Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pêches et Océans Canada

INFOCEANS

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CUTTING-EDGE — ELECTRONIC LOGBOOKS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERS

The fishery is constantly modernizing and becoming more professional and markets are increasingly demanding and competitive. To meet these demands, in 2005 Fisheries and Oceans Canada introduced electronic logbooks for Canadian fisheries. These logbooks are seen as vital to the future of all industry stakeholders.

Electronic logbooks are software programs used on board boats to collect information on catches and fishing effort. These logbooks enable information to be transmitted quickly and electronically to the Department. In addition, as this information is recorded on the boat, it can be consulted as needed.

This tool enhances the quality and precision of data on fishing effort and quantities landed per fisher, in addition to improving the availability of data for fishery managers. The electronic logbooks are also advantageous for fishers who wish to move towards a traceability process for fishery products and ecocertification of fisheries. As well, some software available on the market even facilitates the management of fishing operations by offering tools for monitoring income and expenses.

Electronic logbooks are being gradually introduced to fleets throughout all regions of Canada. Initially, electronic logbooks were part of pilot projects involving a limited number of volunteer fishers. Their use has gradually spread to become mandatory in some areas. For example, during the 2012 season, all lobster harvesters in the Gaspé will use this technology, a total of 170 licence holders over areas 19, 20 and 21.

DFO J.-C. Richard

A Magdalen Islands fisherman using an electronic logbook.

In an effort to encourage fishers to use the electronic logbook in their activities, fishers from the Gaspé and Magdalen Islands received financial assistance to acquire equipment as part of the *Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Measures program*.

Simon Richard and Chantale Thiboutot
Fisheries Management

CANADIAN COAST GUARD: RESCUE SPECIALISTS ARE WATCHING OVER US

Whether it is supporting the commercial fishing industry, marine transportation, commercial shipping or the millions of recreational boaters across the country, Canadian Coast Guard crews have been on duty for 50 years. Over time, certain services that did not exist in 1962 have been added to handle new realities. The *Rescue Specialist Program* is one example.

In 1982, during a storm off the coast of Newfoundland in the overnight hours of February 14 and 15, the oil rig *Ocean Ranger* sank. Tragically, eighty-four people perished. There were no survivors.

Following this tragedy, a Royal Commission was created to shed light on the causes of this disaster. Various gaps were identified and, in an effort to avoid a repeat of such events, the Canadian Coast Guard established the *Rescue Specialist Program*.

DFO C. Demers

The program objective is to intervene not only with victims of maritime incidents, but also with other crew members in case of accidents on board.

Rescue specialists are crew members from the three areas of operation (deck, engine and logistics) who volunteer to be trained in advanced first aid. These individuals are on the frontline during incidents and often the first responders in case of injuries. Their job is to recognize medical emergencies or trauma, stabilize victims, heal wounds and evacuate those who require more significant treatment.

The *Rescue Specialist Program* has existed for over 20 years. Seventy-five rescue specialists work on the various Canadian Coast Guard vessels throughout Quebec. In 2010 alone, they were called to intervene in 133 incidents, 33 of which required medical evacuation.

The Canadian Coast Guard wishes to thank those whose skills, motivation and professionalism ensure the health and safety of mariners.

Claude Demers
Canadian Coast Guard

Canada

A SUSTAINABLE FISHERY
FOR GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE SHRIMP

In the last five years, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Gulf of St. Lawrence shrimp industry have collaborated to establish a work plan targeting, among others, the precautionary approach and the update of the Gulf Shrimp Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP). These two factors are important tools in managing marine resources in Canada and are meant to provide more stability and predictability for decision-making and management.

Ann Grace

International Recognition

In 2008, shrimp stocks in the four areas of the Gulf of St. Lawrence attained Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, which confirms to buyers that shrimp meet the criteria related to sustainable fisheries. The full certification report can be found on the MSC website (www.msc.org).

Obtaining this certification and the need to maintain it for the future are important steps for the Department in improving its management tools adapted for Gulf of St. Lawrence shrimp.

Predictable Process for Total Allowable Catch

In March 2012, the Department, in collaboration with its partners, improved its process for establishing total allowable catch (TAC) for Gulf shrimp. Specific indicators were identified so a more predictable TAC could be established. This new process provides stability for the industry, which was a goal for the 2012 and 2013 seasons.

An IFMP with an Adapted Multi-year Action Plan

An essential component of an effective IFMP is to clearly identify, with industry partners, the issues surrounding a sustainable and prosperous fishery. Based on the realities, the IFMP action plan for Gulf shrimp can focus on sensitive issues related to conservation, socio-economic or ecosystem-based aspects of the fishery.

To take stock of the socio-economic and ecosystem-based aspects of this fishery, members of the Gulf Shrimp Advisory Committee agreed to consider holding a conference by the end of 2012. This conference would be a unique opportunity to further work on the global challenges of this fishery and to prepare, with all stakeholders, the multi-year action plan that will guide the Committee in its work over the next few years.

The Gulf Shrimp Management Plan is available on the Department's national Web site (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Daniel Boisvert
Fisheries Management

BENEFICIAL USE OF SEDIMENTS IN THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

If you are familiar with the Magdalen Islands, you probably know that this beautiful region is facing a problem with shoreline erosion and its impact on coastal activities.

In fact, the archipelago, located in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, faces winds and tides of varying intensity every day. Combined with ocean currents, this results in the accumulation of sediments in ports, including those under the jurisdiction of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. To ensure the safe movement of fishing ships in these harbours, regular dredging must occur, specifically in spring from late March to early June.

Since last March, a very special operation has been carried out. Rather than discarding dredged sediments at sea as was done previously, sediments from dredging sites at Millerand and Pointe-Basse are used by Transports Québec. They serve to reinforce Route 199, which is often subject to erosion, as well as to build the approaches of a new bridge near Havre-aux-Maisons.

How is this done? After being collected at sea and transported to shore by special barges, sediments settle over a 24-hour period in order to dry, which makes for easier handling. The sediment is then loaded onto trucks to be transported to various construction sites.

DFO L. Bouffard

Because of the islands' fragile environment and geomorphology, sand for construction on the archipelago is becoming increasingly rare. "Sand from dredging activities, when not contaminated, is an excellent alternative supply source. With no scheduled opening of new sand pits in the near future, this approach has become crucial," says Louis Bouffard, associate project technician with the Islands' Regional Small Craft Harbours Branch (RSCHB). Sediments collected at sea could be stored for future use in old sand pits.

Is this type of operation possible in other areas? "Of course," replies Alex Harvey, project technician in charge of dredging for the RSCHB. "Last year we completed two relatively similar projects on the North Shore, at Baie-Trinité and Rivière-au-Tonnerre." But he added that a project on the scale of the Magdalen Islands is a first for the Department.

In fact, when possible, both environmentally and economically, the traditional practice of disposing of the dredged sand is being replaced by a beneficial use for the sediments, such as refilling beaches or reusing sediments for construction as in the Magdalen Islands. This beneficial use is also the preferred route for protecting fish habitat.

Lyne Beaumont
Small Craft Harbours

Dispatches

CCGS *AMUNDSEN* OPENS ITS DOORS IN MONTRÉAL

DFO J.L. Dugal

On the occasion of the International Polar Year 2012 Conference in Montréal, the CCGS *Amundsen* was open to the public and Conference attendees. More than 2 800 visitors boarded the vessel. They marvelled at being on board an icebreaker dedicated to scientific research. The experience was enjoyed by both visitors and the vessel's crew members who were most generous with their time and explanations throughout the four-day event.

THE MAURICE LAMONTAGNE INSTITUTE
MARKS 25 YEARS

It was 25 years ago that the Maurice Lamontagne Institute opened its doors in Mont-Joli, 10 years after the first scientists and hydrographers were hired in Québec. They became the foundation of a French research team within the Department.

DFO P. Dionne

Since then, our teams have provided crucial data for fisheries, aquaculture, oceanography, navigation, and protection and management of living resources, habitats and aquatic ecosystems, including marine mammals and species at risk. In 1997, new programs were added in the areas of habitat protection, environmental assessment, integrated oceans management and management of species at risk. Our study area covers the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence, James Bay, Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay.

Over the years, numerous discoveries have been made, notably on snow crab, ocean circulation systems, blue whales, acidification of marine waters and updates of unexpected undersea features.

It is with great pride that I invite you to join us in celebrating 25 years of success, thanks to our teams' effort, which has had such a profound impact on our relationship with our abundant aquatic ecosystems!

Several events are planned to mark these 25 years. Activities for employees, clients and partners are included. Our popular Open House days will return this fall and will provide an opportunity for our teams to share and highlight the link between our work and daily life.

Ariane Plourde
Director, Regional Science Branch and Director of the Maurice Lamontagne Institute

ST. LAWRENCE BELUGA RECOVERY STRATEGY:
A CONSERVATION STRATEGY

With its new *St. Lawrence Beluga Recovery Strategy*, Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues its efforts for the conservation of this emblematic species.

In 1995, a recovery plan for the St. Lawrence beluga was produced by a team led by the World Wildlife Fund and by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. In May 2005, this population was officially listed as a threatened species under the *Species at Risk Act*. A new team was then created by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to develop a recovery strategy that integrates new knowledge about this population.

Threats

Aside from hunting conducted in the past (banned since 1979), ten threats that limit the recovery of St. Lawrence belugas are described in this strategy. Four of these affect the entire population: contaminants, disturbance from human activities, decreases in prey quality and quantity, and other habitat degradation. Collisions with vessels, entanglement in fishing gear and scientific activities can also disturb the beluga, and even cause several deaths yearly. Finally, three specific threats may further limit the recovery of the St. Lawrence beluga: toxic spills, toxic algal blooms and disease outbreaks.

PWGSC F. McCann

This recovery strategy is the latest of many efforts made since 1983 to restore the beluga population in the St. Lawrence Estuary. The commitment and collaboration of all those who participate in the recommendations' implementation is essential to achieving the objectives.

Strategy

The size of the current population is estimated at about 1 100 individuals in total (young and adults). The strategy sets a short-term target of 1 000 adults and a long-term target of 7 070 individuals in total. A series of measures are planned to reach these goals. They are aimed at reducing contaminants in belugas, their prey and their habitats; reducing disturbance; ensuring belugas have available and appropriate food resources; mitigating the effects of other threats; protecting their habitat; and ensuring regular monitoring of the population.

The strategy also deals with critical habitat, the habitat necessary to the survival or recovery of the beluga. Vital activities such as calving and rearing occur within their critical habitat, in this case delineated by the upper estuary (Saguenay River up to Sainte-Marguerite Bay) and the maritime estuary's southern portion.

The *St. Lawrence Beluga Recovery Strategy* is available online for anyone interested in the protection of this emblematic species of the Estuary (www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

Andréanne Demers
Ecosystem Management

CAPELIN ROLL, BUT WHERE?
THE CAPELIN OBSERVERS NETWORK NEEDS YOU!

For an eleventh year, the Capelin Observers Network (CON) invites all to signal the arrival of capelin on the beaches of the St. Lawrence. Observers provide a community watch to locate spawning sites and identify capelin spawning periods.

From 2002 to 2009, the number of network observers and observations increased steadily, resulting in on overview of the range of capelin reproduction areas along the shore. Although the 2010 season did not provide as much information, 2011 improved slightly. In fact, 66 observers signaled 184 observations last year.

The Internet registry has been online since 2011. This database lists more than 170 spawning sites and 1 500 reported observations in Atlantic Canada between 1944 and 2011.

Where and when will capelin roll in 2012?

Again this year, the Capelin Observer Network is calling on you to participate in collecting data. Please contact us to provide your observations during the season or with any questions you may have.

Capelin Observers Network 1-877-227-6853 - **ROC-CON@dfo-mpo.gc.ca**

T. Gallant

Pierre Nellis
Ecosystem Management

MARINFO HAS A NEW LOOK AND IS EXPANDING!

The Canadian Coast Guard's marine information portal in Quebec, *MarInfo*, got a makeover. The home page design and the information architecture have been revamped in order to make the Web site more user-friendly.

MarInfo contains lots of essential information for mariners, including shipping notices, details on buoy tending operations, the position of Canadian Coast Guard vessels in Quebec, and information on the organization.

Mariners will also now find ice charts, bulletins, forecasts and cameras, as well as icebreaker positions in the Quebec, Great Lakes and Arctic regions, all on *MarInfo*!

Go check it out — you'll easily find all the information you need!

New publications

OUR SCIENTISTS IN POLAR REGIONS

The Canadian Polar Commission[i] has released the *International Polar Year Canadian Science Report: Highlights,* summarizing results of 52 scientific projects in Canada conducted on the occasion of the International Polar Year 2007-2008. Prepared for the general public, the report covers topics from marine life to sea ice, human health and the atmosphere.

Several scientists from the Maurice Lamontagne Institute in Mont-Joli actively participated in research in the polar regions. Illustrated with colour graphics and photos, this publication is a useful reference for anyone who wants to know our scientists' key discoveries during International Polar Year.

The report is available on the Web at www.polarcom.gc.ca.

[i] *The Canadian Polar Commission is the national agency responsible for advancing knowledge of polar issues.*

Dispatches

NEW SEASON OF HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYS
ON QUEBEC'S NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS

On April 10, 2012, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, through the Canadian Hydrographic Service, launched its season of hydrographic surveys on Quebec's navigable waterways. The surveys primarily focus on the navigation channel in the St. Lawrence, the ports of Sept-Îles, Montréal and Saguenay, as well as approximately 15 harbours on Chaleur Bay, the Gaspé Peninsula's north shore, the North Shore and the Magdalen Islands. Multibeam surveys will also be conducted in an area off Cap Gaspé to complete mapping for the American Bank Web site and in the Upper Saguenay to update that map.

The surveys are conducted on hydrographic vessels equipped with highly precise echo sounders and electronic positioning systems. The information gathered on the location of shoals is also used to update the official nautical publications and charts, the ultimate goal being to ensure safe navigation. By the end of the season in December, the hydrographic teams will have covered over 10 000 km to monitor the condition of the St. Lawrence navigation channel.

DFO J. Beardsell

CCGS *F.C.G. Smith*

Report Hazards

Mariners are invited to notify the Canadian Hydrographic Service when they discover a hazard (or an apparent hazard) to navigation or if they observe changes in the data recorded on nautical charts. To make it easier for the Department's teams to spot reported hazards, it is important for mariners to specify the nature of the hazard, its position, the date and time it was observed, etc. Information may be reported by phone to 418-775-0502 or by e-mail to shcinfo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

Nautical Charts, Tides and Water Levels

Safe navigation begins with preparation and consultation of available and up-to-date data. Before leaving, we recommend that you have updated nautical charts on board and that you use them. Information to make corrections to charts is available online at www.notmar.gc.ca.

It is also important to check water levels before going out on the water. St. Lawrence River water levels and predicted tides are updated daily and can be obtained by calling 1-877-775-0790 or by visiting www.tides.gc.ca.

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