# **FISHERIES** AQUACULTURE

**NEWS** 

Mapping the Fishing and Mariculture Industry in Québec

North Shore Sea Cucumber Project

Partnership Agreements Between the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation and Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Centres

### **PUBLISHED BY**

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

200, chemin Sainte-Foy, Québec (Québec) G1R 4X6 www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

Coordination team: Jérémie Persant, Mélissa Lapointe. Marie Lionard, Nathalie Moisan, Rabia Siga Sow, Karine Villemaire

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWS is published bimonthly as an insert in Pêche Impact.

A Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation Fish Farm Biosafety Campaign MAPAQ's Regional Branch Is at Your Service!

## **SUMMER IS COMING TO AN END. A PRODUCTIVE SUMMER** THAT WAS FULL OF SURPRISES.

The fishing season ended a few weeks ago for several fleets, while others, including shrimp boats, will still be active for some weeks yet.

This means it is possible to start drawing up a provisional assessment of the season. Although data from all sectors remains incomplete, fishers and processors believe that this was a historic year for both snow crab and lobster. The total landed value for these two species could even break Québec records. Obviously, this is great news for fishermen and processors who dealt with lower prices the previous year.

Several factors explain this exceptional performance. Low product inventories at the start of the season, the recovery of demand on the U.S. market and the demand on the Québec market for Québec marine products could be the main causes of this increase. We must therefore take maximum advantage of this situation and promote the quality of these products.

To this end, it is urgent that consumers be able to easily and quickly distinguish Québec aquatic products so that they can choose them. Currently, not all Québec aquatic products are identified as such on the Québec market. If that were the case, residents of Québec would see that many local foods are already available on their local market, such as Greenland halibut fillet, arctic char and a number of processed products.

The industry must continue to promote Québec fish and seafood on the domestic market, but it must also redouble its efforts to ensure greater identification and traceability of Québec products.

The Department supports the promotion, identification and traceability of Québec's aquatic products. This support is clearly outlined in the Ministerial Action Plan for the Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Industry. In fact, it has been providing financial support for projects to identify Québec's aquatic products for several years. In addition, financial assistance was also provided

> to Aliments du Québec [Québec Food Products] to increase the deployment of its brands in grocery stores across the province.

Finally, in the coming months, we will have a more complete picture of the results of the 2021 season, which will allow us to better evaluate the situation. We can be proud of our sector, of its contribution to the reputation of our coastal regions and of its importance to the vitality of Québec as a whole.

I wish everyone a great end to the season!



Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food

ANDRÉ LAMONTAGNE

# FISH PUMPS: **AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION** FOR MOVING FISH

By Marie-Pier Lambert,

Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

In Québec, use of mechanical equipment (such as fish pumps for moving fish in fish farms serving the stocking market) is non-existent. At present, the fish destined for stocking are moved by hand via spoon net. Using fish pumps to allow fish to swim through a hose with the help of flowing water would greatly facilitate the work of fish farmers by improving efficiency and reducing fatigue and injury. However, operators worry that this equipment could physically injure fish (internally and externally). Indeed, stocking fish must always be in perfect physical condition and have a pristine appearance. To address industry concerns, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation funded and coordinated an on-site project to assess the risk of injury and stress to fish when using mechanical equipment.

The project's objective was to monitor the performance of two relocation techniques in a fish farm raising fish intended for the stocking market. To do so, the manual method (spoon net) was compared to the mechanical method (fish pump). The project was completed in three phases over the course of two years, from 2019 to 2021. The first phase assessed the presence of wounds and also measured cortisol (a marker of stress) and lactate (a marker of muscle activity) levels in the fish. The second phase focused on the practical use of the techniques in fish farming, comparing labour requirements, speed of implementation and purchase and operating costs. The purpose of the third phase was to carry out a comprehensive on-site follow-up, including all stocking activities as well as the percentage of fish caught.

The results of this pilot project at a fish farm are promising. Indeed, they indicate that the use of mechanical equipment, such as fish pumps, is just as acceptable from an animal health and welfare perspective as the standard netting method for fish intended for the stocking market. This equipment also allows for better management of fish batches while reducing labour costs.

For more information on the project, you can contact the author of the article at marie-pier.lambert@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca.



# FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

# MAPPING THE FISHING AND MARICULTURE INDUSTRY IN QUÉBEC

### By Sébastien Cyr,

Marine Emergency Advisor, Centre d'expertise en gestion des risques d'incidents maritimes

During the summer of 2021, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) collaborated with the Centre d'expertise en gestion des risques d'incidents maritimes [Centre of Expertise in Marine Incident Risk Management - CEGRIM], the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) and various industry partners to map out the fishing and mariculture industry in Québec. The aim was to determine the precise location of the various activities taking place throughout the territory and to identify their vulnerability to a possible disaster, whether natural (flooding, coastal erosion, submersion) or man-made (spillage of hazardous materials).

Mr. Mohamed Benallegue, a geomatics engineering student at Laval University, was tasked with producing the maps.

This work made it possible to map out mariculture sites based on information found on the permits issued by MAPAQ and to locate the sites where the various land-based operations are carried out (declumping, sorting, cleaning, bagging, etc.).

The various marine product preparation establishments located in the coastal regions contributed to the project by accurately positioning their various facilities (plants, administrative buildings, warehouses, freezing areas, foreign worker housing, seawater intakes, fish ponds, etc.).

In addition to his initial mandate, Mr. Benallegue also worked on updating the map of commercial smelt fishing zones in the Chaleur Bay. MAPAQ now has an up-to-date digital map that allows permit holders to be located, so that it is easier for MAPAQ staff to issue these permits. With the cooperation of the MFFP, similar work will continue in the coming year for other commercial fishing sectors on the St. Lawrence River.

Some of the maps have been shared on the Government of Québec's Open GIS Infrastructure (IGO) website (<a href="https://geoegl.msp.gouv.qc.ca/igo2/portail/">https://geoegl.msp.gouv.qc.ca/igo2/portail/</a>). All the maps produced as part of this work will be valuable tools for MAPAQ and CEGRIM when making decisions related to fishing and mariculture, particularly in crisis situations.

We would like to thank all the companies for their cooperation. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Benallegue for his work, and we wish him success in his future studies.

# NORTH SHORE SEA CUCUMBER PROJECT

#### By Thomas St-Cyr Leroux,

Direction régionale de la Côte-Nord

North Shore sea cucumber fishers, aware of the impact their fishing has on the environment, have attempted to develop new fishing gear that causes less damage to the seabed. In this context, Pêcherie Shipek and Lionel Arseneault (sea cucumber fishers in Minganie) have developed a new sea cucumber dredge. Teflon wheels were added to the mouth of the dredge and the back of the dredge was modified to reduce the weight of its bag.

The project's goal was to compare the conventional dredges used by North Shore fishers with a modified dredge that would reduce the impacts of fishing on the seabed. To compare the two contraptions, simultaneous dragging was carried out over four days on two vessels located in the same fishing areas. After each drag, the number of sea cucumbers and by-catch caught, as well as the tension generated by each dredge, was recorded. Merinov performed the scientific monitoring of the project.

The results of the study showed that sea cucumber catches and by-catch were not significantly different between the two dredges. The conventional dredge and the modified dredge were equally successful. However, the conventional dredge generated less tension. Tension measurements were used to quantify the resistance created by the dredge when in contact with the floor. Adding wheels to the dredge did not reduce friction between the floor and the dredge. Consequently, the project does not support the conclusion that the experimental device has a lesser environmental impact than the conventional type. Continued testing will therefore be needed to optimize the conventional dredge.

The project was partially funded by MAPAQ's 2019-2022 Financial Aid Program for Development of the Commercial Fishing and Aquaculture Sector.



# PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DES PÊCHERIES ET DE L'ALIMENTATION AND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE RESEARCH CENTRES

By Jérémie Persant,

from the Direction de l'Innovation

In the field of commercial fisheries and aquaculture, research activities conducted by the Government of Québec began in the 1950s, notably with the Station de biologie marine de Grande-Rivière [Grande-Rivière Marine Biology Station].

However, the government's model for taking action in this area has evolved from an in-house approach to an outsourced one by funding organizations covering the research mandates. The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) has adopted this approach, providing financial support to 17 research centres across all sectors.

For commercial fisheries and aquaculture, the Ministère funds organizations involved in scientific research and dissemination to further industry and sector innovation:

- The Centre de transfert et de sélection des salmonidés [Salmonid Transfer and Selection Centre], which selects brook trout to improve their performance;
- Merinov, which conducts research, development, technology transfer and technical support activities for Québec's fisheries, aquaculture and marine biomass development industry;
- The Centre de recherche sur les biotechnologies marines [Marine Biotechnology Research Centre], which supports the growth of the marine biotechnology sector through scientific research and development and industrial transfer activities;
- The St. Lawrence Global Observatory, which aims to promote and facilitate the accessibility, dissemination and exchange of official, high-quality electronic data and information on the St. Lawrence ecosystem;
- The Technopôle maritime du Québec [Québec Maritime Technology Park], which conducts consultation and promotion and brings together all the parties involved in the growth of innovative maritime sectors in Québec.

These partnership agreements are created under section 4 of the Innovamer program and allow funding to be granted to support these research centres. The Ministère's intention for this funding is expressed in MAPAQ's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan under Objective 6: Stimulate research and innovation as a lever for the development of the bio-food sector.

Overall, MAPAQ invests \$4.6 million per year in research and innovation.

A second article detailing these partnerships will be published in a future issue.





# FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

## A MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DES PÊCHERIES ET DE L'ALIMENTATION FISH FARM BIOSAFETY CAMPAIGN

#### By Marie-Pier Lambert,

Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

Fish farmers must face the reality that their fish risk being contaminated by infectious diseases. The presence of diseases in a fish farm can hinder its growth and seriously impact its profitability. Diseases are spread and introduced through various sources such as water, animals, equipment, food and people. However, contamination can be greatly limited by taking monitoring, precautionary and control measures, implemented through a biosafety plan. This plan outlines how a company manages access to and traffic on the farming site, as well as animal health and site activities.

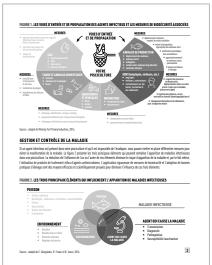
In order to support fish farmers in implementing and improving biosafety measures, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) launched a new Programme intégré de santé animale du Québec [Québec Integrated Animal Health Program - PISAQ] campaign in April entitled *Biosécurité dans les piscicultures* [*Biosafety in Fish Farms*]. This campaign was made possible by funding from MAPAQ and collaboration between the Ministère, the Association des aquaculteurs du Québec [Association of Aquaculturists of Québec], the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and the Association des médecins vétérinaires praticiens du Québec [Association of Veterinary Practitioners of Quebec].

As part of this new campaign, fish farmers are offered three free visits by a private veterinarian. The purpose of these visits is to develop and implement a biosafety plan in the form of recommendations. With this customized plan, each farm will be better equipped to deal with infectious diseases that threaten the health of their fish and the profitability of their business.

In Québec, there is a limited supply of private veterinary services with the necessary expertise in fish farming. The PISAQ therefore also aims to improve the knowledge of veterinarians with respect to fish health and to stimulate their interest in this practice. In addition, this new campaign is an opportunity for fish farmers without access to a veterinarian to apply for support.

To learn more about this PISAQ campaign, please visit the program's website: <a href="https://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Productions/md/programmesliste/santeanimale/PISAQ/Pages/Projetspilotes.aspx">www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Productions/md/programmesliste/santeanimale/PISAQ/Pages/Projetspilotes.aspx</a>.







# MAPAQ'S REGIONAL BRANCH IS AT YOUR SERVICE!

Are you in need of financial assistance to undertake a project or would you like to know if you are eligible for a program? Would you like to fill out a form or do you have questions? Your regional branch is at your service!

## DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DE LA CÔTE-NORD

418 964-8521

cote-nord@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

### DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DE LA GASPÉSIE

418 368-7676

drg@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

### DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DE L'ESTUAIRE ET DES EAUX INTÉRIEURES

819 371-3971

dreei@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

## DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DES ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE

418 986-2098

drim@mapaq.gouv.qc.ca

