

Notice to Fish Harvesters

EKME # 3936044

2018 Prince Edward Island Atlantic Halibut Fishery

Charlottetown, PE. – July 16, 2018 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) today announces that fishing will be authorized for Prince Edward Island (PEI) groundfish fixed gear fleet, with vessels less than 13.1716 metres (45 feet) in overall length that have registered to fish Atlantic halibut in 2018.

INDIVIDUAL ALLOCATION: The Atlantic halibut allocation for the PEI fixed gear fleet in 2018 will be 55.745 metric tonnes. Based on the number of registered participants, an individual catch limit of **205 kg round weight** will be implemented. To convert dressed (head on, gutted) weight to round, multiple dressed weight by 1.14.

SEASON: In 2018, the Prince Edward Island Atlantic halibut fishery will take place every **Wednesday and Thursday on the following days: July 18th/19th, July 25/26, August 1st/2nd, August 29th/30th, September 5th/6th and September 12th/13th.** As in previous years there are daily close times of 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. There will be no consideration of delaying the fishery due to inclement weather or other uncontrollable circumstances.

If more than 10% of the quota remains after September 14th, a list of eligible fishers will be created and the quota redistributed based on the initial individual catch limit. The reallocation fishery will be held on Tuesday to Thursdays each week starting September 18th. A new group of fishers will participate each week until 90% of the quota is caught.

Management measures similar to 2017 include:

- The maximum number of hooks permitted to be fished or on board a vessel at any time is 300.
- Maximum individual by-catch limit of 50kg of cod. All fishing activities must cease for cod and halibut once this bycatch limit is reached.
- 100% Dockside Monitoring

The conditions of licence will be available shortly. The Department wishes to remind licence holders that to be able to obtain their conditions, they need to attach an eligible vessel to their groundfish licence.

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

A shift in the distribution of the North Atlantic Right Whales (NARWs) population in recent years has resulted in an increased presence of NARWs in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In an effort to minimize the risks of interactions with this species, other marine mammals and species at risk, DFO is announcing important management changes in the Gulf Region rock crab fishery.

a) Reducing the amount of rope floating on the surface of the water

The following requirements will be in place to minimize the length of rope floating on the surface of the water and to reduce the risks of entanglements:

- No rope attaching a longline to a primary buoy shall remain floating on the surface of the water after the gear has been set.

If fishing with a primary and secondary buoy:

- A maximum of 3.7 meters of rope shall be used when attaching a primary buoy to a secondary buoy.

Note: A primary buoy is defined as a buoy or other floating device attached to a trap. A secondary buoy is defined as a buoy or other floating device attached to a primary buoy.

b) Requirement to report lost gear

Licence holders will be required to report lost gear. This new management measure will help quantify the amount of gear 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 (DFO.GLF.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 gear; and
- date the gear was last fished.

c) 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 the 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.

d) 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.

e) Protocol for the dynamic management of the fisheries

DFO will implement a protocol for the dynamic management of the fisheries in 2018, which will close areas to all non-tended fishing activities when the presence of NARW is observed. This protocol will allow DFO to close specific areas to fishing activities to prevent incidents with NARW, such as entanglements. DFO will use the existing soft shell/white crab grids to close areas due to the presence of NARW. These measures may be adapted as needed over the season.

Observations inside a foraging area for the toad crab fishery

When at least one NARW is observed inside a foraging area (see map below), a maximum of nine grids will be closed to provide a buffer area around the sighting location to account for whale movements.

Closing and reopening of the areas

Closures will be in force for a minimum period of 15 days and will be extended by a minimum of 15 days from the last NARW sighting. If NARWs are not seen during at least two aerial surveillance flights during the 15 days period, the dynamic closure for the relevant sections will be lifted at the end of the period. Closures will be regulated through variation orders and licence holders will be provided an advance notice of 48 hours to retrieve fishing gear from the area prior to closure.

f) Static closure

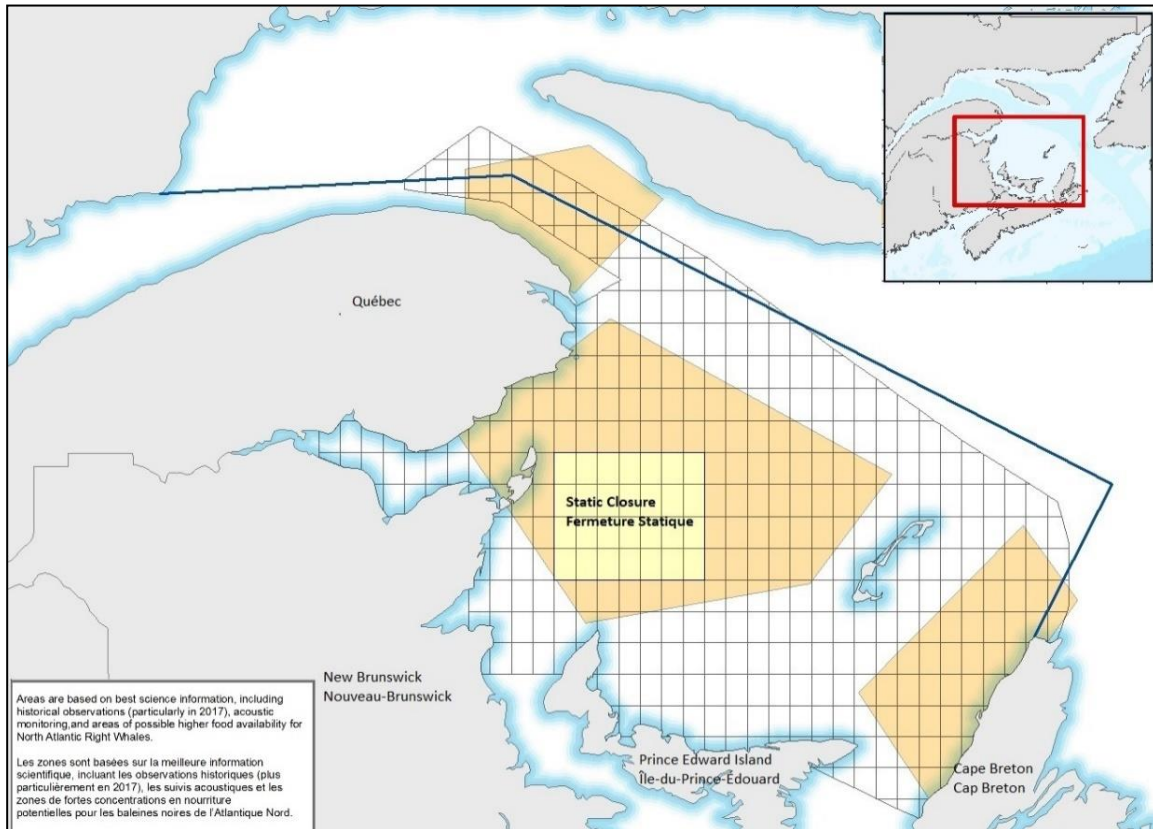
DFO will implement a static closure to all fishery activities using non-tended gear, in an area where 90% of the NARW observations occurred in 2017 to provide a large gear-free area for the NARWs, thus reducing the risk of gear interaction. The closure has been in effect since **April 28, 2018**. This measure may be adapted as needed over the season. The coordinates for the static closure are as follow:

Points	Latitude - North	Longitude - West
1. (north-west corner)	48°00'00''	64°20'00''
2. (north-east corner)	48°00'00''	63°10'00''
3. (south-east corner)	47°20'00''	63°10'00''

4. (south-west corner)	47°20'00''	64°20'00''
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*The point references are based on the geodesic system North American Datum 1983 (NAD83). Positions are expressed in **degrees, minutes and seconds**.*

Map showing of the foraging areas and the static closure



The areas in orange/gold are the NARW foraging areas.

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