

2026 Industry-DFO Post Season Snow Crab Survey

Deadline for Applications June 5th, 2026, at 4:30pm

DRAW ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

EMAIL APPLICATION:

crabsurvey@ffaw.ca

OR

FAX APPLICATION to 709-576-1521

- Licensed to fish commercially for snow crab in 2026.
- The enterprise owner (**license holder**) and crew must be paid up to date members of the FFAW and registered with the **Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board**.
- At the **time the draw** takes place, an enterprise owner:
 - Must have a vessel registered (**in their name**).
 - OR must have participated in the 2026 commercial snow crab fishery under a “Buddy up” arrangement and is applying for this survey based on that same buddy up arrangement.
- **Vessel leasing requests have only been considered in extreme situations, such as total vessel loss. While requests for vessel leasing will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, requests for vessel leasing will only be evaluated for similar extreme situations.**
- Applicants must only apply to the survey within the **crab management area(s) they were licensed to fish commercially** during 2026. Separate draws will be conducted for each crab management area(s) and/or fleet.

The draw will be conducted in mid-June and will be officially certified by an independent entity (i.e., an accounting firm). After the draw, we will be contacting the selected enterprise owners, in the order that the names were drawn, until all survey coordinates have been assigned.

The draw is grouped into a 10-pool system where applicants who participated in the survey in 2025 are placed in Pool 10, whereas applicants who participated in 2016 or earlier are placed in Pool 1.

Draws for this survey are conducted annually.

For 2026 the following will apply for all areas: Applicants will only apply to the survey within the **crab management area(s) they were licensed to fish commercially** during 2026. Separate draws will be conducted for each crab management area(s) and/or fleet.

- Applicants who participated in **2016 or earlier** or have **never participated** will be placed in **Pool 1**.
- Applicants who participated in **2017** will be placed in **Pool 2**. Applicants in Pool 2 will only become eligible after all those from pool 1 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in **2018** will be placed in **Pool 3**. Applicants in Pool 3 will only become eligible after all those from pool 1 to 2 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.

- Applicants who participated in **2019** will be placed in **Pool 4**. Applicants in Pool 4 will only become eligible after all those from pool 1 to 3 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in **2020** will be placed in **Pool 5**. Applicants in Pool 5 will only become eligible after all those from pool 1 to 4 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in **2021** will be placed in **Pool 6**. Applicants in Pool 6 will only become eligible after all those from pool 1 to 5 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in **2022** will be placed in **Pool 7**. Applicants in Pool 7 will only become eligible after all those from pool 1 to 6 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in **2023** will be placed in **Pool 8**. Applicants in Pool 8 will only become eligible after all those from pools 1 and 7 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in **2024** will be placed in **Pool 9**. Applicants in Pool 9 will only become eligible after all those from pools 1 to 8 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.
- Applicants who participated in the **2025** survey will be placed in **Pool 10**. Applicants in Pool 10 will only become eligible after all those from pools 1 to 9 have been given an opportunity to participate in 2026.

Enterprise Owner Compensation

Participants who successfully complete the 2026 survey will receive a snow crab allocation for the 2027 commercial fishery. The snow crab allocation will become EI insurable. The amount of resource allocation will be dependent on the distance from nearest snow crab homeport and distance among the assigned stations, as well as the number of stations per charter. The allocation will be for **ONLY the 2027 commercial fishery.** As in previous years, there will be a fee associated with releasing the allocation.

Enterprise Owner Requirements

- After the draw is completed, fish harvesters will be contacted in the order drawn and advised of the available survey areas and the associated 2027 snow crab allocation. **Harvesters have 48 hours from the first contact attempt by FFAW staff to accept or decline the survey.**
- **FFAW staff will move on to the next harvester after the 48-hour time period. Please ensure all available methods for contacting the applicant or a contact who can speak for the applicant are listed on the application.**
- Enterprise owners will enter into a contract that will specify all the requirements, procedures, and compensation for participating in the survey.
- **Enterprise owners will be required to pay a fee for participating in this survey. The fee will be paid when the fish harvester signs their contract with the FFAW. The fee will be payable to “The Industry Snow Crab Survey”.
- Enterprise owners accepting a survey must sign the contract and pay the fee within **24 hours** of accepting a survey.
- Enterprise owner must provide a crew list for the survey. Enterprise owners must ensure any outstanding union dues are paid at the time the contract is signed.

- After the contract is signed and the fee paid, DFO will issue an experimental license to the enterprise owner. The Enterprise Owner must have an experimental license and associated documentation on board prior to beginning the survey.
- Enterprise owners must arrange an At-Sea Observer **BEFORE SETTING ANY GEAR IN THE WATER**. The survey is subject to 100% At-Sea Observer coverage.
- Enterprise owners must commit to completing the survey once they enter a contract. Commitment means the enterprise owner must maintain communication with the Project Coordinator and arrange an At-Sea Observer by September 14th.

****If the enterprise owner does not return a call from the Project Coordinator within 72 hours at any point prior to the survey or does not call Seawatch to arrange an observer by September 14th, FFAW will move on to the next applicant to get the survey completed.****

- Harvesters who dropout late in the survey (any time after August 14th OR two weeks after their experimental license is issued) **will not be able to apply for the survey for the following two (2) years**.
- Harvesters will be able to appeal their late dropout status based on extenuating circumstances such as health or vessel issues. For health issues, harvesters must explain why they were unable to assign designate.
- No penalties are applied if harvesters decline the survey, or if they accept the survey but then drop out prior to August 14th or within 2 weeks of their survey license being issued.
- **THERE WILL BE NO OTHER FISHING ACTIVITY CONDUCTED, FOR ANY SPECIES, WHILE THE VESSEL IS PARTICIPATING IN THE SNOW CRAB SURVEY.**
- The enterprise owner must provide space for an At-Sea Observer to work onboard the vessel during the conduct of the survey.
- Enterprise owners must provide crab pots with 5.5-inch mesh, ropes, buoys, and weights as required for completing the survey. Fleets of pots must be configured, baited, deployed, and retrieved as per the gear requirements in “Survey Design” (see section below).
- Enterprise owners must ensure that the vessel has a functional GPS and depth sounder onboard.
- The enterprise owner will provide crew, fuel, bait, and all items related to fishing commercially for crab.

Vessel Requirements

- Minimum vessel registered length is 34'11".
- The requirement for having a decked vessel will no longer be required.
- Vessels may be inspected prior to a survey license being issued.
- *Observers and technicians maintain the right to refuse what they deem to be unsafe work.*

In the case that an observer or technician deems a vessel unsafe/not suitable, FFAW will submit a report to the enterprise owner such that they may rectify the identified issues within a specified time-frame.

Crewing Requirements

- **All enterprise owners must ensure a minimum of two (2) crew members (including the enterprise owner)**

Gear Requirements

Survey protocols and gear requirements will be detailed in the harvester contract.

- Inshore surveys require six (6) commercial traps plus one (1) small mesh trap
- Offshore surveys require ten (10) commercial traps plus one (1) small mesh trap.
- Commercial traps must have 5 ½ inch mesh size.
- Small mesh traps will be provided by FFAW.
- Traps will be spaced 25 fathoms apart on a fleet.
- Each trap must be baited with three (3) pounds of fresh or frozen squid on one skiver.
- A twenty-pound weight (not an empty crab pot) will be affixed to each haul-up rope, 15 fathoms from the end pot.
- Harvesters will supply ropes and buoys to accomplish the gear configuration as described in the harvester contract.

If you require additional information, please contact April Wiseman (St. John's) at 709-576-7276

Or email: awiseman@ffaw.ca

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