

**SUBMISSION TO THE  
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD  
AND NUNAVIK MARINE REGION WILDLIFE BOARD**

**FOR**

**Information:**

**Decision: X**

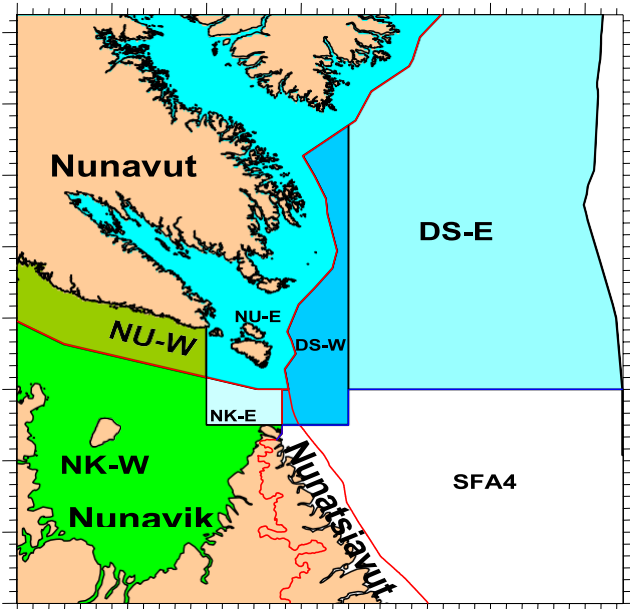
**Recommendation: X**

**Issue: Modification of season-bridging protocols for Nunavut and Nunavik shrimp allocations in the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ)**

**Map:**

Blue areas – Eastern Assessment Zone

Green areas – Western Assessment Zone



Northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*)



Striped shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*)

## **Background**

Two shrimp species (*P. borealis* and *P. montagui*) occur in the shrimp fishery that takes place in the Davis Strait and eastern Hudson Strait. This fishery is managed according to two distinct Shrimp Fishing Areas (SFAs), the Western Assessment Zone (WAZ) and the Eastern Assessment Zone (EAZ), as part of the newly established Northern Stock Assessment Region (NSAR) (Appendix 1).

While allocations are provided annually for commercial fishing, season bridging of quota is regarded as a useful management measure in the Northern shrimp fishery that allows for additional opportunities and flexibility to catch allocations. Season bridging is available, with varying components, to the offshore fleet, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut.

Collectively, season bridging refers to 1) borrowing from the following year's quota to be fished in the current year; and 2) transferring some of the current year's unused quota to be caught in the following year (carry forward). Under the current NU and NK bridging protocols in the EAZ (for *P. borealis*), allowances of 350t are available for carry forward for Nunavut allocations and 20t for Nunavik allocations, to be fished within the first 120 days of the season (April 1 - July 31 of the following year) (Appendix 2). Currently, quota carried forward that is not caught by this date remains unfished.

In 2020, the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board (NMRWB) and Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) made decisions and recommendations, as appropriate, to maintain the existing season bridging protocols for Nunavut and Nunavik allocations within the WAZ and EAZ, until such time as Harvest Decision Rules (HDRs) are developed for these areas. DFO was in agreement that this extension of season bridging protocols was a constructive way forward while this work is ongoing.

Additionally in 2020, both Boards decided that the *P. borealis* allocations in the NU/NK-E management units would no longer be designated as bycatch, and instead would be managed as directed fisheries. As with other directed *P. borealis* fisheries in the EAZ, the Boards also agreed that these allocations would be available for season bridging, but the decision did not specify carry forward amounts for either NU/NK-E.

In 2023, the NWMB and NMRWB made decisions and recommendations, as appropriate, to maintain the existing carry-forward allowances for Nunavut and Nunavik EAZ *P. borealis* allocations, respectively, acknowledging the stock was in the Cautious Zone. Further, NWMB and NMRWB decisions and recommendations, as appropriate, supported extending the carry-forward harvest deadline for Nunavut and Nunavik *P. borealis* allocations in the Nunavut/Nunavik-East and Davis Strait management units from July 31 to August 31.

In 2024, adjustments to DFO's Precautionary Approach (PA) framework, including Upper Stock References (USRs) and HDRs, for the shrimp fisheries in the EAZ and WAZ were supported by the NWMB and NMRWB. Season bridging protocols were considered outside

the purview of the PA framework, and consequently no changes to season bridging for Nunavut and Nunavik allocations were proposed in 2024.

In 2025, a new stock assessment model for *P. borealis* was implemented, which implicated several changes to the management of the *P. borealis* fishery, including in the EAZ and WAZ. A transitional management approach was implemented for 2025 while working groups of the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee – comprised of representatives including DFO, co-management partners, industry stakeholders, and Indigenous groups – developed recommendations regarding changes to the management of the *P. borealis* fishery. This working group initiated the development of a revised season bridging protocol that would include all fishing fleets and areas. However, given the breadth of other management changes and flexibilities proposed for implementation in 2026-27, the season bridging protocol revision was postponed, with a commitment to re-engage the management transition working group on this issue for resolution in 2026. The Department has indicated that additional flexibilities for season bridging would be offered in the interim until the revised season bridging protocol is developed and finalized.

As of January 5, 2026 catch data, Nunavut has harvested 846t in Davis Strait (Nunavik = 0t), amounting to 44% of their Davis Strait allocation. In NU/NK-E, Nunavut has harvested 407t (~73% of their NU-E) and Nunavik 127t (~86% of their NK-E), amounting to a combined 76% of the NU/NK-E allocations being harvested.

The Department has received requests from Nunavut and Nunavik industry to amend the existing season bridging allowances for their respective allocations over the years. Given these requests and the delay in revising the existing bridging protocols, DFO is seeking decisions and recommendations from the Boards to increase the amounts available for carry forward inside and adjacent to the settlement areas, respectively, until such time that the season bridging protocol for NU and NK is revised, anticipated to be completed for the 2027/28 season.

Current carry-forward allowances in EAZ are relatively small (350t for Nunavut; 20t for Nunavik). An industry request for a combined 1200t carry-forward allowance (1000t for Nunavut and 200t for Nunavik) would amount to 12.5% of the EAZ overall TAC, which is within the bounds of what is permitted in other shrimp fleets. Nunavut entities have requested to carry-forward 780t in Davis Strait and 220t in NU-E, which amounts to ~40% and ~39% of the initial allocations, respectively. Nunavik interests have requested to carry-forward 140t in Davis Strait and 60t in NK-E, which amounts to ~65% and ~43% of the initial 2025-26 allocations, respectively. Based on current fishing patterns (i.e., Davis Strait East not being fished), even with this carry-forward increase, it is unlikely that the overall EAZ TAC would be caught in the following year.

Additionally, as part of the season bridging flexibilities noted above, DFO proposes to remove the deadline by which carry-forward quota must be harvested in all EAZ management units for the upcoming season. A recommendation to remove this deadline for harvesting in the Nunavut Settlement Area and Nunavik Marine Region in 2026-27 is also outlined below.

### **Science Considerations**

In the past, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for *P. borealis* in the EAZ (all management units) has not been fully taken. This is in part because ice conditions effectively end the fishing season before quotas can be fully prosecuted and because of minimal harvest of quotas in the Davis Strait East management unit. While harvesting of carry forward allowances potentially increases the exploitation rate in a given year, any one year increase in permitted carry forward amounts would be minimal under current allowances for Nunavut and Nunavik allocations and the offshore fleet in Davis Strait. It is possible for catches (including carry-forward) to exceed the TAC in an individual management area, but they are not expected to exceed the EAZ TAC for bridged seasons. Should there be a change implemented in the management of the fishery to make up for the unfished quota in the Davis Strait-East management unit, further analysis would be required to assess the impact of any future changes to these allowances.

DFO Science notes that the deadline by which to harvest carry-forward allowances does not serve as an end to fishing activity (*i.e.*, fishing does not cease at the deadline), but rather an administrative end after which catches must be reported against current year quotas. For this reason and on the basis that catches are not likely to exceed the TAC, removing the carry-forward harvest deadline does not present a conservation concern at this time.

### **Recommendation**

#### ***Carry-forward allowances***

Given the repeated requests over the years by Nunavut and Nunavik fishing interests, and as part of season bridging flexibilities that could be offered in the interim while a review of the season bridging protocol is undertaken, the Department is recommending increasing carry-forward allowances for Nunavut and Nunavik EAZ *P. borealis* allocations from the 2025-26 season to the 2026-27 season.

In line with the industry request, DFO specifically recommends increasing the current carry-forward allowance for Nunavut to 1000t (780t in Davis Strait; 220t in NU-E) and Nunavik to 200t (140t in Davis Strait; 60t in NK-E) for the 2026-27 fishing season only. Specifically, the Department is seeking a decision to allow a collective 280t to be carried forward in NU/NKE, and a recommendation to allow NU and NK to carry forward 780t and 140t, respectively, in Davis Strait.

#### ***Carry-forward harvest deadline***

Consistent with the flexibilities afforded to other industry stakeholders (*i.e.*, the offshore fleet), and in the absence of a conservation concern, DFO recommends to remove the carry-forward harvest deadline for all EAZ management units.

### **Summary of the request**

DFO is seeking from the NWMB and NMRWB:

- 1) Decisions (NU/NK-E) and recommendations (Davis Strait), as appropriate, on whether to increase current carry-forward allowances for Nunavut from 350t to 1000t (780t in Davis Strait; 220t in NU-E) and Nunavik from 20t to 200t (140t in Davis Strait; 60t in NK-E) for their EAZ *P. borealis* allocations for the 2026-27 fishing season only.
- 2) Decisions to remove the carry-forward harvest deadline for NU and NK *P. borealis* allocations in the NU/NK-East management units.
- 3) Recommendations to remove the carry-forward harvest deadline for NU and NK *P. borealis* allocations in Davis Strait.

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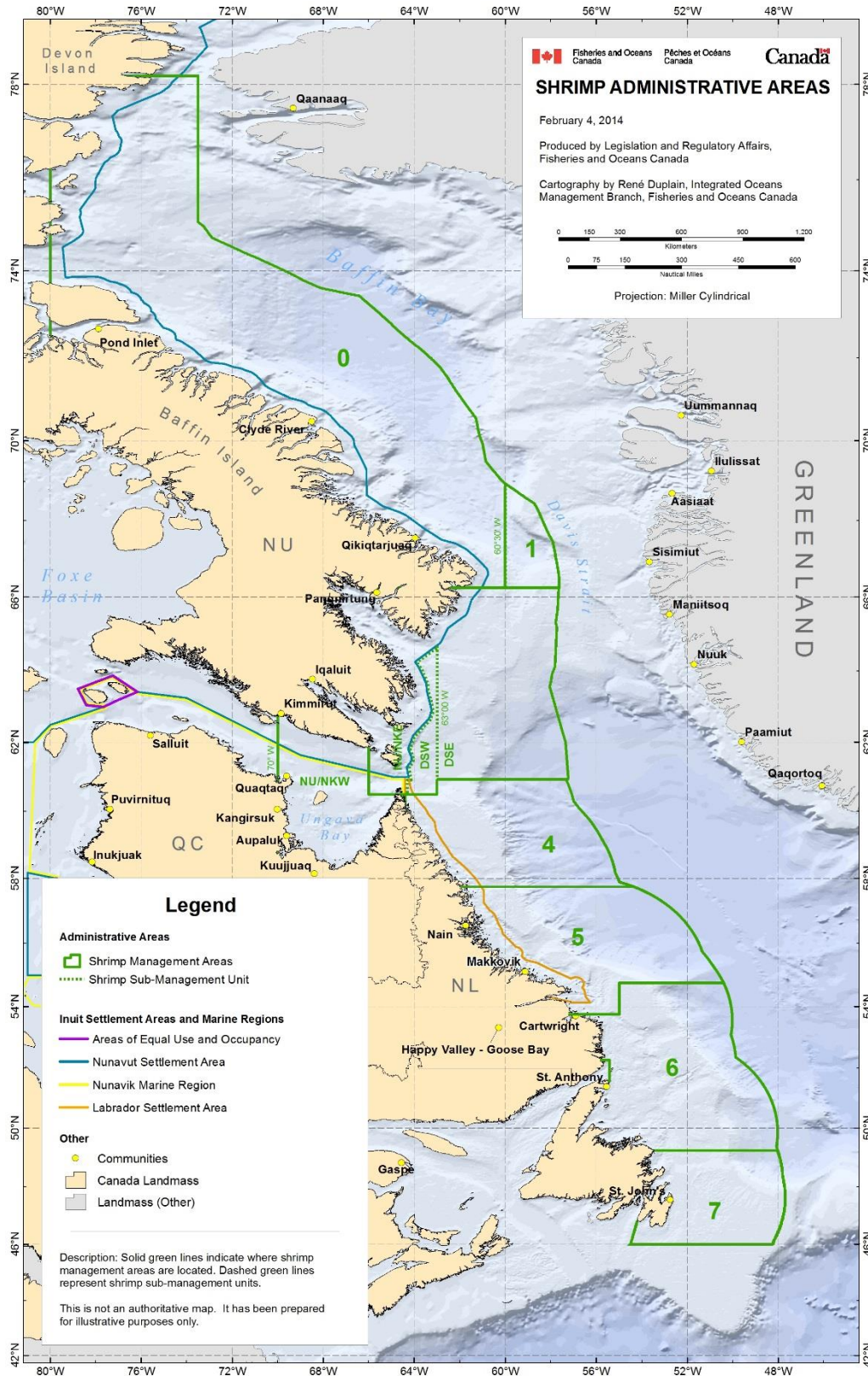
**Date:** January 13, 2026

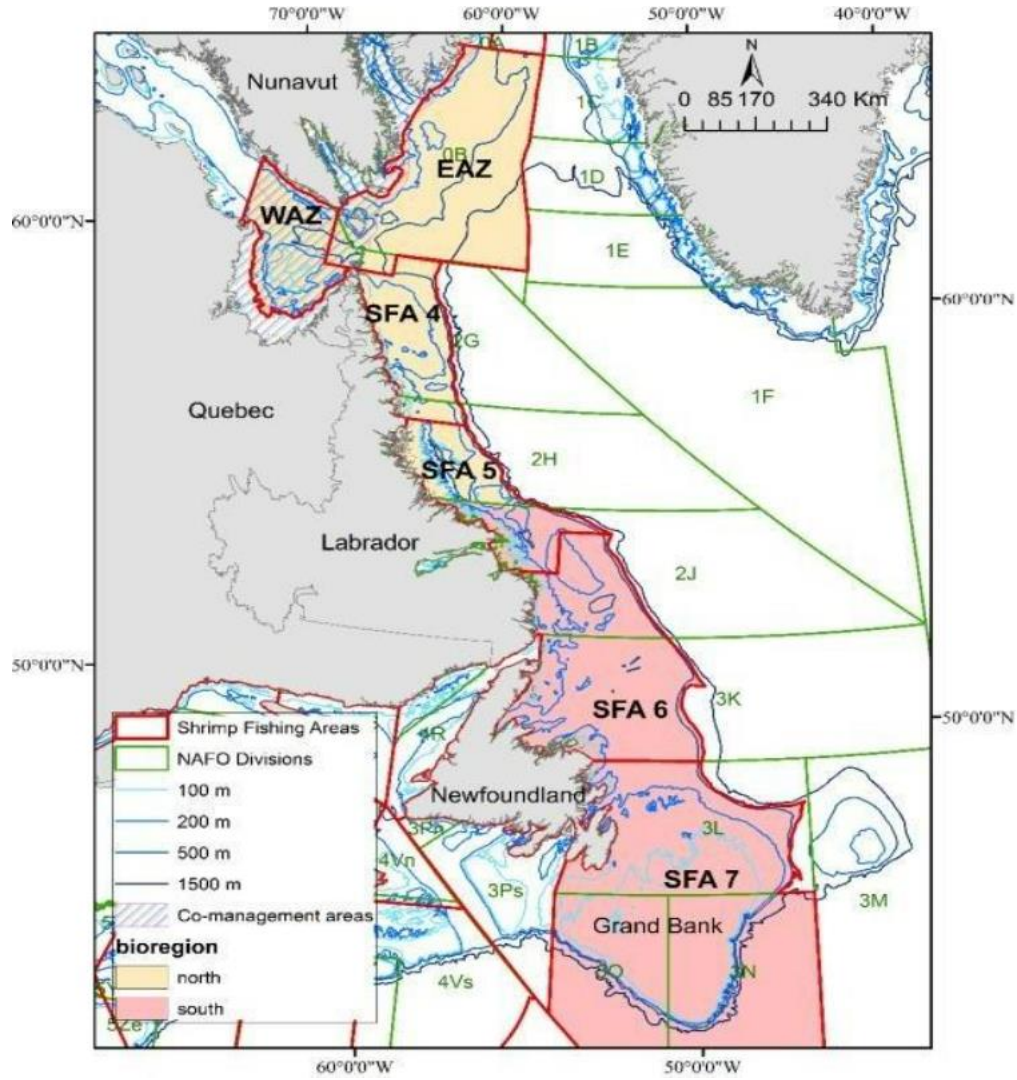
## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Maps of shrimp administrative areas in Atlantic Canada

**Appendix 2** – Season bridging protocols for NU and NK Allocations in the WAZ and EAZ

# Appendix 1





## Appendix 2

### Existing Season Bridging Protocol for NU and NK Allocations in the WAZ and EAZ

#### Carry Forward

##### WAZ (*P. montagui*)

The Department will make 800t available in the WAZ for carry forward to Nunavut and Nunavik allocation holders annually; sharing of this amount will be consistent with the sharing arrangement established by the Boards.

Currently, based on the 50/50 split, Nunavut and Nunavik will each be able to bridge a total of 400t each. Any carry forward quota not caught by September 30 of the following year will remain unfished.

##### EAZ - Davis Strait, NU/NK E (*P. borealis*)

350t will be available for carry forward for Nunavut and 20t for Nunavik allocations, to be fished by July 31 of the following year. Quota that is not caught by this date will remain unfished.

#### Borrowing

##### WAZ (*P. montagui*)

Nunavut and Nunavik shall share a total of 550t annually for borrowing based on sharing arrangements established by the Boards, which is currently 275t each. Requests to borrow quota will be assessed by the Department on a case by case basis in consideration of ice and climate conditions.

##### EAZ - Davis Strait, NU/NK E (*P. borealis*)

Nunavut and Nunavik entities shall be allowed to borrow a total of 225t and 10t respectively from their following year's allocations, to be fished in the last month (March) of the current fishery.

**Table 1.** Existing Nunavut and Nunavik bridging allowances.

Area	Nunavik		Nunavut	
	Carry forward	Borrow	Carry forward	Borrow
WAZ <i>P. montagui</i>	400t	275t	400t	275t
WAZ <i>P. borealis</i>	N/A			
EAZ <i>P. montagui</i>	N/A			
EAZ <i>P. borealis</i> (Davis Strait NU/NK E)	20t	10t	350t	225t