shrimp: 0.8625 cents per pound (sales tax included)
- cod: 2.3 cents per pound (sales tax included)

In high value shell fish fisheries such as Snow crab and scallop large volume landings are charged a cents per pound rate, whereas low volume landings (less than 1500 lb. of crab or less than 400 lb. of scallops) are charged a fixed fee per offload.

In Maritimes Region harvesters can shop around and decide which company to deal with. Some companies charge an hourly rate, which may include time for travel and for data entry. In some cases a package deal for a fishery is offered to harvesters.

In Quebec Region some dockside monitoring companies charge an hourly fee to harvesters. For Snow crab, each port has an hourly rate set, based on the numbers of landings in that port. Busier ports have lower hourly fees. For groundfish, the hourly rate is geared to the volumes of fish unloaded in that port. Ports with larger historic volumes of fish unloaded have a lower hourly rate. On the Quebec Lower North Shore all ports have the same hourly rates, due to the small quantities of fish landed.



Other

In Newfoundland and Labrador Region at-sea observer fees are set as a fixed annual fee for each particular fishery

► At-Sea Observer and Dockside Monitoring

Other companies set monitoring fees based on the volumes (kilograms) of particular species off-loaded.

Since 2013 at-sea observer costs have been fully funded by harvesters.

► Enterprise Combining

What we heard:

Harvesters in 4R asked about the possibility of introducing enterprise combining in 4R. They said combining would help to create viable family fishing enterprises.

DFO Response:

Combining has worked well in other parts of the Newfoundland and Labrador Region where the principal species fished, such as Snow crab and cod, are fished in individual quota regimes. Major fisheries in 4R, such as lobster, cod, turbot, herring, are fished competitively. Detailed proposals would have to be developed to show how combining could work in these fisheries.

► Vessel Length Restrictions and Replacement Policies

In the 2018 report *Discussion on the Newfoundland and Labrador Inshore Fishery*, DFO had indicated that it had no plans to make changes to the current vessel replacement rules but that comprehensive fleet proposals would be given consideration. Accordingly, this topic was on the agenda for discussion at each of the meetings in 2019.

2J

What we heard:

Harvesters objected to the application of the 39' 11" dividing limit between large and small vessels in the inshore fishery. They recommended a different length restriction because of safety concerns related to the distance they are required to travel and the weather conditions off Labrador. Harvesters also noted that the issue needs to be addressed as there are already vessels over the allowable length currently in use.

DFO Response:

Inshore harvesters on the east coast of Labrador (2GHJ) should develop a detailed fleet proposal for modifying vessel length restrictions and submit it for consideration in the Labrador inshore fishery consultation process in 2020.



► 3K

What we heard:

Harvesters said they should be allowed to use vessels up to 44'11" in length. They said DFO should use quotas to control fishing effort, not vessel length restrictions. In the northern part of 3K one has to go 40 to 50 miles offshore to catch Snow crab.

What we heard:

A harvester's representative noted advantages and disadvantages of loosening vessel length restrictions. Larger vessels could navigate further from shore more safely. Larger vessels would require more quota to meet higher operating expenses. Larger vessels could access more fish offshore, thus creating pressure on the operators of smaller vessels to venture further offshore. Larger vessels can carry more gear, which also disadvantages smaller vessels.

What we heard:

A harvester's representative recommended that changes to the vessel replacement policy should be taken on a fleet basis. Harvesters need to consider all factors and scenarios.

Overall DFO Response:

While participants at the inshore fishery consultation meetings around the region provided interesting comments and suggestions regarding vessel eligibility, replacement policies and length restrictions, DFO has received no comprehensive vessel replacement policy proposals from any fleet sector.

► 3L

What we heard:

A harvester noted that larger vessels are subject to Transport Canada safety inspections, entailing costs and complications.

What we heard:

A harvester noted that to build a 39'11" vessel could cost \$400,000 but there are numerous vessels slightly longer than 40 feet available for a fraction of that cost.

What we heard:

A harvester's representative noted that allowing increased vessel sizes in the inshore fishery will increase catching capacity in a number of fisheries.



Other



► 3L

What we heard:

A harvester said that resistance to allowing larger vessels will diminish as older participants exit the fishery.

Overall DFO Response:

While participants at the inshore fishery consultation meetings around the region provided interesting comments and suggestions regarding vessel eligibility, replacement policies and length restrictions, DFO has received no comprehensive vessel replacement policy proposals from any fleet sector.

► 3Ps

What we heard:

A harvester proposed that DFO conduct a formal survey or vote among all harvesters with less than 40 foot vessel eligibility asking them if they wanted an increase in maximum vessel length or status quo. He pointed out that all fishing vessels less than 39' 4" do not require CSI inspections and certification whereas all vessels over 39' 11" do.

What we heard:

Harvesters noted that 39' 11" vessels are difficult to find and new builds are very costly, whereas 45 foot vessels are plentiful and affordable. They said the choice of vessel replacement should be left to the harvester.

Overall DFO Response:

While participants at the inshore fishery consultation meetings around the region provided interesting comments and suggestions regarding vessel eligibility, replacement policies and length restrictions, DFO has received no comprehensive vessel replacement policy proposals from any fleet sector.

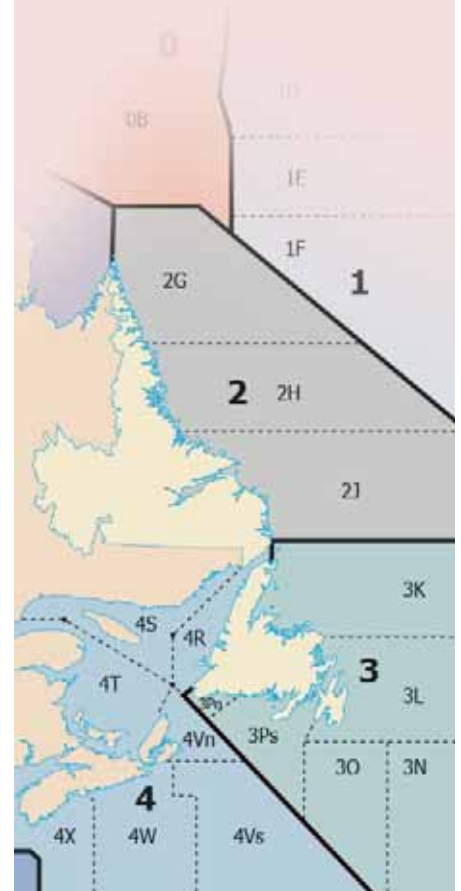
► 4R

What we heard:

A harvesters' representative noted that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (SCOFO) had recommended that Fisheries and Oceans Canada undertake a full and comprehensive review of the vessel length policy in Newfoundland and Labrador including licence holdings, equipment maximums, and vessel extensions. He said that a proper consultation on this subject would need a full discussion with background information on the history of the policy measures.



Other



► 4R

DFO Response:

While participants at the inshore fishery consultation meetings around the region provided interesting comments and suggestions regarding vessel eligibility, replacement policies and length restrictions, DFO has received no comprehensive vessel replacement policy proposals from any fleet sector.

► Rejuvenation and New Entrants to The Commercial Fishery

What we heard:

A harvester's representative raised the issue of obstacles to persons wishing to qualify as independent core harvesters, especially on the Great Northern Peninsula. The obstacles include high costs of acquiring a core enterprise and the cumbersome and lengthy professional fish harvester's certification process. He said the certification process should be streamlined so people could qualify as a Level II harvester in two years, rather than five.

DFO Response:

DFO is aware of the high costs of acquiring a core fishing enterprise and is sensitive to the financial pressures that can compromise the independence of core harvesters.

The fish harvester certification process is governed by policies and procedures administered by the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB), an agency established by provincial legislation. The board includes members from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, fishing industry organisations and DFO. It is the PFHCB which sets the requirements and procedures for certification, not DFO on its own.

► Face to Face Meetings

Harvesters were invited to attend inshore fishery consultation meetings throughout the province through Notices to Fish Harvesters, social media, Notices to the Public and letters to the major industry associations, and Indigenous organisations in Newfoundland and Labrador. Following is a list of the meetings that took place:



Other

► Face-to-face Meetings cont'd



Other

2J

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Cartwright	Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company boardroom	7 May 2019	15
Port Hope Simpson	Alexis Hotel	7 May 2019	15

3K

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Triton	Town office	11 February 2019	21
Virgin Arm	Lions Club	12 February 2019	13
New-Wes-Valley	Lions Club	12 February 2019	22
Fogo Island	Anglican Church hall (Centre Island)	13 February 2019	15
St. Anthony	Lions Club	12 March 2019	31 (from 3K & 4R)

3L

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Bonavista	Lions Club	6 February 2019	28
Clarenceville	Bill Davis Chalet	6 February 2019	13
Hants Harbour	Recreation Centre	7 February 2019	37
Bauline	Community Centre	7 February 2019	12
Trepassey	Social Centre	8 February 2019	43

3Ps

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Southern Harbour	Civic Centre	12 February 2019	22
Fortune	Lions Club	13 February 2019	9
Harbour Breton	Southern Port Hotel	15 February 2019	18

3Pn

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Port aux Basques	St. Christopher's Hotel	21 March 2019	14

4R

COMMUNITY	LOCATION	DATE/TIME	ATTENDEES
Plum Point	Plum Point Motel	26 February 2019	35
Rocky Harbour	Fisherman's Landing Inn	27 February 2019	21