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News Release - Manitoba

March 11, 2019

PROVINCE TAKES STEPS TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY OF LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERY

New Measures Introduced to Help Fish Stock Replenish

The Manitoba government will offer the option of voluntary Individual Quota Entitlement buy-back, and introduce new commercial and recreational fishing regulations intended to help assure sustainable fish populations in Lake Winnipeg, Sustainable Development Minister Rochelle Squires announced today.

"We are seeing early warning signs the sustainability of fisheries resources in Lake Winnipeg is at risk," Squires said. "By acting today, we will ensure the ability of Manitoba's great lake to generate food, provide enjoyment and support economic growth in future."

Effective immediately, until March 21, the province is offering a voluntary commercial fisheries quota buy-back option. Commercial fishers can make Notifications of Interest to sell their Individual Quota Entitlements (annual allowable catch) to the province. The province will then retire the purchased entitlements in order to reduce the amount of commercial catch taken from the lake every year.

In an effort to allow more smaller fish to grow to spawning size, and increase the overall natural productivity of the lake over time, the province will be consulting fishers on other sustainable regulation measures, including net minimum mesh sizes and recreational angling minimum length retention limits. A 30-day consultation period will begin immediately.

The minister also announced the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Co-management Board spring meeting will feature a collaborative science and adaptive management workshop as previously agreed to by the Manitoba Wildlife Federation and commercial fishers. The workshop will be facilitated by a third party and include Indigenous, angling and commercial net fishing and tourism interests along with provincial representation. The goal of this workshop is to set the foundation for a new model of shared management that is broadly based and geared to enhance the fishery using science, knowledge and monitoring, she noted.

The minister also announced the Waterhen Lake/Skownan First Nation will be receiving a \$60,000 Sustainable Fisheries Fund grant in recognition of their shared management efforts on Manitoba's and the Western Hemisphere's first eco-certified freshwater fishery.

"This government recognizes the value of listening and finding better ways of doing things in partnership," added Squires. "A shared science and knowledge approach will generate information we all have confidence in and provide a strong foundation for shared management of our treasured Lake Winnipeg fishery."

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Province Takes Steps to Address Sustainability of Lake Winnipeg Fishery bit.ly/2Hc6qKt



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More information on either the buy-back or the sustainable management consultation is available at www.gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/fish_wildlife/fish/quota_buyback_proposed_reg.pdf. Fishers are encouraged to reach out through the contact emails and numbers provided in the linked document.

- 30 -

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