
Notice to Fish Harvesters

SEASON OPENING FOR THE MACKEREL FISHERY **IN THE SOUTHERN GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE**

Moncton, NB – May 31, 2018 –The Department of Fisheries and Oceans announced today the mackerel fishery in fishing area 16 will open on **June 1st 2018 at 0:01 a.m.** as specified under the *Atlantic Fisheries Regulation, 1985*.

In addition to the new management measures implemented last year to improve monitoring and reporting of catches in the mackerel fishery, fish harvesters will be required to comply with new management measures for marine mammals. Eligible harvesters wishing to participate in this fishery are now able to obtain their mackerel licence through the National Online Licensing System (NOLS). The Department wants to remind fishers that they are required to have entered into an agreement with a dockside monitoring company designated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada prior to the start of their mackerel fishing season.

Discussions on the development of a rebuilding plan for mackerel will continue over the next year in collaboration with various stakeholders to identify options to improve the state of the stock which is currently in the critical zone of the precautionary approach framework.

The Total Allowable Catch for Eastern Canada has been established at 10,000 tons for 2018.

NEW management measures to be implemented for the 2018 fishing season:

Requirement to report lost gear

Licence holders will be required to report loss of gill nets. This new management measure will help quantify the amount of gill nets lost annually and identify the need to increase efforts to retrieve gear that has been lost, which would reduce the risks of whale entanglements.

The following specific information must be reported to DFO by email (GLF.DFO.Gear-Engins.GLF.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) within 72 hours of noticing that the gear has been lost:

- vessel registration number or vessel identification number in the case of Aboriginal licence conditions;
- latitude and longitude of last known position of lost gill net; and
- date the gill net was last fished.

Marine mammal interaction reporting

In order to comply with the implementation of the US Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA) regulations, licence holders must now provide information regarding all interactions with a marine mammal including: bycatch, collisions and all sightings of entangled marine mammals that occur during fishing expeditions.

A Marine Mammal Interaction Form (included with licence conditions) must be completed and submitted by email to DFO.NAT.InteractionsMM-InteractionsMM.NAT.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca within 48 hours after the end of a fishing trip.

The information provided on the form will be used by DFO to estimate levels of accidental mortality and injury to marine mammals. This information will allow DFO to better assess the types of threats that may affect Canada's marine mammals and to develop mitigation strategies.

Requirement to report sightings of live whales

Sightings of live, free-swimming whales must be reported to DFO by telephone: 1-844-800-8568, or by email: XMARwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Tended gear

All fishing gear shall be closely attended at all times by the licence holder and shall be removed from the water as soon as a North Atlantic Right Whale is observed in the area. The licence holder must remove all fishing gear from the water in the static and dynamic areas before returning to port.

For information:

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