

Notice to Fish Harvesters

April 6, 2010

2010 SNOW CRAB MANAGEMENT PLAN - SOUTHERN GULF CRAB FISHING AREAS 12, 18, 25, AND 26 (AREA 12)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has released the details of the 2010 Area 12, 18, 25, 26 (Area 12) management plan. As announced on March 8, 2010, the access to this fishery has been stabilized for the period 2010 to 2014 inclusive.

In the context of developing the Precautionary Approach for all of the southern Gulf snow crab fishing areas, the first step has been completed with the identification of interim reference points. The next steps in the process will be developed in the coming months. However, the interim reference points will be used as guideposts in managing the southern Gulf crab fishing areas.

The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is set at 7,700 tonnes which represents a targeted exploitation rate of 35% of the estimated commercial biomass.

TAC distribution* (metric tons)

- The quota for First Nations is 1,218 t (15.816%) and distributed as follows:
 - New Brunswick (NB): 670 t (8.7%)
 - Quebec (QC): 480 t (6.239%)
 - Prince Edward Island (PE): 68 t (0.877%)
- The quota for the traditional fleets is 5,327 t (69.184%) and distributed as follows:
 - New Brunswick : 3,034 t (39.408%)
 - Quebec : 1,630 t (21.169%)
 - Nova Scotia : 90 t (1.169%)
 - Prince Edward Island : 265 t (3.436%)
 - Harvesters from Crab Fishing Area 18: 308 t (4.002%)
- The quota for new access is 1,155 t (15%) and distributed as follows:

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Distribution of 1,155 t (15%) for New Access	
NB	549 t (7.129%) distributed as follows :
MFU	474 t (6.161%)
Identified groundfish specialists ITQ fleet	55 t (0.713%)
Identified groundfish specialists competitive fleet	20 t (0.255%)
QC	372 t (4.837%) details as to distribution of quota will be provided by Quebec Region.
NS	70 t (0.913%) details as to distribution of quota will be provided by Gulf Region.
PEI	163 t (2.122%) distributed as follows :
PEIFA	144 t (1.867%)
PEI Groundfishermen's Association	20 t (0.255%)

*numbers are rounded

2010 Management measures

The following management measures apply:

- The soft-shell crab protocol from 2009 including level of at-sea observer coverage (25%) remains in place in 2010. Following a review by scientists in March 2010 of the elements of the protocol, DFO anticipates undertaking discussions with fishery stakeholders to review the results and modify the protocol if needed for the 2011 fishing season.
- In order to promote viability for fishing enterprises, for 2010 only, DFO will allow flexibility in temporary quota transfer rules, the creation of partnerships, combining several licence holders on a vessel, etc. The implementation of various options will be discussed with those who are interested and will be in place for 2010 only.
- Licence holders must ensure that each trap has only one tag (i.e. valid tag).
- DFO has eliminated the policy of allowing tagging of traps at sea.

All other management measures from 2009 are rolled over in 2010 which include amongst others:

- 100% dockside monitoring (catch monitoring).
- Landings weighed in kilograms on an electronic scale with a memory.
- The use of a vessel monitoring system (VMS). Harvesters are asked to register their VMS with DFO as soon as possible to avoid delays in receiving their licence conditions.
- Maximum mesh size of 75 mm.
- Authorized release of commercial-sized male crab with small claws back in the water.

- A delayed season opening to June 1 applies to an area in CFA 12 for one nautical mile bordering on CFA 19. /3

- The Irving Whale Exclusion Zone is maintained.
- For proper management and control purposes, the targeted total number of vessels for all fleets on the water at any time is 150 for the Gulf Region and 75 for the Quebec Region.
- For proper management and control purposes, traps will be issued on the same basis as in the past:
 - 150 for mid-shore vessels
 - 75 for the traditional inshore Prince Edward Island fleet
 - 75 for Crab Fishing Area 18
 - New access and First Nations: those receiving quotas of up to 50 t will be entitled to 75 traps, while fishers receiving over 50 t will be able to use 150 traps.
- The targeted opening date for the fishery is April 16 at 18:00 Atlantic Daylight Time weather permitting and subject to DFO operational requirements.
- The fishery will close on July 18; all gear must be removed from the water by the end of the day July 17. Extensions to the fishing season will not be considered.

For information:

Tasha Laroche
Resource Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Moncton, NB
(506) 851-7790

Marcel Boudreau
Resource Management
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Quebec, QC
(418) 648-7679