Notice to Fish Harvesters

North Atlantic Right Whale – Notification on requirements to implement lower breaking strength gear modifications in fixed gear, trap and pot fisheries in Atlantic Canada and Quebec

Moncton, NB - December 1, 2022 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada announces that the timeline for harvesters to implement lower breaking strength gear modification requirements in non-tended fixed gear, trap and pot commercial fisheries in Atlantic Canada and Quebec is extended to 2024.

Canada is committed to protecting North Atlantic right whales and supporting their recovery. We continue to prioritize measures to prevent entanglements of North Atlantic right whales in fishing gear, closing areas to fishing when and where right whales are detected, and removing lost, abandoned and discarded fishing gear. The Department is reviewing available information to ensure that lower breaking strength fishing gear is safe, effective at protecting whales, and readily available. This is important for supporting harvesters as they transition successfully to equipment that better protects endangered whales.

The Department will continue its support for various whalesafe gear trials in relevant fisheries with a particular focus on ropeless and rope-on-demand gear, and its engagement with industry, other stakeholders and Indigenous partners. During 2023, the Department will announce further details regarding measures to protect North Atlantic right whales in Canadian fisheries, including the approach to implement appropriate whalesafe gear requirements over time.

For more information:

Whalesafe Fishing Gear: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/gear-equipement/index-eng.html

North Atlantic right whale protection measures: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/mammals-mammiferes/whales-baleines/narw-bnan/index-eng.html

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