Atlantic Canada accounted for approximately 80% of the value of total commercial fisheries landings in Canada in 2015\(^1\). The Fishing industry has long been a part of Atlantic Canada’s economy and local culture, but has seen two decades of employment decline, as well as a high degree of vulnerability to seasonality.

This profile provides an overview of recent labour market conditions for the Fishing industry in the Atlantic region and outlines some of the high-value species found within the Atlantic fisheries. The major occupations covered in this report are: Fishermen/women, Fishing vessel deckhands, and Fishing masters and officers. Trends and outlooks are provided when relevant and sufficient data are available.

The following are some key highlights:

- Each of the Atlantic Provinces experienced reductions to their respective fishing employment bases over the past twenty years, with Newfoundland and Labrador having experienced the greatest loss.

- The most important species of fish to the Atlantic fishery (by value) are lobster, shrimp and queen (snow) crab. Combined, these species account for 78% of the total landed value of fish in the Region.

- The Fishing industry in Atlantic Canada has one of the highest proportions of older workers compared to other industries, with 35% over the age of 55 years (compared to 22% for all industries).

- The industry has the highest unemployment rate among all industries in Atlantic Canada, in large part due to its seasonal nature, with an average rate of 27% in 2016 compared to 10% for all industries.

- Employment prospects in Atlantic Canada’s Fishing industry are expected to be limited over the forecast horizon (2017-2019) due in part to limited commercial access to fishing resources and recent species management policies.

If you would like a pdf copy of the full profile, please contact the Labour Market Analysis Directorate, Service Canada, Atlantic Region at:

\(^1\) The most recent year for which data is available.