**Conservation, concertation, and innovative technologies for co-existing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence: the crabbers perspective.**

In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, crab fishermen developed, in partnership with scientists, engineers, conservation NGOs and governmental agencies, different approaches to adapt their operations and fishing gear to the presence of North Atlantic Right Whales (NARW) on fishing grounds and try to coexist on a shared territory. Since 2018, an Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) project focussed on the development of new technologies of fishing gear to reduce entanglements or fatalities when fishermen and whales are occurring on the same area and at the same time. This project, testing 15 different solutions, resulted in interesting findings that could enhance our competences to find the most effective and efficient solutions to protect NARW while maintaining fisheries in the Gulf. The key findings of this project are presented, along with the new project it allowed to create. This new 3-year project (2021 – 2023) aims to build on the knowledge gained during the last 3 years on how to coexist with NARW and developing the best working solutions for the three most promising options explored by our team, being: 1) to address issues raised by the fish harvesters who experienced the EdgeTech ropeless technology during the 2020 fishing season before recommending and promoting full commercial fishery in closed areas with this new technology; 2) to conduct a pilot tests using weak rope (less than 1,700 lbs) as vertical lines during commercial snow crab fishing in CFA12 closed areas; and 3) to combine our knowledge on 4 initiatives tested in 2018-2020 to test the feasibility of using snow crab pots throughout CFA12 as hydrophone holders to track whales and vessels. This new project will allow to strengthen the collaboration with the government, academics, and fishermen, in better understanding the fishery the whales, and our most realistic and efficient options to coexist in the Gulf.

300 words (max. 300)