



## **Implementing New Management Measures for the Recreational Harvest of Spot Prawns in BC Tidal Waters**

For review by the Sport Fishing Advisory Board

### **Issue**

The recreational daily limit for spot prawns (Prawns) has not changed since 1996. The harvest of Prawns by the recreational sector has increased dramatically over the last 20 years.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is proposing to implement reduced recreational daily and possession limits for Prawn.

### **Background**

As part of the effective management of Canadian fisheries resources, DFO routinely reviews management measures and licence conditions for the various fishing sectors to ensure that measures and conditions are appropriate for sustainable harvest.

Over the last several decades, Prawn harvest has become an increasingly valuable and important part of BC's fisheries. The commercial Prawn harvest is one of the most valuable fisheries in BC and First Nations are harvesting Prawn in increasing numbers for Food-Social-Ceremonial (FSC) purposes, often using commercial gear. The recreational harvest of Prawns has grown, with increasing urban populations, increasing interest and advances in fishing gear and equipment (e.g. fish finders, power trap haulers).

All sectors involved in fishing (First Nations Food-Social-Ceremonial (FSC), Recreational, Commercial) share a responsibility to manage fisheries resources. This includes adopting sustainable fishing practices and the implementation of new management measures. Some recent examples of new management measures include:

- The requirement, starting in 2016, for a supplemental licence when using commercial gear and vessels to fish for Prawns for FSC purposes.
- The requirement, starting in 2014, for all commercial Prawn vessels to have a DFO-approved Vessel Monitoring System and a system to notify DFO and the service provider every time gear is set or hauled.
- The requirement, starting in 2014, for all commercial Prawn vessels to release any egg bearing female Prawn, immediately, with the least harm possible.
- The requirement, starting in 2017, for all commercial Prawn vessels to remove their fishing gear within 3 days of notification of the closure of the fishery (from 7 days), reducing commercial fishing effort by 4 days in a 35-40 day fishery.
- The requirement, starting in 2018, for all recreational harvesters to release any egg bearing female Prawn, immediately, with the least harm possible.

DFO recognizes the efforts of the Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB) to support the implementation of egg bearing female release in the recreational fishing sector.

The discussion of the daily recreational Prawn limit has been ongoing between DFO and the SFAB starting with a facilitated face to face meeting in February 2017. A subsequent meeting was held in March 2018 where the topic was again discussed, and it was discussed again and the SFAB Groundfish/Shellfish Working Group in April 2018. The subject of considering changing the recreational Prawn limit has also been in the 2017 and 2018 Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMP) for Prawn and Shrimp by Trap.

### **Analysis**

The daily recreational limit for Prawns needs to be adjusted to account for the increased recreational fishing effort occurring in many areas of the coast.

### **Proposed Management Changes**

Beginning with the 2019 fishing season, starting April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, the daily recreational limit for Prawn will be reduced from 200 to 100 prawns and shrimps combined.

The possession limit for Prawns will remain at 2 times the daily limit, i.e. 200 prawns and shrimps combined.