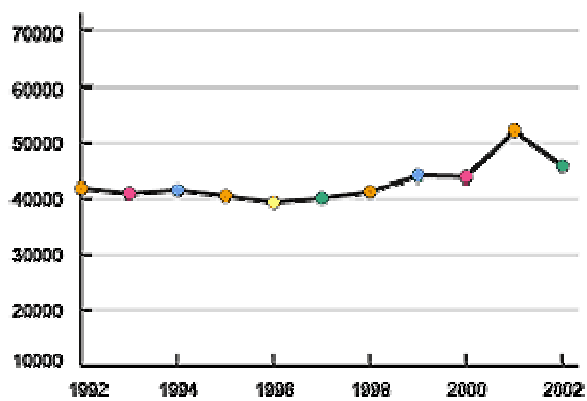


# Sustainable Fishery

Canada currently provides more than half of the world's supply for live and processed hard-shell Atlantic Lobster. With the landings exceeding 45 thousand metric tonnes in 2002, sustainable management practices are crucial to the future of the fishery. As well, consumers are becoming more concerned about the food they eat and want to ensure that harvesting and processing methods are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner.

## Canadian Atlantic Lobster Landings

The best science suggests this conservatively managed resource will sustain these yields .



Conservation and enhancement of the lobster biomass is a prime concern to the Canadian lobster industry. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) oversees the management of the fishery and enforces the various acts and regulations in respect to lobster harvesting. The fishery management system in Canada is regarded among the most complex and sophisticated in the world. In the case of the lobster fishery it is largely managed by effort control and seasonal openings rather than by quota. This approach is founded on Integrated Management, which is a way of managing natural

resources that integrates economic, social and environmental objectives. Its goal is to ensure that development occurs in a sustainable manner by conserving biological diversity and maximizing socio-economic benefits. The premise underlying the conservation measures for protecting our ocean resources are based on the following four principles:

## Conservation Protection Research Technology

The method of harvesting lobster has remained largely unchanged throughout the history of the fishery. Lobster harvesters still use the ecologically sensitive approach of single traps attached to lines and hauled one trap at a time. While this is extremely labor-intensive, it maintains the integrity of the ocean floor with minimal disruption to the environment. Despite the eco-friendly approach that lobster harvesters employ, additional management practices are necessary to ensure the longevity of the industry.

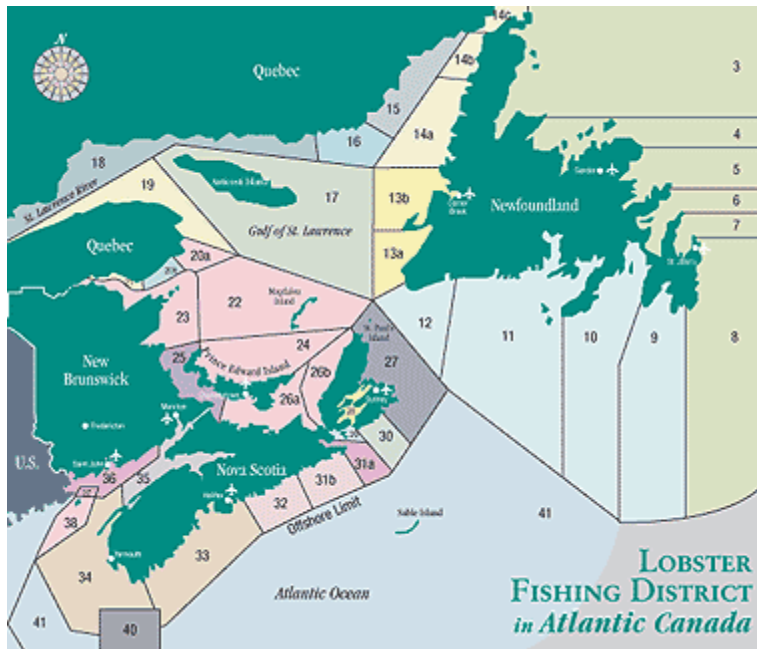


### ***Lobster Fishery Areas***

The implementation of Lobster Fishery Areas (LFA) represents a progressive step in addressing the sensitivity of individual areas throughout the thousands of miles of Canada's rugged Atlantic coastline. The designation of 41 LFAs coupled with four regional zones, enable comprehensive management plans to be implemented at local levels. The majority of lobsters harvested in Canada are conducted by an inshore fishery, usually within 15 kilometers from shore. There is currently one offshore fishery located approximately 90 kilometers off the coast of Nova Scotia, primarily on Brown's Bank and Georges Bank. Presently two companies with eight licenses participate in this year-round fishery.

### ***Staggered Lobster Seasons***

Each of the LFAs has a designated season with the exception of the offshore fishery, which is year-round. Atlantic Canada's staggered fishing seasons have been designed to protect summer moults while allowing the industry to deliver the quality hard-shell lobster preferred by consumers. The seasons for Atlantic Canada lobster are highlighted below.



(Lobster Fishing District map - [PDF - 430K](#) or [JPG - 84K](#))

### **Conservation Measures**

Protection of the lobster stock is managed through a series of conservation measures that reflect the environmental pressures for each of the LFAs. A collaborative effort between DFO and the lobster industry addresses the implementation of management measures designed to affect effort reduction. Typically, multi-year integrated management plans are prepared at the local level to ensure that a healthy fishery is maintained. The management plans will vary from region to region and even with individual LFAs. Some practices are enforceable by DFO, while others are applied on a voluntary basis. The following represent the key conservation measures utilized by the lobster fishery:

**Carapace Size Limit:** Minimum (in some cases maximum) lobster carapace size is established for each area based on the condition of the fishery.

**Limited Entry of Licenses:** the number of licenses for each LFA is limited and is determined by the management plan.

**Seasons:** seasons vary by LFA and incur limited durations to enhance the conservation measures (with the exception of the offshore fishery).

**Trap Limits:** a limit is placed on the number traps available to each license registered.

**Escape Mechanisms:** traps are equipped with escape mechanisms that enable undersized lobsters to exit the trap. Biodegradable panels enable trapped lobsters to escape in the event the trap is lost at sea.

**Berried Females (v-notching):** in Canada female lobsters bearing eggs (berried females) must be released by law. Cutting a small notch (v-notching) in the female's tail prior to release is done on a voluntary basis and identifies the lobster for future release by other fishers.

**Female Size Limits:** in some areas there is both a minimum and maximum carapace size limit for female lobsters (window size limit). This ensures that female lobster at prime breeding size are protected from harvesting.

**Trap Designs:** regulations and management practices are in place regarding the size and type of trap, the number of parlors, the limitations on the design of trap entrances and maximum hoop sizes.

**Fishing Days:** some areas limit the hauling of gear to six days per week.

**Total Allowable Catch (TAC):** There is no TAC for the inshore lobster fishery, however it is an important conservation measure for LFA 41, which is the only offshore lobster fishery in Canada (conducted year-round).

Consumers can be rest assured that when they choose Canadian Atlantic Lobster they are not only eating something good for them but the harvesting methods employed to catch the lobster **are good for the environment.**