

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

NEWS

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It's been one year already since I enthusiastically accepted the position of Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and I must say that from the moment I took up my duties, I've been impressed by the creativity and dynamism of fisheries and aquaculture industry members. A first visit to the North Shore, Magdalen Islands and Gaspé Peninsula gave me the opportunity to meet some extraordinary and passionate people.

Since then, we have met great challenges together. The first food sovereignty policy was introduced. Last April, I also

announced the *2013-2018 Action Plan. Building our Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Industry*; its implementation is moving forward according to plan. These two elements, which will guide our actions for the next five years, will infuse our biofood industry with new energy and ultimately, our marine and aquaculture products will feature more prominently in meals prepared by Quebecers.

In recent months, a number of files have held our attention, notably the meetings of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers and the Atlantic Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, held in Québec City last September 4 and 5. In this regard, I would like to salute the excellent work accomplished at these meetings by Agnès Maltais, the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity, Minister of Labour, and Minister responsible for the Status of Women, as well as by my Parliamentary Assistant (Fisheries) and MNA for Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Jeannine Richard. They forcefully defended the interests of Québec's fisheries and aquaculture industry and I thank them. An overview of the debates appears on the following pages.

Moreover, the Government of Québec signed a new five-year (2013-2018) agreement last August to implement a Marine Resource, Science and Technology niche of excellence. This niche will be backed by the regional strengths present in the Lower St. Lawrence, North Shore, and Gaspé Peninsula – Magdalen Islands regions in key commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors. It will lead to a common vision for this industry and foster the deployment of a long-term development strategy. The Ministry of Finance and the Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food are major contributors to this niche.

In closing, I wish fish harvesters and their assistants, processors and aquaculturers and excellent end to their season.

François Gendron
Deputy Premier,
Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

A MARINE RESOURCE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NICHE OF EXCELLENCE PARTNER

By Julie Boyer,

Gaspé Peninsula Regional Directorate

For the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the renewal of the Marine Resource, Science and Technology niche of excellence (Créneau d'excellence Ressources, sciences et technologies marines – RSTM) is excellent news, given the importance the Ministry places on the fisheries and aquaculture sector to meet the food needs of Quebecers, support the economic prosperity of the maritime regions and contribute to the dynamic and sustainable occupation of the territory. Moreover, actions initiated pursuant to the RSTM niche of excellence are in line with the objectives of the Government of Québec's food sovereignty policy.

To this end, in August – together with the Ministry of Finance and the Economy and regional partners – the Ministry signed an agreement to renew implementation of the RSTM niche of excellence in the three Maritime Québec regions, the Lower St. Lawrence, North Shore and Gaspé Peninsula – Magdalen Islands. The five-year agreement, which covers the 2013-2018 period, includes an action plan to foster innovation and technology transfer, development of new products, market development and initiatives to improve enterprise profitability. The plan also seeks to accompany enterprises participating in the niche of excellence as they carry out their projects. Finally, the new agreement places an emphasis on sustainable development, labour and training.

Like the forty-some niches of excellence deployed in the various regions of Québec, the RSTM niche of excellence is associated with the ACCORD (Action concertée de coopération régionale de développement) initiative implemented by the Government of Québec. The ACCORD initiative aims to put in place in each region of Québec production systems able to compete on North American and world markets; it is founded on the establishment and development of niches of excellence, which will ultimately brand the participating regions.

The RSTM niche of excellence is based, firstly, on an alliance involving a set of businesses whose activities, associated with the marine sector, are related or interdependent. It also helps build

closer ties between the various research, technology transfer and training communities, and then between these communities and businesses.

Established in November 2006, the RSTM niche of excellence brings together enterprises, associations, organisations, research establishments and educational institutions as well as pertinent government and quasi-government agencies as members of systems specific to the aquaculture, catch, processing, marine biotechnology and marine technology sectors.



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FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWS

PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF THE 2013 FISHING SEASON IN QUÉBEC

By Rabia Siga Sow
and Jean-Michel Poulin,

Analyses and Policies
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The preliminary results for the 2013 fishing season have now been published and now that we've had a first look, we can provide a partial overview of the trends for the current year. Overall, the results are positive, but readers will see that this is primarily due to the success of the snow crab fishery.

As of August 31, 2013, Québec landings, all species together, totalled 45,688 tonnes with an estimated value of \$152.5 million. Compared to the **same period last year**, this translates into an increase of 2% in landing value although catch volume is practically the same as in 2012.

In terms of quantity, only the crustacean group posted higher volumes (+10%), spurred by increases in snow crab, Gaspé Peninsula lobster and northern shrimp landings. Landings fell for all other groups of species. This explains why the total landings, in terms of quantity, remain equal to last year's total. The increase in the total catch value (2%) is largely due to the higher value of snow crab catches (+17%).

Species	August 30, 2013		August 30, 2013 ¹		Var. (%) 2013 / 2012	
	Quantity (tonnes)	Value (\$k)	Quantity (tonnes)	Value (\$k)	Quantity (%)	Value (%)
Crustaceans and molluscs	36,749	136,099	40,388	141,331	10	4
Snow crab	13,536	1,938	15,876	72,524	17	17
Lobster	3,845	38,604	4,192	38,312	9	-1
Northern shrimp	15,891	30,340	17,587	26,835	11	-12
Other molluscs and crustaceans	3,477	5,217	2,734	3,659	-21	-30
Groundfish	4,330	11,565	2,965	9,308	-32	-20
Pelagic and estuary fish	4,142	1,067	1,963	822	-53	-23
Other species	394	1,018	372	1,018	-6	0
Total (all species)	45,616	149,749	45,688	152,479	0	2

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Quebec Region; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food compilation.
1. Preliminary data as of August 31, 2013.

The northern shrimp quota for the Gulf of St. Lawrence increased slightly compared to 2012, which translates into larger catches. This being said, the landing price for this small crustacean was pushed downward by slower economic activity on the markets.

As for groundfish, it is important to point out the challenges in the Greenland halibut fishery this year, which had a

significant impact, despite a stable quota. In contrast, the results remained interesting for Atlantic halibut.

Finally, the preliminary data for pelagic fish indicate a drop in herring catches, but we will have to wait until the fall fishery results come in before making a clear statement in this regard.

Ultimately, this year's data provide an encouraging portrait of the fishery

results. Nevertheless, some fleets, notably the Magdalen Islands lobster fleet, appear to be experiencing some difficulties. We will have to wait until the all fishing results have been compiled before we can draw a precise portrait of the 2013 season.

A SOLUTION FOR OPTIMISING ON-BOARD SCALLOP REARING OPERATIONS

By Julie Boyer,

Gaspé Peninsula Regional
Directorate

When conditions are suitable for scallop growth, they are also suitable for many other marine organisms that settle on rearing structures. Scallop farmers have to remove some of the build-up to ensure the productivity of their farming operations.

A mariculture enterprise, Les Fermes marines du Québec, has developed a square rearing basket made of rigid plastic that Les Fermes Marines de Gaspé uses to grow out scallops on longlines. This new material provides advantages in terms of rigidity, solidity, and storage capacity. However, the company has identified two disadvantages: there is little space available aboard the boat transporting the material to the rearing site and marine organisms growing on the structures are hard to remove.

To overcome these disadvantages, Les Fermes marines de Gaspé wanted to come up with a system it could use to clean the baskets directly aboard the boat during production operations. An on-board cleaning system of this type would allow the operator to immediately

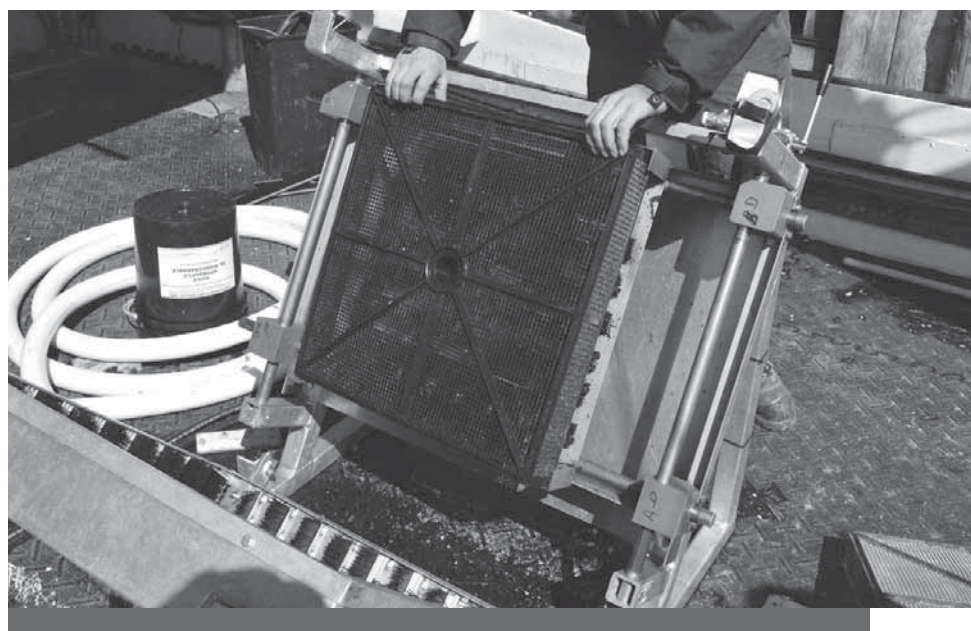


Photo: Jean-Philippe Hébert

re-use the same baskets without the need to bring them back to the wharf, which would considerably reduce handling and the company's operating expenses.

However, there are no washing devices on the market designed or useable for cleaning this type of basket. Pressure washing is not an appropriate solution at sea since the nozzles used tend to become plugged when supplied with raw

salt water. Also, because so many nozzles are needed to wash the baskets quickly, the system requires a high-pressure pump. This type of pump is more costly to use than brushes.

The CEO of Les Fermes marines de Gaspé, Jean-Philippe Hébert, called on Merinov to design and test a prototype scallop basket cleaner that can be used on board. Hubert Murray, an engineering technician at Merinov, chose to use

brushes driven by a hydraulic motor that itself is powered by the boat's hydraulic system. The prototype designed by Murray and approved by Frédérick Lantin, a Merinov engineer, was built at a shop in the region in spring 2013 and tested during the summer on a boat operated by Les Fermes marines de Gaspé. The enterprise was able to see that the device works well; so well in fact, that it enabled the company to increase its productivity. Not only was the cleaning more thorough, the prototype saved the company a great deal of work time.

It is important to point out that this prototype was developed with funding from Les Fermes marines de Gaspé, Merinov, the Société de développement de l'industrie maricole and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Les Fermes marines du Québec, the designer of the rearing baskets, is the distributor for this new type of rearing structure.

For more information, please contact Hubert Murray or Frédérick Lantin at Merinov or Jean-Philippe Hébert, CEO of Les Fermes marines de Gaspé. A related technical report will be posted shortly on the Merinov website.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWS

QUÉBEC HOSTS THE CCFAM AND ACFAM MEETINGS

By François Montminy-Munyan,

Analyses and Policies
Directorate

On September 4 and 5, Québec hosted the ministers responsible for fisheries and aquaculture in Canada who attended the meetings of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM) and the Atlantic Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (ACFAM). François Gendron, Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who was unable to attend due to unavoidable circumstances, delegated Agnès Maltais, the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity, Minister of Labour, and Minister responsible for the Status of Women to attend the ACFAM meeting in his stead. Jeannine Richard, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and MNA for Îles-de-la-Madeleine, took over for the CCFAM meeting. The meetings were held in Québec City.

Difficult situation of the lobster industry

The economic hardship experienced by the lobster fishing industry was the primary topic of discussion by ACFAM members during the afternoon on September 4. The ministers from Québec and the Atlantic Provinces as well as Canada's Minister of Fisheries and Oceans were updated on consultations within the lobster industry conducted by a group of experts in the Maritimes. Established by the fisheries ministers in the three provinces involved, this group of experts is composed of Gilles Thériault, a New Brunswick fisheries consultant, Lewie Creed, former Prince Edward Island deputy minister, and John Hanlon, a Fisheries and Oceans Canada retiree. The group's mandate is to examine the factors influencing lobster prices and make recommendations to improve the industry's financial situation. To this end, during the summer, the three members of the group consulted with representatives of the industry's various sectors not only in the Maritimes but also in Québec and in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their report is expected this fall.

Québec was able to share with its counterparts in the federal government and the Atlantic Provinces its concerns about the massive presence of lobster normally destined for processing on the live crustacean market, a situation that accentuates the imbalance between supply and demand. It asked all governments to work together with the industry to raise the minimum catch size and to guarantee that live lobster comply with minimum quality standards. Québec also spoke about its many initiatives to support its lobster industry, notably its backing for live lobster identification and eco-certification.



From left to right: Michael Olscamp, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries – New Brunswick; Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship – Manitoba; Derrick Dalley, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture – Newfoundland and Labrador; Diana McQueen, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development – Alberta; Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans – Canada; Jeannine Richard, Parliamentary Assistant (Fisheries) to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food – Québec; David Oraziotti, Minister of Natural Resources – Ontario; Ron MacKinley, Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development – Prince Edward Island.

Federal employment insurance reform

ACFAM ministers also spent part of the meeting discussing their respective visions for the future of the fishing industry. Notably, Agnès Maltais addressed the federal government which, given its decisions in recent years, seems to be abandoning the commercial fishing industry and ignoring the economic development of maritime regions. She reminded her listeners that the federal employment insurance reform will have major adverse repercussions in Eastern Québec, notably for the commercial fisheries and aquaculture industry; seasonal in nature, it is directly impacted by the federal government's budget cutbacks.

Closure of the Québec City Rescue Coordination Centre

Agnès Maltais also pressed the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Gail Shea, to defer the closure of the Québec City Rescue Coordination Centre. She reminded her federal counterpart that this centre is the only one in Canada able to provide quality bilingual services, with enough qualified staff to meet the demand generated by the number of

incidents on the St. Lawrence Seaway. The federal minister was unable to meet demands of Maltais, who asked for guarantees regarding the safety of Francophone mariners and fish harvesters on the St. Lawrence.

Environmental issues and regulations

As for the CCFAM meeting, issues of an environmental nature featured largely on the agenda. Fisheries and Oceans Canada sought the support of the provincial and territorial governments for a variety of initiatives. The first matter on the agenda dealt with inter-governmental cooperation to implement the new provisions of the Fisheries Act. In 2012, the federal government announced that this act would be modified to exempt some development projects from its habitat protection provisions. Québec has indicated that it is concerned about the anticipated impacts of the legislative amendments put forward by the federal government on the environment and on fish stocks. It reminded listeners that Québec administers its own freshwater Fisheries Act. However, Québec expressed its willingness to cooperate with the federal government to protect fish resources and aquatic

environments within the scope of its jurisdiction and legislative powers.

The federal government also proposed a regulation to foster the control or eradication of invasive aquatic species. The arrival and spread of these species are a major problem in Québec in environmental and economic terms. The Government of Québec has already put in place some regulatory tools of this nature. It wishes to continue its cooperation with neighbouring governments to reduce the risk of the introduction and spread of these species which recognise no borders.

Finally, Fisheries and Oceans Canada also proposed a new regulation to control waste emissions from aquaculture establishments. Québec already has a host of acts, regulations, policies and government directives to regulate aquaculture activities, particularly the industry's environmental impacts. Consequently, it refused to participate in this new initiative on the part of the federal government which would duplicate its own environmental requirements and increase the administrative burden of Québec's aquaculture establishments by adding an additional level of supervision.



MARTIN LAPIERRE, of La Crevette du Nord Atlantique inc., receives the National Bank's Jury's Choice Award – Young Entrepreneur

By Michelle Parent,
Gaspé Peninsula Regional
Directorate

For the past 19 years, the National Bank's SME Awards have paid tribute to the excellence of Québec entrepreneurs. The National Bank, supported by the decision of an independent jury, names gold, silver and bronze award winners in various categories and presents the Jury's Choice Award for Young Entrepreneurs, which salutes the merits of a young business entrepreneurs under the age of 40. In 2013, this honour went to Martin Lapierre, shareholder of the firm La Crevette du Nord Atlantique inc.

Martin Lapierre became a company shareholder in 2011, taking over from his father in the enterprise created in 1980 and headed by Gaétan Denis

and Amédée Lapierre. La Crevette du Nord Atlantique inc. specialises in processing northern shrimp. Located in L'Anse-au-Griffon, near the Rivière-au-Renard fishing harbour on the Gaspé Peninsula, the company employs 145 workers year round. Keeping the time between landing and processing very short helps the company offer high-quality shrimp products.

Since its creation, La Crevette du Nord Atlantique has continually upgraded its facilities to offer an ever-expanding range of products. Today, the company's shrimp is sold in a variety of ways – cooked, peeled, fresh, frozen or in brine – under the Caravelle brand or under private grocery chain labels.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN SEA URCHIN PRODUCTION AQUACULTURE AND PROCESSING: A PROMISING COMBO

By Jean-Marc Jalbert,
Gaspé Peninsula Regional
Directorate

In Québec's northern climate, green sea urchin (*Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis*) gonads (roe) attain their best quality – and command the highest prices – late in the fall or in winter. This decisive factor hinders valorisation of this species in our regions, particularly for mass production, since it makes access to marine stocks considerably more difficult.

At present, nearly the entire green sea urchin harvest in Québec is shipped to the United States. This being said, due to the general increase in operating costs affecting all businesses in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, marketing conditions have become less favourable for exports and the sale of the raw product (live sea urchin) on the North American market has become just as difficult.

Integrating processing into the green sea urchin production system, which would allow companies to diversify their product range and gain greater control over marketing, seems to be one way to increase valorisation of this species in Québec.

The project

Gaston Bérubé operates a sea urchin farming site near Île du Bic and another one near Île Saint-Barnabé (off Rimouski). In the early 2000s, he decided to focus his efforts exclusively on farmed production and the sale of whole green sea urchin.

To process and market the sea urchins harvested from his own aquaculture sites, Bérubé recently acquired industrial space in Mont-Joli that he equipped and standardised to meet his needs with financial support from the Ministry. At his new facility, he hopes to develop new products and also adapt them to a very specific market, Québec's fine food restaurant market.

Distinctive products for the Québec market

In the short term, Bérubé will process three types of product for specific market segments:

- **Fresh roe**

This is a premium product that will be offered during the optimum harvest period (December to February), mainly to gourmet restaurants that routinely seek and use quality fresh sea urchin roe. The product's interest lies mainly in its "ready-to-use" format, which allows the client to eliminate tasks related to the extraction and preparation of roe in the kitchen

- **Blanched and frozen roe**

Thanks to a process developed by the company itself, the natural colour and shape of the roe is preserved better after thawing. Since this product can be supplied year round, it will be offered as an alternative to fresh roe for less popular specialty cuisines, and to sushi restaurants or institutions that do not use this product extensively.

- **Frozen roe**

This product is the least expensive in the range. Already available on the market (from Chile), it is generally used to prepare sauces or other dishes incorporating the flavour of the sea urchin. Although less expensive, frozen sea urchin roe is no less interesting for Bérubé's company, since he expects to be able to capture a good share of this market in Québec. This option would allow him to sell roe of less than optimal appearance (in terms of colour) year round.

In accomplishing this project, the entrepreneur can diversify his activities and improve the profitability of his company while meeting the demand of specific Québec markets.

MAPAQ interest with respect to this project is to support the green sea urchin harvest and foster the optimal use of a raw material in our regions. In this regard, the project described above is in line with the Government of Québec's food sovereignty policy in terms of commercial fisheries and aquaculture development.