

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE NEWS

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The Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch and the Communications Directorate of the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation
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A DYNAMIC INDUSTRY

We're already witnessing the beginnings of spring as preparations are made for the start of the fishing season. Even though it's the low season for commercial fishing and aquaculture, winter was still a busy time. In 2019, I began travelling throughout the regions of Québec, and I visited the coast three times; going twice to Gaspésie and once to the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I intend to visit the Côte-Nord in 2020 to wrap up.

I was delighted to attend the annual Quebec Association of the Fishing Industry (AQIP) convention, given the exciting theme of processing and the economy in maritime regions. Indeed, as a cog in the economic engine and the primary employer in some communities, with 4000 jobs created in our coastal regions and half a billion dollars in annual revenue, it's fair to say that the processing industry plays an active role in the dynamism and vitality of coastal Québec. Many important dossiers and multiple projects were submitted by the industry, with more to come in 2020, particularly regarding the development of new products, automation and robotization of processes, as well as food certifications.

Additionally, the sector's central role in the local economy calls for synergy between the various stakeholders in the commercial fishing and aquaculture field. As I reiterate at every opportunity, I am here to help you and want to encourage everyone in the industry to work together, hand in hand, to successfully achieve the actions that will generate economic benefits for the entire industry and which will contribute to the economic growth of our maritime regions. Many challenges still lie ahead, and only a concerted effort will allow the sector to make comfortable progress.

I wish you a warm early spring, so that your fishing season can get off to a good start. Once again, I want to take this opportunity to express my desire to see everyone in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industry work together toward the growth and sustainability of all companies.



Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries, and Food
ANDRÉ LAMONTAGNE

THE DIRECTION DE L'INNOVATION: A NEW UNIT IN THE SOUS-MINISTÉRIAT AUX PÊCHES ET À L'AQUACULTURE COMMERCIALES

Innovation and research are among the main tools for development, productivity and economic diversification. This motivates the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) to invest nearly \$8 million annually in business initiatives for the adoption of innovative

technologies and practices, in business and research centre R&D projects related to fisheries and aquaculture and in scientific and technical services for the industry.

Given the importance of innovation, in 2019 the MAPAQ established a new branch dedicated to supporting research and innovation for the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Located in Gaspé and headed by Mr. Marcel Roussy, the mandate of this new unit of the Sous-ministériat aux pêches et à l'aquaculture commerciales is to guide the department on scientific and technical issues, to contribute to the development and implementation of research-innovation policies and programs and to participate in collaborative structures related to innovation. In particular, the Direction de l'innovation (DI) manages components 2 and 4 of the Innovamer program, which provide financial assistance for sectoral innovation projects and partnership initiatives. The components provide support to research institutions and organizations dedicated to innovation and promote the availability of scientific and technical services and the development of expertise in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector.

The DI works closely with the other branches of the Sous-ministériat aux pêches et à l'aquaculture commerciales to fulfil its mandate and serve its customers throughout Québec by creating functional links with these teams.



The Direction de l'innovation staff, left to right: Ms. Micheline Fournier, Secretariat Officer, Mr. Marcel Roussy, Director and Ms. Julie Boyer, Innovation Advisor.

THE SOUS-MINISTÉRIAT AUX PÊCHES ET À L'AQUACULTURE COMMERCIALES RECRUITS A PROCESSING ADVISOR

By Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

Since June 2019, the Sous-ministériat aux pêches et à l'aquaculture commerciales (SMPAC) of the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) has enhanced its food processing services with the arrival of a technical advisor in processing for the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Mr. Jean Paradis, who has several years of experience in the private sector and also with the MAPAQ as a process technician and at the Merinov Centre, will provide technical support in analyzing financial assistance applications, ensuring that the SMPAC services meet the needs of the industry and maintaining the department's food processing expertise. He will also ensure that companies and partners are supported in their interactions with the various SMPAC branches.

To contact Mr. Jean Paradis:

Phone: 418-368-7676, ext. 1850

E-mail address: jean.paradis@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE?

By Nathalie Moisan

Direction de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

Are you curious to know how to farm yellow perch or walleye? Are you a producer who wants to spawn twice per year by modifying the photoperiod? The answers to these and many other questions can be found in specialized aquaculture information documents that are available free of charge from the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation on its website at the following address: www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/publications-aquaculture.

Happy reading!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN FISH FARMING? DISCOVER ARCTIC CHAR FARMING



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ARCTIC CHAR

Arctic char, also known as mountain trout, iqualukpiq in Inuktitut and *Salvelinus alpinus* in Latin, is a cold-water fish that is raised primarily for the table market, although a small amount is also used for stocking. Wild Arctic char is also an important food resource for people living in northern Canada, particularly for the Inuit. In Québec, arctic char is called "omble chevalier", roughly translated to "Knight's char", after a 16th-century researcher who, upon seeing the fish, found that "its flanks [during the spawning season] are red like those of a knight" and that "it is taller, more beautiful and stronger than brook trout".

Arctic char is the third most important species in Québec in terms of volume of fish produced, after brook trout and rainbow trout. Its popularity is growing among consumers who want a top-quality niche product.

Practicing commercial freshwater aquaculture activities in Québec requires a mandatory permit from the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ). Prior authorizations are, however, required and must be obtained from the municipality, the ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques and the ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs. For more information, consult the document *Lois et règlements relatifs à l'aquaculture en eau douce*: www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/loisaquaculture.

WHY FARM ARCTIC CHAR?

Farming Arctic char is an activity that is not widely developed in Québec. However, we would benefit from eating more of this species of fish because its omega-3 rich flesh is prized by chefs around the world for its more delicate and nuanced texture than that of salmon and a taste punctuated with nutty aromas. An ever-growing demand for fish farmed for consumption is growing worldwide and the MAPAQ supports the development of this sector of activity in Québec.

Arctic char is a promising candidate for aquaculture development in Québec given its excellent low-temperature growth rate, its tolerance to high stocking densities and its excellent net yield, making it an ideal fish for farming.

ARCTIC TROUT NEEDS

- Females that are ready to spawn prefer water temperatures of 4 to 7°C, which is required for the final stages of the reproductive cycle, while juveniles grow optimally at 12 to 14 C.
- In general, char requires well-oxygenated water. Indeed, its oxygen requirement may double during feeding or when the water temperature increases. Farmers must consider these variations to ensure the fish always has sufficient oxygen.
- Although anadromous Arctic char migrate to saltwater for part of their lives and return to the river to reproduce, most farmed strains are reared all their lives in freshwater or slightly brackish water.
- A clean environment and easy-to-maintain materials are essential to limit disease, although the species is generally considered robust.

Would you like more information on Arctic char farming?

Contact the MAPAQ Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures at 819-371-3971.

PROMOTING MARINE PRODUCTS FROM THE GASPÉ PENINSULA

By Gabrielle Lafond-Chenail
Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

Last spring, the identification of Gaspé fish and seafood was the subject of a pilot project. This project was carried out in collaboration with Gaspésie Gourmande and the fishmongers associated with Gaspé processing plants and was intended to identify authentic Gaspé marine products and to respond to the major consumer trends of purchasing locally and ensuring traceability.

Point-of-sale promotional tools were distributed to identify marine products caught or farmed by Gaspé enterprises landed, processed and sold in the Gaspé Peninsula through the fish shops associated with this enhancement initiative. The label bearing the name "Gaspésie Gourmande mer" made it possible to take advantage of the prestige of the Gaspésie Gourmande brand and easily distinguish the region's marine products. The species highlighted in this first year of the project were lobster, snow crab, northern shrimp, Greenland halibut, Atlantic halibut and Arctic char. Training was also given to properly inform and sensitize the key fishmonger employees about species identification.

In terms of public relations and promotional activities, the project received significant visibility in an advertorial in the 2019 edition of the Gaspésie Gourmande guide-magazine. A total of 36,000 copies were distributed throughout the Gaspé Peninsula during the summer season resulting in a wide readership. The project team also met with the media during the project deployment tour and conducted seven separate interviews and press stories. Various publications on the Facebook social network also reached nearly 23,000 people. Finally, information on the project was made available with the development of a Web microsite.

This pilot project resulted in stakeholders' expectations being met. The project's brand signature is strong and further enhances the value of Gaspé marine products, which are a distinctive regional highlight. Furthermore, development avenues such as signature activities, strategic partnerships and content creation are promising for the project's future. They will not only help promote Gaspé marine products and participating enterprises, but also enhance the value of the entire Gaspé Peninsula fishing and aquaculture industry. The Gaspésie Gourmande team is thereby working to continue the project to ensure its full deployment in the years to come.

Finally, the project has received financial assistance from the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation.

Use this logo to identify marine products
fished, raised, landed, processed and sold
by Gaspé residents in the Gaspé Peninsula!



SUBMISSION OF THE 2018-2023 ACTION PLAN FOR A SUCCESSFUL BIO-FOOD POLICY

By Rabia Sow
Direction des analyses et des politiques des
pêches et de l'aquaculture

On January 29, the ministre de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation unveiled the 2018-2023 Action Plan for a Successful Bio-Food Policy. This document marks a pivotal step in implementing the 2018-2025 Bio-food Policy - Feeding our World. Indeed, it presents a synthesis of nearly 60 roadmaps that include more than 1,700 measures and actions planned by the bio-food sector and government partners to achieve the targets set for 2025. These measures and actions were determined and prepared in collaboration with the bio-food sector partners.

We invite you to read the following documents:

- Plan d'action 2018-2023 : www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/politiquebioalimentaire-plan
- Plan d'action 2018-2023 (sommaire 2020) : www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/politiquebioalimentaire-sommaireplan
- Feuille de route – Filière sectorielle des pêches et de l'aquaculture : www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/feuillede-route-pechesaquaculture

LES ÎLES-DE- LA-MADELEINE'S ANNUAL FISHING AND MARICULTURE INDUSTRY GATHERING

By Karine Villemaire
Direction régionale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine

On December 11, 2019, Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine's fishing and mariculture industry gathering was held. On the theme of "A thriving industry: stay the course!" the 11th edition of this major event brought together more than 150 participants involved in the sector.

The day began with a review of current events, followed by summaries of fisheries and mariculture activities for the 2019 year. In particular, 2019 was a record year for most of the fisheries in the archipelago, both in terms of quantities and landed values. The theme of the day was, therefore, well justified!

Participants were able to attend a number of conferences on a variety of topics, for example:

- Naviguer en eau trouble: faire face au défi de la main-d'œuvre*, by Ms. Marie-Josée Tessier, HR Strategist and Partner, Koläb;
- Optimisation des méthodes de production d'huîtres en lagune aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine*, by Mr. Robin Bénard, Project Leader, Merinov;
- Activités d'innovation sur la valorisation des coproduits marins*, by M. Colin Gauthier-Barrette, Research Professional, Merinov;
- Bilan énergétique des bateaux de pêche et techniques de réduction de l'empreinte écologique*, by M. Patrick Fortier-Denis, P. Eng., Innovation Maritime;
- Projet d'aire marine*, by Mr. Éric Le Bel, Marine Establishment Project Coordinator, Parks Canada.

These presentations provided an opportunity to inform and exchange with participants on the progress made and the solutions to be considered in direct relation to the main issues affecting the fisheries and mariculture sector in Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Furthermore, booths from the Merinov centre, the Centre de recherche sur les milieux insulaires et maritimes from the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), as well as the Fondation Madeli-Aide, which supports education for young fishers from Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, were accessible throughout the day. MAPAQ and DFO used the opportunity to introduce not only their respective financial assistance programs but also the Québec Fisheries Fund, which is jointly managed by the two departments.

Coordinated by the Municipality of Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine team on behalf of the Table pêche et mariculture des Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the 2019 Annual Fishing and Mariculture Industry Gathering was a success. MAPAQ is proud to be associated with this activity that mobilizes the entire industry.

To obtain the presentations, contact Ms. Anne-Emmanuelle Tardif of the Municipality of Îles-de-la-Madeleine at artardif@muniles.ca.



The speakers from left to right: Éric Le Bel (Park Canada), François Bourque (MAPAQ), Gabrielle Landry (Municipality of Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine), Robin Bénard (Merinov), Marie-Josée Tessier (Koläb), Josée Richard (DFO), Patrick Fortier-Denis (Innovation maritime), Colin Gauthier-Barrette (Merinov).

QUÉBEC FISHERIES FUND: REGIONAL TOUR

By Karine Villemaire

Direction régionale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine

By Jean Lavallée

Direction régionale de la Côte-Nord

By Thierry Marcoux

Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

The Québec Fisheries Fund (QFF) came into effect on April 24, 2019. The fund is a contribution program funded jointly between Canada and Québec, with an envelope of \$42.8 million over 5 years. The purpose of the QFF is to stimulate innovation and support the development and adaptation of Québec's fish and seafood sector.

From September to December 2019, the ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) representatives conducted a joint tour to meet with commercial fishing and aquaculture industry stakeholders and partners in Québec's maritime regions and introduce them to the Québec Fisheries Fund. The objective of these meetings was to generate industry interest in the QFF and discuss potential projects based on the following three pillars: innovation, infrastructure and scientific partnerships.

SUMMARY OF THE MEETINGS

A total of 43 meetings were held in the various regions, reaching 70 businesses and associations directly involved in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector. Furthermore, more than 50 socio-economic partners, band councils and research centres were informed of the various opportunities offered by the program.

MAPAQ and DFO representatives noted the enthusiasm shown by the industry for carrying out projects in the context of the QFF and several intentions to carry out projects were discussed during the meetings. The projects put forward covered the harvesting sector as well as the aquaculture or processing sector. Furthermore, the discussions made it possible, among other things, to clarify the type of project eligible under the three proposed pillars, as well as the procedure to follow for submitting applications for financial assistance.

For more information on the Québec Fisheries Fund or to apply for financial assistance, please visit:
<https://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fondspechesquebec>.



STRONG EXPORT GROUP PRESENCE IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

By Michel Bélanger

Direction des analyses et des politiques des
pêches et de l'aquaculture

Techniques for promoting and marketing fish and seafood in foreign markets are constantly evolving. The Agri-Food Export Group Québec-Canada is always attentive to the needs of its members in this area and makes a point of being very active in the sector. That is why Mr. Hicham El Ghissassi, International Markets Director, and Mr. Jean-Philippe Nadeau, Export Advisor, visited the Gaspé Peninsula and Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine this summer to meet with more than 15 companies. The objective was to better understand the needs of these enterprises concerning export activities and to better identify the challenges they face. It was also an opportunity for companies to decide what strategies to adopt to promote and sell their products in the main markets. The Export Group's service at major international trade shows such as Seafood Expo North America in Boston in the United States, Seafood Expo Global in Europe and China Fisheries & Seafood Expo in Qingdao, China was also discussed.

During the meetings that took place, companies expressed their interest in continuing their efforts to diversify markets. They also pointed out that the way to achieve this diversification is unique to each. Constraints were also raised concerning the ability to exhibit at each of the trade shows; challenges were raised specifically concerning Seafood Expo Global and China Fisheries & Seafood Expo. The strategy deployed in recent years for Seafood Expo North America met the expectations of the consulted representatives.

Last January, the president and CEO of the Export Group, Mr. Martin Lavoie, gave a presentation at the convention of the Association québécoise de l'industrie de la pêche. At the briefing, he described the organization he leads and provided an overview of the summer tour. Constructive exchanges with participants followed the meeting and Mr. Lavoie was able to outline his vision of the sector's development and show his real interest in seeing his organization support maritime region exporters.

ABOUT AGRI-FOOD EXPORT GROUP QUÉBEC-CANADA

Agri-Food Export Group Québec-Canada is the largest association of agri-food exporters in Canada with over 450 members. It was founded in 1990 and over the years has developed several services and engaged in hundreds of activities to facilitate access to international markets for Québec's agri-food exporters. The Export Group is also the driving force behind the Prix Alizés and the Soirée des Alizés, two activities that take place on the fringes of SIAL Canada. It benefits from a privileged link between exporters and markets and is an essential link between the public sector and the industry. It works daily to increase the presence of Québec products around the world.

For more information about the Agri-Food Export Group Québec-Canada and the services provided to stakeholders in the Québec fish and seafood sector, please contact the adviser appointed to this business sector:

Mr. Jean-Philippe Nadeau, Export Advisor
E-mail address: Jean-PhilippeNadeau@groupeexport.ca
Website: www.groupeexport.ca/en/