



Gulf Region

Notice to Fish Harvesters

2023 - SOUTHERN GULF OF ST-LAWRENCE LOBSTER CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN FOR LOBSTER FISHING AREAS (LFAs) 23, 24, 26A AND 26B

Moncton, NB – March 29, 2023 – Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Gulf Region, announces the 2023 management measures for Lobster Fishing Areas (LFAs) 23, 24, 26A and 26B. Unless indicated otherwise, existing management measures remain in place. Please refer to your lobster licence conditions for further details. Licence conditions should be available on the National Online Licensing System on March 30, 2023.

Please note that additional management measures may be announced

Management measures and the season dates for **LFA 25** will be issued at a later date.

Opening Dates in 2023

As previously announced, there were changes to the Guidelines on Opening / Closing Dates for the Commercial Lobster Fishery in the Gulf Region. Please see the 2023 targeted season dates below:

Lobster Fishing Area	2023 Open Season Dates
23	- 6:00 am April 30 - June 30 - Flexibility up to 72 hours before the scheduled season opening - Flexibility at end of season 1 day for 1 day up to 4 days
24	- 6:00 am April 29 - June 29 - Flexibility at end of season 1 day for 1 day up to 4 days
26A 1 & 3	- 6:00 am April 26 - June 26 - Flexibility at end of season 1 day for 1 day up to 4 days
26A-2	- 6:00 am April 26 - June 26 - Flexibility at end of season 1 day for 1 day up to 4 days
26 B (South)	- 6:00 am April 29 - June 29 - Flexibility at end of season 1 day for 1 day up to 4 days
26 B (North)	- 6:00 am May 6 - July 6 - Flexibility at end of season 1 day for 1 day up to 4 days

These are targeted season dates and subject to change due to ice, weather, or other conditions.

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DFO will monitor and assess the situation at the various wharves a few weeks before the scheduled opening. Conference calls will be held in the days leading up to the scheduled opening between DFO and stakeholders to obtain feedback on the situation at various locations in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Management measures in place for the 2023 fishing season

Management measures to minimize interactions with North Atlantic Right Whales

The Management measures to minimize interactions with North Atlantic Right Whales (NARW) can be found at the following address: <http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/commercial-commerciale/atl-arc/narw-bnan/management-gestion-eng.html>.

Table 1: Key Management Measures in 2023 in Lobster Fishing Areas 23, 24, 26A and 26B

Note increase in carapace size, as per request from industry, for LFA 23 and 26A-3

Lobster Fishing Area	Minimum legal carapace size (mm) ¹	Window size females (mm) ²	Maximum number of traps	Minimum number of traps per line ³	Maximum hoop size (mm)
23A	81	115-129	300	n/a	152
23B	81	115-129	300	n/a	152
23C	81	115-129	300	In a portion of 23C: 3 traps	152
23D	81	115-129	300	In a portion of 23D: 3 traps	152
24	75	115-129	300	6 traps	n/a
26A-1	75	115-129	272 PEI 280 Gulf NS	In a portion of 26A-1 adjacent to PEI: 6 traps 26A-1 (Gulf NS fishers only): 5 traps	n/a
26A-2	76	115-129	255 and 275 ⁴	6 traps	152
26A-3	77	115-129	250	2 traps	n/a
26B South	82.5	n/a	250	n/a	n/a
26B North ⁵	82.5	n/a	250	5 traps	152

Notes: ¹See table 2 for height of escape mechanism corresponding to the minimum carapace size in effect.

²As defined by licence conditions (female Lobster of a length of 115 mm but not more than 129 mm shall be returned to the water immediately in a manner that causes it the least harm).

³As defined by licence conditions.

⁴Commercial licence holders: 255 traps/Some Communal Commercial licence holders: 275 traps.

⁵Closure to fishing of Cheticamp Harbour.

Height and Length of Escape Mechanisms

The height of the escape mechanism as indicated in Table 2 needs to be adjusted according to the minimum legal carapace size in effect in each LFA (refer to Table 1 for minimum legal size).

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Table 2

Length of escape opening between 127 mm and less than 254 mm	
Minimum legal carapace size	Minimum height of escape opening
>73 mm to 76 mm	43 mm
>76 mm to 79 mm	44 mm
80 mm to 81 mm	46 mm
>81 mm to 83 mm	47 mm
>83 mm to 84 mm	48 mm
>84 mm to 85 mm	49 mm
Length of escape opening equal to or greater than 254 mm	
Minimum legal carapace size	Minimum height of escape opening
>73 mm to 76 mm	42 mm
>76 mm to 79 mm	43 mm
80 mm to 81 mm	46 mm
>81 mm to 83 mm	47 mm
>83 mm to 84 mm	48 mm
>84 mm to 85 mm	49 mm

Restrictions on the movement of lobster licences

For information on restriction on the movement of lobster licences you can refer to the Commercial Fisheries Licensing Policy for Gulf Region that can be found at the following link:

<http://www.glf.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Gulf/Licenses-Delivery/Commercial-Fisheries-Licensing-Policy>.

Daily closed time

The daily close time is from 9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. in LFA 23.

Transit Corridors

The transit corridors remain in effect and a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) is required (every 5 minutes) if using the transit corridor. The corridor allows fish harvesters to transport their catches through that area to reach their homeport avoiding the use of the smack boat. For this reason, a validity period is added to LFA 23D licences from the date of issuance to June 30. The opening and closing of the season will remain as indicated in the Fisheries Regulations or as announced in a Variation Order. The coordinates for the corridor are identified in the Variation Order and the licence conditions of those using the corridor.

Logbook

Licence holders that will not be using an Electronic logbooks (ELOGS) are still required to use paper logbooks and submit them to DFO on a monthly basis as in previous years. The list of paper logbook suppliers is available at the following Internet address: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/sdc-cps/nir-nei/log-suppliers-eng.html>.

Before you go fishing

The Department has assembled a list of requirements and documents harvesters will need before they start fishing. This list is available at: [Before you start fishing, you will need... \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

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