

Findings and Decision - Renewal Application of Bounty Bay Shellfish Inc. for AQ#0148

1. Overview:

On September 13, 2019, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NSDFA) received an application from Bounty Bay Shellfish Inc. to renew Aquaculture Licence and Lease #0148 (AQ#0148), as described below:

Table 1. Description of Aquaculture Licence and Lease #0148

Type: Marine	Size: 35.00 HA
Number: AQ#0148	Cultivation Method: Suspended shellfish cultivation
Applicant: Bounty Bay Shellfish Inc.	Species: Blue mussel
Location: St. Anns Harbour, Victoria County	Proposed Term: 10 year Licence/20 year Lease

2. History

AQ#0148 was first issued on August 21st, 1990 for a ten-year term (August 1st, 1990 to July 31st, 2000). AQ#0148 was assigned from Connor & Associates Limited to Bounty Bay Shellfish Inc. on March 16th, 1999. AQ#0148 was renewed on June 21st, 2000 for a five-year term (August 1st, 2000 to August 1st, 2005). AQ#0148 was renewed on August 17, 2005 for a five-year term (August 1st, 2005 to August 1st, 2010). AQ#0148 was renewed on January 5, 2011 for a five-year term from August 1st, 2010 to August 1st, 2015. AQ#0148 was renewed on August 26th, 2015 for a five year term (August 1, 2015 to August 1, 2020).

3. Procedure

3.1 Performance Review

A performance review of the information submitted by the operator in support of their renewal application was completed. This review recommended that the site be renewed based on the technical and biological assessment. This performance review is required pursuant to Subsection 72(c) of the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations, and was completed on June 30, 2020.

3.2 Public Comment Period

Notice of the application for the renewal of AQ#0148 for the 30-day public comment period was published on NSDFA's website (<http://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/public-information/>) for the period of April 9, 2020 to May 8, 2020. Notice of the application was also published in the Royal Gazette Part I on April 8, 15, 22, 29 and May 6, 2020.

3.3 Submissions

Zero submissions were received by NSDFA during the 30-day public comment period.

4. **Factors to be considered**

Review of the file indicates that the site has had consistent production and employment, AQ#0148 is an integral component of the operator's multi-site aquaculture operation. The information in support of the renewal suggests continued production is planned for this site and continued employment. Department staff will continue to monitor that production plans are implemented as submitted.

The performance review noted that there are no expected impacts on fisheries activities as a result of the renewal of this lease and licence. Although not specific to AQ#0148, benthic monitoring of other shellfish aquaculture sites within St. Ann's Bay has consistently shown limited potential for impact from shellfish aquaculture. Bounty Bay Shellfish Inc. participates in two annual Community Liaison Committee Meetings with the local community and other stakeholders to discuss activities on the site, including the Environmental Monitoring Program.

There were no ecological concerns identified in the past performance of this site with respect to negative impacts on other fisheries. AQ#0148 is licensed to cultivate shellfish species, and as such there is no evidence that shellfish aquaculture will have impacts on the sustainability of wild salmon. The successful growth of blue mussels in St. Ann's Harbour has been proven. The information reviewed during the performance review did not indicate adverse impacts on the surrounding public waters.

There are no recorded instances on file of AQ#0148 interfering with other users of the public waters surrounding the operation. AQ#0148 is authorized to cultivate shellfish using suspended gear, and as such the gear must remain within the geographic boundaries of the site. Section 55 of the Licence and Lease Regulations requires an aquaculture licence holder to mark each of their sites in a manner determined by the Minister and keep each site marked during the term of their licence. The licence and lease holder is to comply with the Canadian Navigable Waters Act and the agreed upon site markings with public access corridors where applicable.

The Department is aware of past concerns regarding loose gear from suspended shellfish sites in St. Ann's Harbour. The Farm Operations section of the Farm Management Plan for AQ#0148 will require the operator to indicate how they will operate AQ#0148 in accordance with industry best practices with respect to maintaining the site in good order, the removal of decommissioned farm supplies and equipment, and the retrieval of gear or debris that has broken loose. Any complaints received by the Province of Nova Scotia specific to a particular aquaculture site, such as AQ#0148, are reviewed by Nova Scotia Environment, with appropriate follow-up and prescribed actions taken if necessary.

AQ#0148 is located in St. Ann's Harbour. The nearest sites to AQ#0148 are AQ#0277 and AQ#1188, each located approximately 100 metres away. AQ#0148 is located less than 250 metres from the shoreline at its nearest point. There are eight other shellfish aquaculture sites licensed in St. Ann's Harbour, four of which are also operated by Bounty Bay Shellfish Incorporated. There is no evidence to suggest that the extent of existing aquaculture in the harbour has exceeded the carrying capacity of the harbour.

5. Decision

Based on the considerations above, Aquaculture Licence #0148 shall be renewed for a period of 10 years (August 2, 2020 to August 1, 2030) and Aquaculture Lease # 0148 shall be renewed for a period of 20 years (August 2, 2020 to August 1, 2040).

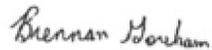
The Licence and Lease documents shall be prepared in accordance with the standard operating documents of NSDFA, and shall be made publicly available subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

6. Conditions

In addition, the following condition shall apply:

The operator shall adhere to the following site marking requirements:

- a) mark all corners of the leased site with cautionary yellow buoys of a minimum of 60 cm in diameter;
- b) mark all corners of the leased bottom with a cement block or similar device of a weight sufficient to ensure the cement block or device remains in place at all times; and
- c) display the licence or lease number of 1 corner of the licenses or leased area.



Brennan Goreham
Aquaculture Administrator
Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

August 21, 2020

Date