

Commercial Fisheries in PEI

PEI Dept of Fisheries, Rural Development and Tourism

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Commercial Fisheries in PEI

- Carried out by >1200 fishers from 41 harbours
- Several important species
- Most activity from late April to October
- Water depth from 6 to 250 feet (< 15 miles)
- Value of Fisheries & Aquaculture to the PEI economy more than \$908 million in 2024
- Landings and values - preliminary



Bar Clams in PEI

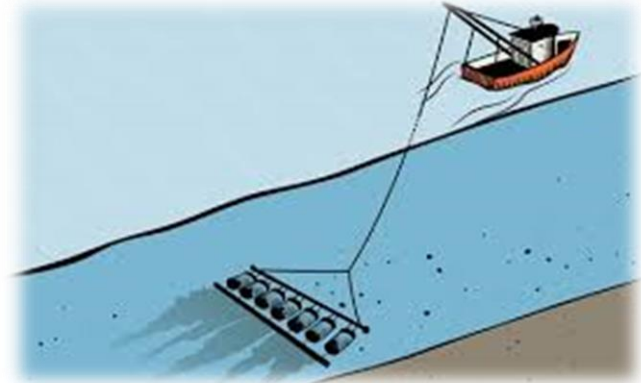
Annand clams

- Season is April to November but fished in spring and fall of year
- 20 licenses in PEI.
- Harvested using dredge
- Majority of landings to local markets
- 2024 landings of over 950,000 lbs worth more than \$600,000



Scallops in PEI

- Fished in spring and fall of year
- About 400 licenses. Small portion active
- Harvested using dredge
- Majority of landings to local market
- 2024 landings of over 44,900 lbs worth more than \$583,000



Herring in PEI

- Fished in several locations around the Island
- Fished for bait, roe and smoking
- Over 800 fishers licensed
- Both a spring and fall fishery based on provincial/fleet quotas
- Over 3 million lbs landed in fall 2024 worth about \$ 1.5 million
- Spring herring closed since 2022.



Mackerel in PEI

- Found throughout the Gulf
- Over 1200 licensed fishers with few being active
- Fished primarily for bait
- Was fished mainly in August - October some in June
- 2021 landings of 2.6 million lbs worth \$ 3.2 million
- 2022 - 2025 fishery closed and a small bait fishery in 2024 and 2025 of 440t for Atlantic Canada .



Other Pelagics in PEI

- **Gasperaux** – fished as bait for lobster fishery in spring of year



- **Silversides** – caught in box nets in the fall, frozen and used as bait for lobster fishery



Halibut in PEI

- Found throughout the Gulf
- Over 800 licensed fishers with 320 active
- Fished in August
October
- 199,000 lbs landed in 2024 worth approx \$ 1.1 million



Bluefin Tuna in PEI

- Migrate to southern Gulf each year
- Fishery in July - December
- 359 licenses on PEI.
- 2025
 - Landed 380,000 lbs (814 fish)
 - Landed value of > \$2.5 million
- Charter fishery had 17 boats in 2025 >\$ 1 million



Rock Crab in PEI

- Found around PEI in inshore waters
- Approximately 75 licenses
- Seasons between May and November
- Landings of 1.3 million lbs. in 2024 worth \$2.3 million dollars



Snow Crab in PEI

- Found in Gulf, beyond 200 feet of water
- Fishery in April-July
- 28 permanent licenses in PEI(inshore)
- Landings for 2024 in PEI were 7.1 million lbs worth about \$27 million dollars



American Lobster



Lobster Habitat

- Lobster prefer a complex habitat with boulders/rocks on softer substrate to allow them to burrow.
- Prefer temperatures below 20 Celsius
- Depth range shore to 150 feet.
- In the Gulf, an offshore to inshore movement in the spring of the year. Closer to shore in summer.
- Settlers and juveniles usually found in less than 30 feet of water and are cryptic for the first couple of years



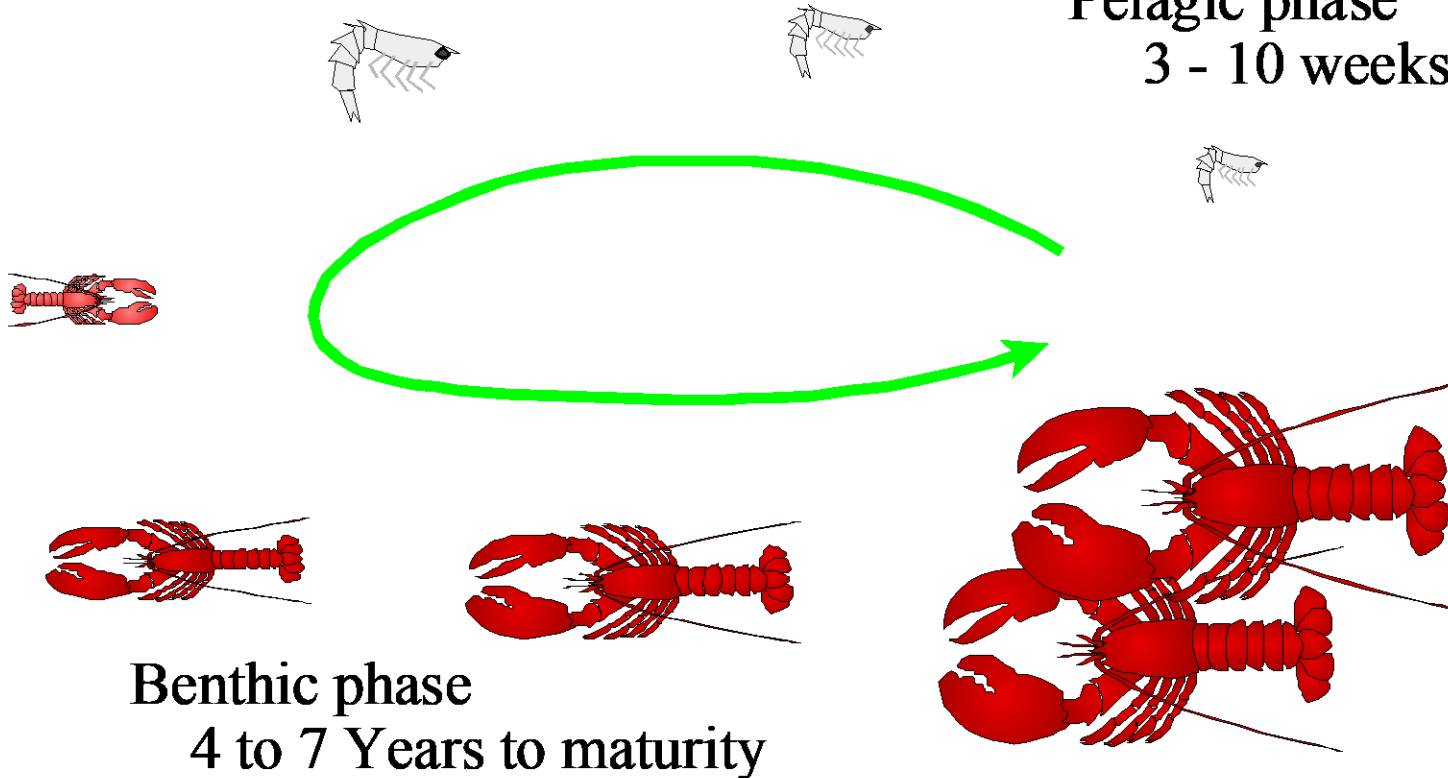
Lobster Biology

- Lobsters are a decapod crustacean
- Lobster only grow when they molt. 15% in length and 40% in weight
 - Adults grow about 10-12 mm per molt/year
 - 75 mm lobster to 85 to 87 mm
- Female growth is slower because of reproduction.
- Commercial size lobsters are thought to be 5 to 8 years old.



Lobster Lifecycle

Pelagic phase
3 - 10 weeks

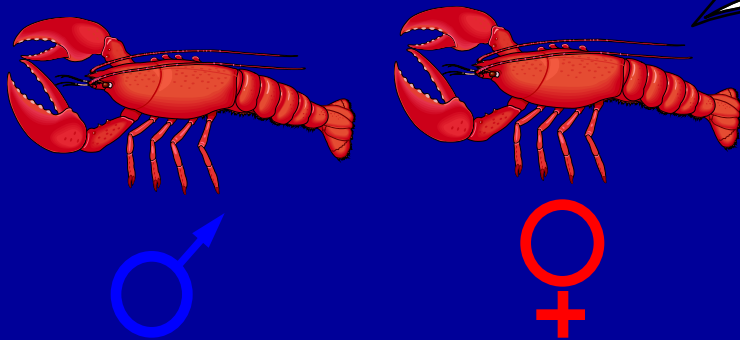


Benthic phase
4 to 7 Years to maturity

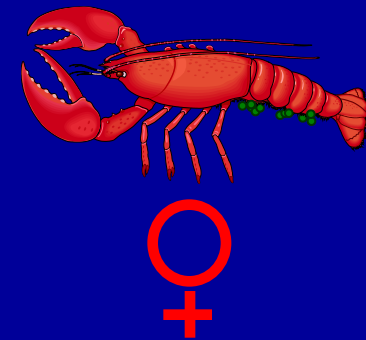
Post molt mating in July –August
Eggs extruded 1 year later and hatch
up to 1 year after that.

Female Reproduction Cycle (2 Year Cycle)

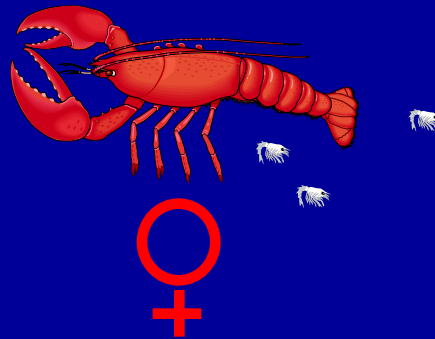
Female moults and mates
with hard shell male
(July-September)



Female extrudes eggs
approximately 1 year after
moulting (July-September)



-Female moults
after eggs
hatching



Female carries eggs for
9-12 months - hatching of eggs
(July-September)

The Lobster Fishery

- Trap fishery
 - 49" L X 36" W X 20" H
 - Attracted by bait



The Lobster Fishery

- Managed by:
 - number of licenses
 - traps/license
 - seasons
 - minimum legal sizes
 - egg bearing females protected



The Lobster Fishery

- 1225 Licensed fishers
- +2000 or more helpers
- Approximately 41 fishing harbours
- 2025p - landings of 45 million lbs with a value of over \$355 million to fishermen



The Lobster Fishery

- Two seasons
 - May and June (LFA 24 & 26A)
 - 1010 or 82 % of fishers and 80% of landings
 - 272 or 300 traps/license
 - August and September (LFA 25)
 - 218 or 18 % of fishers and 20% of landings
 - 240 + traps/license

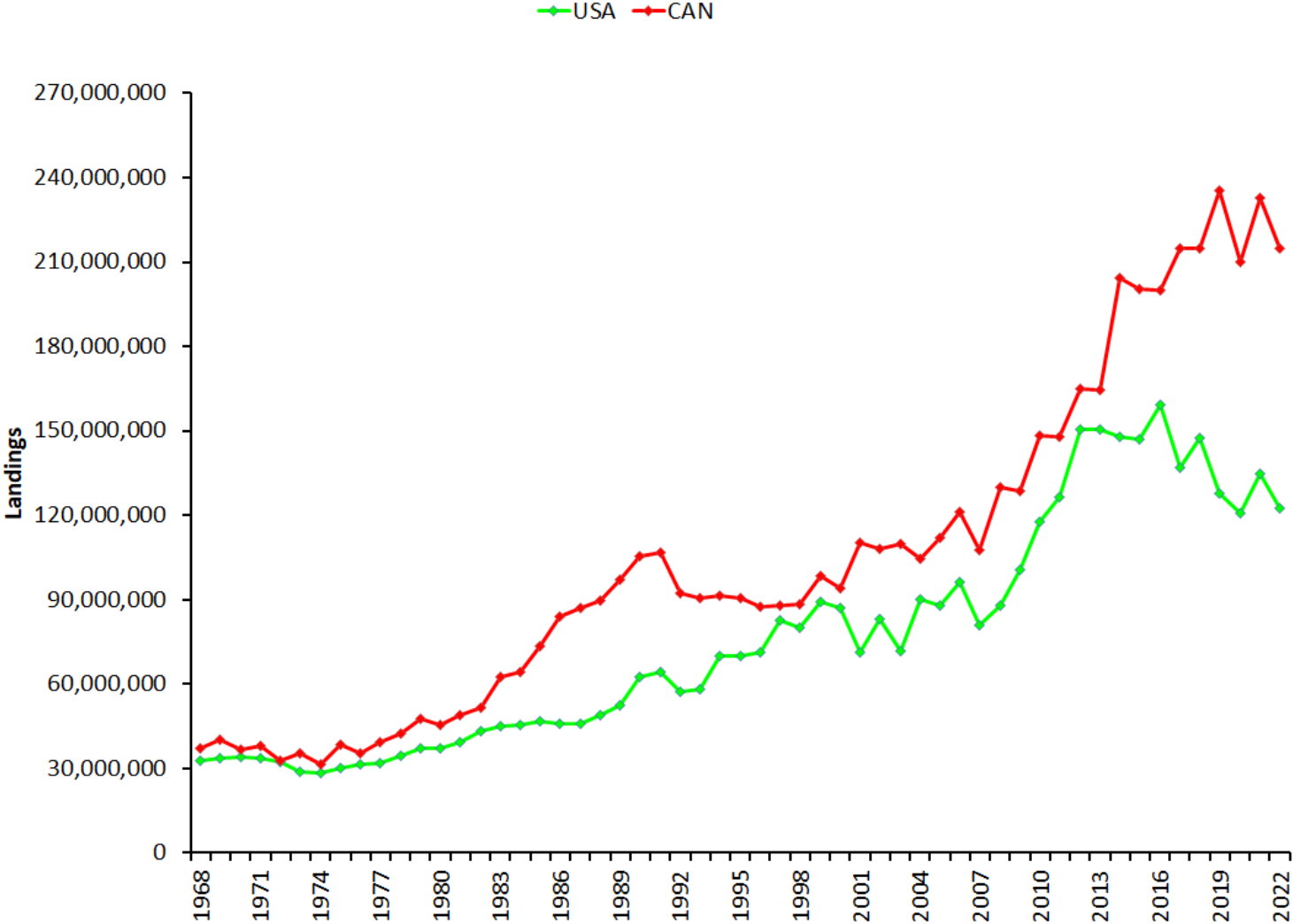


The Lobster Fishery

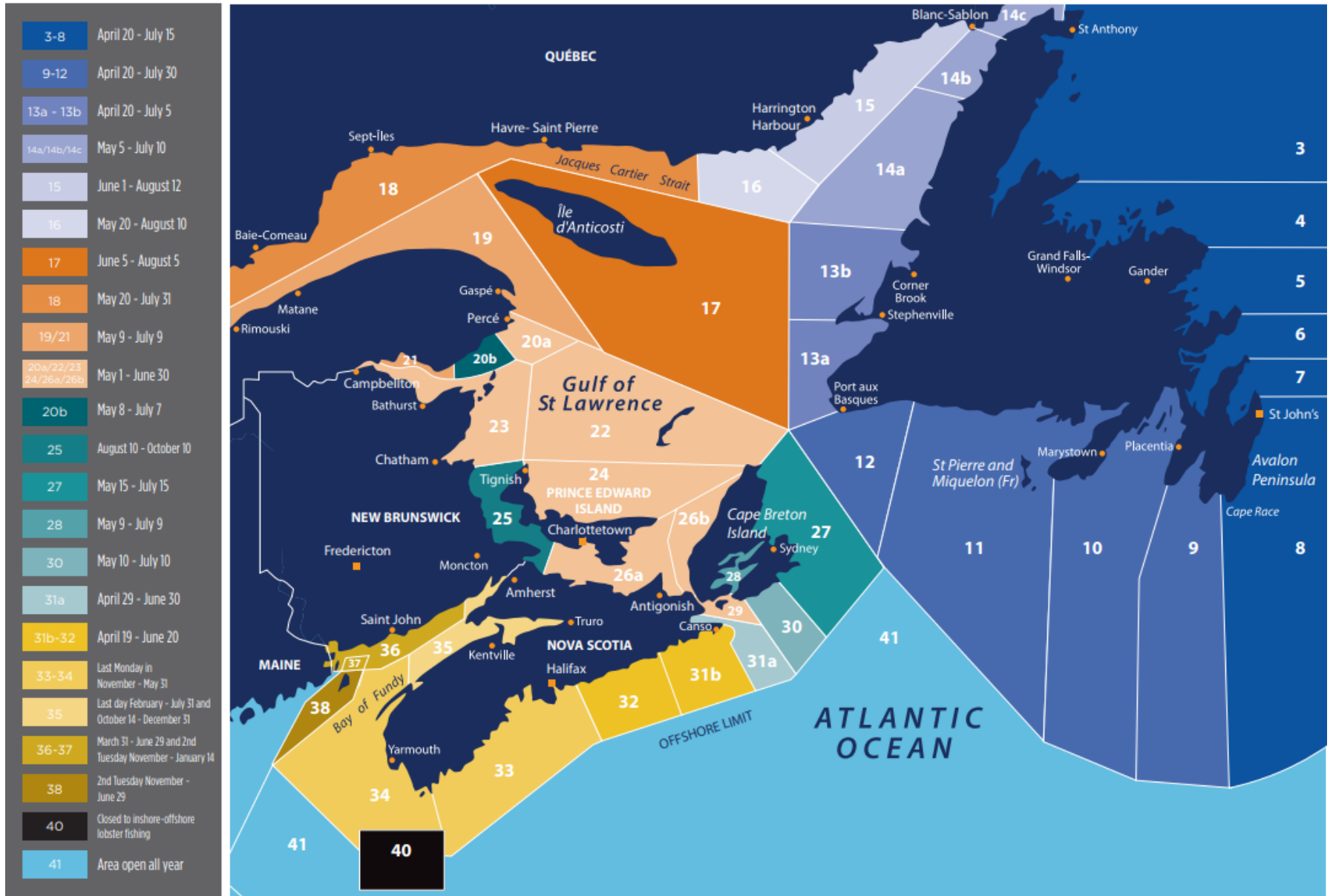
- Two size categories of lobster
 - Canner – 75, 76 or 79 mm to 81 mm
 - Represent 37% of landings in 2025
 - Majority processed
 - Market – 81 mm and above
 - Represent 63% of landings in 2025
 - Sold live and processed



Lobster commercial catches in Canada and USA



Atlantic Lobster Fishing Areas

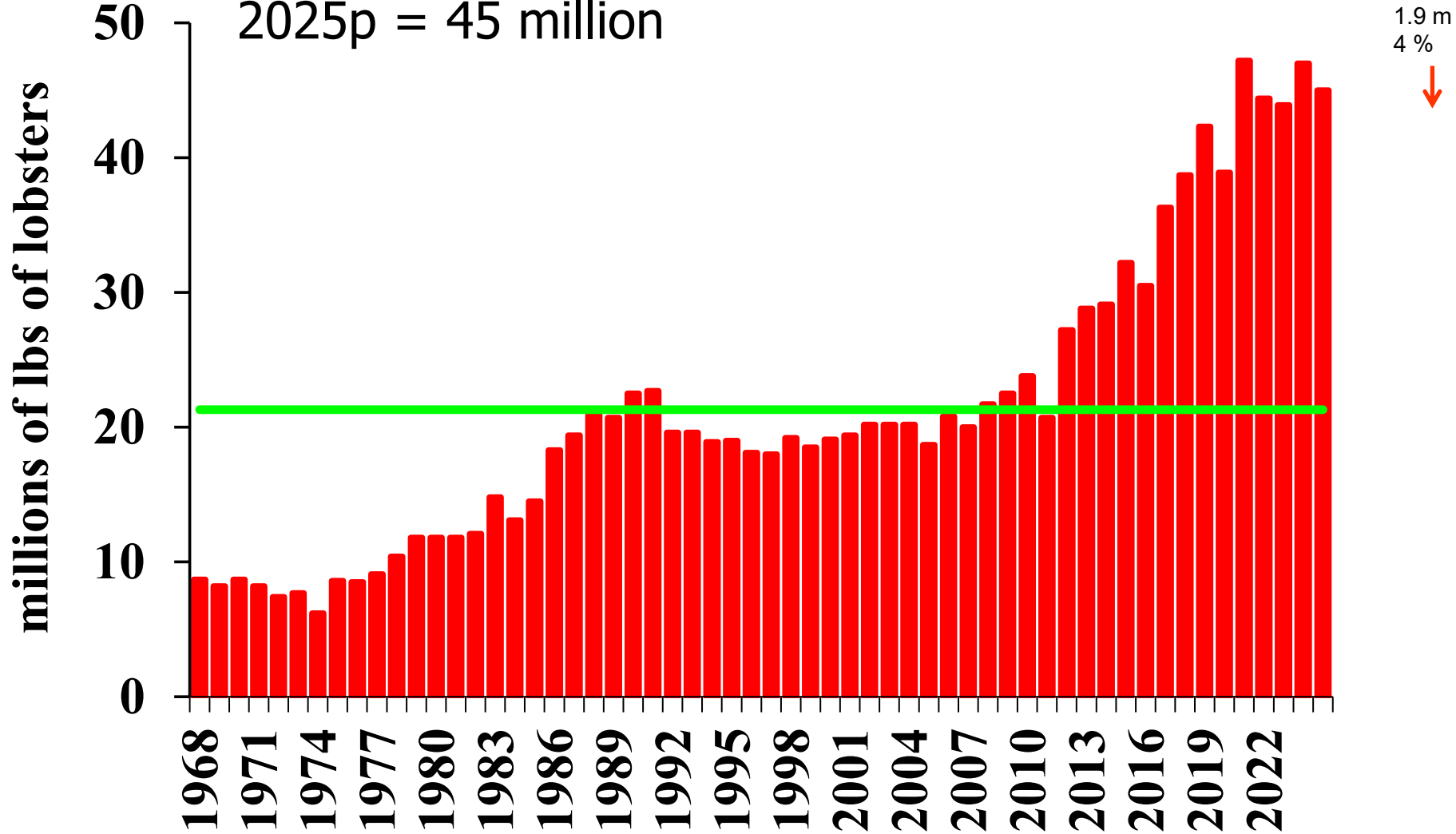


Source : fisherking Seafoods

PEI Lobster Landings 1968-2025p

Source DFO Stats & Prov

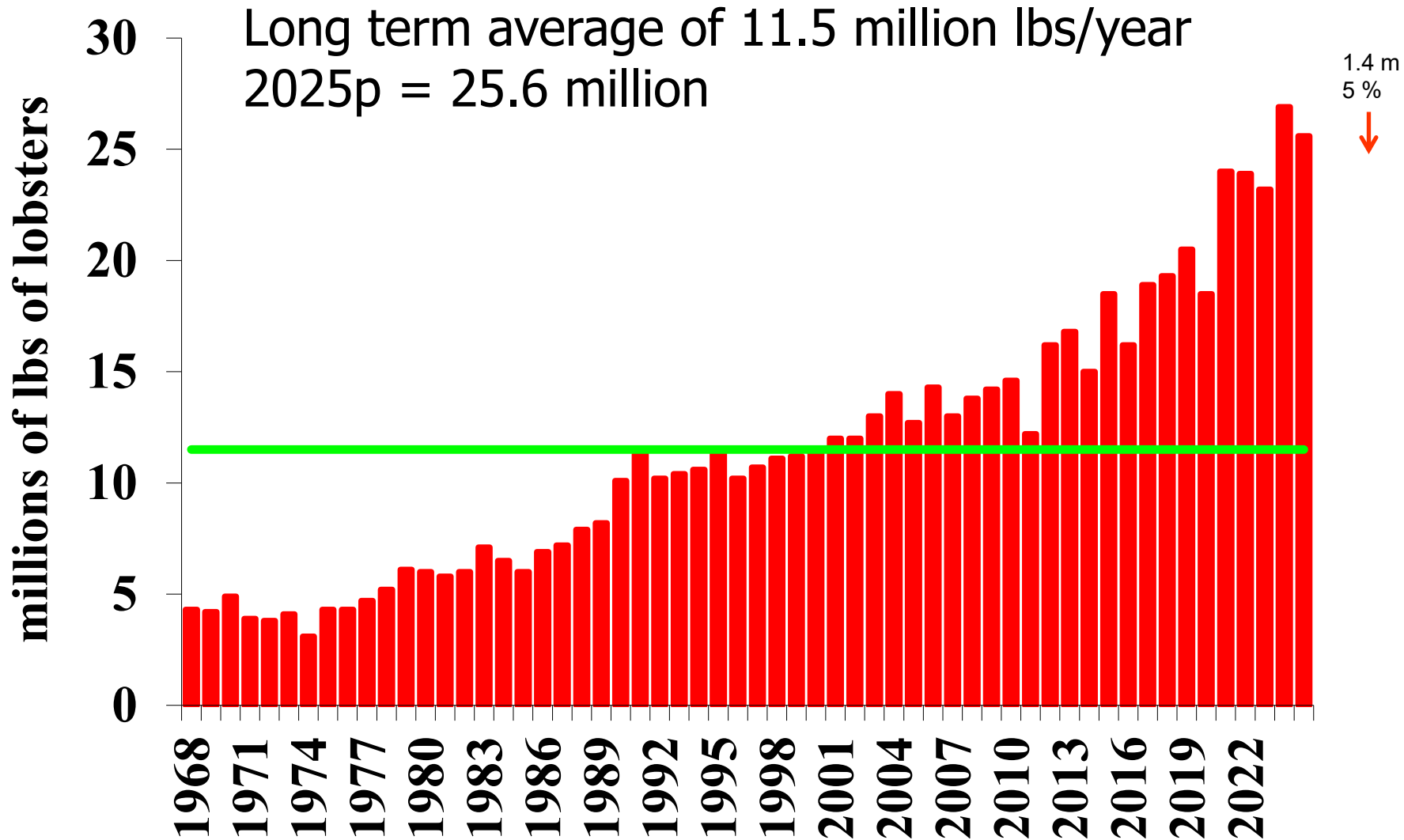
Long term average of 21.3 million lbs/year
2025p = 45 million



PEI Lobster Landings 1968-2025p

LFA 24

Source DFO Stats & Prov

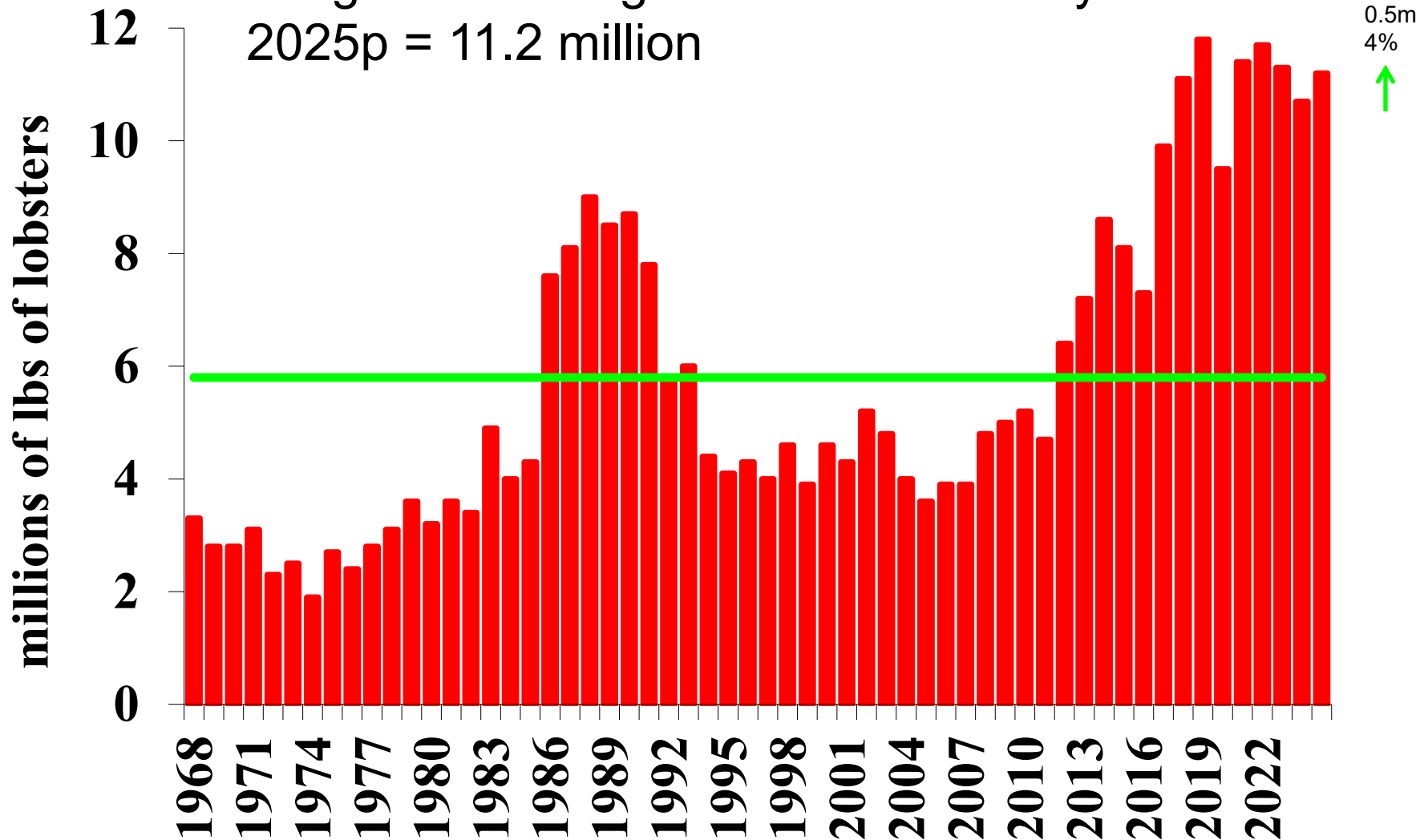


PEI Lobster Landings 1968-2025p

LFA 26A

Source DFO Stats & Prov

Long term average of 5.8 million lbs/year
2025p = 11.2 million

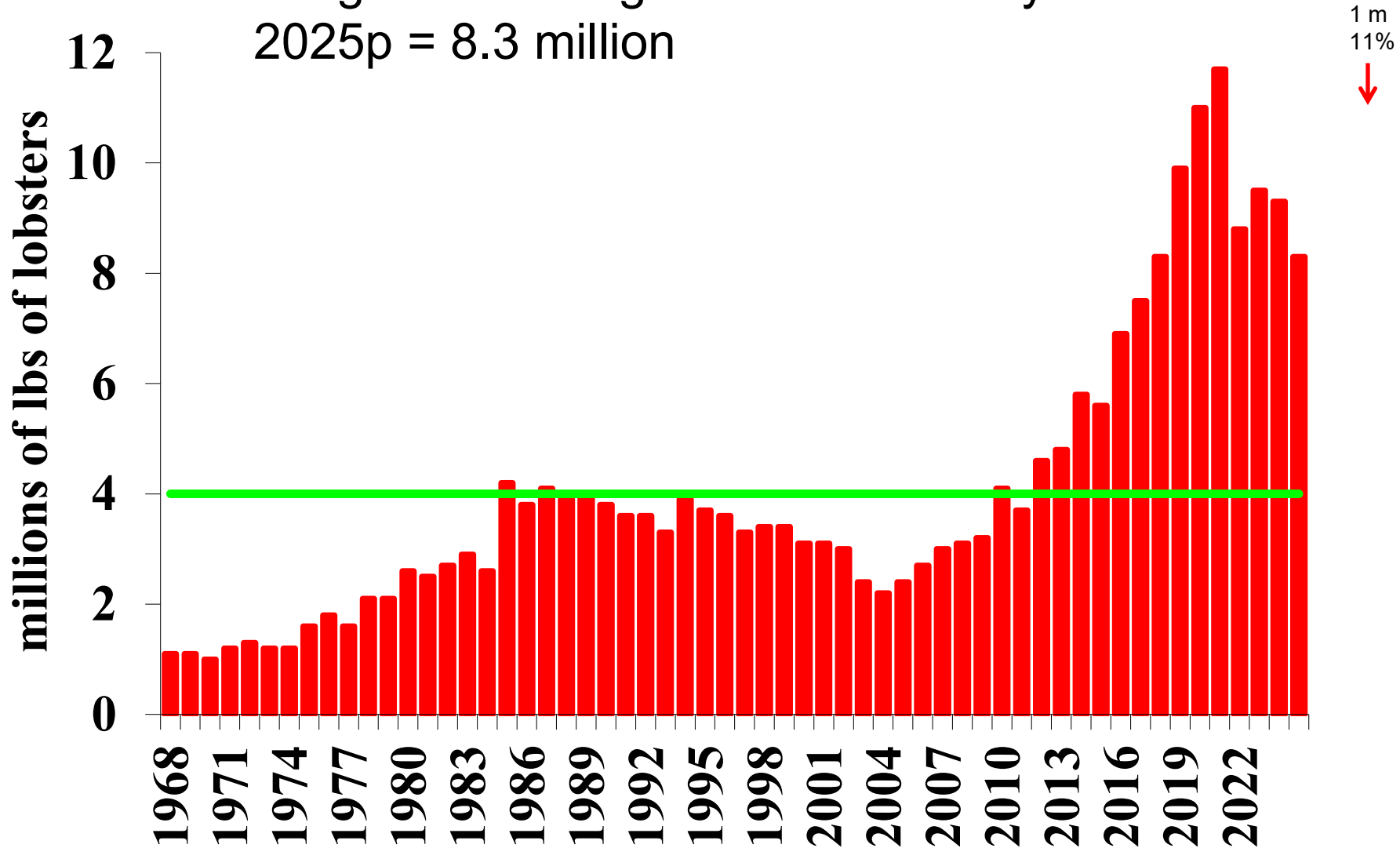


PEI Lobster Landings 1968-2025p

LFA 25

Source DFO Stats & Prov

Long term average of 4 million lbs/year
2025p = 8.3 million



Markets

- 10% shipped live to the fresh market
- 80% processed product- 65% processed on PEI
- >90% of lobster exported outside of Canada
- Main markets – USA, Asia and Europe



Processing



- 12 major processing plants
- Many cookhouses, pounds, and retail outlets
- Approximately 1500 employed at peak processing period

Products



- Fresh or live market (market size lobsters)
- Frozen (raw tails, pop pack, cold pack)
- Vacuum packages (whole lobster)
- Specialty products (piece packs, bisque, tomalley, paste)

Lobster to the Economy



- Over \$350 million landed value to fishermen in 2025
- ~80% of the total landed value of PEI fishery
- Over \$700 million to economy
- Employment for ~ 4,500
- Fisheries & Aquaculture is second or third largest industry on PEI
- Lobster second to potatoes as export product

Communities

- Major single fishery for most marine fishers
- Supports many coastal communities
- Defines identity of individuals and communities



Lobster Facts

- 1225 licensed lobster fishermen on PEI, 3100 in the sGSL
 - 240, 272 or 300 traps each
 - Bait predominantly herring and mackerel
 - Two-month season, fish 6 days a week
 - Land between 15,000 to more than 60,000 lbs/fisher
- The maximum size of a lobster trap is 49"L X 36"W X 20"H
- One million lobster traps fished in sGSL each year
- About 20 million trap hauls on PEI each year
- 1 lb female carries approximately 10,000 eggs while a 9 lb female may carry up to 190,000 eggs.
- From every 50,000 eggs approximately 2 lobsters will reach legal size

Lobster Facts

- Besides the greenish-brown colored lobsters, there are also rare captures of blue, yellow, red, white and 50/50
- Lobsters are capable of dropping and re-growing appendages
- 1 lb. lobster yields approximately 4 oz. of meat (25% meat yield)
- Biggest lobster recorded - 1977 off of Nova Scotia – 44 lbs. Probably over 50 years old
- Most lobsters caught in PEI are 5-7 years of age
- 1902 5 cents each
- 2025 >\$7.00 each

A serene sunset over a vast, calm ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright, golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water's surface. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a soft blue at the top. The water is dark blue with gentle ripples, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

Thank You