



Gulf Region

Notice to Fish Harvesters

2024 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERY

Charlottetown, PEI – June 28, 2024 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) announces that fishing will be authorized for the 2024 Prince Edward Island (PEI) bluefin tuna season.

SEASON DATES:

- In 2024, the fishery will open on July 15, 2024 and close on December 31, 2024 or when the quota nears 0 mt.

NEW in 2024

- **A maximum of three tuna licence holders will be permitted to form a partnership to fish from the same vessel.**
- **Only the primary licence holder is required to be onboard during a bluefin tuna fishing trip.**
- **Fishers will not be authorized to retain blue shark as bycatch, while on a tuna fishing trip.**

MANAGEMENT MEASURES:

- For 2024, each eligible licence holder will be issued two tags at the beginning of the season.
- Licence holders must land one tuna by 23:59hrs on September 24, 2024 to be eligible for a reallocation tag. Licence conditions will only be valid until 23:59hrs on September 24, 2024. New conditions will only be issued to eligible licence holders.
- Additional tags will be issued if more quota becomes available.
- Eligible licence holders who are active (hail out) in the fishery prior to 23:59 hrs on September 24, 2024, but did not land a fish, will be authorized to retain their original tag. If a second tag was obtained, it must be returned. Licence holders who have not landed a fish by 23:59 hrs on September 24, 2024 will not be eligible for a reallocation tag.
- Licence holders who have no fishing effort (no hail) by 23:59 hrs on September 24, 2024 must return all unused tags and will not be eligible to continue fishing for the remainder of the season.
- Licence holders will only be authorized one vessel transfer during the 2024 season. A licence holder may transfer their vessel to another licence holder, then have the vessel transferred back. If the vessel is then transferred to another tuna licence holder after the original transfer, new tuna licence conditions issued will not be issued.
- For partnerships with two licence holders, fishers must land two tuna by 23:59hrs on September 24, 2024 to be eligible for a reallocation tag.
- **For partnerships with three licence holders, fishers must land three tuna by 23:59hrs on September 24, 2024 to be eligible for a reallocation tag.**

- Partnerships will be valid for the whole season, unless DFO is notified otherwise.
- Partnerships will not be authorized for vessel transfers.
- The PEI bluefin tuna fleet will have access to a portion of the quota transferred from Mexico to Canada. The Mexican and Canadian quotas will be combined for the 2024 season. The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association (PEIFA) will charge a registration fee of \$250.00 for all members holding a tuna licence to cover the cost of the Mexican quota transfer.
- Possessing a bluefin tuna tag allows access to fish but does not guarantee your quota. The fishery will close once the quota has been reached.
- Each tuna tag will include a temporary dart tag that is recorded in Annex II associated with that tag. Dart tags are non-transferrable.
- Licence holders will have to print licence conditions for 4RST and 4WD separately.
- Licence holders/operators are permitted to release any bluefin tuna tagged with a scientific tag. Please refer to your licence conditions for details on this authorization.

Mackerel Bait

Licence holders are permitted to catch and retain 20 live mackerel per fishing trip for bait purposes. This will be reflected in conditions of licence.

Discarding Waste

As of 2022, all commercial fisheries in Canada have a new condition of licence relating to the discharge of garbage from Canadian fishing vessels. The licence holder/operator is prohibited from discarding in Canadian fisheries waters from their vessel any time that may be harmful to fish or fish habitat.

New condition: *The licence holder/operator is prohibited from discarding in Canadian fisheries waters from their vessel any item that may be harmful to fish or fish habitat including but not limited to plastics, ropes, fishing gear, garbage bags, fuel, oil, rags, glass, bottles, metal, extruded polystyrene foam (e.g. Styrofoam), and tires.*

LOGBOOK

As of 2023, a new tuna logbook is required to be used. Licence holders are required to submit a copy of the Atlantic bluefin tuna log document to the dockside monitoring company that was hailed in to within seven (7) days following the end of the fishing trip when no tuna has been caught or immediately at the end of each fishing trip when a tuna is on board.

HAIL OUT

Fish harvesters from both Gulf and Quebec Regions will be required to dial a **new telephone number** when hailing out, as required by condition of licence. The new telephone number **1-833-699-2013 (toll free) or 1-506-431-3223 (satellite phone only)** will need to be used for new hails, modified hails, and cancelled hails. This will direct fish harvesters to a call centre, and replace the Vessel Hail Out System (Interactive Voice Recognition System - IVR) until further notice.

2024 TAG AVAILABILITY: Beginning on Friday, July 12, Bluefin tuna tags will be available at the DFO PEI Area Office (165 John Yeo Drive, Charlottetown, PEI) from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Licence holders are eligible to pick up their initial two tags at the same time. Each bluefin tuna tag will include one temporary dart tag, depending on availability. Temporary dart tags will be free of charge, compliments of the PEIFA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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