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DFO and First Nations to pool data to inform commercial lobster fishing decisions in Gaspé

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Can LFA 19 support more commercial lobster fishing?

The Canadian federal government is implementing a data collection plan for Lobster Fishing Area (LFA) 19, an area that extends from the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula to the Lower St. Lawrence. In the context of expanding lobster populations and a changing climate, accurate data collection can help assess whether lobster stocks can support additional commercial fishing while ensuring conservation. The plan follows a decision on May 10 to grant new exploratory lobster fishing licenses for Quebec's North Shore.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) will begin discussions with First Nations and the industry to develop this plan, which will be implemented as early as next year. The outcome of these discussions will help guide decisions regarding issuing new exploratory fishing licenses in 2025 in LFA 19.



DFO will work with First Nations to collect data to assess if stocks in Gaspé can support more commercial lobster fishing while ensuring conservation. Photo by [Erik Mclean](https://www.pexels.com/photo/black-metal-fence-with-yellow-hose-12072268/) (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/black-metal-fence-with-yellow-hose-12072268/>).

Maritime Canada's lobster population is strong. So why are scientists worried?



The lobster population in Canada's Maritime region falls within the healthy zone, but scientists worry about the effects of climate change.



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(<https://link.chtbl.com/aquapod>).

“The Data Acquisition Plan will give us a better overview of the state of lobster stocks in the region,” said the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard “In the long term, I am hopeful that this will generate concrete economic opportunities for our Gaspé fish harvesters while advancing the important path towards reconciliation.”

Exploratory fishing licenses for the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula may be available as soon as 2025. Details regarding the number of permits, their distribution, and any allocation criteria will be disclosed later. It’s anticipated that this initiative could enable certain fish harvesters to generate income by selling their catch, thereby potentially bolstering the local fishing industry in Gaspésie.

Read more here (<https://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2024/06/boosting-gaspesies-blue-economy-minister-lebouthillier-launches-a-lobster-data-collection-plan-in-collaboration-with-first-nations-and-industry.html>).

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