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Canada and France agree to maintain cod quota on south coast of Newfoundland

[Barb Dean-Simmons](#) · [Journalist](#) | Posted: 19 hours ago | Updated: 2 hours ago | 5 Min Read



An Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*). Taken off the coast of Thyborøn, Denmark in July 2017. - Contributed

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Fisheries and Oceans minister Joyce Murray said Wednesday that Canada and France have agreed to maintain the current quota for cod in fishing zone 3Ps at 1,346 metric tonnes for the 2022-23 fishing season.

Fish stocks in that zone are co-managed because France owns Saint Pierre and Miquelon off the south coast of Newfoundland.

The two countries meet annually to negotiate management measures and quotas for the shared fish stocks.

Under the terms an agreement signed in 1994 Canada holds 84.4 per cent of the total allowable catch, while the other 15.6 per cent is held by France.

Sector/fleet allocation of total allowable catch for 3

Source: Atlantic Groundfish Council

Murray called the rollover of quotas a “responsible decision.”

“It is encouraging to see the stock showing signs of modest growth,” she said in a press release.

Last fall scientists with Fisheries and Oceans Canada said the **3Ps cod stock remains in the critical zone.**

Karen Dwyer told media at a Nov. 19 briefing that the current spawning biomass of 3Ps cod is 31.5 thousand tonnes. That keeps it under the 66-kilotonne level that would get the stock off the critical list under DFO’s precautionary approach protocol.

If no one fished it at all, scientists say, the biomass could grow by 20 percent.

Even with some fishing—at levels similar to the past couple of seasons—the stock could grow by 10 per cent.

Quotas in that zone have been cut significantly over the past several years.

Total allowable catch - cod zone 3Ps (Newfoundland's south coast)

Source: Atlantic Groundfish Council

For five years, 1993 to 1997, the cod stock was under moratorium.

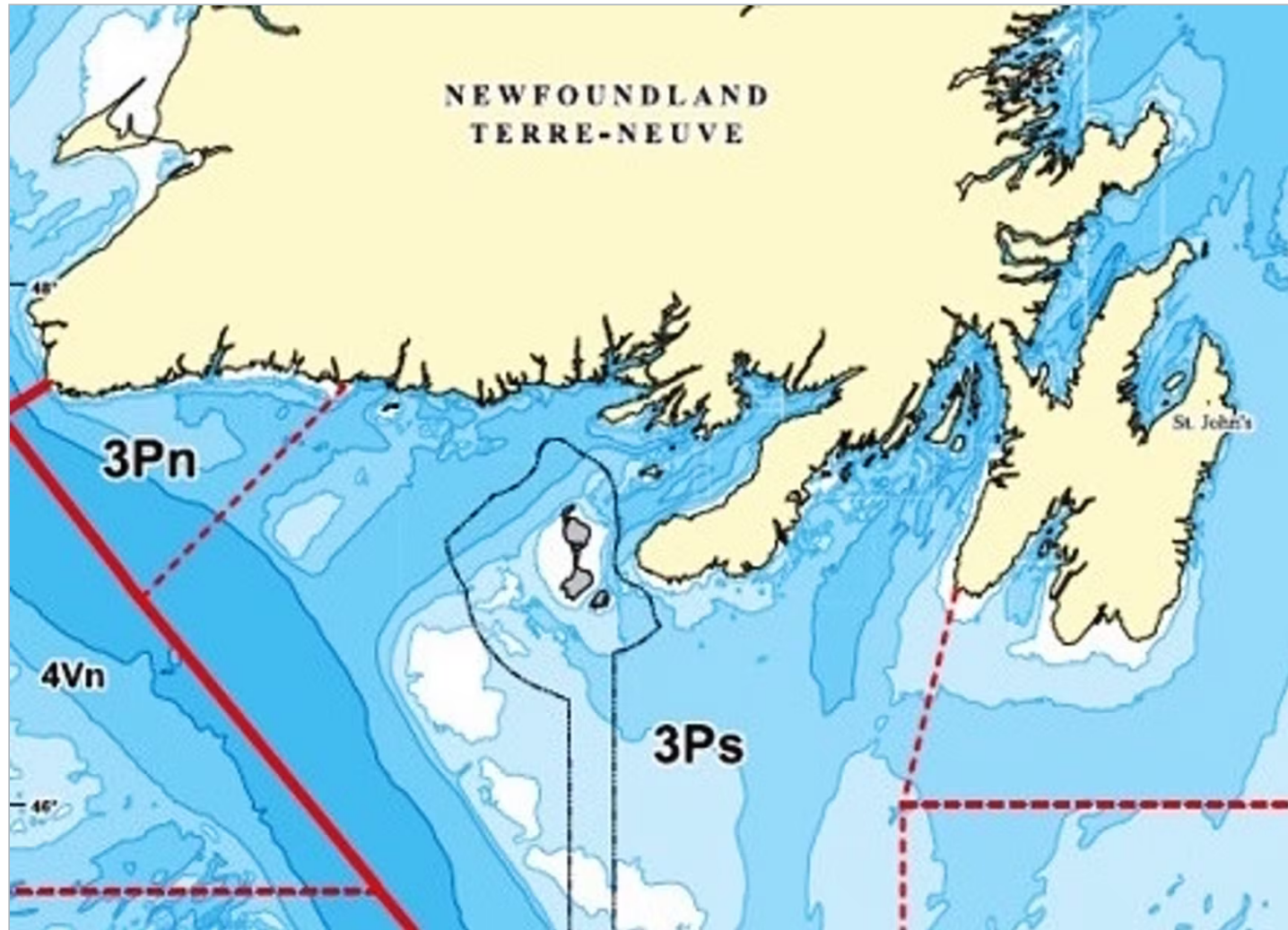
When the moratorium ended in 1996, the TAC was set at 10,000 tonnes.

Quotas increased to 20,000 tonnes for 2000-2001 but reduced to 15,000 tonnes from 2001 to 2005.

By 2019-20 the TAC had dropped to 5,980 tonnes, and **in 2021 DFO decided to cut the quota by 50 percent.**

While the low quotas have hit fish harvesters and processors that rely on 3Ps cod for some of their earnings, the Atlantic Groundfish Council (AGC) said it is

encouraged by the decision and DFO's commitment to have a rebuilding plan in place for 3Ps cod by the end of this year.



Canada and France each have fishing rights in zone 3Ps on the south coast of Newfoundland. - DFO

Kris Vascotto, executive director of the AGC, noted government, the industry and some non-government organizations began work on this plan last year and

“there has been a spirit of cooperation and a shared vision of a rebuilt stock that is encouraging.”

Vascotto said the rebuilding plan is expected to be in place in time to allow quotas to be set for the 2023-24 season.

The AGC is also involved in **a fishery improvement project for 3Ps** that is supported by the **Sustainable Fisheries Partnership** a global non-profit that operates in part to rebuild depleted fish stocks.

Vascotto added Murray’s decision on the quota for this year indicates the department shares the view of the fishing industry that natural mortality is the biggest challenge facing the 3Ps stock.

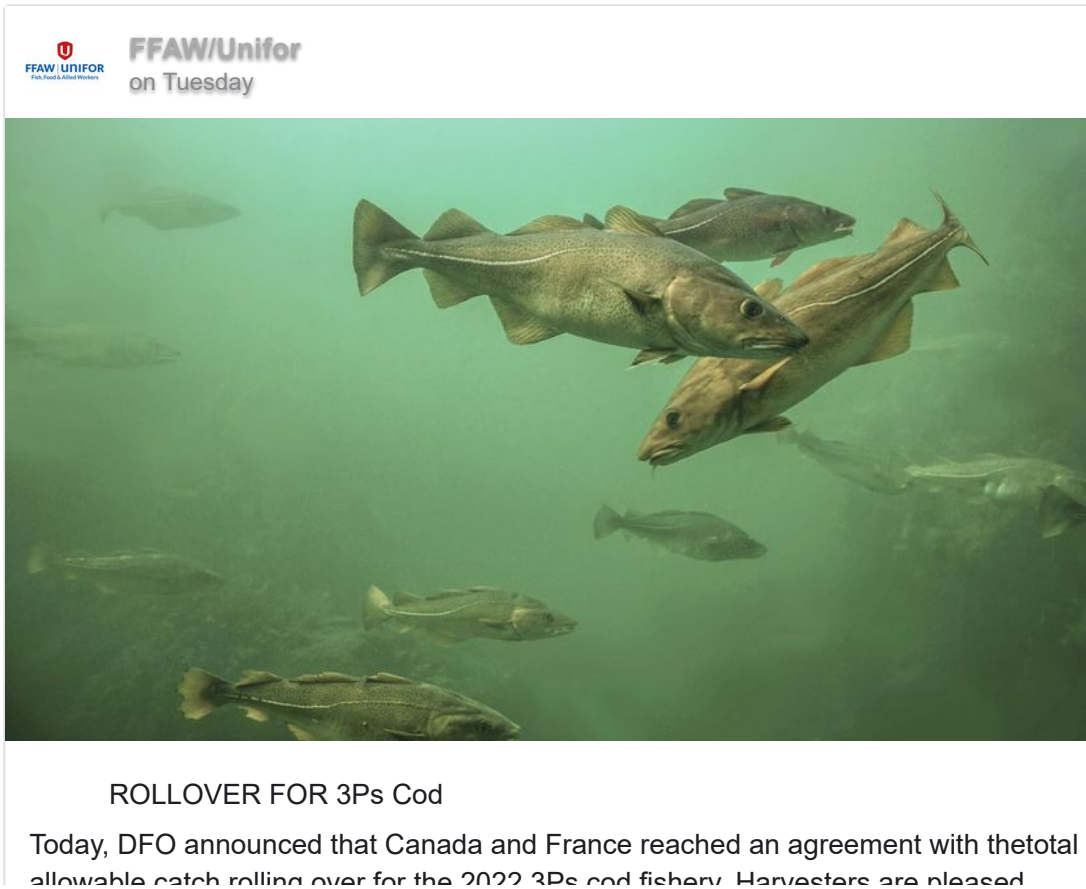
So, what’s causing that natural mortality?

Last year fish harvesters and their union pointed to seals.

In **a demonstration at Clarenville last year**, to protest the idea of a moratorium on 3Ps cod, Fish Food and Allied Workers (FFAW) president Keith Sullivan said the grey seal population in Atlantic Canada has grown to the extent that the cod stock in the Maritimes and Gulf zones is just about wiped out.

He said the seals were moving into the 3Ps zone as well and “something has to be done to manage these predators.”

In a post on its Facebook page this week, the union said harvesters were pleased with a rollover of the cod quota for this year, but they remain concerned about the high rate of death of the fish.



ROLLOVER FOR 3Ps Cod

Today, DFO announced that Canada and France reached an agreement with the total allowable catch rolling over for the 2022 3Ps cod fishery. Harvesters are pleased

The union once again pegged “seal predation” as one of the factors.

The Canada-France agreement also governs the quotas for witch flounder, Unit 2 redfish and 3Ps Iceland scallop. Quotas for those species will also remain the same as last year.

The countries have also agreed to maintain a moratorium on 3Ps American plaice.

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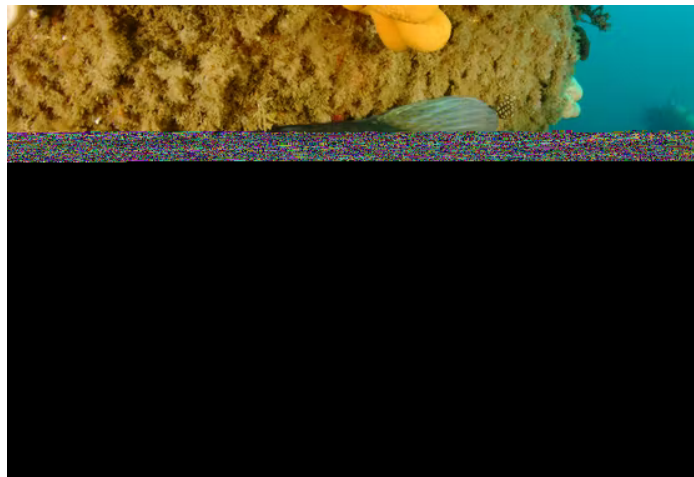
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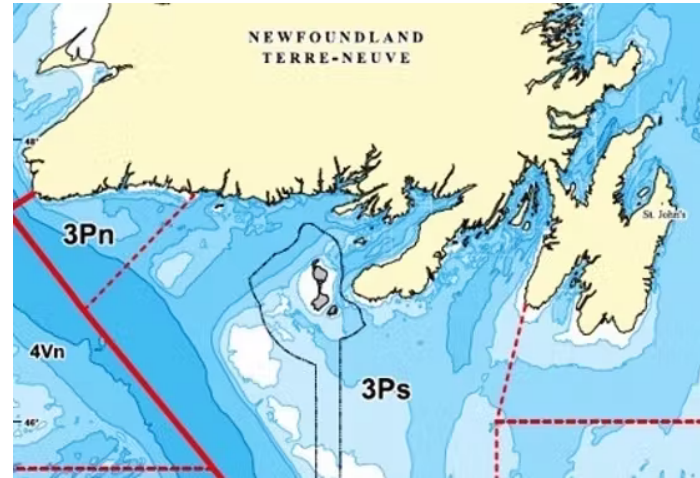


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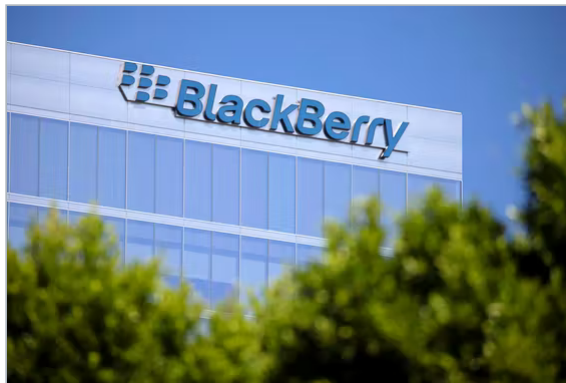
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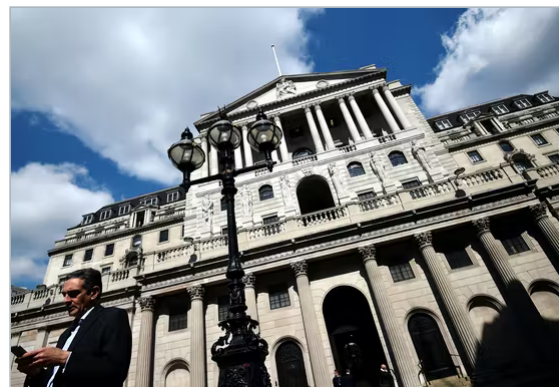
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