



FFAW | UNIFOR

Fish, Food & Allied Workers

WINTER 2020

the union forum

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a floral patterned top and a blue lanyard with the FFAW | UNIFOR logo, is speaking into a microphone. She is looking slightly to her right. In the background, there are other people, some wearing blue lanyards, and a blue banner with the FFAW | UNIFOR logo and text.

Women's Regional Meetings Bring Together Union Sisters

Developing a Better Approach for Snow Crab

Long Harbour Workers Win 5 Year Battle for Collective Agreement



Wishing you
and your family a
Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year



FFAW | UNIFOR
Fish, Food & Allied Workers

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The **FFAW-Unifor** is Newfoundland and Labrador's largest private sector union, representing 15,000 working women and men throughout the province, most of whom are employed in the fishing industry. The Union also represents a diversity of workers in the brewing, hotel, hospitality, retail, metal fabrication, and oil industries, and is proud to be affiliated with the Unifor Canada.

The Union Forum covers issues that matter to Union members - battles, victories and

the pursuit of economic and social justice. As a social Union, it is understood that lives extend beyond the bargaining table and the workplace. The magazine will reflect on the struggle to make our communities, our province and our country better for all citizens by participating in and influencing the general direction of society.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Keith Sullivan, President



On November 9th, a group of strong, focused and proud women got the news they had been waiting for since 2015 when their group of janitorial workers were first certified as a bargaining agent: they finally had a collective agreement.

I can only imagine the sense of joy, vindication, and resolve that this news must have elicited. No more day-to-day uncertainty and below market wages. Now they would receive fair pay for honest, hard work. And to top it off, the 21 workers in the unit would get to share a \$225,000.00 signing bonus.

Five years is a long time, particularly in collective bargaining. And during that time, your Union never once considered abandoning these workers. Instead, we put a tremendous amount of resources into this battle, combating this most arrogant and disrespectful employer tactics at every point. The rights of the workers would be respected and honoured.

We could do no less. Workers' rights are set back if an employer can frustrate the collective bargaining system; or if they are allowed to maintain unsafe work environments; or if they are not held to task for not paying harvesters for everything they've landed. This is our obligation to our members, and we ensure we have the resources and capacity to do so.

In October, the total landed value of the inshore fishery eclipsed \$500,000,000 for 2019. This year will likely be the most valuable season ever for inshore harvesters in our province. This is a result of constant pressure to ensure fair access to resources, focus on premium

quality and negotiate strong collective agreements. This speaks to our collective work and achievement at the wharf, in the fleet committees, and in the negotiating committees.

It is also telling how broadly this collective wealth is shared. In 2015, \$411 million of the total landed value came from just crab and shrimp. This year, to reach that same \$411 million point one needs to add together the total value of crab, shrimp and lobster, which together are fished by nearly the entire inshore membership of the Union. This is progress. This year, the fishery generated real wealth across the vast majority of our coastline. This, too, is progress.

On top of what is shaping up to be the most valuable season ever for inshore harvesters, we have seen a change in the federal Fisheries Act that gives us the opportunity to secure an owner operator policy that ensures the value of the fish off our coasts stays with inshore fish harvesters and in our communities. The challenge for 2020 is making sure the regulations have teeth and politicians or bureaucrats in Ottawa don't attempt to derail our progress, which is vital to the future of coastal Newfoundland and Labrador.

Another key to our success in years to come will be harvester input in fisheries science and management. Those who are trying to divide workers say that fisheries science and management should be done only by DFO.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

People I talk to want more of their input considered in science and management and will not give up their right to shape policy. It is your Union's position that we should be doing what we can to shape the results of science to encompass harvesters' perspectives. That is what we are doing on the crab Precautionary Approach, which is a united effort of thousands of crab harvesters to shape the rules upon which their fishery will be based. If your Union was not front and center with a dedicated team, including fisheries scientist, and countless hours of work from committee members, we could end up with an unmanageable approach accounting for significant losses in this extremely valuable fishery.

This year, Workplace NL finally made the step to develop a safety council for manufacturing workers and it will have a special focus on fish processing. This is the result of years of research, meetings, and lobbying by FFAW members. The challenge for 2020 will be to make sure this council is established and gets to work developing strategies to make our workplaces safer.

In 2019, the passion and dedication of our members was evident in every aspect of the work our union has done, whether it was a small group of determined workers in Long Harbour fighting for their first contract or hundreds of people who filled halls and packed downtown St.

John's this spring to fight for fair management of our fisheries.

In 2020, we will continue to build, unite, progress and deliver results for our members despite the attempts of others to divide, mislead and slow progress. This November marked five years since I was given the privilege of leading your Union. It remains the greatest honour and responsibility of my life. In the last five years I've met thousands of members in hundreds of communities and at hundreds of different venues. It may be cliché, but we often talk about working together to make things better. I think we have. In the mess of our province's economy, the fishery sustains thousands with better wages and earnings rarely replicated in the history of our province.

But our work is not done. In 2020 and for years to come, your Union will be there, working for you and with you, to improve the lives of FFAW members living in every corner of the province.

Have a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday!

\$100 MERCER'S MARINE GIFT CARD WINNER

Thank you to all inshore members who returned your contact information form to the FFAW-Unifor office. Everyone that returned the form by September 30 was entered into a draw for a \$100 Mercer's Marine gift card. The winner of the gift card is Debbie March of Brownsdale.

A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN HER UNION

Tina Pretty, FFAW-Unifor Women's Coordinator

Sometimes getting involved in your union may appear to be a challenge for women but with a resolution at the 2018 Convention, FFAW-Unifor made it a priority to engage more women members than ever before.

We understand that it's not always easy for women to travel to meetings and there are many barriers that keep them from participating such as lack of transportation, childcare or elder care, lack of confidence, feeling they have little to offer or that their voices are not welcome. By holding regional meetings, we want women to know their we are holding space for them and we encourage them to come out and meet their sisters.



On October 3rd, forty-five women from both the Inshore and Industrial/Retail/Offshore Sectors attended the first-ever FFAW regional women's meeting at the Quality Inn in Clarendville. After the day-long meeting, they left as union sisters.

Inshore harvester Brenda Viscount was one of these women. Brenda hails from Dunville, Placentia Bay - a small community on the south west coast of the Avalon Peninsula. She is a Level II harvester who fishes with her husband Ken in 3Ps Area 10 in their 32' vessel where they fish for lobster, blackback, crab, cod and herring for lobster bait. In addition to her fishing, Brenda also

did work for the union on the Green Crab Mitigation Project in 2019. On attending her first regional women's meeting, she says the experience was "good and relaxing and I was comfortable to speak on a topic, if I wanted."

Throughout the day were a number of panels followed by participant activities. The first one, Using Our Voices for Change, women heard from seasoned union women as they gave their personal accounts of lobbying and running for office in the union, as well as, conducting campaigns in both municipal and provincial elections. Brenda said it was good to see so many women - young and old - take part and discuss their issues and concerns. When asked if she would consider running for office in some capacity in the future, she said she didn't rule it out.



At the second panel of the day, Women Activists in the Union, Brenda listened to how women have stepped up and spoken out in a male-dominated industry. In talking about her own personal experience, she said, "being heard or taken seriously if you have an opinion on different aspects of the fishery can be a challenge. Also, some views may be that women are not quite physically capable to perform some of the tasks within the field." A big concern for Brenda is safety. She has a diploma in Occupational Health & Safety and considers safety awareness to be important, especially in an industry that is very dangerous.

In discussing what she enjoys most about her profession she said she liked being outdoors, the field work and tracking data from season to season and says, “the Skipper is not too bad either.”

As a first-timer to a FFAW event, Brenda was asked what advice she would give other women to encourage them to attend similar meetings. Fully endorsing the experience, she said, “being involved and attending these events makes you more informed on what is happening in the industry.”

For a lot of women, sometimes you just need to be

asked to attend a meeting or sit on a committee to get involved. It’s important women feel they have a place at the table and what we need to remember is our union is all of us. There’s a slogan in the labour movement that a woman’s place is in her union and having annual Regional Women’s meetings goes a long way to making FFAW women feel they belong.



Keith Sullivan presented FFAW’s annual donation to Kids Eat Smart Foundation Newfoundland and Labrador at the organization’s annual Radiothon on November 6.

Since the Union’s donations began, the members of FFAW have provided 27,500 breakfasts for children and youth all around our province. The organization does invaluable work to ensure children do not go hungry at school.

HARVESTERS ASK GOVERNMENT TO REFUSE BIDS ON IMPORTANT FISHING AREA

At the November 6 deadline for bids on several offshore land parcels, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) announced that two bids were submitted for oil and gas exploration parcels on important fishing grounds. Fish harvesters asked that the provincial government to refuse these bids to protect the inshore fishery and the value it brings to the province. However, Minister of Natural Resources, Siobhan Coady, rejected the idea that two industries cannot coexist together on these parcels.

ExxonMobil and Husky/Suncor submitted bids on two



of the parcels in the Jeanne d'Arc region, better known as the Grand Banks. If these bids are accepted, these companies could be given exclusive rights to undertake seismic and other exploration activities directly on critical crab habitat and harvesters' most productive fishing grounds. Earlier this fall, fish harvesters submitted a symbolic bid to the C-NLOPB in an effort to send a message to the province that these grounds must be protected.

"Fish harvesters are baffled by the provincial government's refusal to prioritize a renewable, sustainable fishery over oil and development. The provincial and federal government still have the opportunity to do the right thing to protect these prime crab fishing grounds by not accepting the bids in these critical areas," said FFAW-Unifor President Keith Sullivan.

"These crab fishing grounds are vital to the future of our enterprises and our coastal communities. Yet,

government has consistently ignored our concerns in favour of further oil and gas development," said FFAW-Unifor Executive Board member and Port de Grave harvester Nelson Bussey.

"Fish harvesters are not willing to give up more of our traditional, valuable fishing grounds to oil and gas development. We will do whatever it takes to protect these crab grounds and we call on the provincial government and our Members of Parliament to show their support for our industry by rejecting these bids," said FFAW-Unifor Inshore Council member and St. John's



harvester Glen Winslow.

The fishery contributes \$1.5 billion to the provincial economy annually and keeps hundreds of rural communities thriving, while oil and gas drilling, seismic activity and exclusionary zones push fish harvesters further away from their traditional fishing areas. The two parcels that have received bids could take millions of dollars in revenue away from the crab fishery each year and away from the rural communities who need it most.

"By continuing to ignore calls from fish harvesters to protect the fishery from the impacts of oil and gas development off our coast, the provincial government is sending a message that they don't care about an industry that drives the economy of our coastal communities. We urge the Premier and Minister Coady to do the right thing; reject these bids and stand up for fish harvesters and rural Newfoundland and Labrador," concluded Sullivan.

FEDERAL ELECTION 2019: LIBERAL MINORITY AND A NEW FISHERIES MINISTER

Jessica McCormick, Director of Public Affairs

Canadians elected a minority federal government on October 21, but will anything really change? For FFAW-Unifor, a minority government provides an opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador's fishing industry to make progress on key issues impacting inshore fish harvesters and plant workers in the province.

Two key outcomes of the election that may have a significant impact on the federal landscape over the next four years are the fractures between the western provinces and the rest of the country with a shut-out for the Liberals in Alberta and Saskatchewan and the signal that Canadians want to see more co-operation in Parliament sent via the election of a minority government.

Prior to election day, FFAW circulated a questionnaire



all major federal parties seeking their positions on issues important to our members. The Liberals, NDP, Conservatives and Green Party all submitted responses, which can be found at www.ffaw.ca.

Both the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party made strong commitments to improve enforcement of owner-operator and fleet separation policies, to continue supporting the allocation of the first 115,000 mt of northern cod to inshore harvesters, to

take immediate action to address rising seal populations, to reform Employment Insurance in order to make it fair for seasonal workers and to ensure fish harvesters have a voice and a seat at fisheries science and management decision-making tables.

In the Liberal Party's first term in government, some progress was made on protecting the independence of inshore, owner-operator fish harvesters through the passage of amendments to the Fisheries Act that enshrined owner-operator and fleet separation policies in law. However, there is much work left to be done when it comes to fair quota allocations for Newfoundland and Labrador harvesters, meaningful consultation with the industry and consideration for social, economic and cultural factors in fisheries management.

On November 20, Prime Minister Trudeau announced his cabinet appointments, including a new Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.



Nova Scotia Member of Parliament Bernadette Jordan was appointed to the portfolio, replacing previous Minister Jonathan Wilkinson.

Jordan previously served as the Minister for Rural Economic Development and as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. FFAW will be seeking a meeting with the new minister as soon as possible to discuss the many urgent issues facing the inshore fishery and coastal communities.

ST. JOHN'S HOSTS INTERNATIONAL COLDWATER PRAWN FORUM

Johan Joensen, FFAW-Unifor Industry Liaison

The semi-annual International Coldwater Prawn Forum took place on November 14th in St. John's. This year's forum brought together over 200 industry leaders from all sectors of the Coldwater Prawn (Shrimp) industry from around the world.

For the opening of the event, greetings were brought on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador by Elvis Loveless, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

Throughout the day there were different sessions, with focuses on Climate, Environmental and Biomass Changes; What Impacts the Coldwater Prawn; the

different time periods for species such as cod and shrimp – something the FFAW has been working diligently to change. In Newfoundland and Labrador the Department of Fisheries and Oceans intends to rebuild northern cod and northern shrimp towards a greater biomass at the same time, although these two species have historically never been abundant at the same time.

Several FFAW-Unifor members who are active in the shrimp fishery participated in the Forum. All participants indicated that it was eye opening to see the amount of information available on the many aspect of the industry. They also appreciated the opportunity to hear about other topics pertaining to the fishing industry overall.

To see presentations provided at the Forum, visit the



Coldwater Prawn Market; and the Future for the Coldwater Prawn Category. The presentations ranged in discussion, from climate change; to digitizing the chain of custody.

Keith Sullivan, FFAW-Unifor President, gave a presentation on the inshore shrimp fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador in the context of a changing marine ecosystem. Sullivan also discussed the complexities of managing species with separate rebuilding plans. Specifically, Sullivan explained the juxtaposition of having limit reference points set at

following link:

<https://icwpf.com/2019-icwpf-st-johns-nl-canada/presentations-from-icwpf19/>

The next Forum will take place in Tromsø, Norway in 2021.

DO YOU HOLD A FISHING MASTER CERTIFICATE?

Important notice regarding certificate expiry and renewal

If you hold a Fishing Master certificate, or any other Transport Canada (TC) certificate of competency it is important that you understand the expiry and renewal process in order to keep your certificate valid.

With changes to the Marine Personnel Regulations (MPR) of the Canada Shipping Act, phased-in between 2008 and 2016, ALL Canadian fishing vessels now require a certified master. In many cases fishing vessels also require a certified mate.

As a result of these changes, more fishing vessel masters and mates hold Fishing Master certificates (or other TC issued certificates). Changes to the MPR also include stricter requirements for the renewal of all TC issued certificates of competency.

It is **VERY** important to note that Fishing Master certificates and other TC issued certificates of competency, in most cases, have an expiry date. It is highly recommended that certificates be renewed before the expiry date, in order to avoid unnecessary delays or issues in the renewal process.

Below are a number of important considerations and recommendations regarding the expiry and renewal of your certificate:

- Check your certificate to see if it has an expiry date, and make a note of that important date.
- Contact TC regarding the renewal of your certificate before the date of expiry.
- Normally, you require 12 months of sea service in the past five years (or 3 months sea service in the past 12 months) in order to renew your certificate.
- If you do not have the required sea service, there may be other options for renewing your certificate and keeping it valid.
- It is a violation of the Canada Shipping Act to operate (as master or mate) using an expired certificate and doing so could lead to a monetary penalty or other sanctions from TC.
- Sea service acquired after the certificate is expired normally cannot be used as valid sea service for certificate renewal.
- If you do not renew your certificate in a timely manner, it is possible that you will have to be re-examined at a TC office in order to renew your certificate.

If you have an expired Fishing Master certificate (or other TC issued certificate of competency), or if you have questions about the expiry/renewal of your valid certificate, you should contact the TC office nearest you.



LONG HARBOUR WORKERS AWARDED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT AND SIGNING BONUS AFTER 5 YEAR BATTLE

The janitorial workers at Provincial Ready Mix are celebrating a well-deserved victory at the Labour Relations Board following a five-year battle with their employer to negotiate their first collective agreement. Provincial Ready Mix is the contractor hired by Vale in Long Harbour for all janitorial work at the nickel plant. The process for a collective agreement began



in 2014 with FFAW-Unifor receiving certification in 2015. There was significant pushback and delays from the employer, leading to the Union’s application for conciliation and subsequent requests to the Department of Labour to impose a first contract. “It has been a long, frustrating process for these workers that has finally paid off,” said FFAW-Unifor



Local Chair Katie Manning and coworker Angie Cooke celebrate the good news.

Service Representative Allan Moulton. “We encountered numerous delays and when we did finally reach the bargaining table, very little progress was made which led to our application to have the Labour Relations Board impose an agreement on the company. The workers at Provincial Ready Mix must be commended for their hard work and for their persistence over the five-year process,” Moulton added.

The Labour Relations Board selected FFAW-Unifor's offer for wages and classifications using a final offer selection process. In addition to a significant increase in wages, the 21 employees will be sharing a \$225,000 signing bonus.

Katie Manning, local Committee Chair at Provincial Ready Mix, said of the outcome, "A few of the girls and I were driving home from our shift when Allan called me. We pulled over and when he told us the news, we basically broke down in tears. We were so relieved and overwhelmed. We are more than happy with the work the Union has done for us and the fact that they stuck with us through everything."

"In Newfoundland and Labrador, the law states you have a legal right to join a union. But that is where it stops. There is no legal right to a first collective agreement. Companies can stall, refuse to bargain and change meeting dates repeatedly," said Greg Pretty, FFAW-Unifor Industrial-Retail-Offshore Director.

"The process should react more rapidly if an employer tries to break the union or weaken the resolve of the workers to have a collective agreement. Workers have

a right to a union, and they should have a right to a timely collective agreement should the employer disrespect their wishes to unionize. A five-year battle is unacceptable, but we are certainly glad these workers will finally be receiving the recognition they deserve," said Pretty.

"This Board decision sends a strong message to imprudent, callous employer groups who are contemptuous of workers' right to organize and to achieve a timely first collective agreement," Pretty added.



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EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE OF LOBSTER IN PLACENTIA BAY

Dwan Street, Projects Coordinator

As a component of DFO's Coastal Environmental Baseline Program, FFAW members have been helping to expand the knowledge base on lobster in Placentia Bay. There have been significant concerns around the decline that has happened over the past few decades compared to increases in other regions. From 1992-2007 lobster landings in Placentia Bay declined by approximately 90%.

Phase I

Last year, FFAW completed phase I of the project, which consisted of a series of thorough, in-depth interviews with harvesters who had experience fishing lobster in the bay. Questions examined changes in lobster distribution, size, and abundance, as well as changes in environmental conditions from fish harvesters in Placentia Bay.

Fifteen fish harvesters were interviewed in February and



March of 2019. Harvesters were selected based on their length of time in the fishery and location. Interviewed harvesters had a long history of fishing experience fishing lobster in Placentia Bay, with an average of 34 years lobster fishing experience (range 17 – 53 years). Harvesters also indicated changes in areas they have fished over the years, showing these areas on maps.

Harvesters agreed, for the most part, that catch rates had declined significantly, beginning between the early 1990s and early 2000s (range 1991-2006). Outer Placentia Bay was the exception, where declines in catch rates had not been so drastic but fluctuated over the years.

The invasion of green crab in the area has brought significant concerns as to the impact this species is having on lobster. All harvesters were well aware of how aggressive green crab can be on the lobster population and eel grass beds, which are important nursery areas for juvenile lobsters and other fish.

Since the early 2000s, harvesters have also noticed a decline in the number of undersized lobsters. Interestingly, nearly all harvesters said they have observed an increase in the number of egg-bearing females.

These latter observations helped shape the work for phase II, which aims to examine juvenile lobsters that are too small to catch with commercial lobster pots.

Phase II

To capture and record data on juvenile lobsters, work has been ongoing in the United States and up the eastern Canadian seaboard by Rick Wahle. This project is called the American Lobster Settlement Index. This year, Marine Institute agreed to begin doing similar sampling on the west coast and Fortune Bay that would add to the index. This provided a great opportunity for FFAW members to contribute the same type of data from Placentia Bay.

Juvenile lobsters are caught in settlement trays filled with cobble. The trays were deployed in August and retrieved in November. Locations were chosen based on areas most commonly fished, according to the harvesters in phase I. Trays were deployed in Lawn, Woody Island, Placentia and Merasheen.

Results from these trays will be available in the next edition of the Forum. We thank harvesters Kevin Parsons, Garry Hussey and Ken Viscount for their hard work contributing to this very important project, as well as FFAW Science technician Scott Smith.

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (the NL-FHSA) is seeking interest from fish harvesters working in NAFO zone 2J3KL who would like to obtain an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED's) for their fishing vessel.

Hibernia Management and Development Company Ltd. (HMDC) is making a funding contribution towards the implementation of a program focussed on equipping fishing vessels with AEDs for improved preparedness for marine cardiac emergencies. This initiative began in 2018 with the support of One Ocean and the NL-FHSA and the efforts of these organizations are greatly appreciated. HMDC has asked the NL-FHSA in consultation with the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/Unifor) and the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (the PFHCB) to reach out to fish harvesters in the under 40' and over 40' fleet, licensed to fish in 2J3KL to determine their interest in obtaining one of 95 AEDs.

Fish harvesters who are selected to receive an AED will be responsible to pay for their own travel costs associated with the training and for the maintenance costs associated with their AED such as inspection and battery replacement. The locations where AED training will be delivered has not yet been determined.

Who Can Apply?

- Fish harvesters holding a current professional fish harvester certificate in the under 40' and over 40' fleet, with an active ground fish license for 2J3KL, and
- Fish Harvesters who agree to pay for and absorb cost of travel to AED training delivered by the approved training provider under this initiative OR can provide a valid Marine First Aid Certificate (AED demonstration included).
- Fish Harvesters who agree to pay for the maintenance, inspection and battery replacement of the AEDs.

How do I Apply?

Applicants should write a letter stating their interest in receiving an AED and indicating that they meet the criteria as documented above. Please submit your application to info@nlfhsa.com. The deadline to apply is January 31, 2020.

How will Applicants be Selected?

Applicants who meet the criteria will be entered into a draw for selection purposes. Only successful applicants will be notified by the NL-FHSA in February 2020 if they have been selected to receive an AED.



NL-FHSA
FISH HARVESTING
SAFETY ASSOCIATION

SCIENCE IMPROVES UNDERSTANDING OF ATLANTIC HALIBUT IN GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE

Atlantic halibut abundance has been increasing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Fish harvesters have been saying that for years. But what do we really know about the Gulf of St. Lawrence Atlantic halibut? Until recently, understanding of population characteristics such as annual migrations and spawning behaviors was primarily based on limited local sampling data and estimates based on studies in other regions or related species; not much to go on.

However, an electronic tagging study implemented in 2013 is yielding interesting results that are already redefining the understanding of Gulf halibut distribution and behavior. Approximate migration tracks produced from the depth profiles recorded over the course of the electronic tag deployment are showing, as in this example (Figure 1), that halibut can migrate well beyond where they were tagged for large portions of the year. Additionally, several halibut have shown unique profiles of depth use suggestive of spawning behavior, extreme rises off the seafloor (Figure 2) uncharacteristic of depth uses seen at other times in the year.

The success of this project has been extremely dependent on collaboration with fish harvesters from the beginning, and their help is still valuable. New questions about halibut spawning behavior, seasonal migration, and habitat use have been raised by the findings from the electronic tags.

Masters student Rachel Marshall of the Memorial

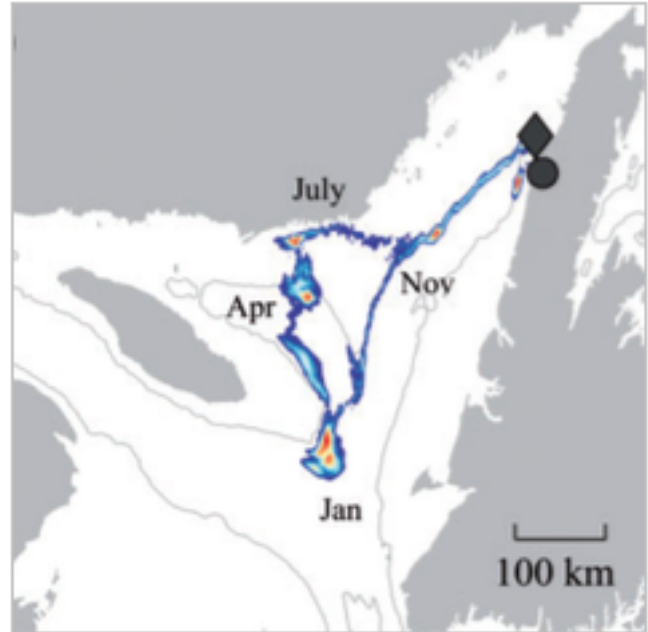


Figure 1: The black circle represents the initial tagging location in October 2013 and the black diamond shows the tag recovery location in Oct. 20

University of Newfoundland Marine Institute is looking to address those questions through interviews with fish harvesters who have long-term experience fishing for Atlantic halibut in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The information collected during these interviews will be presented to stock assessment scientists and managers at the next Gulf halibut stock assessment.

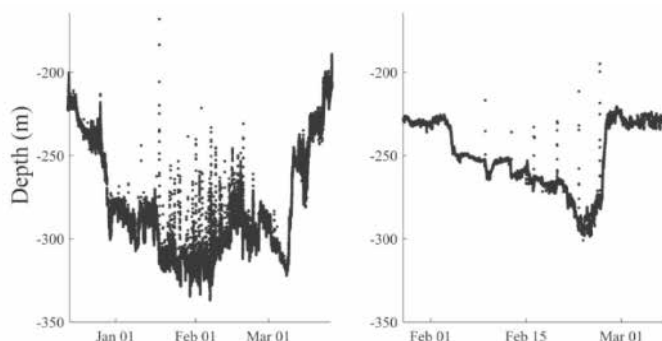


Figure 2: Examples of presumed spawning rises for two halibut.

Fish harvesters who are actively fishing for groundfish in NAFO divisions 3Pn and 4R, and who have been doing so for at least five years, who are interested in participating in this study, please contact Rachel Marshall (email: Rachel.Marshall@mi.mun.ca). In-person interviews are expected to take place on the West Coast of Newfoundland between February 15th and 23rd, 2020.

2019 COD FISHERY IN 2J3KL

This season's northern cod fishery was a mixed bag compared to previous years. Landings increased and harvesters continue to consistently land better quality cod. While the fishery opened on August 11th in 3KL, all Newfoundland buyers refused to buy any cod during the first week, which delayed the start of the fishery to August 18th.



Along the Northeast coast, cod is most abundant in early summer. The weather is usually good and cod are closer to shore making them accessible to many. Missing a week during that time of year meant a missed opportunity for many harvesters as most active harvesters would have caught their weekly CAP at that time. Despite low weekly Caps, overall landings are usually highest at this time of year.

In addition to the week delay, many harvesters directed their attention to squid due to the abundance and price. This meant less effort on cod, resulting in lower landed weekly volumes. This was a departure from 2018 when cod was landed at a faster pace.

The focus of the fishery is still to build processing

capacity and supply top quality cod to markets for a longer period of the year to satisfy our most valued customers. The biggest impediment to developing a fishery that works for harvesters is the low cod quota, fishing less than 3% of the of the fishable biomass which is close to the levels of the mid-1970s and in the range of 150,000 MT was harvested annually.

Depending on who you talk to and where they were from, there were mixed messages this year with respect to abundance. In some areas cod was plentiful and in other areas not so much. Harvesters did however report seeing lots of small cod, certainly a good sign for the future. Some harvesters feel that they were too late getting at the cod and missed a very good time to fish. For the most part however those that put the effort in ended up catching their weekly CAP's most weeks, up until the weather turned. Many harvesters landed substantial amounts of cod that accounted for a significant amount of their annual income.

From August 4th onwards, the price for grade A cod was 90 cents/lb, 8% higher than in 2018. Harvesters in the province deserve credit because quality has consistently improved and most harvesters agree that overall they did well with most averaging 90% grade A. This is a far cry from the situation a few years ago when the cod grading program was first implemented, indicating harvesters and buyers are doing a far better job handling fish both on the boat and in the plants.

While there is still work to do and improvements to be made it seems we are heading in the right direction. It is obvious however that harvesters need more opportunities to fish and these low levels are holding back development of what is great opportunity for fish harvesters and their communities. This will be one of the main topics on the agenda for our round of meetings this winter and we look forward to hearing what our members have to say.



SNOW CRAB MANAGEMENT UPDATE: BUILDING AN ALTERNATE PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

Erin Carruthers, FFAW-Unifor Fisheries Scientist

As crab harvesters in this province know, earlier this year the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) put forward a Precautionary Approach (PA) or management framework for the Newfoundland and Labrador Snow Crab fishery. There was, to put it



mildly, considerable criticism of the approach. Instead of simply criticizing DFO's proposed management approach, FFAW committed to developing an alternate management framework for the snow crab fishery that incorporates fish harvester knowledge and expertise.

In essence, PA frameworks are documents that define a healthy zone for the stock, define a critical zone where there is a risk of long-term harm occurring to the stock



and define a series of steps in the cautious zone that should help get the stock back to the healthy zone.

PA frameworks should define where you want to be (healthy) and what you are going to do to either get to or stay in the healthy zone (decision rules). PA frameworks should also define the no-go or critical zone.

The key challenge in developing a management framework is to ensure that the definition of zones and decision rules makes sense for that particular fishery. Do the zones reasonably reflect the history of the fishery? Does the management approach address conservation challenges specific to that particular



fishery and stock? And crucially, does the management approach help harvesters and fisheries managers meet overall goals for the fishery?

When we began developing an alternate management framework for the NL snow crab fishery, we began by listening to harvesters.

Harvesters from the south coast to southern Labrador had similar goals for the fishery. Harvesters from all fleets have keen interest in not only understanding what is in the fishery (commercial-sized male crab) but also have keen interest in predicting and protecting incoming recruitment. Overall, harvesters said they wanted to manage for stability.

Harvesters recognize that although the NL snow crab fishery “can never get full stability, the goal is to smooth it out. We want hills, we don’t want mountains.” Harvesters from all fleets agreed that they wanted to avoid handling soft-shell; they wanted to avoid soft-shell outbreaks.

Because the goal is to develop an alternate management framework that works for harvesters, coastal communities and is acceptable to DFO Science and Management, Earl Dawe, retired crab fisheries scientist, and myself as the FFAW fisheries scientist, analyzed data provided by DFO Science. Our results, as well as the fishery objectives defined by the fleets, were then reviewed by harvesters at a series of crab committee and fleet meetings throughout the province. These review meetings occurred in October and November of this year.

Any alternate PA will need to be evaluated against the requirements of a Precautionary Approach Framework as defined by DFO policy. Consequently, our next steps in this process includes producing a document for peer-review by scientists and managers. To do so we will be building upon not only the fishery objectives articulated by harvesters but also their reviews during this recent round of consultations.

Thanks to all for the many hours talking about crab, reviewing catch rate histories, discussing crab life stages and our overall shared goals for the fishery. Hopefully, the outcome will be a management framework that allows the snow crab fleets to achieve the goal of a healthy and sustainable snow crab fishery for years to come.

SNOW CRAB SURVEY FINISHES 16TH YEAR OF CONTRIBUTING IMPORTANT SCIENCE DATA

Miranda McGrath, FFAW-Unifor Science Coordinator

2019 Marked the 16th year of the Annual Collaborative Post Season Snow Crab Survey. It was a survey season filled with storms causing weather delays and, in turn, a list of participants wanting to all go at once with limited observer availability. Through it all, we successfully completed the survey and DFO was able to obtain very valuable information for use at the upcoming stock assessment.

The annual Snow Crab Survey was first implemented in 2003 because harvesters wanted a more fishery-focused survey as opposed to relying on the DFO trawl surveys. DFO, FFAW and fish harvesters came together to form an extensive survey, covering all Crab Management Areas (CMAs) surrounding Newfoundland and Labrador.

From its start-up in 2003 up until 2016, the survey remained constant – harvesters would set 6 pots inshore and 10 pots offshore at each station and those stations remained consistent year to year. The original core stations were set as a result of harvesters and scientists agreeing that historical fishing grounds and some variations outside of those areas would be a good representation of what's available in the respective area.

In 2017 it was suggested that a change of stations may be beneficial to the study of the entire stock – seeing what's happening beyond these “core” original stations. After the 2017 survey the fleet chairs met with DFO science and management to discuss where the survey would go moving forward. DFO promoted a fully randomized survey – changes to stations each year in a random matter, while harvesters argued that the core stations were important because of the 15-year time series already developed. The table was able to come to an agreement that throwing out the past information was not acceptable and that they'd test a random survey by developing a 50/50 survey over a 5-year period. 50% of the stations would be core stations and would be comparable to the time series, while 50% of the stations would be stratified random and would not be compared in assessment until there was 5 years of random data.

2019 marked the second year of having core and random stations in the survey, while random stations are sometimes in areas where harvesters would not expect crab, more have proved to be in areas that have high numbers of females and smaller male crab-often a happy surprise for harvesters.

Right now, the Post Season Snow Crab Survey boasts the widest spread coverage of the stock for Newfoundland and Labrador and is constantly improving. Interest in the survey is just as widespread with over 700 harvesters from all areas of the province applying to participate in 2019. With that in mind, FFAW has taken steps to increase the variation in participation within the survey by implementing a 6-pool application system (Effective June 2017) as opposed to the original 3 pool setup. 2019 had 88 harvesters successfully take part in the survey – all of which go into pool 6 in 2020.

FFAW has also taken steps to develop the distribution of small mesh pots at the request of harvesters. Harvesters have noted the importance of having small mesh pots in their surveys – and in turn FFAW has been pushing for more funding for the distribution of the pots. The small mesh pots are used in assessments to provide an index of future recruitment based on the catch rates of pre-recruits. In the past there has been limited coverage with small mesh pots but the goal is to have all stations with small mesh pots in the coming years and be able to strengthen the certainty in the results from the small mesh stations.

Interested in participating in the Post-Season Snow Crab Survey?

Keep an eye to our website and social media pages to ensure you get a copy of the Snow Crab Survey Application for 2020.

AMERICAN PLAICE CURRENTLY UNDERGOING STATUS REASSESSMENT BY COSEWIC

Justin Strong, FFAW-Unifor Science Coordinator

On October 22nd to 24th, FFAW Science met with representatives from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Provincial Government to discuss recent scientific findings on the status of American Plaice, or flounder, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is due to provide an updated status assessment of American Plaice in the Canadian North Atlantic in relation to Species at Risk measures. Following up on the first assessment by COSEWIC in 2009, this meeting is to ensure that any new information on Plaice was presented, reviewed, and incorporated into the re-assessment process.

At one point in time, American plaice were perhaps the most abundant flatfish in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean and supported a fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador waters that was, at that time, the largest flatfish fishery in the world. Catches were highest on the Grand

Bank, however fishing was considerably productive on Hamilton Bank, and the Northeastern Newfoundland Shelf, as well as St. Pierre Bank. Currently, directed fishing in 2J3K, 3LNO, and 3Ps stocks is prohibited through moratoria that began in 1993.

In 2009, American Plaice in 2J3KLNOPs and 3Pn were classified as Threatened by COSEWIC due to a 96% decline in abundance over 3 generations, or about 50 years. Plaice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, assessed with those on the Scotian Shelf, were also classified as Threatened at this time. These populations showed decreases of up to 86% over about two generations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In light of these assessments, American Plaice are not currently listed as a Species at Risk.

As the re-assessment process continues, the current status of American Plaice in Newfoundland and Labrador remains to be determined, as new science advice becomes incorporated into the evaluation process.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

To our friends with FFAW-Unifor – the NDP wishes you and your families joy this season and prosperity in 2020. We look forward to working together with you for justice, fairness, and equality.

— YOUR **NDP CAUCUS**



ALISON COFFIN, Leader and MHA (St. John's East-Quidi Vidi)
JORDAN BROWN, MHA (Labrador West)
JIM DINN, MHA (St. John's Centre)





FISH HARVESTING SAFETY ASSOCIATION 4TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

On October 18, 2019, the Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA) held its 4th Annual Safety Symposium and Trade Show entitled 'How the Land Lies' in Gander. The event was designed to provide a status report on the affairs of the Association and to reflect on the prevailing conditions in which it operates. The Symposium was attended by over 80 participants consisting of fish harvesters, both owners/operators and crew members, as well as stakeholders from industry.

The Symposium kicked off with a welcome message from NL-FHSA Board of Directors Chair, David Decker which highlighted the successes of the 2019 fishery. "There will always be people who need you: your wisdom, your experience, your knowledge, your lessons learned. As individuals we all make a difference. Together we can take safety to a whole new level because there is nothing more important than coming home from work healthy and safe!"

The first keynote address was given by Jack Greenham, NL-FHSA Executive Committee Member, fish harvester, and educator at the Marine Institute. Greenham gave an overview of a proposed course, Safety Management in the Commercial Fish Harvesting Sector currently under review as part of the Bachelor of Maritime Studies Degree - Safety management option.

Dennis Hogan, CEO of Workplace NL, delivered the second keynote address, speaking to emerging trends in occupational health and safety. He noted there

is evidence of skippers and crews working together to identify safety hazards and implement controls to prevent workplace injury and illness and the fish harvesting industry is to be commended for their efforts and the safety improvements introduced over the years. In the last ten years, the lost-time incidence rate in the fish harvesting industry declined by almost 21 % and the soft-tissue injury rate, for the same period, has dropped by 27 %.

However, Hogan further noted that fish harvesters have the highest rate of serious injuries of all industries in the province and almost one third of the workplace injuries in the industry are classified as serious. Injuries to the head in the fish harvesting industry are increasing, spiking in 2017 to the highest in 20 years. Hearing loss among fish harvesters is almost four times the provincial rate. In the past ten years, WorkplaceNL has recorded 19 deaths in the fish harvesting sector,





half of which were the result of drowning. Over 1/3 of all injuries in the fish harvesting industry are caused by falls on ships/boats (19%) and exposure to noise (15%). Due to the nature of the work, it was also noted that injured people are seldom eligible for return-to-work accommodations as a fish harvester. This has a significant impact on the fish harvester as well as the family.

Executive Director Brenda Greenslade facilitated the Annual General Meeting portion of the Symposium, presenting the 2018 Annual Report: All Hands on Deck. This report as well as priorities and financial reports can be found on the Association's website.

A panel discussion by Advisory Committee Members: Dr. Barb Neis, Honorary Research Professor SafetyNet; Captain Clem Murphy, Manager, Compliance and Enforcement, Transport Canada; Loyola Power, Director Occupational Health and Safety, Service NL; and Mark Gould, Regional Supervisor, Maritime Search and Rescue Sub Centre, highlighted ongoing collective efforts as industry experts in education, research, regulation and search and rescue.



Other highlights of the Symposium include a safety demonstration by K&D Pratt, a risk assessment presentation by NL-FHSA's Corey Cooper, and a



presentation on engaging young harvesters by the PFCHB's Juanita Cutler. Judging by the feedback received, the event was successful in serving as a catalyst to further advance health and safety in the fish harvesting industry.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

WorkplaceNL
 ServiceNL
 Fish, Food and Allied Workers - Unifor
 Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board
 K&D Pratt
 Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour
 Fisheries Resource Centre
 Nord Marine
 Spartan Marine
 Mercer's Marine
 March's Enterprises
 Eastern Medical Supplies

CAPELIN SAMPLING TELLS STORY OF OFF-BEACH SPAWNING PATTERNS

Natalya Dawe, FFAW-Unifor Science Assistant

This past summer, FFAW Science, in partnership with WWF-Canada, documented capelin spawning sites in Bonavista Bay. In interviews with capelin harvesters earlier this year, harvesters throughout the northeast coast highlighted the importance of off-beach spawning.



Cod, dead capelin (above), and capelin eggs (below) present at an off-beach capelin spawning site in Bonavista Bay, NL.

This was especially true in Bonavista Bay, where harvesters often indicated that more capelin spawning now occurs at off-beach locations than at beach locations in Bonavista Bay.

Many harvesters reported that they were now seeing



Capelin eggs and capelin in shallow water, adjacent to the beach where capelin spawn was also present. Bonavista Bay, NL.

more off-beach spawning than beach spawning. Understanding the contribution of off-beach spawning to the health of the stock – and incorporating that information into the assessment will likely give us a better understanding of capelin stocks. Documenting

where off-beach spawning occurs is a crucial first step. According to Dennis Chaulk, Inshore Council member for Newton to Elliston, “For the past couple decades or more, capelin have been mainly spawning in deeper water in Bonavista Bay, which seems to be similar all along the northeast coast.”

The first step to address this is to document both

beach and off-beach (deep-water) spawning sites. Documentation of off-beach spawning occurred in Bonavista Bay, in part due to the timing of capelin spawning and its overlap with the timing of our survey.

FFAW Technician Dennis Ivany went out with chartered harvesters in Bonavista Bay to known sites where capelin spawn off-beach, or on the seabed. Many of these sites were identified in interviews with capelin harvesters in early 2019.

At these locations, a camera system was dropped to look for signs that capelin used the area to spawn, such as dead capelin, live capelin, or eggs. If eggs were seen on the video, a sampling device – basically a small pipe dragged along the bottom – was used to collect eggs.

Thirty-three potential off-beach spawning sites were surveyed. Capelin eggs were successfully collected from 10 off-beach spawning sites and five beach sites.

By partnering with academic and DFO researchers, results from this project will help document the extent of off-beach spawning along the southern and northeast coast of Newfoundland.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF THE 2019 SQUID FISHERY

Monty Way, FFAW-Unifor Staff Representative

This year's squid fishery proved to be both profitable and frustrating for many. Talk to any fish harvesters along the east and northeast coast of Newfoundland and most would certainly agree that year-to-year, the squid fishery can be unpredictable. Squid all but disappeared for a number of years but they have shown very positive signs in recent years. This year there was a significant amount of squid on our shores this season, often in places where there has been little sign of squid for decades. Along with a significant increase in abundance came significant increases in prices, which led to challenges with buyers.

"The squid fishery was excellent this year; if only the plants would have bought when the squid was around people would have done even better," summed up Beachside harvester and Inshore Council member Nancy Bowers.

Just a few short years ago the price paid to harvesters for squid was \$0.15 per pound. In recent years, your union has worked to increase the price for squid and this year, the initial price for squid was set at \$1.00 per pound for the first 4500 MT (75 cents beyond) following August negotiations and a trip to the Price Setting Panel; the highest price ever paid in our history.

The fishery began in late July and while some bays seemed to be more productive than others, landings were good in most places all along the east and Northeast coast. Harvesters, however, soon began complaining to their Union that buyers were deducting between 10 to 30% from their catch for water loss, which was a direct violation of the 2019 squid schedule.

The Union filed a grievance to the Association of Seafood Producers (ASP) that what they were doing was illegal and had to stop, and in retaliation buyers stopped buying squid, effectively shutting down the fishery before it had fully ramped up.

Leadership from around the province met to discuss how to handle the situation, which then led to a request

from the negotiating committee to go back to the Price Setting Panel. A new price was set at 0.75 cents per pound in hopes that would get the fishery going again.

While abundance of squid was not expected, and despite the challenges, it provided our province with a new opportunity to access international squid markets. Harvesters fishing squid shifted their focus on delivering a quality product to provide the best possible access to the food market. Squid Quality and Handling protocols were established to assist harvesters in landing the best quality squid to the wharf to ensure the quality was sufficient for the food market.

By the time the dust settled it seemed as though the squid started to get scarce in some areas. Much of the squid were landed before the dispute broke but there were some harvesters that had good landings after. Undersize was less of an issue later in the season and improved handling and storage practices resulted in a much better product coming ashore.

"It's extremely frustrating to have access to an abundant, high-quality resource, whether it be cod or squid, and not have a buyer for it. Inadequate capacity to process has cost our communities millions of dollars this year alone," said Tony Doyle, Bay de Verde fish harvester and FFAW-Unifor Inshore Council Vice-President.

To say the 2019 squid fishery didn't come with issues would be an understatement. 2019 was the first year in at least a couple decades where we landed a significant volume of squid and I think it's fair to say that the abundance caught industry players a bit off guard.

For long-term sustainability in the fishing sector, it's clear we need less corporate concentration, more processing licenses in the hands of different companies and more competition in the industry. These are changes that will provide long-term results for the inshore fishery.



Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season.



NL-FHSA
FISH HARVESTING
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LUMP REBATE INCREASES PRICE BY 300%

Jason Spingle, FFAW-Unifor Staff Representative

Lumpfish, also known as lumpsuckers, are harvested for their roe – a delicacy in Europe that is less expensive than other caviars. The international competition for lumpfish harvesting is tough, the market in Europe is limited, and the timing of seasons makes it particularly difficult for Canada to compete since we are the last to fish.

While the lump fishery has seen lower landings in recent years, for many it is still an important fishery for the viability of their enterprises. This is especially the case for 4R harvesters on the tip of the northern peninsula from Savage Cove to Noddy Bay.

“Unlike areas on both sides of us, the vast majority of harvesters here don’t have access to lobster or snow crab, so lump has been one of, if not the, most important fishery,” says Carl Hedderson, Inshore Council member representing Barr’d Harbour to Noddy Bay and L’Anse au Clair to Red Bay.

Given the market and the timing of the NL fishery, the market for lump can be difficult to predict. The NL fishery is the last to occur among major lump producers and as a result, NL harvesters are at the mercy of the market already established by its European counterparts. Oversupply in Europe meant a lower price for harvesters in the province and as a result few were participating in the fishery.

However, the market for lump roe has increased significantly for harvesters in our province compared to previous years. The oversupply in the European market has declined, making lump roe harvested in Newfoundland and Labrador much more desirable.

While late ice conditions hampered the start of the fishery, harvesters still managed to have a successful season with the limited time they had. What made their season even more worthwhile was the rebate paid at the end of the season.

The base price for lump roe was set at \$1.50 per pound which is paid upon landing, however the rebate is calculated later in the season based on market prices. The initial price – this year \$1.50 – applied up to a market price of \$900 CAD on the European market. For everything above \$900, the price to harvesters increased by 1 cent for each \$4.00 increase in the market price. For example, a market price of \$1,100 would provide a rebate of \$2.00 per pound to harvesters.

This year’s rebate turned out to be \$3.01 per pound, meaning harvesters earned a total price of \$4.51 – a significant increase and great news for lump harvesters.

Roger Woodward from North Boat Harbour, one of the three fishing enterprises in the Woodward family, called his staff representative Jason Spingle about a week before the bonus was released. “To be honest, we needed a good bonus this year given the lower gulf cod quota and some bad luck with our herring traps,” said Roger.

“It’s always great to call members with positive news, especially in a situation like this,” said Spingle.

The market outlook for lump remains positive and processors are encouraging more harvesters to participate in the lump roe fishery next year.



THE IMPORTANCE OF HARVESTER INVOLVEMENT IN FISHERIES SCIENCE

Miranda McGrath, FFAW-Unifor Science Coordinator

Why should your union be involved in any aspect of fisheries science? – The better question might be – why not?

FFAW, with the leadership and determination of harvesters, helps to drive fisheries research within our province to new limits. FFAW-initiated surveys have become a major contributor to science at the assessment level – bringing information from harvesters, the main



stakeholders in the fishery, forward to the science table. To ensure science accurately reflects harvesters' observations and experience, the union has expanded on this and developed our own science team to

contribute as much as possible to the science-based Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) assessment process.

For many years, FFAW has contributed annual survey work on snow crab, northern cod, halibut and lobster but the list does not stop there. Your union has also branched out to help better understand red fish, capelin, lumpfish, mackerel, and even the invasive green crab.

FFAW works with a team of six individuals focused solely on science. Of course, there are a number of



others available to step in on various projects and together they take on the issues harvesters believe are not being covered by DFO and to further push DFO to dig deeper in their research.

What happens when fish harvesters take control of science initiatives?

We've been successful in implementing the 4R3Pn halibut longline survey, which has better results than DFO's trawl survey and in turn have been able to grow the quota available to harvesters on the west coast.

As a result of this work, FFAW is part of the Nova Scotia-based Halibut Longline Survey – which previously involved only Nova Scotia-based harvesters



completing halibut survey work directly off our shores. Your union fought hard for NL harvesters to be able to participate in this survey and now Newfoundland and Labrador harvesters actively participate each year alongside Nova Scotia.

We've been successful in conducting long-term surveys like the cod-sentinel program which has been ongoing for over 25 years.

We've also undertaken cod-tagging around the province for a number of years, to mark and recapture cod – giving us a better view of movements and growth patterns.

The Post-Season Snow Crab Survey began 16 years ago and continues to develop and gather more information by the expansion of small mesh pot use and incorporating random stations.

The lobster science program has been ongoing since 2004, providing DFO with information on undersized lobsters picked up by the modified lobster trap, along with v-notch information, egg-bearing females and daily catches.

Along with our long-term programs, we also work on starting up new science projects to reflect the changes that harvesters see in their day-to-day lives. One such program is our science on capelin – which started out by interviewing capelin harvesters and conducting an egg sampling survey.

Similar actions were taken with Mackerel by collecting young-of-the-year along the northeast coast, with the goal of obtaining more genetic information that will assist in determining where Mackerel are spawning, which could have a great effect on the current stock assessment.

Keep an eye on our website and social media for any upcoming science work that you could be involved in; callouts for harvester work are posted there, or if you'd like more information about any specific project feel free to contact us at 576-7276.



FFAW HOLDS REGIONAL WOMEN'S MEETINGS

In October FFAW-Unifor held regional women's meetings in Clarenville and Deer Lake. In the past women gathered every three years for a Women's Conference held in conjunction with the FFAW Triennial Convention. At the 2018 Convention, a resolution was passed that paved the way for women to meet annually through regional meetings. Yearly meetings will facilitate more women getting involved and finding out about the work

are or lack of access to transportation, for example.

Close to 100 women participated in the women's meetings, representing inshore harvesters, seafood processing workers, and dockside monitors. At each session, after the welcome and opening remarks, women participated in an icebreaker where they learned about noteworthy feminists from Newfoundland and Labrador and across the country.



of the union. According to Tina Pretty, Coordinator of the FFAW Women's Programs, "Hosting meetings in the region provides more opportunity for women to participate in union activities and learn more about all aspects of the work FFAW does in a women-only space that is safe and respectful." These regional meetings are a step in the right direction in terms of providing more accessible venues for women to participate in their union, as many women are unable to attend conferences or meetings due to responsibilities for elder and child



Election Readiness: Using Your Voice for Change

This was the first of two panels where participants heard from long time Executive Board, Inshore Council and Women's Advocate Mildred Skinner on her experience running for union positions and in a provincial election. Doretta Strickland, the first woman ever elected as Vice-President of the Industrial/Retail/Offshore division, Unit Chairperson and Women's Advocate at OCI Triton talked about her own experience running in

municipal politics. Both gave women practical advice on standing for office and organizing campaigns. In talking about the importance of solidarity among the diverse membership of the Union, Doretta said, “my husband is a fish harvester and we live in the same house, why can’t we be in the same union?” Women participants worked in groups to identify barriers and solutions to getting



involved in politics and raising our voices for change.

Domestic Violence at Work NL Survey

Meeting participants also heard from Jenne Nolan of the St. John’s Status of Women Council on the preliminary

results of a recent provincial survey on domestic violence at work and what we can do to reduce violence in our communities.

(continued on next page)

Getting Active in Your Union

In the second panel session, women listened to three activists on their involvement in the union. In Clarenville, Nancy Bowers, an Inshore Council member and Women's Advocate told women she didn't always have a good relationship with her union but by getting involved she learned about all aspects of the Union, the programs and science projects of the FFAW and how she, as a member, could play in role in shaping the work of the Union. Gaining this firsthand knowledge completely changed her perspective on the Union. Karen Caines, an Executive Board member, Unit Chairperson and Women's Advocate at OCI Fortune told women she followed in her mother's footsteps in fighting for workers' rights and gave numerous examples. Sheila Howell from



Beothic Fish Processors in Valleyfield, a member of the FFAW Executive Board and Women's Advocate, talked about her experience in her workplace and lobbying politicians and Workplace NL on the importance of a stand-alone seafood processing safety sector council. At the Deer Lake meeting, Nancy Bowers was joined by



Lucy Rumbolt, Vice-Chairperson at OCI Port aux Choix, who spoke about her role in collective bargaining and the gains achieved through solidarity amongst workers in her plant. At both sessions, the panelists gave women encouragement and suggestions on getting involved and demonstrated how women can make an impact in their local, in the community and in the union as whole.

Other topics discussed at the meetings were the successful rally back in March that was attended by both fish harvesters and plant workers that resulted in the reversal of proposed crab quota cuts. Participants also learned more about the Women's Advocate Program and opportunities for training.

What's Next?

At both meetings, participants discussed how to keep up the momentum and develop more opportunities for collaboration and networking for women in the Union.

One key takeaway from these sessions, heard from both presenters and participants, is the important role of women in the union and the power of the sisterhood. As one panelist said, "put yourself forward, you are enough, and you can be heard."

FFAW will be holding more meetings in 2020 in different areas of the province so even more women can participate and feel that a woman's place really is in her union.

IT'S TIME FOR FISH-NL TO END THEIR CAMPAIGN OF DIVISION IN THE INSHORE FISHERY

Jessica McCormick, Director of Public Affairs

If I could suggest a New Year's Resolution to Ryan Cleary, it would be to turn a new leaf in 2020 and end FISH-NL's failed campaign to represent inshore harvesters.

On November 8, FISH-NL announced that, due to a lack of support for their campaign to represent fish harvesters, the group would extend their card drive an additional 90 days past their original deadline. After nearly four years of a campaign based on lies and misrepresentation, this move is another desperate attempt to find sufficient support from fish harvesters, the majority of whom have repeatedly rejected FISH-



NL's efforts to represent them. It is time for FISH-NL to end their failing card drive and allow the industry to move forward.

No extension to the certification period has been formally requested by FISH-NL nor has the Labour Relations Board granted an extension. FISH-NL's campaign extension is merely an attempt to revise their own self-imposed deadline to adapt their disastrous campaign and give themselves more time to garner support that does not exist. FISH-NL initiated their campaign in 2016. The province's Labour Relations Board decisively rejected the group's first application for a membership vote in late 2018 due to insufficient support.

Throughout the Fall, FFAW heard from harvesters

concerned that their name was fraudulently signed to a FISH-NL membership card and from members of the public not connected to the fishery who were frustrated after receiving robocalls from FISH-NL.

It is clear this group has done nothing but create turmoil and unrest in our coastal communities, pitting fish harvesters against plant workers, skippers against crew. FISH-NL has repeatedly discounted the value of fish harvesters participating in fisheries science and management and has attacked the significant work of harvesters who give their time to volunteer positions on councils and committees.

After more than three years of creating division in the

industry, fish harvesters are ready to move forward and leave the chaos created by FISH-NL behind. The inshore fishery does not need a bare bones organization like FISH-NL with no experience, resources or capacity to effectively represent fish harvesters. The vast majority of harvesters know the industry and our Union is better off when we work together. The proof is in the battles we've won – our track record of success negotiating record-high fish prices, fighting back against quota cuts and pressuring governments to reverse bad management decisions.

Let's move forward into 2020 strong, united and ready to work together to build a strong inshore fishery and vibrant coastal communities that support all our FFAW members and their families.



MORE RESEARCH NEEDED ON SEISMIC IMPACTS TO LOCAL COMMERCIALLY IMPORTANT SPECIES

Robyn Lee, FFAW-Unifor Petroleum Industry Liaison

As offshore oil and gas exploration expands in Newfoundland and Labrador, some of the most significant concerns for fish harvesters continue to be the potential impacts of seismic sound on our ocean ecosystem. FFAW-Unifor has long called for a halt to any seismic operations on important fishing grounds and for more research into the potential effects.

While there has been a fair amount of research conducted on the impacts of seismic work on marine life around the world, there has yet to be a study that provides conclusive evidence that a species, at the



population level, would be impacted by seismic work in our offshore. This is the premise on which seismic projects continue to be authorized year after year by the C-NLOPB and one which FFAW and fish harvesters disagree with.

FFAW-Unifor has advocated for many years for more research on commercial fish species that are of commercial interest to our region. We have also worked to ensure fish harvester involvement in this research. Getting this important work funded and underway has been frustrating and painfully slow. Research results are often not available immediately as reports need to be reviewed by various committees prior to release or publication.

Seismic research has typically been directed to the Environmental Studies Research Fund (ESRF). The Fund is managed by a 12-person board with representation from the federal government, offshore Petroleum



Boards, the oil and gas industry and a member of the “general public.” Until recently, this general seat was occupied by a fish harvester from Newfoundland and Labrador. The Fund is administered by a Secretariat within Natural Resources Canada. Money for the fund comes from the oil and gas industry through levies. There

have also been some impact studies funded by PRNL, Petroleum Research Newfoundland and Labrador.

Over the years, several local seismic studies on lobster, monkfish and snow crab have been carried out with funding from ESRF. In more recent years, FFAW-Unifor has been lobbying for research on three critical local species: 1) snow crab, 2) Northern shrimp and 3) Atlantic cod. Some research has been completed or is underway. However, more local research is still needed.

While the research for these projects is ultimately funded by the oil and gas industry, it is the involvement



of fish harvesters and credible scientists throughout the development and execution of the project that are key to making the research matter to the fishing industry.

With so much natural variability in our ocean it is challenging to design and conduct experimental research in the open ocean. Many seismic studies have been conducted in laboratory settings, with caged animals or in near shore areas that make research applications impractical. Fishing vessels make great research platforms! It is critical that research continue on species of commercial interest to our region.

Snow crab

A snow crab study (2014-2019) investigating the effects of seismic surveying on commercial snow crab (catchability, movement, physiology, and genomics) conducted in 3L offshore recently concluded. Four years of field work could not measure predictable effects of seismic surveying on catch rates, movement, physiology or genomic responses. This does not mean there is no impact of seismic on snow crab. It simply means that the research questions targeted in the study either did not detect statistical differences before, during or after

seismic exposure during field experiments or effects were different from one year to the next. For example, catch rates were lower in 2017 but higher in 2018 in areas exposed to several weeks of seismic surveying, compared to control sites with no seismic surveying.

Results of this multi-year study should be available on the ESRF website in 2020. There are a number of peer-reviewed journal publications in Fisheries Research that have also resulted from this research that are and will be publicly available as well. One published article entitled "Effects of 2D seismic on the snow crab fishery"



is available through the link on our website at ffaw.ca. As additional results are published, the links will also be posted to our website. Results of the study were presented at the 3L crab fleet meetings in 2018 and 2019.

Northern shrimp

The report of a pilot study on Northern shrimp behaviour and catch rates (initiated by harvesters in 2011) was recently released. The study was conducted by LGL Limited, a local consulting firm, in 2017, and funded by PRNL. Legal permission from the various funders is required to release any deliverables. However, the study set out to determine if a particular experimental design was able to obtain data on sound levels that shrimp are exposed to in their natural habitat, as well as during and after exposure to a seismic sound source. A big unknown was whether they would be able to find a large enough aggregation of shrimp to conduct their work. It was determined that the equipment and experimental design approach were able to detect differences in near-bottom shrimp densities. We are awaiting further information from the funders to establish if further work is being planned or not.

Atlantic cod

ESRF has recently funded a groundfish study in our region, with a focus on Atlantic cod. This is after considerable debate about duplicating research currently being undertaken in Europe. The European research project, Establishing the Sensitivity of Fish to Seismic Activities, is funded by the International Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP) – Joint Industry Project (JIP). Dr. Hans Slabbekoorn, from Leiden University, Netherlands, is the principal investigator. Dr. Slabbekoorn attended a Groundfish focused research workshop in St. John's in November 2017 to discuss his work. The report from this workshop can be found on the One Ocean website: <http://www.oneocean.ca/>. The North Sea environment, however, is considerably different from that of Newfoundland and Labrador, and warrants an independent study in this region.

The DFO researcher leading the local work has been experimenting with different types of gear and different methods of catching Atlantic cod in deep water along the slope edge, where seismic surveying is common, to keep the fish alive after tagging them.

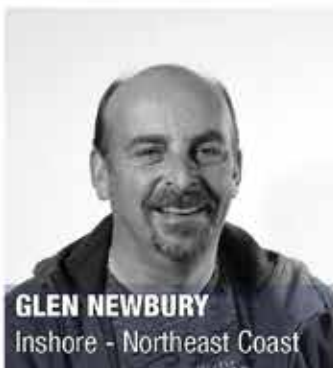
The experimental study officially got underway this summer on the Grand Banks and focused on catch rates to investigate possible effects on groundfish exposed to seismic surveying. The study design is similar to the snow crab study. In particular, it relies on an experienced inshore commercial fishing vessel and crew to conduct fishing at control sites (no sound) and test sites pre, during and post seismic exposure. Research will continue offshore over the next few years. No results have been published at this point.

If you have questions or concerns regarding seismic research and/or effects please do not hesitate to contact Robyn Lee, Petroleum Industry Liaison at (709) 576-7276 or rlee@ffaw.net.



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2018-2021



FFAW-Unifor Inshore Council

2019-2022



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incl. Fogo & Change Isl.



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At Large



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Newtown to Elliston



JIM CHIDLEY
Cape St. Francis to Point Lance



BLAINE CROCKER
Trout River to Eddies Cove W



VACANT
Francois to Codroy



RENDELL GENGE
At Large

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FFAW-Unifor Inshore Council

2019-2022



CARL HEDDERSON
Barr'd Hr to Noddy Bay
L'Anse au Clair to Red Bay



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Crew Member Position



LORETTA KELLY
Women's Position



IVAN LEAR
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Little Catalina to Greens Hr



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Monkstown to Garrish



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Hr Grace to Cape St. Francis



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Cape St. John to N Head



JAY RYAN
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Crew Member Position



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Whiteway to Carbonear



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Quirpon to Englee



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Shawmut Witless Bay

FFAW-Unifor WOMEN'S ADVOCATES

If you would like to speak with a Women's Advocate on issues related to workplace violence or harassment, intimate violence, suicide prevention, sexual assault, or addictions, please refer to the list below:

If you feel that you are in immediate danger, please contact your local police or call the crisis line listed in your phonebook.

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Avalon Peninsula

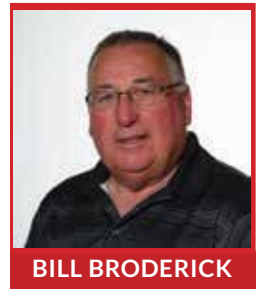
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FFAW | UNIFOR STAFF REPRESENTATIVES



BILL BRODERICK

Inshore Director



JASON SPINGLE

Staff Representative
West Coast, Northern Peninsula & Labrador



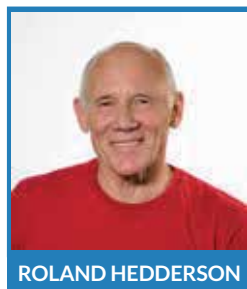
GREG PRETTY

Industrial/Retail/Offshore Director



MONTY WAY

Staff Representative
Connaigre Peninsula, Burgeo-Ramea-Francois, Jackson's Head to North Head



ROLAND HEDDERSON

Staff Representative
St. Brides to English Harbour East, 3K Inshore to North Head to Cape Freels, OCl trawler fleet



JOHN BOLAND

Staff Representative
Inshore, Cape Freels to Cape St. Mary's



ALLAN MOULTON

Service Representative
Industrial/Retail/Offshore

FLASHBACK



Do you recognize these people? Who are they? What are they doing? If you know the answers please send them to cglode@ffaw.net and your name will be entered for a prize. The winner will be announced in the next issue of The Union Forum.



The last photo was not identified.

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