

**2015 CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN**  
**Atlantic Halibut (4RST) - Prince Edward Island Fixed Gear Fleet**  
**Less than 13.1716 meters**

EKME 3483957

**Approved on June 16, 2015**

This Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP) applies to all Prince Edward Island (PEI) fixed gear licence holders fishing Atlantic halibut in NAFO Divisions 4RST with vessels less than 13.1716 meters (45 feet) in overall length from **May 15, 2015 to May 14, 2016**.

When fishing in a particular area, the CHP for that area will apply. It is to be noted that this CHP is subject to change following ministerial decisions or annual review.

Directed fishing for any other groundfish species will require a separate harvesting plan.

The conservation measures during the fishery are as follows:

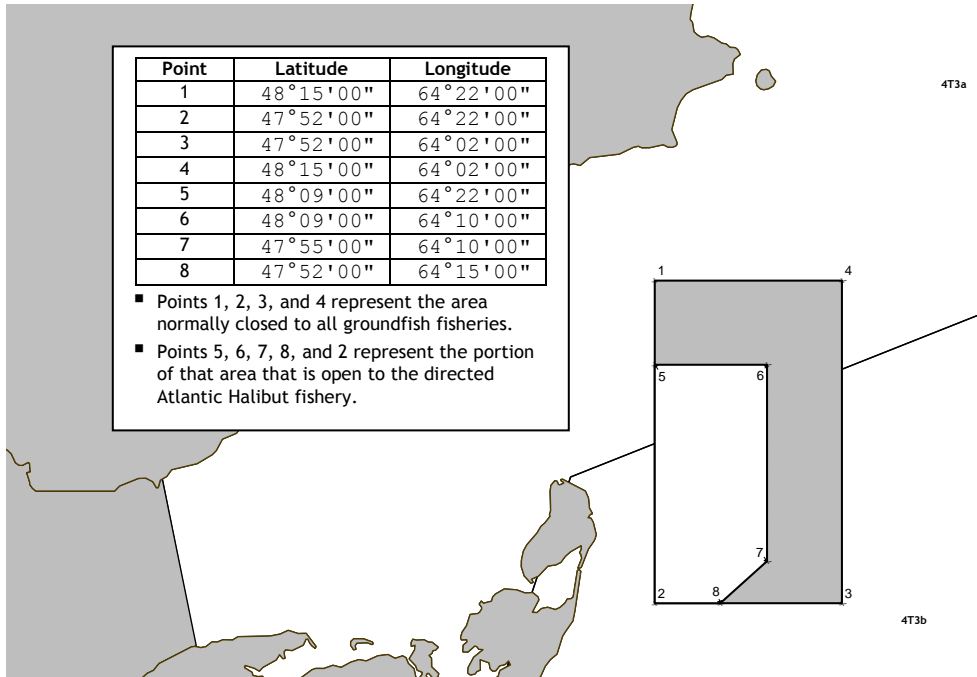
**1. Protection of spawning fish and concentration of juveniles**

The protection of fish during the spawning period and areas where there are concentrations of juveniles is a priority that the department and the industry consider very important for the reconstruction of the cod stock in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The following conservation measures will apply:

- Closure of all groundfish fisheries from April 1 to June 23 in part of the NAFO Division 4R offshore from St. Georges Bay and Port au Port Bay.
- Closure by variation order of all groundfish fisheries from January 1 to December 31 in part of groundfish fishing area 4T3 known as Miscou Bank.
- Permanent closure of all groundfish fisheries from January 1 to December 31 in groundfish fishing area 4T5 known as Shediac Valley, which is a juvenile area.

The following map represents the Miscou Bank closure, as well as the portion of that area that is open to the directed Atlantic halibut fishery.

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## 2. Participants

For the purposes of this Conservation Harvesting Plan, fishers who belong to the Prince Edward Island fixed gear fleet are fishers having their home port in the province of Prince Edward Island. The existing vessel Class A-68 will be used for the July fishing period, and a new vessel class (A-78, to be confirmed) will be created for the September fishing period. To be eligible to participate in this fishery during either period, eligible fishers must register with the Prince Edward Island Fisherman's Association on July 6 and 7, 2015 and pay a registration fee of \$250.00 (non-refundable) covering the fleet's observer coverage costs and contributing to the industry led self-rationalization program used to finance a buyout of PEI groundfish licenses. Deadline for registration will be 7:00 pm p. July 7. In a case where the number of licence holders applying to register is in excess of 400, a meeting of those registered will be organized to discuss participation level and vote on subsequent controls. **Not registering or participating to the 2015 halibut fishery will not prevent an eligible harvester from participating to this fishery in future years.**

Registration of commercial communal licence holders will be administered by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). DFO will compile a final list of registered fish harvesters and the fishery will open by variation order for all registered fishers.

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**3. Season Catch Limit**

Fish harvesters would be required to limit catch following a predetermined formula. A maximum catch limit per licence will be authorized and will be indicated in the licence conditions. When the Atlantic halibut catch limit has been reached, fishing gear must be immediately removed from the water. All Atlantic halibut caught over the seasonal catch limit authorized in the licence condition is required to be returned (a) to the place from which it was taken forthwith; and (b) where it is alive, in a manner that causes it the least harm. In accordance with the text from the conditions of licence, any quantity landed in excess of the catch limit will place the harvester in a position of infraction and charges can be laid.

**4. Allocation**

The Atlantic halibut allocation for the PEI fixed gear fleet will be 47.38 metric tonnes (t) in total for 2015. This corresponds to the initial allocation for this fleet (46.38 t) as well as a carry forward of 1.0 t remaining from the 2014 season. For proper management of the fishery, 1.0 t will not be made available to the fishers. 46.38 t will be divided by the number of registered fishers in order to establish a seasonal catch limit per licence, which will be indicated in the condition of licence for this fishery.

Transfer of seasonal catch limit between participants is NOT authorized.

**5. Fishing gear**

➤ **Longline only**

- i. Minimum hook size: opening must be equal to or greater than 15.4 mm.
- ii. Maximum number of hooks: 300 hooks

**6. By-Catch Limits**

By-catch is defined as the weight of a by-catch species divided by the weight of the directed species, in this case, Atlantic halibut. If below by-catch limits are exceeded, the fishery may be closed. By-catch of groundfish species **may not be released** unless a condition of licence authorizes to do so. For management purposes, the individual by-catch limits of groundfish while directing for Atlantic halibut are as follows:

Cod	Maximum fishing period limit of 50 kg
White Hake	Maximum daily limit of 10%

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Other species of                    25%  
groundfish

**Special provision regarding cod:** Once an individual fishing period by-catch limit of 50kg of cod has been caught, all fishing gear shall be immediately removed from the water and fishing shall cease. All cod caught in excess of 50 kg shall be forthwith returned to the water from which it was taken and where it is alive, in a manner that causes it the least harm.

**7. Small Fish Protocol**

The following small fish protocol will apply: areas may be closed for specified fleet sectors when the number of undersized fish reaches or exceeds 15% of the catch of any of the above species. Where there is a requirement by condition of licence to release undersized fish to the water, it will not be counted within the small fish protocol. Undersized fish **may not be released** unless a condition of licence authorizes to do so.

a.	Cod	43 cm
b.	American Plaice	30 cm
c.	Witch Flounder	30 cm
d.	White Hake	45 cm
e.	Winter Flounder /Yellowtail Flounder	25 cm
f.	Atlantic Halibut	85 cm
g.	Greenland Halibut	44 cm
h.	Redfish	22 cm

**8. Catch Monitoring and Test Fishery**

Small fish and by-catch closures will be of a minimum duration of ten days. The cost of conducting all test fisheries must be borne by industry. If a fishery is closed, it will not re-open unless DFO feels that it can be effectively monitored and controlled. If any particular fishery is closed twice during the year because of high levels of small fish or incidental catch, the fishery may remain closed for the remainder of the year.

**9. Logbook**

Logbooks are mandatory for all vessels.

**10. Dockside Monitoring**

Dockside Monitoring Program (DMP) will apply at 100%.

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**11. Observer Coverage**

Industry-funded at-sea observer coverage at a minimum of 10% will apply for vessels less than 13.716 meters (45 feet).

Fishers are required to contact the DFO Vessel Hail-Out System at **1-800-561-2467**, at least **10 hours before leaving** on each fishing trip (mandatory hail-out).

**12. Fishing Seasons/Periods**

The following seasons will be in effect during the year. However, the actual fishing periods for the PEI geographical fleet will be July 21-24 and September 1-4, 2015 from 6 am until 6pm each day. Upon registration, each fisher must choose which fishing period they will participate in and their licence conditions will only be valid for one of the two periods.

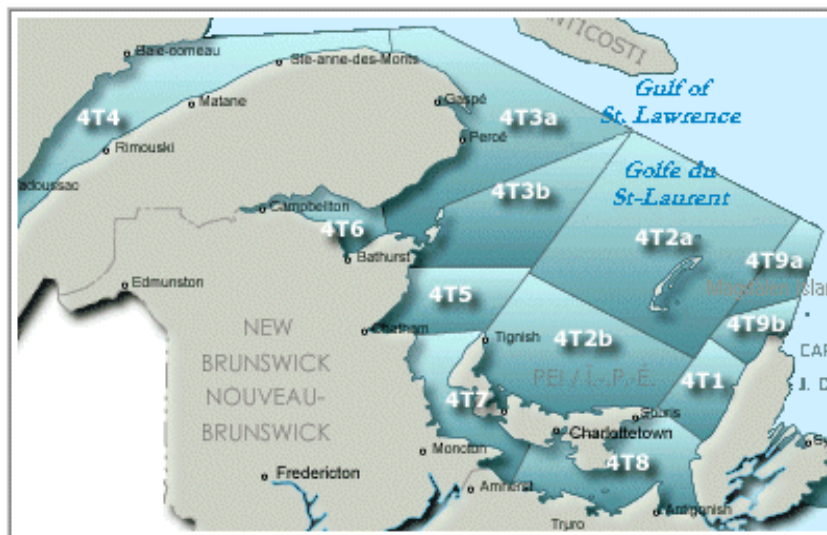
The fishery will open and close via variation order.

For the July fishing period, Industry will be contacted by noon (12:00) on July, 17, 2015, to confirm weather and opening. If weather on Tuesday July 21 or the rest of the week renders the fishery impossible, the fishery will remain open one or more additional day(s).

For the September fishing period, Industry will be contacted by noon (12:00) on August 28, 2015, to confirm weather and opening. If weather on Tuesday September 1 or the rest of the week renders the fishery impossible, the fishery will remain open one or more additional day(s).

- 4T1           ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year
- 4T2 (a)       ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year
- 4T2 (b)       ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year
- 4T3 (a)       ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year, except Miscou bank
- 4T3 (b)       ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year, except Miscou bank
- 4T4           ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year
- 4T5           ▪ No directed fishery
- 4T6           ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year
- 4T7           ▪ No directed fishery
- 4T8           ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year
- 4T9 (a+b)     ▪ May 15 to May 14 the following year

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If, after the prescribed fishing periods, the total catch is over 90% of the quota, the objective will be considered to have been reached and the fishery will not reopen. In such a situation DFO Gulf Region will proceed with a carry-forward of the remaining fleet quota into the 2016 fishing year.

If, after the prescribed periods, the 90% threshold has not been harvested, a third fishing period of October 20-23, 2015 will occur. Eligible participants will include active fishers from the first two fishing periods (those with a hail out number). Registration for a draw to redistribute the remaining quota will be administered by the PEIFA after the September 1-4 fishing period. There will be no fee for the reallocation draw. The remaining PEI quota will be equally distributed with the same individual licence catch limit as the initial fishing periods. The number of participants will be determined by the amount of remaining quota.

For this 3<sup>rd</sup> tentative fishing period, Industry will be contacted by noon (12:00) on Monday October 19, 2015, to confirm weather and opening.

**No night fishing**

While fishing under this CHP, no hooks (gear) can be set in the water between the times of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

**13. Other Management Measures**

The Department will continue to monitor the level of dumping and discarding of groundfish at sea. An industry funded sampling program is already in place to collect data to monitor small fish and by-catch. The sampling program will further be enhanced to include the collection of additional data to monitor discard of groundfish. If a fleet sector or an individual is suspected of dumping

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and discarding groundfish at sea, the industry funded at-sea observer coverage may be increased up to 100%.

Buddy-up arrangements will not be authorized in this fishery.

**14. Quota reconciliation**

Quota reconciliation provides that any overharvest of a quota in one year will be accounted for in advance of the following fishing season. For example, quota overruns by a fleet during the current season will be deducted from quotas for the following season on a one-for-one basis.

In the month following the end of the fishing season, the Department will make any necessary changes to quotas for the current year based on quota overruns, if applicable.

**15. Species At Risk Act**

Pursuant to the Species at Risk Act (SARA), no person shall kill, harm, harass, capture, take, possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual or any part or derivate of a wildlife species designated as extirpated, endangered or threatened.

At the time this Management Plan is promulgated, the Atlantic species targeted by these measures are the following ones: spotted wolffish (threatened), northern wolffish (threatened), leatherback turtle (endangered) and Atlantic walrus (Northwest Atlantic population) (extirpated). New species could be added to the SARA within the year.

All by-catches of species identified above must be returned to the water and released in the exact capture location and, if the fish is still alive, with as little harm as possible. The information related to species at risk shall be collected for each fishing trip where such a species is caught. This information must be entered into the logbook and reported to Fisheries and Oceans Canada immediately after the fishing trip.