

Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association

May 2022
Issue #1

The latest news, views, and announcements with the association

Newsletter to our membership

Weak Gear Trials

Find out the types of gear we will be testing in the upcoming season and how you can get involved!

We need volunteers!

We need fish harvesters to volunteer for sampling including taking lobster technicians, our ghost gear project

Upcoming Courses

Marine first aid courses are available in May see below for more details



Annual General Meeting Hosted in March 2022

Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association hosted our Annual General Meeting in March 2022. Ben Zisseron from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Science Team gave a presentation and touched on upcoming projects he will be leading such as the Lobster Tagging Program. The CBFHA helped Ben last season to tag and release lobsters in LFA 27. Approximately 3000 lobsters were tagged and released within LFA 27 to 32, with the number of lobsters tagged you can be expected to see them during the 2022 season. For this project to be successful, DFO is looking for recapture information to be recorded on a datasheet and the lobsters picture taken. This information can then be sent to DFO science or CBFHA by email/phone/mail. Ben also stated that area 27 is handling more undersized lobster than any other LFA that has at-sea sampling. Therefore, they are proposing a project to use larger escape hatches. They are looking for captains from each port to test three traps with a larger size escape hatch than you are currently using. All lobsters in these traps will be measured. DFO will provide escape vents, datasheets, and gauges. This is NOT to be used as a management change, but if you are interested, please reach out to the CBFHA office via phone or email.

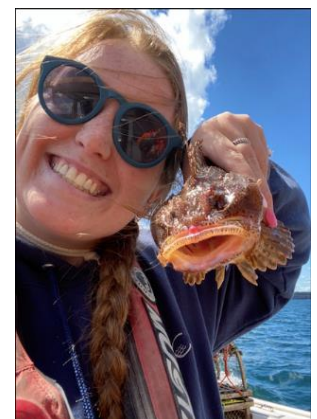
Fisheries Researcher Tracy MacKeracher is a student at Dalhousie who is conducting an independent research project titled "Understanding outcomes in Nova Scotia's Fishing Communities". She wants to interview fish harvesters in LFA 27, the interviews are approximately 45 minutes and her two most popular questions are the following: 1. What is the best bait type? 2. What is the best trap type? She is looking to learn from fish harvesters about how lobster fishing supports your well-being, your willingness to take risks, who you trust to get fishery information from, and fishery issues that you are worried about. Want to participate? Provide your contact details here: <https://bit.ly/3uXl6Tb> or call/text Tracy at 902 329 2088 if you have questions.



New Staff Positions

Michaela Oravec is our new Executive Director. She is currently on her fourth year working with CBFHA. Michaela started as a summer technician, project coordinator, and Assistant Executive Director before becoming the Executive Director.

Amanda Gove is our new Project Coordinator. She is currently on her fifth year working with CBFHA. Amanda started as a lobster technician and lead technician before becoming Project Coordinator. She has her Bachelor of Science Degree from Saint Mary's University and is currently taking her Masters of Marine Science (Fisheries Resource Management) from the Marine Institute.



Board of Directors

During the Annual General Meeting, our board of directors for the upcoming year were elected. Our board are local fish harvesters that represent Bay St. Lawrence to Gabarus. *From top left to right:* **Michael Barron** is the President of the association (Ingonish), **Ray Sherwood** is Vice President (Gabarus), **Glen Tredwell** is Secretary (Glance Bay), and **Richard MacPhee** is Treasurer (Big Bras d'Or). *From bottom left to right:* **Cole MacLellan** (Bay St. Lawrence), **Joey Rambeau** (Dingwall), **Scott Erickson** (Point Aconi), and **Wendell Murphy** (Little River).



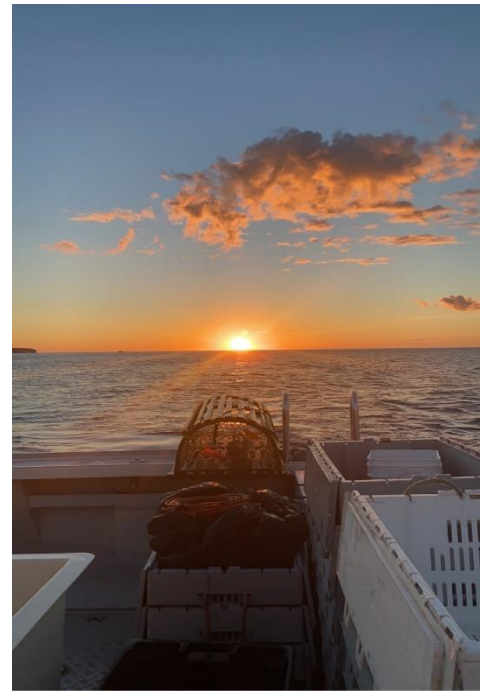
Want to be an At-Sea Sampling volunteer?

The Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association has been collecting at-sea data since 2011. Initially, we were funded through DFO, but now funding comes from fish harvester's dues and other small funds for technicians. The lobster harvesters in LFA27 felt that not enough research was conducted on lobster and wanted to support CBFHA to collect independent data.

To collect this data, lobster license holders volunteer to take technicians on board their vessels for a day of fishing. The technicians, are often local students studying biology, marine biology and environmental management. They are hired to sample on a different vessel every day of the lobster season. From mid-May to mid-July, the students meet fisherman at the wharves and sample as many traps as they can without compromising the data or interrupting the fishing taking place on board the vessel.

While our technicians record a wide variety of data, our 2 primary focuses of the At-Sea Sampling program is monitoring the health of the lobster stock, and recording by-catch as it pertains to the lobster fishing industry.

Lobster information is recorded by the student handling the lobster and determining the size to make sure the lobsters are sorted appropriately. Lobsters that are too small/undersized are recorded and carefully put back to sea. Markets are lobsters that are equal or greater than 82.5 mm in carapace length. The lobster is measured from the eye socket to the end of the first part of the shell (the carapace). These markets are checked for health, making sure they don't have shell disease or any epiphytic growth. The number of claws is recorded and marked down with an indication if they are in the process of re-growing any appendages. Technicians make note of the sex, male or female, and most importantly, we check if the lobster is egg bearing. Female lobsters in the process of spawning are not allowed to be retained. Technicians carefully measure the lobster, record the clutch stage (how far along she is) and the percent cover of eggs along the tail. Then she is carefully returned to sea.



If you're interested in having a lobster technician on-board your vessel for the 2022, please email or call us at the office so we can add you to our list!

LFA 27 Ghost Gear Initiative

Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association conducted 11 at-sea ghost gear retrievals from July- November 2021 in partner with Fisheries and Oceans Canada Ghost Gear Fund. As well as a hosted a Ghost Gear Workshop in November that discussed the following information.

Ghost gear refers to any fishing gear that has been abandoned, lost, or discarded, this could be from various factors such as: bad weather conditions, snagged beneath the surface, conflict with other gear or vessels, or entanglement. Ghost gear is a problem because it turns into a continuous cycle of ghost fishing. Ghost fishing is a term that describes what happens when abandoned fishing gear continue to fish due to the trap being baited, once lost, the trap will attract fish, scavengers, and crustacean, which may become trapped and die, forming more bait and a continuous cycle. It catches and wastes targeted species, such as lobster, in unknown numbers and could have an impact on the health of the stock. It entangles other marine wildlife, adds to ocean garbage, and is hazardous for fish harvesters and marine communities to deal with as ropes/nylon lines can affect vessels propulsion and ability to maneuver.



The Ghost Gear fund allowed our organization to conduct at-sea ghost gear retrievals with various captains in LFA 27. Communication with fish harvesters to address where ghost gear hot spots were located was essential. The retrieval processes included sending CBFHA technicians on vessels to survey areas and collect ghost gear onboard these vessels by locating fixed year and dragging by using our grapple system. The following is what happened to the ghost gear that was found:

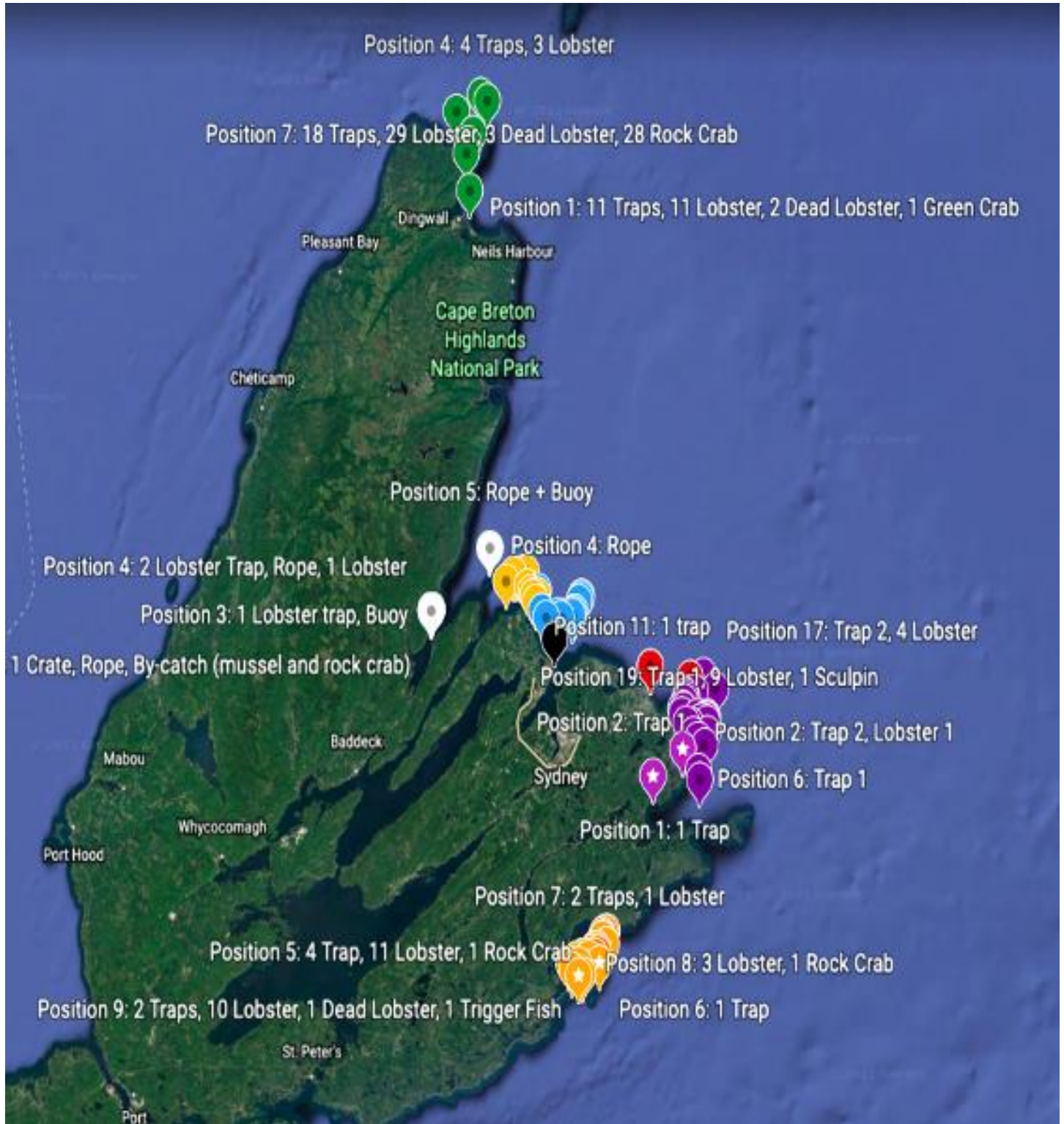
- Tagged gear will be taken to a compound in Glace Bay and fish harvesters will be contacted to come pick up their lost gear.
- Untagged gear that is useable will be donated to fish harvester or community members to be repurposed.
- Untagged gear that is unusable is to be sent to recycling depots and waste management to be discarded.
- Rope that was able to be repurposed was sent to Nautical Waters and Tuesdays Stuff

The collection total of our 11 at-sea retrieval trips included cleaning the ocean of **199 lobster traps**, which accumulated to **10,953 pounds** and **232 pounds of rope**. The following species were returned to the ocean: **436 lobsters**, 41 rock crabs, 25 pounds of mussels, 4 sea-ravens, 3 starfish, 2 lumpfish, 2 sculpins, 1 eel, 1 green crab, and 1 trigger fish.



Ghost Gear Continued:

We are currently looking for volunteers to continue doing at-sea ghost gear retrieval for the 2022 season. The image below is a visual representation of the wharves and locations that we have conducted these retrieval trips.



***NEW* Personal Fisher Registration (PFR)**

There is a new way to register for your personal fisher registration (PFR) with the Fish Harvesters Registration and Certification Board of Nova Scotia (FHRCBNS). You can still register through DFO, either way, you pay a fee annually of \$50. With the board, it is easier to register as you can do it through your phone/tablet/laptop.

These are the benefits if you register through the FHRCBNS board:

- Keeping your money local, the board was made to support Nova Scotia fisheries and they will be investing the fees collected in the NS fishery
- The board will invest in training, skills, and safety development that meet the needs of NS fish harvesters and provide discounts on certain training courses.
- Give NS fish harvesters a say and choice in what trainings are being offered
- The board will maintain a website, newsletters, social media updates and annual reports

What is the makeup of the board? The present board of directors are on an interim bases. Once the organization is up and running, directors will be voted in based on their sector and geographical region. This will be conducted by fish harvesters and their organizations in the respective zones on a voluntary bases.

Visit their website for more information: www.nsfishharvesters.ca

Upcoming Courses

SYDNEY: St John Ambulance Office on 201 Churchill Drive, Suite 304.

MARINE BASIC FIRST AID:

May 7-8th

May 12-13th

June 23-24th

MARINE ADVANCE FIRST AID:

May 16-20th

**** To register please call 902-471-3534 or email admin@fisheriessafety.ca ****



Contact Information:

Office Phone: 902-794-2227

Executive Director, Michaela Oravec: cbfishassociation@gmail.com

Project Coordinator, Amanda Gove: cbfishharvesters@gmail.com

Facebook: Cape Breton Fish Harvesters Association

Instagram: [capebretonfishharvesters](https://www.instagram.com/capebretonfishharvesters)

Office hours in North Sydney (262 Commercial Street, Suite 4)

Monday to Friday

8:30 - 4:30
