



April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## **2026 CRAB SURVEY APPLICATION PACKAGE**

Thank you for your interest in the 2026 Collaborative Post-Season (CPS) snow crab survey.

The CPS snow crab survey provides critical information for the assessment and management of the snow crab resource. The survey data are used to monitor changes within specific crab management areas (e.g., 3K-3C, 3K4-Offshore, 3L-6C, and 3L Mid-shore Extended) and play a key role in evaluating the overall status and health of the stock at larger assessment divisions (such as 3K and 3LNO).

The overall goal of the CPS survey is to ensure that necessary data are collected and used in assessment and management, and the FFAW works to ensure that the process and compensation are fair and equitable.

Following consultations with harvesters, improvements were made to the organization of the snow crab survey to reduce the number of incomplete survey blocks. These changes included mailing out applications four weeks earlier, implementing late dropout consequences, and revising the distribution of quota allocation. Together, these changes contributed to higher completion rates, with 93% of stations completed in the 2025 survey.

Changes to the organization of the CPS survey were a result of CPS Review meeting in December 2024 with snow crab fleet chairs (18), representatives from DFO Science (5), representatives from Seawatch Inc. (2), and FFAW staff (7) and subsequent virtual follow-up meetings with snow crab fleet chairs. During these meetings, strategies to increase completion rates, particularly with respect to late dropouts. The late dropout amendments listed below are a reflection that it is very important to the success of this program that harvesters are committed to the work and are engaged with the Project Coordinator.



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Current improvements to the 2026 CPS snow crab survey include:

1. Survey allocations based on distance from snow crab homeports and distance among stations. Distance from port calculations will be based on active snow crab ports for the 2026 season.
2. Earlier mailouts and additional human resources in signing up harvesters to continue to improve timelines in getting folks on the water.
3. Continued data collection on fish predators and bait. Catch Data sheets were updated to improve the systematic documentation of the presence or absence of fish predators in traps.
4. The definition of a “late dropout” will be changed such that a late dropout is:
  - a. a harvester who accepts the survey and then declines it after August 14<sup>th</sup>, or two weeks after their survey license has been issued, whichever is later AND/ OR
  - b. a harvester who does not call Seawatch to arrange an Observer by September 14<sup>th</sup> AND/ OR
  - c. a harvester who does not return a call from the Project Coordinator within 3 days (72 hours) at any point prior to completing their survey.
5. As per above section, if a harvester does not contact Seawatch by September 14<sup>th</sup> and/ or does not return a call from the Project Coordinator within 3 days (72 hours), we will revoke their Agreement and assign the survey to a different harvester.
6. The penalty for a late dropout will be changed such that harvesters will be unable to apply for the survey for the following two (2) years.
7. In the event a harvester must dropout for health reasons, they must be able to explain why they cannot assign a designate.
8. Harvesters will be able to appeal their late dropout status based on health or vessel issues.

These changes should contribute to a successful 2026 crab survey.

Please direct any questions regarding these changes to April Wiseman (709-576-7276) or [awiseman@ffaw.ca](mailto:awiseman@ffaw.ca)