

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

NEWS

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The 2015 fishing season is well underway and the first snow crab and shrimp landings have been appearing on the market since early April. Lobster from the Gaspé Peninsula recently returned to fish store counters. And soon, Magdalen Island lobster, and other fish, mollusc and crustaceans will be entering the Québec market.

Once again this year, backed by industry initiatives, our marine products should occupy an ever growing share of markets in Québec and elsewhere. In fact, our fishing and processing enterprises do their utmost to implement painstaking practices in order to reach the highest quality standards, and to help consumers find marine products sourced in Québec. The following article takes stock of industry advances in this area, notably with respect to Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainable fishery certification.

The Government of Québec encourages fish harvesters and industrialists to implement initiatives of this kind, which offer them an undeniable competitive edge when dealing with buyers and consumers who increasingly demand fish and seafood harvested by fisheries that employ environmentally sound practices and are geared towards sustainable development.

The soon-to-be-introduced maritime strategy will also help make the sector more competitive. One of the goals of this government project is to give new impetus to enterprises and offer them the opportunity to create more wealth, jobs and investment, and thus ensure the continued survival of the fisheries and aquaculture.

In closing, we wish each and every one of you an excellent fishing season.



Pierre Paradis
Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food



Germain Chevarie,
Parliamentary assistant
to the Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food (fisheries
and aquaculture component)

GROWING NUMBER OF QUÉBEC'S MARINE PRODUCTS OBTAIN ECOCERTIFICATION

By **Françoise Nicol,**

Fisheries and Aquaculture Analyses
and Policies Directorate

Since the northern shrimp fishery obtained Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) ecocertification in 2008, the fishing industry in Québec has never looked back. The southern Gulf of St. Lawrence snow crab fishery and the Magdalen Islands lobster fishery were certified in 2013 and now, the Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishery has earned this prized open sesame card. At present, nearly 52 percent of the products landed by Québec harvesters enjoy MSC certification.

This approach allows Québec enterprises to address the demand for ecocertified aquatic products, already well-established in Europe and gaining ground in North America and Asia – notably in Japan and China. Significant socio-economic benefits are therefore anticipated in the medium term. One recent study¹ showed that without MSC certification, the major South African hake fishery could lose 35 percent of its current value within five years, potentially entailing the loss of 12,000 jobs in the fishing sector and related industries.

The substantial efforts made to conserve the resource, improve fishing techniques and processing methods have brought undeniable commercial advantages in all our markets. Consumers are also increasingly aware of the importance of protecting the environment; ecocertification is one response to their demands for respectful management of the aquatic environment.

It is important to point out that the ecocertification of fisheries and aquaculture products is a priority for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Moreover, it supports industry efforts financially, helping it hire accredited consultants skilled in evaluating the sustainability of a fishery.

In conclusion, ecocertification gives the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Québec a significant competitive edge needed to ensure its sustainable development and competitiveness!

¹ Source: The Fish site, *Sustainable South African hake fishery brings economic and environmental benefits*, September 8, 2014 www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/24045/sustainable-south-african-hake-fishery-brings-economic-and-environmental-benefits/

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Québec

GOOD NEWS FOR THE SEAL INDUSTRY!

By Karine Villemaire,

Magdalen Islands
Regional Directorate

Photo: Yoanis Mengé



Filmmaker Raoul Jomphe

**SEAL MEETING –
FEBRUARY 27
TO MARCH 8, 2015**

Organised by the Fondation Willie Déraspe (seal interpretation centre), in partnership with the Association des chasseurs de phoques des Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the Seal Meeting has become an essential outreach forum in terms of raising public awareness about the true reality of the seal industry. The program also features an evening to salute the contributions of key industry actors. This year, filmmaker Raoul Jomphe, was honoured for his body of work (*Phoques, le film*, the photo show *Loup-marinières, Natisiniartiit, Sealers*, etc.). His works have contributed significantly to demystifying the sea hunt locally and internationally, and continue to do so. Réal Boudreau, seal hunter and guide for the seal watching excursions organised by Château Madelinot, was also honoured for his commitment to and enthusiasm for helping people learn about the seal in its natural environment.

Of particular note, the seal hunter's dinner, organised for the Seal Meeting, was an opportunity to draw attention to the benefits of grey seal meat. Some 140 diners were able to savour this new product and appreciate unique qualities; it is lighter in colour and has a finer taste that makes it subtly different from harp seal meat.

THE GREY SEAL: A NEW COMMERCIAL SPECIES

In January 2014, the seal industry received the authorisations it needed to market grey seal meat. It can now be sold, just like the harp seal meat currently on the market. This year, two grey seal hunts took place around the Magdalen Islands, generating a total harvest of some 750 seals and giving Québec's only seal meat processing and supplier, Boucherie spécialisée Côte à côte, a basic supply.

Photo: Le bon goût frais des Îles de la Madeleine



Still from the online seal meat educational video from
Le Bon Goût frais des Îles de la Madeleine



FORMATION EN LIGNE

The association Le bon goût frais des Îles de la Madeleine took advantage of the Seal Meeting's effervescence to officially introduce an online educational capsule dealing with seal meat. Targeting the general public, the video clip provides a brief overview of the seal meat harvest and explains the importance of the activity to the culture of the Magdalen Islands. This is followed by a demonstration on how to prepare and cook the meat. There are also suggestions regarding drinks that pair well with the seal. The free video clip has been posted on line at <http://lebongoutfraisdesiles.com/fr/ambassadeur.html>. It's sure to tingle taste buds!

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is proud to support the various initiatives put forward by the seal industry and would like to salute the vital contributions of the people and organisations that work to develop the seal industry in Québec.



Grey seal

Photo: Yoanis Mengé

EXTENSION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE IN QUÉBEC

By **Valérie Gagnon**,

Estuary and Inland Waters
Regional Directorate



The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has been working since 2004 to implement the sustainable development strategy for freshwater aquaculture in Québec (STRADDAQ), a three-party agreement also involving the Association des aquaculteurs du Québec and the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change (MDEELCC). The goal STRADDAQ seeks to achieve is to encourage existing salmonid fish farms that have joined the program voluntarily to attain an environmental phosphorous

waste emission target of 4.2 kg per year per tonne of production.

In winter 2015, the STRADDAQ partners decided to extend the agreement for one more year. This initiative will allow all fish farming enterprises participating in the Strategy to complete their work and conclude the environmental monitoring being done to confirm that they have reached the established target.

At present, most enterprises have obtained the authorisation certificates issued by MDEELCC that they need to implement their STRADDAQ projects, but a certain number were unable to complete all the improvement work at their facilities before the initial March 31, 2015 deadline. Now that the strategy has been extended, fish farm operators will have until December 31, 2015 to complete the work. STRADDAQ will end on December 31 2016, when all the on-site environmental monitoring work at all the enterprises will be finished.

The 34 enterprises participating in STRADDAQ on a voluntary basis together produce 70 percent of the salmonids farmed in Québec. These enterprises received funding via Aquableu, the *Financial support program to improve the environmental performance of salmonid fish farming enterprises* established by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to carry out improvement work at their facilities. They also received professional and technical support from the Ministry throughout the process.

SEAFOOD EXPO NORTH AMERICA 2015

By **Françoise Nicol**,

Fisheries and Aquaculture Analyses
and Policies Directorate

Seafood Expo North America (SENA), the annual trade show better known by its former name – International Boston Seafood Show, was held from March 15 to 18. SENA is North America's largest gathering for businesses in the fish and seafood processing sector. The show draws over 20,000 buyers and suppliers of fresh, frozen or processed products, equipment and services from more than 100 countries.

With exports of nearly \$210 M to the American market in 2014, Québec enterprises recognise the importance of participating in this trade show. This year, the following businesses showcased their wares in the Québec pavilion at SENA: E. Gagnon & Fils ltée, Fumoir Grizzly inc., Groupe MDMP ltée, Groupe Alimentaire Nordique and Imperial Caviar & Seafood inc. In addition, the Gaspé Cured enr. consortium represented the following firms at the show: Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan ltée, Les Pêcheries Gaspésiennes inc. and Poisson Salé Gaspésien ltée. Great Northern Products was also there to represent Cusimer (1991) inc., Les Crustacés des Monts inc. and Poissonnerie de Cloridorme inc.

To promote the products of all these enterprises and to give visitors an opportunity to sample them, the chef at the Québec Delegation in Boston, Dominic Sylvain, had a specially appointed space in a strategic location in the Québec pavilion.

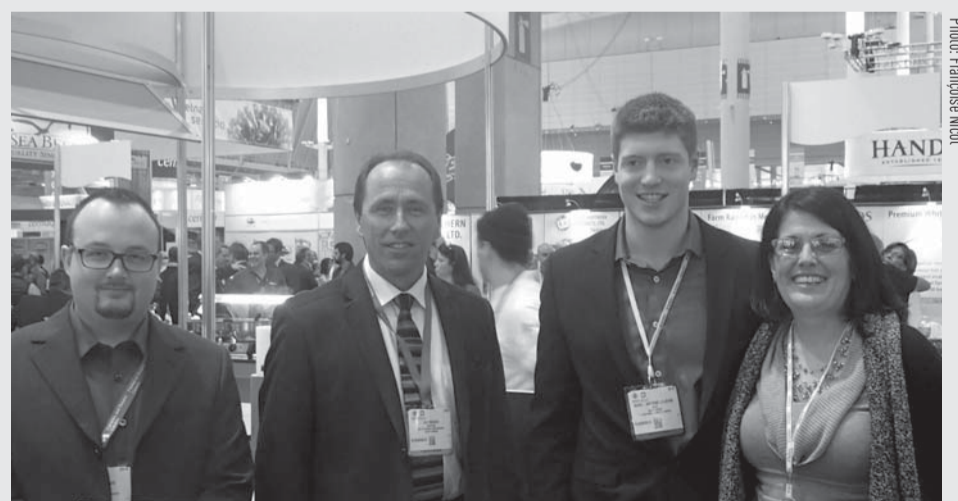


Photo: Françoise Nicol

From left to right: Simon Langlois and Luc Reeves, of Pêcheries gaspésiennes inc., with Marc-Antoine Lelièvre and Louise Leblanc, of Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan ltée. The two enterprises are members of the Gaspé Cured enr. consortium.

QUÉBEC FISH AND SEAFOOD EXPORTS RISE IN 2014

By **Françoise Nicol**,

Fisheries and Aquaculture Analyses
and Policies Directorate

Canada's fisheries and aquaculture industry achieved a historical record in 2014, exporting over \$5 billion in aquatic products for the very first time in its history, a gain in exports of 11.8 percent from 2013. The main market continues to be the United States, since 62 percent of Canadian shipments (\$3.1 billion) finds buyers there. Québec accounts for 5.4 percent of all Canadian exports, and still holds fifth place amongst exporting provinces.

QUÉBEC EXPORTS IN 2014 WORTH \$272.3 MILLION, UP 14.9 PERCENT FROM 2013

The primary destination of Québec's aquatic products is still the United States, with 76.7 percent of exports (\$208.8 million) going there. Snow crab was the most popular species with our neighbours to the South; sales of this species exceeded \$92.5 million and accounted for 34 percent of Québec exports. Lobster takes second place in terms of all exports, with sales of over \$80.1 million.

THE ASIAN MARKET ABSORBS 11.8 PERCENT OF TOTAL QUÉBEC EXPORTS IN 2014

Japan is Québec's second largest trading partner. With orders exceeding \$11.2 million, the Japanese market has also expanded, by 40.6 percent from 2013. Snow crab sales account for more than \$8.8 million of the commercial trade activity with this country. The remaining sales, for the most part, involved lobster, molluscs and fish roe.

Exports to continental China and Hong Kong, respectively worth \$8.5 million and \$930,000, rose by 105.3 and 28.7 percent. Here also, lobster and snow crab sales increased, by \$3 million and \$2.8 million respectively.

As for the Asian continent, it is important to point out that shipments to Vietnam have climbed by a remarkable 346 percent! With a total value of \$9.2 million, Québec ships more marine products to Vietnam than it does to China. A range of species are marketed there: Greenland halibut, shrimp, lobster and molluscs.

EXPORTS TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET PICK UP

For 2014, \$15.6 million in earnings were generated by the European market, up by 260 percent compared to 2013. The main products exported to Europe are shrimp, lobster and cured fish. While sales have slumped on Swedish and German markets, they are growing in Denmark, Spain, Italy and France

THE CARIBBEAN IS A TRADITIONAL MARKET FOR QUÉBEC

Exports to the Caribbean have also expanded, by 11.9 percent compared to 2013 and are worth \$10.2 million. This result surpasses exports to China. The main products exported to Caribbean markets are, as usual, cured fish.

CONCLUSION

The value of Québec exports rose gradually on all markets in 2014. Spurred by higher volumes of landed and processed products, particularly snow crab and lobster, enterprises have been able to expand their presence in a number of markets. Asian and European markets now draw more than 18 percent of all fish and seafood exports from Québec.

As the economy began to recover in the United States, the falling value of the Canadian dollar spurred exports. Favourable economic conditions in Québec's main markets should bring upward pressure to bear on prices and exports in 2015.

Value of Québec's marine product exports, by destination

	Value	Export share
United States	\$208.8 M	76.7%
Asia	\$32.0 M	11.8%
European Union	\$18.2 M	6.7%
Caribbean	\$10.2 M	3.7%

Québec's marine product exports, by species

	Value	Export percentage
Snow crab	\$104.5 M	38.4%
Lobster	\$80.1 M	29.4%
Finfish	\$45.7 M	16.8%
Shrimp	\$22.2 M	8.2%
Other species	\$13.2 M	4.8%
Other crustaceans	\$4.0 M	1.5%
Molluscs	\$2.7 M	1.0%