

**Science Advisory Process on  
Assessment Frameworks for  
Lobster in LFAs 23, 24, 25 and 26A & B and  
Lobster in LFAs 35, 36 & 38 and 38B (grey zone)**

**27 – 29 March 2007**

**Gulf Fisheries Centre  
343 Ave Université Ave  
Moncton, NB**

**Terms of Reference**

**Context**

The status of the lobster resources in the Gulf of St. Lawrence (LFAs 23 to 26B) was last assessed in 2002, although a special review was conducted on the LFA 25 resource (2004) to address specific issues that arose at that time. In 2003, a multi-year (2003-2005) lobster Conservation Harvesting Plan was announced which included a series of management measures aimed at increasing egg production. Although the need to reduce fishing effort and to gather reliable and timely data was acknowledged during consultations with the fishing industry, there was no action taken to address this. With the need to develop a new multi-year plan, it is timely to consider the overall resource situation, the methods used to assess the health of the stock and the impact of changing management measures.

The status of the lobster resources in the Bay of Fundy (LFAs 35-38B) were last assessed in 2001. The fishery presently operates under the 2001-2004 Conservation Harvesting Plan, which needs to be reviewed and updated. As part of the 2004-2008 Lobster Conservation Strategy (Scotia-Fundy Fisheries Sector – Maritimes Region), within each LFA, indicators need to be developed that are supported by a broad representation of stakeholders.

Since the last assessments of the lobster resources in each area, both DFO Science activities and collaboration with the lobster industry has expanded the possibilities for stock status and productivity indicators. It is timely to develop new frameworks which are to be used to assess the status of these resources and provide the consequences of different management options. Also, the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council is undertaking consultations with the lobster industry in Atlantic Canada during 2006 with a release of a final report planned for summer 2007 on issues related to this framework. It is expected that the findings of this framework would be informative to the FRCC's initiative.

In preparation for these reviews, during fall 2006 – winter 2007, consultations were conducted with the lobster industry in both Gulf and Southwest Nova Scotia to explain the framework approach and have discussions on the issues that will be addressed.

## **Objectives**

### *Estimation of Current Status of the Resource*

- For both the Southern Gulf and Bay of Fundy lobster resources, develop suite of indicators on:
  - Abundance based upon sea sampling, industry logbooks, experimental fisheries and DFO surveys
  - Fishing pressure based upon removals, effort trends and sea sampling
  - Production based upon surveys of juveniles and berried females
  - Ecosystem based upon available water temperature information
- Provide guidelines on the interpretation of levels and trends of these indicators
- Apply these suites of indicators and guidelines to the current information to evaluate the status of the lobster resources in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Bay of Fundy and, as required, provide the consequences of management options

### *Estimation of Fishery Impacts on the Ecosystem*

- For both the Southern Gulf and Bay of Fundy lobster resources, to the degree possible, report on by-catch of non-lobster species
- Provide commentary on the potential impact of lobster fishing on the habitat

### *Management Issues*

- Develop set of issues relevant to improvements in management
- Develop schedule for the assessment of these resources, including the provision of guidelines for the monitoring of the indicators and other events that would trigger an earlier than scheduled assessment

## **Outputs**

CSAS Science Advisory Reports, two for each of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Bay of Fundy. For each area, separate SARs would be produced for the framework and the assessment

CSAS Research documents for each of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Bay of Fundy

CSAS Proceedings, including discussions of preparatory meetings

## **Participants**

DFO Science, Gulf and Maritimes

DFO FAM, Gulf and Maritimes

Lobster Advisory Committees (LFA 23 – 26B and 35, 36, 38 and 38B)

FRCC

Provincial representatives (NB and NS)

External reviewers

First Nations