

# FISHERIES AQUACULTURE

## NEWS

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## ANTICIPATING ANOTHER PROMISING SEASON

March has already arrived! Preparations are well underway for the upcoming fishing season, which I hope will be as productive as the one in 2021.

Overall, last season was a positive one. In fact, the preliminary value of the fish and seafood harvest in Québec reached an all-time high of \$437 million, exceeding the \$400 million mark for the first time. This is an outstanding performance.

The Québec fishing industry successfully played its hand despite the pitfalls caused by supply problems in world markets. We must now take advantage of this growth and redouble our efforts to promote and increase the visibility of Québec fish and seafood products on domestic markets in order to encourage consumers to continue choosing products from Québec.

Last December, I announced that a study would be set up to document how the fisheries and aquaculture sectors contribute to Québec's food autonomy. The results of the study will be used to develop a strategy to increase sales of Québec fish and seafood products on the domestic market and expand the fisheries sector's contribution to Québec's sustainable food autonomy.

Over the next few weeks, many promotional campaigns will be rolled out to reach Québec consumers. Our industry has everything to gain by promoting our products as the season approaches and as consumer appetite for fish and aquaculture products grows season after season.

The efforts of local fishers, aquaculturists and processors to offer high-quality products guarantee success. This is what distinguishes Québec products from imported products.



Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries, and Food

ANDRÉ LAMONTAGNE

The next few months will be busy for everyone. The partners of the 2018-2025 Bio-food Policy – *Feeding our World* are preparing for their third annual meeting to implement the policy. Scheduled for May, the meeting will be held on the theme of Sustainable Food Autonomy. I therefore invite representatives from your industry to take an active part in this process.

In closing, I would like to wish you an outstanding 2022 fishing season!

## INDUSTRY CONSULTATIONS TO IDENTIFY INNOVATIVE SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROJECTS

By Jérémie Persant,

Conseiller en innovation, Direction de l'innovation

Innovation is a driving force for industry growth, which is why MAPAQ focuses on activities in this area. For this reason, the Ministère has undertaken consultations to identify innovation-based projects and actions that will be prioritized to ensure effective and coordinated development for the sector in the coming years.

To increase the impact of innovation activities, the Ministère adopts a sectoral approach. Obviously, such an approach requires a high degree of cooperation between innovation partners such as companies, research centres, universities and the Ministère. Thus, we started organizing meetings with stakeholders interested in innovation in early December 2021. The first consultation focused on the algae sector. However, during 2022, other consultations will follow, notably for the fish farming, mariculture and marine product processing sectors in Québec. Subsequently, stakeholders in these fields will be invited to submit projects to the programs focused on innovation, namely the Fonds des pêches du Québec and the Innovamer program.

Finally, the Ministère would like to thank all the partners who have participated and will participate in this essential process.

## 2021 EDITION OF THE FISHING AND MARICULTURE INDUSTRY MEETING ON ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE (MAGDALEN ISLANDS)

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

Îles-de-la-Madeleine's fishing and mariculture industry meeting was held on December 15, 2021. This year, the event adopted a hybrid format to reach as many participants as possible who are active in this industry, while following COVID-19 health recommendations. This edition was therefore accessible both in-person and virtually. In total, about 125 people, including about 40 joining remotely, were able to participate in the meeting.

At the opening, the Îles-de-la-Madeleine mayor and deputy, Mr. Jonathan Lapierre and Mr. Joël Arseneau, highlighted the sector's vitality and noted the presence of professional fishing students. The ministre de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, Mr. André Lamontagne, also joined the virtually and participated in opening the event. During his presentation, he mentioned that two studies will be conducted to better document the role and contribution of the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector. One is about food autonomy and the other is about regional economic development. These studies will help define the actions the government will prioritize for the sector. The Minister also mentioned that he is paying particular attention to federal issues such as the Cap-aux-Meules wharf, as well as to respect for Québec's historical shares of the redfish fishery.



12 months in 12 minutes presentation by Ms. Gabrielle Landry, event host moderator

As with every year, presentations reviewing current events and 2021 fisheries results were highly anticipated. It appears that 2021 was another record year for the vast majority of fisheries in the islands sector, both in terms of quantities and landed values.



The meeting provided participants with a wealth of information on a variety of topics, including:

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF FISHERIES AND MARICULTURE BY FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA.

In total, the benefits were estimated at \$242.2 million in 2019 for the Îles-de-la-Madeleine sector.

### FOLLOW-UP ON THE DECISION-MAKING PROJECT FOR THE LFA 22 LOBSTER FISHING SEASON OPENING BY THE REGROUPEMENT DES PÊCHEURS ET DES PÊCHEUSES DES CÔTES DES ÎLES AND MERINOV.

Although there are some technological risks, the project provides relevant information about water temperature in different fishing areas, and biological information that could influence the opening date of the lobster fishery.

### TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ON SAFE LOBSTER FISHING TECHNIQUES BY MERINOV.

Since the demonstrator could not be transported to the Madelinot archipelago for technical reasons, a presentation was given to visualize the possible improvements on the deck of a lobster fishing vessel in order to maximize the safety of workers at sea.

### EMPLOYMENT SEGMENT BY LE BON GOÛT FRAIS DES ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE (BGFIM).

In order to attract new workers to the bio-food sector, BGFIM has produced several segments on possible jobs, including those in marine product processing facilities. The segment designed for Renaissance des Îles was presented during the meeting.

### IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF MARINE WASTE ON THE ARCHIPELAGO BY THE CENTRE DE RECHERCHE SUR LES MILIEUX INSULAIRES ET MARITIMES (CERMIM).

CERMIM has monitored its repurposing projects in the agricultural sector (lime replacement and soil improvers) and in the civil engineering field (concrete). It appears that the drying stage is crucial for complete waste repurposing. Research on solutions adapted to the insular context will continue.

### RECOVERY AND REPURPOSING OF LOST AND END-OF-LIFE FISHING GEAR: INITIATIVES IN THE AREA BY COMITÉ ZIP, MERINOV AND CERMIM.

Three local organizations have joined forces to locate, recover and reuse fishing equipment. This equipment was either lost, abandoned at sea, or simply unused. From the available data, 63 lobster traps and two dredges, not including rope, were recovered from the sea by diving. On land, 441 traps and 3,151 kg of rope were recovered. These materials have a potential for reuse and several concrete solutions have been employed as part of these projects.

### WINTERIZATION AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE SEGMENT BY THE COMITÉ SECTORIEL DE MAIN-D'ŒUVRE DES PÊCHES MARITIMES.

This segment shows the exemplary routine that a fisher must follow to maintain the safety equipment on board their boat.

The team from the Municipality of Îles-de-la-Madeleine municipality, which was coordinating the event on behalf of the Table pêche et mariculture des Îles-de-la-Madeleine, is proud of offering this 2021 fishing and mariculture meeting for the industry. MAPAQ supports this event whose goal is to be a collective initiative that allows the sector to shine.

To obtain any of the presentations, contact Ms. Marie-Christine Leblanc, Supervisor and Territorial Development Officer at the Municipality of Îles-de-la-Madeleine at [mcleblanc@muniles.ca](mailto:mcleblanc@muniles.ca).

## TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER RECRUITMENT IN FISH AND SEAFOOD PRODUCT PROCESSING PLANTS – REVIEW AND UPDATE OF MEASURES

By Omar Sarr,

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

Aquatic product processing plants in maritime regions are increasingly using the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) to meet their labour needs.

According to the data provided, these companies hired 151 temporary foreign workers during the 2019 commercial fishing season. In 2020, it was projected that 356 of these workers would be hired. However, due to the constraints of COVID-19, very little hiring of this nature was completed.

In 2021, however, 345 such hires occurred, compared to the projected 484. The length of stay for these workers ranged from 14 to 30 weeks based on with 35 to 45 hours worked per week. Overall, these workers accumulated nearly 320,000 working hours.

### THE COST OF HIRING TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

The costs paid by plants hiring these workers include individual fees totalling over \$1,400 paid to the governments of Canada and Québec. There are also fees for international recruiters, transportation, accommodation and more. By 2021, the average cost of hiring a single worker for some plants exceeded \$10,000. This amount included costs related to COVID-19, including accommodation and wages, during the 14-day mandatory isolation periods that these workers were subject to upon arrival in Québec.

To reduce the costs associated with international hiring, Québec offers companies financial support representing 50% of eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$1,200. In addition, in the context of COVID-19, the Government of Canada offered companies reimbursement for a portion of the costs related to the above-mentioned mandatory quarantine in the amount of \$1,500 per worker who arrived in Québec between January 1, 2021 and June 15, 2021 or \$750 for those who arrived in Québec between June 16, 2021 and August 31, 2021.

### NEW MEASURES TO MAKE THE HIRING PROCESS MORE FLEXIBLE INTERNATIONALLY

Last August, the Government of Québec and the Government of Canada reached an agreement to introduce flexibility into the temporary foreign worker hiring process. These measures will be in effect until December 31, 2023.

This increased flexibility affects three aspects of hiring for workers in the fisheries sector.

#### 1. Increasing the maximum number of temporary foreign workers a company can hire

The number of such workers that could be hired by a fish and seafood product processing company with more than 10 employees had been limited to 10% of the company's workforce.

Now, for positions in the low-wage sector, the proportion has increased to 20% for all occupations covered by the sectors determined by the Québec government, including fish and seafood preparation and packaging. Similarly, the exemption to the 10% limit remains in effect for low-wage seasonal positions that do not exceed 180 calendar days in duration.

#### 2. Adding fish and seafood plant workers to the list of occupations eligible for streamlined processing

In general, in order to hire a temporary foreign worker, a Québec company must submit an application for a labour market impact assessment (LMIA) which must be approved by both levels of government (Québec and Canada) in order to assess the impact of the planned hiring on the Canadian and Québec labour markets. This requires the company to first provide evidence that it has tried to recruit Quebecers and Canadians.

The new bilateral agreement allows plants in the sector to apply for an LMIA through a streamlined process that does not require evidence of efforts to recruit Quebecers and Canadians to work under the TFWP.

#### 3. Adding Labourers in Fish and Seafood Processing to the list of occupations exempt from the external posting process

Typically, prior to applying for an LMIA, a company must post job openings on the Government of Canada Job Bank and use two additional recruiting methods consistent with the occupation's job posting practice. In addition, posting must occur for a period of at least four consecutive weeks within the three months prior to applying for an LMIA.

Currently, fish and seafood product processing plants can apply for an LMIA to hire labourers under the TFWP without posting job openings externally.

Sources :

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[Program requirements for low-wage positions – Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visas-passeports/temporary-foreign-workers/program-requirements-low-wage-positions.html)

[https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/grands-dossiers/action\\_mainoeuvre/action\\_fiches/soutenir\\_recrutement.asp](https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/grands-dossiers/action_mainoeuvre/action_fiches/soutenir_recrutement.asp)

## 2021 RESSOURCES AQUATIQUES QUÉBEC (RAQ) MEETING

By **Nathalie Moisan**,  
Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

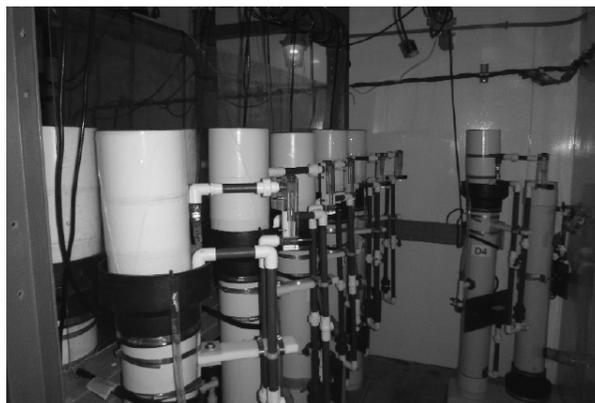


The inter-institutional Ressources Aquatiques Québec grouping held its annual meeting on November 23 and 24 in Québec City. The RAQ includes researchers from eight Québec university institutions, other provinces and countries, provincial and federal government departments, and several other fish and seafood sector organizations. Over 100 participants attended 22 high-quality presentations as well as a rapid-presentation session by the student body that replaced the traditional poster session. In this activity, students had only three minutes to engage the audience. This exercise in conciseness made for some very dynamic descriptions!

This year, for example, they included studies on the impact of climate change on commercially harvested ground fish populations, the diet of redfish, or the use of probiotics to improve the health of farmed fish captivated the audience. Summaries of all presentations can be found at <https://www.raq.uqar.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/130/2021/11/resumes.pdf>.

To mark the grouping's 20th anniversary, a photo contest illustrating the research projects was launched. This competition had two categories, the first entitled: My Field Research Project, and the second, My Laboratory Research Project.

The winner of the laboratory photo is Ms. Mousumi Sarker Chhanda. Her photo shows brook trout egg incubators with a biofilter. Her work focuses on the microbiota of brook trout, which could increase the quality of eggs during the incubation period.



© Crédit : Mousumi Sarker Chhanda, incubators with biological filter.

In the field category, Ms. Carole Gauvin won with her photo entitled *Anguille sous roche* [Eel under a rock] Ms. Gauvin is studying contamination in American eels.



© Crédit : Carole Gauvin, Anguille sous roche.

MAPAQ attended these meetings.

Congratulations to the organizing committee for this very successful edition!

## SHRIMP FISHING VESSEL OWNERS INVEST IN PROCESS AUTOMATION

By **Danielle Bouchard**,  
Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

By the spring of 2022, 11 shrimp fishing vessel owners<sup>1</sup> in Gaspé will acquire and install mechanized bycatch separation and weighing systems. This is an important innovation for the shrimp fishing industry in Québec.

The addition of separators on board the shrimp fishing vessel will optimize the bycatch separation operation which is currently done manually. This equipment will reduce the time spent processing the shrimp on deck and the time they are exposed to exterior heat. In addition, it will reduce handling of northern shrimp on board the fishing vessel, which will increase the quality of the products offered on the market and improve working conditions for the fisher's helpers.

Mechanization of the catch weighing system will allow programmed weighing and identical distribution in bags. The mechanized process will allow the shrimp to be put in the hold and iced more quickly, which will help improve their quality.

The eleven companies, with a total quota of nearly 2,625 metric tons of shrimp, are supported in their project by the Coopérative des Capitaines Propriétaires de la Gaspésie (formerly ACPG), which is putting them in direct contact with Danish-based equipment supplier Intech. Intech will be responsible for manufacturing the equipment and adapting the technology on the vessels.

Convinced of the gains, other fishers will likely undertake this productivity improvement, which also has positive repercussions on working conditions for the fisher's helpers.

MAPAQ contributes nearly \$800,000 of the approximately \$2.2 million invested in all businesses.

<sup>1</sup> Pêcheries Danamé Inc., 9080-6100 Québec Inc., Pêcheries Mario B. Inc., Pêcheries Dupuis 130427 Inc., Les Pêcheries Marc Paré Inc., Pêcheries GMS Inc. and Pêcheries Martin Paré Inc., Les Pêcheries Gedema Inc., Les Pêcheries Réal Bond Inc., Les Pêcheries Guillaume Synnot Inc. and 9000-3997 Québec Inc.

