



Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

Pêches et Océans  
Canada

*Gulf Region*

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# *Notice to Fish Harvesters*

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## **2025 - EXPERIMENTAL STRIPED BASS (MORONE SAXATILIS) BYCATCH PILOT PROJECT IN THE GULF REGION LOBSTER FISHING AREA (LFA) 25**

**Moncton, NB – June 19, 2025** –Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Gulf Region, is seeking participation in an experimental pilot project allowing striped bass bycatch retention in LFA 25 in 2025. This is a continuation of the pilot project conducted in LFA23, 24, 26A and 26B this spring and in LFA 25 lobster fishery in 2024. This initiative will enable the department to collect a wider range of data on the prevalence, distribution, condition, and composition of striped bass bycatch in lobster fisheries.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To better understand and quantify the incidence, distribution, condition, and composition of striped bass bycatch in lobster traps in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. This could inform decisions to modify management measures in the future regarding the retention of striped bass. Data quality, consistency, and reliability will be important to providing valuable information for future decision-making.

### **APPROACH**

#### **General**

An experimental licence, pursuant to Section 52 of the Fishery General Regulations, issued to each participant, may allow for the retention of striped bass caught incidentally in lobster traps during the LFA 25 season. Participation in the pilot project will be limited to a maximum of 25 percent of the total number of active licence holders in LFA 25.

The pilot project is set to begin on the season opening day in LFA 25, or at the earliest possible date after the season opening, given logistic considerations, and will conclude at the end of the fishing season.

The information gathered throughout this pilot project will undergo a comprehensive evaluation after the fishing season.

#### **Management measures for the pilot project**

- All striped bass retained as part of this experimental pilot project must measure between 50 and 65 cm.
- A maximum of four (4) striped bass can be onboard the vessel at all times.
- Any striped bass caught incidentally outside these requirements must be returned forthwith to the water.
- Striped bass caught, within the possession and size limits, as part of this experimental pilot project can be used as bait.
- Sale and gifting of retained striped bass is not permitted.

- Participants must log daily trips and record data on all incidental catches of striped bass in their lobster traps using the pilot project experimental logsheet. NIL reports, indicating zero fish caught, must be submitted.
- Logsheets must be returned to DFO within seven calendar days following the conclusion of the fishing season.

### How to participate

**Fish harvesters can apply to the pilot project via NOLS on a first-come, first-serve basis.** The project will be limited to the first 25% of active lobster harvesters in LFA 25 who submit their application.

### NOLS submission instructions

Once in NOLS, applicants will have to select the following request type “*Application for New Licence*” and subtype “*Other*”. In the Comments section of the request, please insert the following text:

- Striped bass bycatch pilot project

For instructions on “*Submitting a Request and Checking the Request Status Step-by-Step*” please refer to this link:

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/products-produits/request-demande-eng.html>

Once applications are reviewed, successful applicants will receive their experimental licence, pursuant to Section 52 of the Fishery General Regulations and the associated logsheet via NOLS.

Participating fish harvesters will be able to locate their experimental licence in their NOLS’ account document section; the document will appear as Lobster; Scientific. Fish harvesters will be required to print this licence and keep it aboard their vessel while participating in the pilot project.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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