



PACIFIC PRAWN FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Protocols for Sampling Prawns, Destined for Tubs, to Monitor Size Limits in the Commercial Prawn Fishery

The minimum size limit for prawns in the commercial fishery is 33 mm carapace length or 22 mm telson length if heads have been removed. Two input harvest control rules that are in place to reduce the capture of undersize prawns are: a) a minimum mesh size restriction on traps and b) the single haul provision. However, some undersize prawns are retained in the trap as they are brought aboard the vessel and this is regulated through an output harvest control rule that requires prawns be sorted immediately after capture with all undersize prawns and bycatch released unharmed. Fishery officers may board a vessel at any time to enforce the minimum size limit regulation.

A concern has been raised that prawns frozen in tubs may inhibit a fishery officers' ability to readily measure prawns for size. In response to this concern, fishers are strongly encouraged to not freeze more than 1lb of prawns in a tub. To assist the fishery officer in obtaining a sample of prawns, destined for tubs, for measurement of size the following procedures are proposed by the Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association:

- DFO fishery officers can board a vessel at any time to inspect for retention of undersize. Prawns for size sampling are available to be selected at many locations on board the vessel as follows:
 - A sample of prawns can be taken as the fisher transfers retained catch off the sorting table. The fisher can slide the prawns into a container to give to the fishery officer. Alternatively, the fishery officer can select a sample themselves after sorting is complete.
 - A sample of prawns can be taken from the purging tank. The fisher or a fishery officer may extract a random sample from a bucket/bag from the purging tank for inspection.
 - A sample of prawns can be taken from the processing table. The fisher can slide the prawns into a container to give to the fishery officer. Alternatively, the fishery officer can select a sample themselves from the processing table before they are packaged.



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- A sample of prawns can be taken from the tubs. Recently packaged tubs will not have reached a frozen state.
- For tubs that are in a frozen state the fishery officer may be able to measure some of the telsons through the container if it is of a clear plastic.
- For tubs that are frozen, and the entire contents needs to be inspected, fishers will immediately thaw the tub so that individual prawns can be readily selected.
 - Testing has shown that 1 lb of prawns can be fully thawed in less than 2:30 seconds by placing the frozen contents of the tub in a basket and spraying with a deck hose.
 - If multiple tubs are requested by the fishery officer, the tubs should be placed in the same basket and thawed at the same time so as not to add extra time to the thawing procedure.
 - Again, fishers are advised to freeze no more than 1lb of prawns in a tub to facilitate rapid thawing.
- If an on-ground (third-party) observer suspects a vessel is retaining undersize prawn, the observers are to report this to the J.O. Thomas office in Vancouver as soon as they depart the vessel. J. O. Thomas will forward this suspected activity to the DFO lead Prawn manager. J. O. Thomas (as the third-party service provider) is in formal contact with the lead DFO manager twice a week during the commercial fishery.
- If required and of benefit to DFO, the PPFA is willing to work with DFO to develop a size monitoring program with the third party on-ground monitors.