

Stewardship Focus

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Fish harvesters and science work together to search for green crab in Bay St. George. From left, FFAW/CAW members Joan Doucette and Eugene Swyers of St. George's, DFA fishery inspector Lisa Butt and DFO Green Crab Research Scientist Dr. Cynthia McKenzie.

WESTERN CONCERNS

Lobster harvesters in Bay St. George first reported European Green Crab sightings in lobster and eel traps in 2008.

Dr. Cynthia McKenzie, Research Scientist with the Science Branch of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, along with graduate students and technicians from Memorial University attended an information sharing session with lobster harvesters in the Bay St. George area on July 6.

During the following two days a rapid survey involving volunteer harvesters resulted in a capture of 527 green crabs with the highest concentration in Port Harmon.

Harvesters are concerned about the effects green crab will have on the local lobster fishery, the marine habitat and the ecosystem in general.

Efforts are ongoing to secure a program to address this growing problem.



Controlling European Green Crab

Concerns about the European Green Crab are growing. The aquatic invasive species was first found in Placentia Bay in 2005. Last year they were found in Bay St. George.

A pilot project involving a directed fishery, research and science, and an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) education program was launched in Placentia Bay. Lobster harvesters participated in the fishery using modified snow crab pots and Fukui traps. The results of their efforts were significant.

In 2008, 1,780 traps were hauled and 25,463 pounds of green crab were landed. Over 300,000 individuals were removed from North Harbour. In 2009, 690 traps were hauled resulting in 6,588 pounds or 85,644 individuals landed.

These landings prove the need for continued fishing efforts. Without it a growing green crab population can eliminate eel grass beds, destroy mussel and clam beds, negatively affect juvenile crab and lobster, and can lead to severe environmental and economic consequences.

Time to talk

Lobster harvesters, fishery officers clarify v-notching rules

Fish harvesters, in particular on the south coast and Northern Peninsula, expressed frustration last winter with the existing v-notching program for lobster due to lack of clarity in what constitutes a v-notched lobster.

The FFAW/CAW initiated meetings with DFO to present harvester's concerns. In response DFO adopted a common sense approach to enforcing the v-notching rule.



Fish harvester Andy Francis of Port aux Basques shows which fan to check for a v-notch, the second from the right.

Meetings included representatives from the FFAW/CAW, Conservation and Protection and Resource Management Division of the Fisheries Management Branch of DFO, and DFA.

In addition to the discussion regarding the issues around v-notching, both harvesters and DFO presented ideas to help grow and conserve the lobster resource in various areas of the province. For example, promoting the use of a proper v-notching tool and promoting lobster conservation areas.

Aquaculture meetings

Information-sharing sessions are planned for the traditional fisheries to learn and understand more about the aquaculture operations and to share concerns.

Meeting dates, times and locations:

Triton: Dec. 3, 3 p.m. Municipal building
English Harbour West: Dec. 15, 6 p.m., Lions Club
Harbour Breton: Dec. 16, 1 p.m. Lions Club
Hermitage: Dec. 16, 6 p.m., Lions Club

Seal of approval?

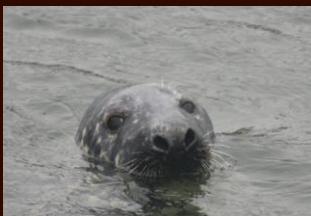
A growing grey seal population around the South and West Coasts and the Northern Peninsula is creating big problems for fish harvesters.

Lobster harvesters say seals are destroying their traps and tearing up bait nets to access easy food supply.

A species of cod worm, *Pseudoterranova decipiens*, originates from grey seals and in recent years fish processors say they are seeing more of these parasites imbedded into the flesh of otherwise valuable cod fillets. This cod quality issue appears to be growing in tandem with the grey seal population.

The FFAW/CAW has formed partnerships to develop a project that, if approved, will see targeted sampling of grey seals and to quantify information pertaining to distribution, diet and parasites.

It is hoped the project will get its seal of approval before the new year.



Short term pain



12G Crab fishers granted closure

Stewardship is alive and well in Snow Crab Fishing Area 12G.

Low landings in the area that spans from Cape St. Gregory to Broom Point on the Northern Peninsula prompted harvesters to address the problem.

A committee decided a short term closure was an appropriate action to help the stock rebound. A vote among members resulted in greater than two thirds in favour of a closure.

A formal proposal was submitted to DFO in March asking for a two-year closure. It was accepted.

Early indications from the snow crab survey this past season show the harvester-driven closure has had a positive effect on the stock so far.



NEW LOGO

The new Fisheries Stewardship Logo was created by Malorie Duffy of Millcrest Academy in Grand Falls-Windsor through a province-wide school contest attracting 784 entries.

FISHERIES STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM GOAL

The ultimate goal of the Fisheries Stewardship Program is to work with fish harvesters to share and expand their knowledge and develop the tools necessary to adopt sustainable fishing practices as part of shared stewardship, and to implement a broader fisheries conservation ethic.

IDEAS WELCOME

If you have an idea about how we can become better stewards of our fisheries resources please share it with us, we are eager to work with you.

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