

**2015-2019 CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN
WINTER FLOUNDER (4RST) – PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
FIXED GEAR LESS THAN 19.81 m**

Approved August 12, 2015

EKME 3512814

This Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP) applies to all Prince Edward Island (PEI) groundfish licence holders with fixed gear vessels less than 19.81 m, regardless of homeport, fishing winter flounder in a defined area within groundfish fishing area 4T2b during the period from **May 15, 2015 to May 14, 2019**. When fishing in another groundfish fishing area, the conservation harvesting plan for that division 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 cod

The protection of fish during the spawning period and areas where there are concentrations of cod is a management measure that the Department and industry consider very important for the reconstruction of the cod stocks in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. The following conservation measures will apply:

- Closure of all groundfish fisheries from April 1 to June 23 in part of NAFO Division 4R offshore from St. Georges Bay and Port au Port Bay, which is a recognized spawning area.
- Permanent closure of all groundfish fisheries, except for cod directed fishery when authorized, from January 1 to December 31 in part of groundfish fishing area 4T3a+b known as Miscou Bank, which is a recognized cod concentration area.
- Permanent closure of all groundfish fisheries from January 1 to December 31 in groundfish fishing area 4T5 known as Shediac Valley, which is recognized as a juvenile area.

2. Participants

For the purposes of this CHP, fish harvesters who belong to the PEI fixed gear fleet are fish harvesters having their home port in the province of PEI using Vessel Class A-61 and as identified by the Fleet Representatives. The cap on participants in the proposed area is 15 independent core harvesters, with access for commercial communal licenses held in reserve, should interest be there.

The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association (PEIFA) has requested that fish harvesters pre-register with their Association's office before the fishery commences, in order to better define the actual anticipated effort in this fishery. The 15 successful fish harvesters must register with an At-Sea Observer company within a week of being

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identified as one of the participants. If they do not register, they will be excluded from the fishery and another fish harvester will be given an opportunity to participate.

3. Fishing Gear

GILLNETS

(a) 4T2b

- i) Minimum mesh size of 145 mm;
- ii) A limit of 350 fathoms of net, total, per licence;
- iii) A tangle net is described as a gill net where the top rope and bottom rope are tied together in a manner that does not allow a distance greater than 76.2 cm at the points of attachment. These attachments shall be no more than three fathoms apart for the entire length of the net. There are to be no floats attached to any portion of this net.

4. Fishing Seasons:

The following seasons will be in effect for the duration of the CHP. Although these fishing seasons are anticipatory, actual opening dates may vary depending on circumstances at the time, for example the announcement date of the total allowable catch, while closing dates may be anticipated according to factors such as the reach of quota or other fishing management considerations.

4T2b September 1, 2015 at 6:00 a.m. (Atlantic Daylight Time - ADT) until
October 24, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. (ADT).

With respect to soak times, all gear is to be returned to port at the end of the fishing day, with no nets in the water between 20:00hrs and 05:00hrs the next morning. Any unused quota may be made available to this fleet before the end of the fishing year (May 14), pending approval of an amended CHP.

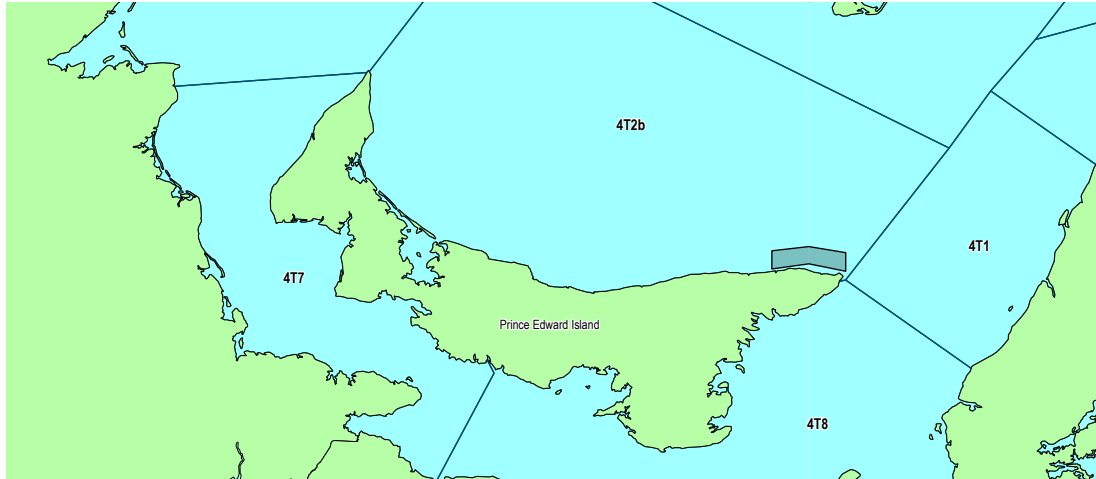
The following sub-area within groundfish fishing area 4T2b will be open for the winter flounder fishery.

East Point:

Point	Latitude - North	Longitude – West
1.	46° 32' 01.060"	62° 17' 12.500"
2.	46° 32' 45.090"	62° 07' 47.130"
3.	46° 31' 41.520"	61° 58' 22.490"
4.	46° 28' 26.220"	61° 58' 24.080"
5.	46° 29' 44.280"	62° 07' 48.500"
6.	46° 28' 50.280"	62° 17' 14.220"
7.	46° 32' 01.060"	62° 17' 12.500"

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Note: When the geographic boundary of an area is expressed in Latitude and Longitude, those point references are based on the geodesic system North American Datum 1983 (NAD83). Positions are expressed in degrees, minutes and seconds.



5. 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, winter flounder.

While directing for winter flounder, the authorized percentages of by-catch are:

➤ Cod	4T	5% daily
➤ White hake	4T	10% daily
➤ Yellowtail flounder	4T	25% daily
➤ Other species of groundfish	4T	10% daily

Certain areas could be closed for fishing for specified fleet sectors when a species by-catch exceeds the above percentages.

6. Small Fish Protocol

The minimum length of fish relative to the small fish protocol is:

Cod	43 cm
American plaice	30 cm
Witch flounder	30 cm
White hake	45 cm
Winter flounder	25 cm
Yellowtail flounder	25 cm
Atlantic halibut	85 cm
Greenland halibut	44 cm
Redfish	22 cm

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Areas will 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.

7. Dockside monitoring

Dockside monitoring program (DMP) will apply at 100%.

8. Logbooks and combined form

Logbooks are mandatory for all fish harvesters with homeports **in the Gulf Region**. They must be completed each fishing day.

The combined form is mandatory for all fish harvesters with homeports **in the Quebec Region**. They must be completed each fishing day.

9. At-Sea observers

The industry-funded At-Sea observer program for American plaice/witch flounder fisheries applies at a minimum coverage of 10% of the fishing trips.

10. Catch monitoring and test fishing

Small fish and by-catch fleet 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 the Department feels that it can be effectively monitored and controlled. If any particular fishery is closed twice during the season because of by-catch or small fish, the fishery may remain closed for the remainder of the season.

11. Other management measures

In areas **4RST**, you are authorized to fish for winter flounder in waters having a maximum of 15 fathoms deep.

The Department monitors 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 could be further enhanced to include the collection of additional data to monitor the discarding of groundfish. If a fleet sector or an individual is suspected of dumping and discarding groundfish at sea, in addition to other regulatory options, including fisheries closures and legal proceedings, the industry funded at-sea observer coverage may be increased.

12. Quota Reconciliation

Quota reconciliation provides that any overharvest of a quota in one year, on an

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Individual Quota regime or in a competitive fishery, will be accounted for in advance of the following fishing season. For example, quota overruns by a licence holder or 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 makes any necessary changes to quotas for the current year based on quota overruns, if applicable.

13. 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 wolfish (threatened), northern wolfish (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 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.