



Notice to Fish Harvesters

December 20, 2019

GEAR MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR NON TENDED FIXED GEAR FISHERIES IN EASTERN CANADA

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) – As announced in February 2019, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will be implementing mandatory gear marking to all non-tended fixed gear fisheries starting in 2020 in Eastern Canada. The Gulf, Maritimes, Newfoundland & Labrador, and Quebec Regions are hereby notifying fish harvesters in Eastern Canada of the gear marking requirements that will apply.

The new requirements are part of the Government of Canada's continuing efforts to improve tracking of gear, address ghost gear and further identify management measures threats to marine mammals, in particular North Atlantic Right Whales. They will enable officials to make corrective changes in the most efficient manner going forward. They are implemented to recognize gear origin, specifically country, region, species, as well as lobster and snow crab fishing areas. They were developed as a continuum of what has already been introduced in certain Gulf of St Lawrence snow crab fisheries since 2018.

The gear marking requirements will consist of interlacing different strands of colored twine within existing rope. Briefly:

- 1) Colour combination using two different strands of twine interlaced on the same segment:
 - a) One colour to identify specific Region – to be interlaced on the same segment of rope as the second colour.
 - b) A second colour to identify target Species – to be interlaced on the same segment of rope as the first colour. Each species will be attributed the same colour across all Regions in Eastern Canada (i.e. yellow for lobster).
- 2) For lobster and snow crab fisheries only, a third colour will be used to mark different fishing areas. The third colour will be added to a subsequent segment of rope immediately after the segment of rope with the first two colours (it will not be interlaced with the first and second colour)
- 3) Gear marking will be mandatory for ropes attaching the fishing gear to the primary buoy (vertical line). It could also be included on other rope segments when applicable, at the discretion of fish harvesters, such as on the rope from the primary buoy to the secondary buoy, and on the rope from trap to trap set on a same line (ground lines).



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- 4) At a minimum, gear marking will be required at the top, middle and bottom of the vertical line (aligned with minimum requirements in the US) or every 27.4m throughout the length of the rope (aligned with existing practice in Gulf and Quebec Regions).
- 5) Use of a “tracer” as an alternative to colour coding requirements will be permitted. It could be phased-in as ropes are replaced. The tracer, a silver transparent tape inside the full length of the rope, must have a visible inscription identifying country, regions, species and fishing area.

Gear marking requirements as well as pre-determined colors are further detailed in the attached document titled “*GEAR MARKING, EASTERN CANADA, for non-tended fixed gear fisheries*”.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada will formerly announce other management measures to protect North Atlantic Right Whales in February 2020.

For additional information

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