

LFAs 33/34 MOULT & QUALITY MONITORING PROJECT

~NOVEMBER 2007 UPDATE~

Monitoring of lobster blood protein levels, shell hardness and molt stage has now been ongoing since the summer 2004 with pre-season, during and post-season sampling. The monitoring currently includes 18 areas in LFAs 33/34 with close to 52,000 lobsters sampled to date. The information collected for this project is available on the Internet and allows people to look at lobster sex, size, blood protein, molt stage and shell hardness by sampling location or dates. Below is a breakdown of some of the sampling locations for the last pre-season sampling for 2007 compared to similar dates in 2006.

	Argyle Inshore		Argyle Offshore		St Mary's Bay		Yarmouth Inshore		Yarmouth Offshore	
Sampling date	Nov 8/06	Nov 8/07	Oct 16/06	Oct 10/07	Nov 6/06	Nov 8/07	Nov 9/06	Nov 1/07	Oct 25/06	Oct 31/07
Mean protein level	9.37	10.72	7.67	8.66	11.41	11.45	8.68	9.61	8.09	8.17
% active pre-molt	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	7%	0%	1.5%	0.5%	0.5%
% soft-shell	24.5%	11%	1%	0%	10.5%	2%	0%	1.5%	1.5%	2.5%

	Bay of Fundy		Sambro		Cape Sable Isl. Inshore		Cape Sable Isl. Offshore		Port Latour	
Sampling date	Nov 1/06	Nov 9/07	Oct 27/06	Nov 6/07	Nov 7/06	Nov 12/07	Nov 6/06	Nov 13/07	Oct 10/06	Oct 16/07
Mean protein level	7.5	10.31	7.36	9.86	8.52	7.7	8.64	7.54	8.39	7.91
% active pre-molt	0.5%	1.5%	0.5%	10.2%	0%	1.5%	0%	2%	0%	0.5%
% soft-shell	25.3%	0.5%	2.6%	na	0%	2%	0.5%	1%	7.5%	1.5%

What can we expect from the 2007 fall season?

Although this monitoring project is still in its infancy in terms of predictive value, we have looked at the information collected so far and tried to see if we could predict with some level of certainty what will be coming out of the water comes the last week of November.

Based on the pre-season sampling, it seems that this coming season should be very similar to the 2006 fall commercial season in terms of quality and soft-shelled lobsters.

When looking comparing the 2006 with the 2007 pre-season sampling, we notice that most locations have very similar numbers. Some of the locations that are standing out in terms of average blood protein levels being higher than last year include Argyle Inshore, Bay of Fundy and Sambro. A decrease in the proportion of lobsters with soft shell was also observed in our sampling in Argyle Inshore and the Bay of Fundy, as well as in St Mary's Bay and Port Latour. Finally, our latest sampling in St Mary's Bay and Sambro demonstrated a higher proportion of lobsters in active pre-molt; it is expected that these lobsters will be molting shortly and therefore, could show up as soft shell lobsters if caught at the opening of the commercial season.

Note: Although only the latest sampling dates are shown here, the overall pattern throughout the year for the parameters monitored was considered when predicting the quality of the LFAs 33/34 2007 fall season. However, confidence is highest for those locations where sampling was done closest to the season start.

This information was prepared by the AVC Lobster Science Centre (AVCLSC) in collaboration with Fisheries & Oceans Canada. For more information on this project, visit:

WWW.LOBSTERSCIENCE.CA/MOLT



The AVCLSC is a research centre located at the University of Prince Edward Island. Since its inception in 2000, the AVCLSC has directed its research and development efforts to the long-term benefit of the lobster fishery.

AVC Lobster Science Centre
 550 University Avenue - Charlottetown - PEI - Canada - C1A 4P3
 Tel: (902) 894-2887 - Fax: (902) 894-2885 - Lobster@UPEI.ca - www.LobsterScience.ca