

canadian lobster



Species Name: *Homarus americanus*

Certification(s):

Offshore Canadian lobster has Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification

Harvest Area / Season: Canadian Offshore lobsters are harvested within the FAO Area 21 (Atlantic Northwest). The offshore fishery operates in Lobster Fishing Area (LFA) 41, which encompasses the area outside the offshore boundary line 50 miles from the coast of Nova Scotia. Commercial fishing traditionally occurs on Georges Bank (outer and upper slope), Georges Basin, Crowell Basin, Southeast Browns Bank (outer and upper slope of Northeast Channel), and West Browns Bank. The fishery in LFA 41 is conducted on a year-round basis and operates from January 1 – December 31.

Quota Systems: The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) sets the quota for LFA 41. Clearwater owns all 8 licences in the fishery and is allocated 100% of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC). The annual quota is set at 720 metric tonnes and has been maintained at that level since 1985. Scientific research indicates that the exploitation rate in the fishery is low at 15% of the available lobsters.

Biomass Assessment: Catch Per Unit Effort and data on landings, sex ratios and egg-pre-recruit are used to assess the status of the resource. The assessment undergoes a rigorous peer review process prior to finalization of the advice. The median size of lobsters (110-122mm) in the offshore catch is higher than the size at which 50% of the females mature (95mm) and thus a high proportion of the females have the opportunity to breed 2-3 times.

Participation in Research: Clearwater vessels carry industry funded independent biological technicians on a regular basis to collect scientific data to be used in the assessment of the resource. The overall management style of the fishery is consultative and co-operative and a comprehensive and rigorous research program underlies the management process. Clearwater employs a team of biologists who apply biological science and technology to perfect our handling and storage systems and maintain lobster quality and health.



This product comes from a fishery that has been independently certified to the MSC's standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery.
www.msc.org. MML-C-1327

Conservation / Management Measures: In addition to quota controls, fishing in LFA 41 is subject to a series of other management measures. Lobsters under the minimum legal size of retention (82.5 mm carapace length) and egg-bearing females are returned. Escape vents allow non-target species and juvenile lobster to escape. Biodegradable panels mitigate the impact of ghost fishing if gear is lost. Market demand for a wide range of lobster sizes encourages selection of animals from a wide range of size classes, reducing the pressure on any single size group. Clearwater targets lobster only at times of year when quality is highest and only hardshell lobsters are retained. This eliminates pressure on recently moulted and softshell animals. Clearwater has also implemented a voluntary maximum size limit.

A closure of LFA 40 on Browns Bank to all lobster fishing has been in place since 1979 as a measure to protect lobster brood stock.

Practices to Minimize Bycatch: The nature of trap fishing selects for lobsters and other crustaceans so finfish bycatch is minimal. Our ongoing gear research program is testing additional modifications to further reduce bycatch below already low levels.

There is a regulated Jonah crab bycatch fishery associated with the LFA 41 lobster fishery. Management measures such as minimum legal size and retention of male crabs only are implemented to manage this bycatch and there is a quota limit of 720 t. All other non-target bycatch is returned at sea. Survivability of undersized lobster and other crustacean bycatch returned to sea is very high.

Catch Monitoring: The LFA 41 fishing fleet is subject to 100% Vessel Monitoring System coverage, 100% dockside monitoring and approximately 25% at-sea observer coverage. Daily logbook recording is mandatory. There is excellent monitoring of catches, bycatch and landings.

Fishing Method: Lobsters are caught with baited traps. Traps are set on the ocean bottom with openings to allow lobsters in, and escape vents to allow undersized lobsters out. The bottom

impact associated with trap fishing is minor, with only the area directly under the trap being influenced, and scientific studies have shown that species moved by the trap return to the area after the trap is removed.

A coral protection area was established which restricts fishing by all gear types in deep water of the Northeast Channel to protect an identified concentration of deep sea corals. Coral interaction is not an issue in the lobster fishery as the fishery takes place in waters shallower than the coral distributions.

Traceability: Lobsters sourced from the offshore fishery can be traced through Clearwater's Fleet Operations offices in Lunenburg, NS and our live lobster handling facilities in Clark's Harbour, Arichat and Bedford, NS. Landings can be identified by boat and specific fishing trip.

Inshore Lobster Fishery: In addition to the Offshore lobster product, Clearwater also purchases lobster from inshore lobster fishermen in the Canadian Maritimes. The inshore fishery takes place within 50 miles of shore and is managed through input controls in each LFA around the coast. Management measures include seasonal openings, restricted entry to the fishery, a limited number of traps per fishermen, minimum legal size of retention, mandatory trap escape vents for juveniles and protection for egg-bearing females.

Inshore fishermen are required to complete logbooks. Catch for the inshore fishery is recorded through a dockside reporting system when lobsters are sold to dealers/distributors. The inshore lobster fishery in Atlantic Canada lands approximately 50,000 t annually.

Lobsters sourced from the inshore fishery can be traced through Clearwater facilities in Arichat, Bedford, and Clark's Harbour, Nova Scotia. Clearwater lobster buyers record the fisherman or group of fishermen and the LFA from which lobsters are sourced. A 'buy' may include landings from 1 to 25 boats that all fish from a specific community within a single LFA. Fishing trips in the inshore are single day trips. Clearwater is committed to working with the inshore fishery to help achieve MSC Certification.



Dedicated to Sustainable Seafood Excellence

