

Manufacturing crisis and conflict on fisheries management

VIRGINIA BOUDREAU
and ANTHONY DAVIS

Once again the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is using its control of the fisheries management system to intimidate and to jeopardize small boat fish harvesters and their families and communities. This time DFO is moving to strip snow crab allocation from Northeastern Nova Scotia's small boat fishery in order to create access for the Mi'kmaq. DFO's purpose is to implement Mi'kmaq access as required under the Supreme Court of Canada's Marshall decision by buying back 'temporarily allocated' snow crab quota. Outlined during a recent meeting in Port Hawkesbury, the offer on the table is \$1,300 per ton. The offer is accompanied by warnings that purchases will be made on a 'first come, first served' basis, with

no guarantee about the length of time that this deal will be available. The underlying threat is essentially take the offer to sell as soon as possible, or the temporary allocation will be simply terminated and re-allocated to the Mi'kmaq when the current agreement expires at the end of this year. Of course, this situation, as intended, places incredible pressure on small boat fish harvesters and their families as well as on their representative Associations and leadership. As an example, Northeastern Nova Scotian snow crab fish harvesters received the buy-out offer on Tuesday, May 7 and were required to have signed and submitted acceptance of the offer by Friday noon, May 10 in order to be included. In fact, this situation exemplifies DFO's apparent addiction to managing fisheries by manufacturing crises and

sowing dissent. By threatening snow crab harvesters with the prospect of losing everything, DFO compels each allocation holder to focus on their own specific economic interests as the expense of maintaining solidarity with other fish harvesters within their representative associations and communities. Setting conditions that place allocation holders in such a position creates for them crisis and conflict, while fostering dissension among fish harvesters, within representative associations and between small boat fishers and the Mi'kmaq. Needless to say, such processes and outcomes assure, again as intended, that DFO will retain its position of dominance and control within the fisheries and fisheries management. No doubt the Mi'kmaq are essentially interested in exercising their treaty right to participate in the commercial

fisheries in a manner that will assure constructive and mutually beneficial relations with small boat fishers and their communities. Furthermore, the vast majority of small boat fish harvesters have come to accept that space in the commercial fishery for the Mi'kmaq needs to be secured. Many in both of these constituencies would prefer to sort this situation out among themselves. Yet, DFO has demanded from the outset that it play the central controlling role in setting the terms and conditions for Mi'kmaq access, insisting that the Mi'kmaq be accompanied only within the existing license and quota allocation management system. Since this can only be accomplished by re-allocating existing licenses and quota from fish harvesters to the Mi'kmaq, DFO has instituted buy-back and buy-out programmes wherein ridiculously inflated prices are offered. While some have accepted offers, the numbers to date have not satisfied DFO's expectations and needs.

Fish harvesters have been resisting, and in doing so are demonstrating their commitment and attachment to the fisheries livelihoods. Fishing for a living is not just about money, a feature of the human beings in fishing that DFO seems simply incapable of understanding and respecting. But, DFO continues to raise the stakes, in terms of both dollars and threats. That DFO continues to act in a manner that is, at best, callous and disinterested, and at worst, authoritarian and inhumane is illustrated thoroughly in the 'temporary allocation' snow crab buy-back scheme. In 1989 the snow crab fishery in the Guysborough County area of the Scotia-Fundy Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) management region began to develop on a large scale, encouraged by the evidence of a very large recruitment of young crab. It began with DFO issuing several temporary permits. Four new exploratory licenses were added to Crab Fishing Area 24 and, in 1996, these were turned into regular commercial license status. In 1995, 6 temporary allocations were issued to Guysborough County fish harvesters to fish 10,000 lbs. of quota in the Chedabucto Bay, this continued until

• Continued on page 13

Celebrating 15 Years of Excellence. Celebrating 15 Years of Excellence.



St. Andrews . . . the meeting place for the industry

Business Conference • Thursday, June 13th

The 2002 Atlantic Aquaculture Exposition, Conference & Fair has been organized to strategically focus on ideas for the future of aquaculture while experiencing the most recent developments and approaches to the challenges of globalization. Through the use of videoconferencing technology, you will be transported to international aquaculture hotspots, including Norway, Scotland, The Faroes Islands, Ireland, and Australia.

- Topics include:
- Organic Marketing – Ritchie Flynn, Irish Salmon Farmers Association
 - Offshore Farming: Risk Management – Graeme Deor, Marine Harvest, Scotland
 - Developments in Cod Aquaculture – Reid Hole, Cod Culture of Norway
 - Country Specific Marketing – Dr. Craig Foster, Pivot Marine, Tasmania
 - Global Positioning of Salmon and Future Market Trends


Technical Workshops • Friday, June 14th

Today's technical sessions will give hatchery, cage site managers, and processing personnel an opportunity to interact in real-time with their counterparts in other parts of the world.

- Topics include:
- A Tour of a Norwegian Cod Hatchery



St. Andrews-by-the-Sea
New Brunswick, Canada
**JUNE 12-16
2002**

Charge your subscription
We've made it easier to subscribe - just charge it on 

Here's how:

Snow crab valued asset to Guysborough County's economy

• Continued from page 12

based on a sharing formula that reflects the number of Core Fishermen members in each Association and the numbers of fishermen resident in each county. In Guysborough County, the Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association (GCIFA) has been managing many aspects of their members' allocations. The terms of the allocation require that snow crab be harvested in 25-ton increments. In the past, GCIFA has organized and held a draw among its members for the opportunity to harvest snow crab, thereby assuring fair and equal opportunity for all to access participation. This year GCIFA has proposed to have all members interested in harvesting snow crab 'on the water' by forming groups of six who would then harvest 25 tons a piece. Again, this approach is intended to maximize access, participation and the distribution of benefits among GCIFA's membership.

GCIFA also provides additional services such as making arrangements for gear, observer coverage, dockside monitoring in the offshore area. Five per cent of the total snow crab landed value revenue is retained by the GCIFA for administration, office and staff costs. In fact, the snow crab revenue has enabled GCIFA to develop its capacity and to demonstrate its competency so effectively that it has been able to engage in a variety of research collaborations with university and DFO scientists. Significant reductions in allocation means a reduction in revenue to the Association that is essential for it to carry on work in the areas of allocation management, research and service for its membership.

As evident, any significant reduction in access to and participation in fisheries such as snow crab will have a devastating impact throughout Guysborough County on many livelihoods, businesses and

prospects. The full meaning of this prospect is deepened through recalling that Guysborough County, and Canso Town in particular, are already on their knees as a result of fish plant closures and the groundfish resource crisis. Similar conditions prevail throughout Northeastern Nova Scotia and in many regions of Atlantic Canada. Surely, there is a better way to manage the public's fisheries resources than through the manufacture of crises, conflicts, and dissension.

Rather than fostering crisis and conflict, DFO should be facilitating dialogue and co-operation between small boat fish harvesters and the Mi'kmaq, possibly on a fishery by fishery and site by site basis. Assuring the successful participation of the Mi'kmaq will require a process that develops collaboration and partnership. Certainly preservation of a fisheries management system is not the first order of business in these circumstances. In fact, the entire allocation system should be open for consideration and re-adjustment. It is unjust and inequitable to require that the small boat sector somehow quickly accommodate the lion's share of change and consequence arising from the Marshall Decision. Most fisheries dependant communities, families and livelihoods in settings such as Guysborough County are simply unable to survive under these conditions. Then again, perhaps driving even more families and communities from the fishery is one of DFO's unstated intentions.

Regardless, senior managers within DFO have repeatedly demonstrated that they are incapable of competent conduct. One only needs to recall that it was this management team's decision that resulted in the collapse of groundfish, the imposition of the moratorium, and the single largest displacement of employment in Canadian industrial history. It is well past

the time for this management group to be held directly accountable for the consequences of their decisions and actions. After all, they are civil servants employed for the specific purpose of safe-guarding and furthering the interests of citizens, particularly fisheries livelihoods and the marine resources upon which they depend. Certainly, in any other employment setting than the public service their track-record of abysmal failures would have resulted in dismissal. Given that elected representatives and Ministers seem either incapable or unwilling to assure accountability by taking the necessary steps, it now falls to citizens to insist that accountability be assured and that a new approach to fisheries management be instituted.

(Editor's Note: Virginia Boudreau is the community Research Co-ordinator for the Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association.

Anthony Davis is a professor in the Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Director, Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S.

East Coast Marine Brokers

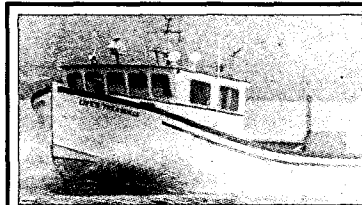
R.R.#5, Box 830, Yarmouth, N.S. B5A 4A9
LOCATED AT 1017 LAKE SIDE ROAD
PHONE (902) 742-2328 FAX (902) 742-9290
E-MAIL: boats@eastcoastmarine.com
web page: www.eastcoastmarine.com

After Hours call (902) 742-2328 (Bruce)
(902) 749-7148 (Larry)

We Service The Maritime Provinces.
Many Boats Available 34' to 45'
Top Quality Fiberglass Vessels
If You're Buying Or Selling
Please Call Larry at 902-643-2435

ATTENTION

- WANTED FOR PURCHASE -
Lobster Licenses
For All Areas Of Scotia Fundy
Tuna Licenses
For Scotia Fundy Area
Swordfish Longline Licenses
For Scotia Fundy Area
Sea Urchin Licenses
For Areas #36 and #38
Scallop Licenses - Full Bay and Upper Bay
Shrimp Licenses For Scotia Fundy Area
Crab Licenses For All Areas
Offering maximum dollar value.
If you are thinking about retiring,
please give us a call - we can help.



C.G. ATWOOD BOAT SHOP

R.R. #1, Shag Harbour,
Shelburne Co., N.S. B0W 3B0

Ph: 902-723-2097

www.atwoodboats.com

Moulders and Finishers
of Fibreglass Cape Island Boats
28' - 45' (choice of width)
also Outboards - 12'-17'

SC9933

WADE'S WIRE TRAPS LTD.

Come in or call and let us
give you a quote on all
your trap needs this
season.

- Quotes on complete traps, kits & coils of wire
- Volume discounts



AQUAMESH

AQUAMESH

AQUAMESH

All the BIG FISH will be there!



4-7 September 2002
Smárinna, Kópavogur, Iceland

- 97% of space gone - waiting list for next hall started
- Iceland's catch amounts to 1.7 million tonnes of fish/year