

**SEARCH AND RESCUE
STATISTICS
1999
Laurentian Region**



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FOREWORD

The Laurentian Region falls within the borders of the province of Quebec, and encompasses 6000 kilometres of coastline. It derives its name from the St. Lawrence, the waterway which travels 1600 kilometres between Montreal and the Atlantic, and into which an impressive number of tributaries empty.

Search and rescue resources remain scattered over the vast area making up the Laurentian Region (over **155,000** sq. km).

It should be pointed out that the conclusions and information drawn from this analysis are taken from the data recorded by MRSC Québec staff for all incidents reported during the 1999 calendar year, within its territory of responsibility. The Magdalen Islands are not included since the area is under the responsibility of the Halifax Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC).

Fortunately, 1999 proved more positive than 1998. Though the total number of incidents increased, the number of serious accidents decreased. In this regard, on September 24 when the cruise ship NORWEGIAN SKY ran aground on a shoal encircling Ile Rouge, everyone was holding their breath. Then, when the vessel's master asked that the evacuation operation he had requested earlier be suspended, everyone breathed a huge sigh of relief: the giant of the seas had become free of the shoal, without any harm to the 2 712 persons on board.

The incident was given extensive media coverage, as was also the case when the coroners submitted their reports on some fatal incidents reported the previous months (such as the BRIER MIST foundering, the crash of an aircraft off Baie-Comeau and the collision between a personal water-craft and a small zodiac, on the Chambly Bassin). Such coverage enhances public awareness of the capacity and the limits of search and rescue services.

The Coast Guard did not produce a report for 1998. However, a national report, published by the National Rescue and Environmental Response Directorate, permits regional comparisons within Canada.

This publication was produced by the Marine Rescue Centre - Québec (MRSC Québec) in Québec City for the purpose of developing a more accurate analysis of the boating situation for people in the field specifically in order to better determine safety problems.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA)

For the past 20 years, CCGA volunteer members have been working in partnership with the Canadian Coast Guard, assisting fishermen and boaters in distress. In the Laurentian Region, all CCGA volunteers--most of whom own a pleasure boat or a commercial fishing boat--have received special training so as to be more effective during search and rescue operations.

The role of the members of the CCGA is often perceived by the public as being limited to SAR operations. However, a keen eye will soon have spotted them at events such as boating shows; hunting, fishing and camping shows; hunting and fishing information evenings and at many other activities providing the members with the opportunity to have direct contact with boaters, sports fishermen and hunters. The members' goal: to supply the latter with information concerning the boating safety precautions to be taken. CCGA volunteers have also taken part in specific activities of particular interest to boaters, for example, the departure of vessels competing in transatlantic races or the firework displays at Montréal and Québec City.

For the Marine Rescue Centre, the CCGA volunteer network means above all being able to count on an available boat, whether it be a balmy afternoon in July or a cold, windy night in late September. The invaluable assistance provided by the volunteer members of Lac Saint-François, Sept-Îles, Rimouski or Rivière des Prairies cannot be more fully appreciated than by the people whom they assisted.

Photo

Map of the region

PART II: OVERVIEW

Spring arrived very early in 1999, as it did in 1998. The temperatures recorded, when compared to the averages for the past few years, were those one would expect to see almost three weeks further into the season. Such conditions certainly contributed to a greater use of the waters and boating facilities in the Laurentian Region. Had it not been for a brief rainy period in July and a hike in fuel prices, the summer of 1999 would probably have been a record-breaking year.

Moreover, Environment Canada reported that, nationally, 1999 was the third warmest year since 1947 with temperatures at least 1.7° above normal; the very warmest year was 1998.

In 1996 and 1997, there was a significant drop in the total number of incidents reported to the Rescue Centre (Table 1). In 1998, 1279 incidents were recorded, an increase of 17.5% over the previous year. Then, in 1999, there was a 10% jump, with a total of 1408 incidents, qualifying the year as one of the Rescue Centre's busiest since it opened in 1978.

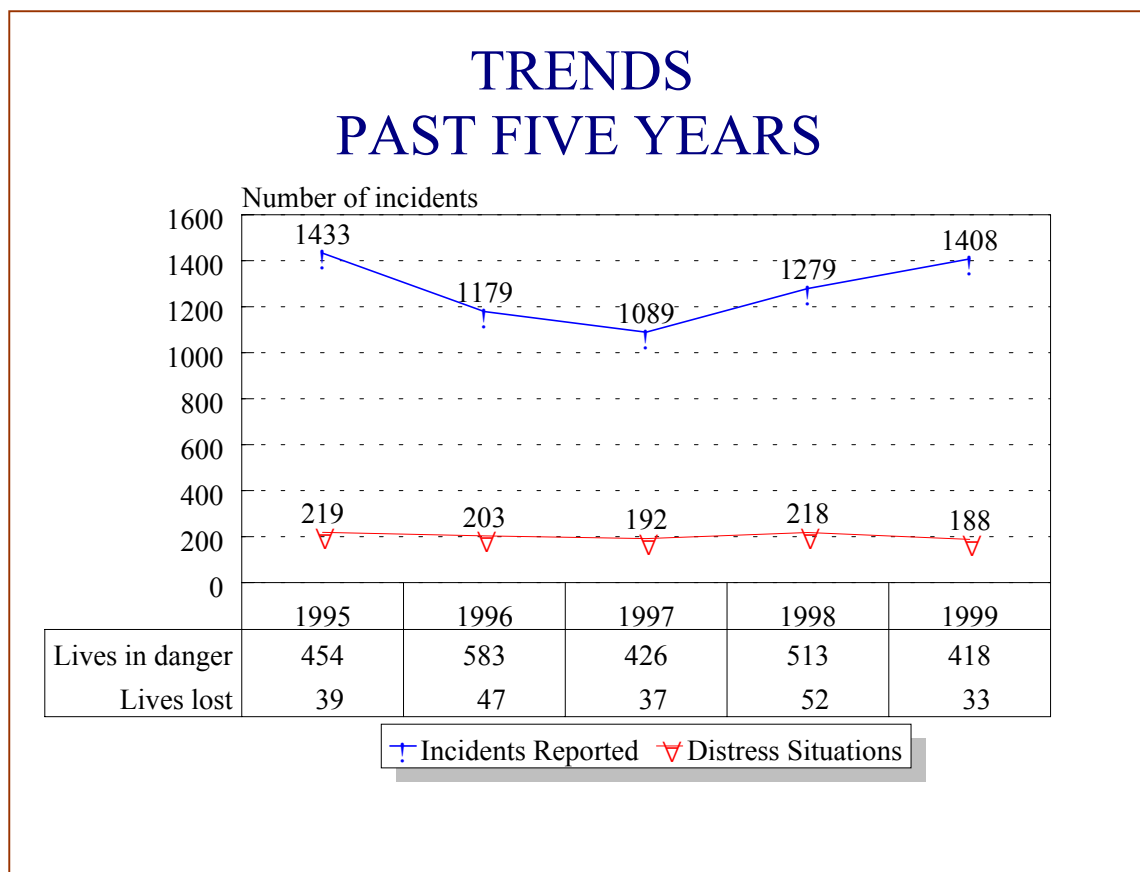


Table 1

To our great satisfaction, the death toll did not follow the same curve. The toll in 1998 was rather bleak, with more than 52 mortalities (paradoxically, where recreational boating only is concerned, 1998 was the best year on record, with only four deaths). However, in 1999, the number of mortalities (33) was below the latest five-year average of 42. The proportion of serious incidents also dropped, from 17% to 13%, a definite improvement over the previous years.

The factors contributing to this very positive record were namely:

- favourable climatic conditions;
- sustained prevention efforts on the part of boaters;
- media coverage of boating safety issues.

In all, more than 6530 people (recreational boaters, commercial fishermen and sailors) were assisted in one way or another by the Coast Guard and by its partners in the Canadian SAR system.

Relevant information on each category of client is clearly presented in Table 2.

A comparison of the 1998 and 1999 statistics indicates that while there was a 15% increase in boating-related incidents--from 930 to 1068--the number of distress situations dropped from 122 to 101 in 1999 (-17%).

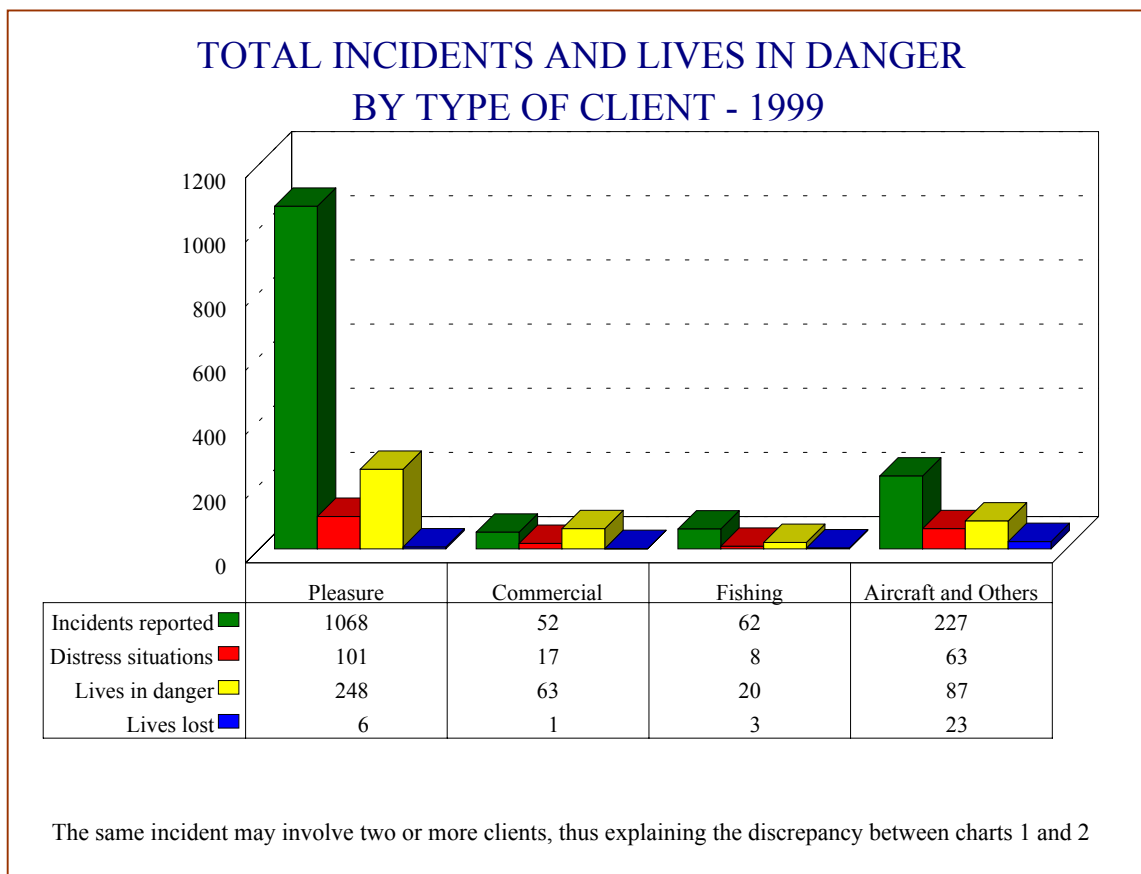


Table 2

Incidents involving commercial ships were more numerous in 1999: 52, up from 42 in 1998. With respect to commercial fishing, the number of incidents was somewhat consistent with the previous year (62 incidents in 1999 compared to 56 in 1998).

Not surprisingly, recreational boating--the activity sector that generates most SAR clients--accounted for 76% of all requests for assistance, a slight increase over the previous year.

As regards the origin of calls received involving the water surfaces within the Laurentian Region, the majority of calls are, of course, made from the Port of Montréal, Greater Québec and the two lakes, Lac Saint-Louis and Lac des Deux Montagnes. This is in contrast to the Upper North Shore and the Gaspé Peninsula where Coast Guard responds primarily to requests from commercial vessels and from fishing vessels, respectively.

Table 3 shows the geographic distribution of incidents reported for each of the four main categories of clients.

Table 3

PART III – RECREATIONAL BOATING

The analysis of incidents occurring in 1999 produces interesting results, particularly with respect to recreational boating. Though the total number of incidents for that category was 20% above the annual average (890 incidents)¹ and there has been no significant change over the past few years in the proportions of the different types of pleasure craft, powerboats accounted for over 70% of rescue service clients. Three-quarters of these boats were under 8.0 metres in length. As for incidents involving personal watercraft, the number remained relatively stable...good news indicating that the significant efforts made to reduce the negative impact of this newcomer to the world of recreational boating appear to be paying off. Nonetheless, the proportion of serious accidents remains highest (30%) for this type of craft; for other pleasure craft, it ranges from 12% to 14% only.

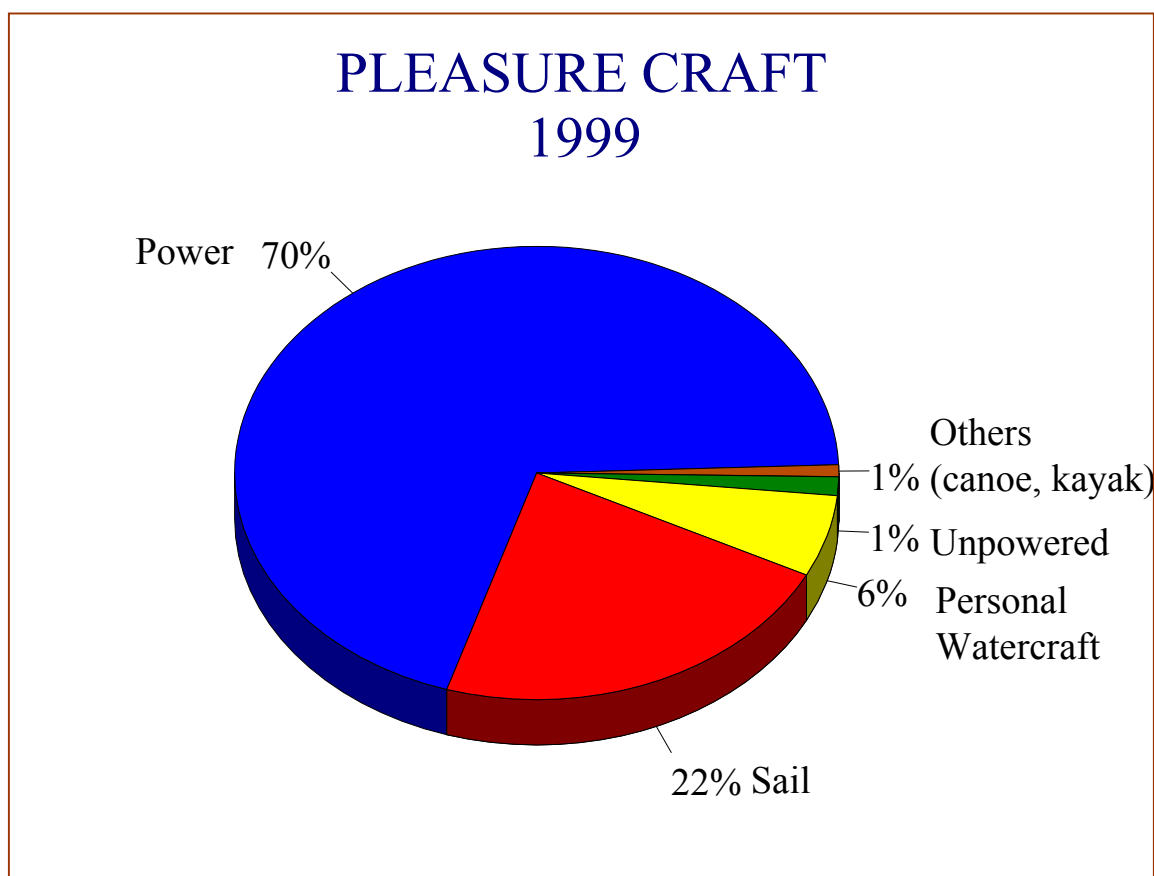


Table 4

¹ The annual average is based on the period 1994 through 1998.

PLEASURE CRAFT - POWER 1999

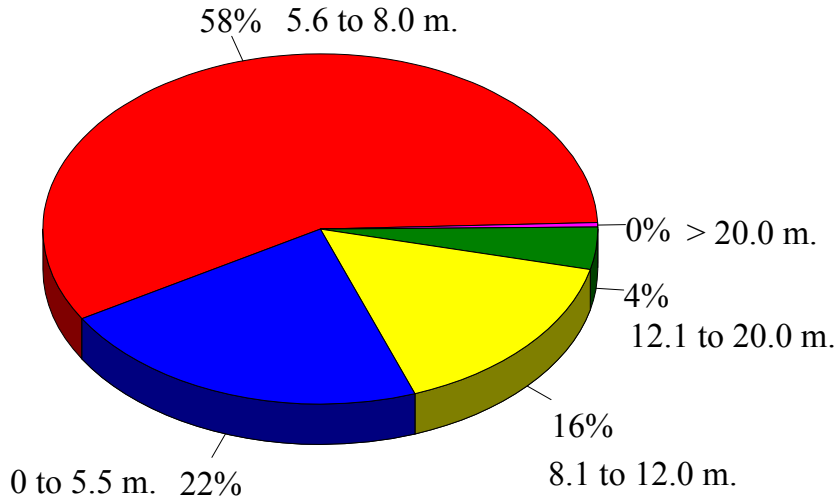


Table 5

PLEASURE CRAFT - SAIL 1999

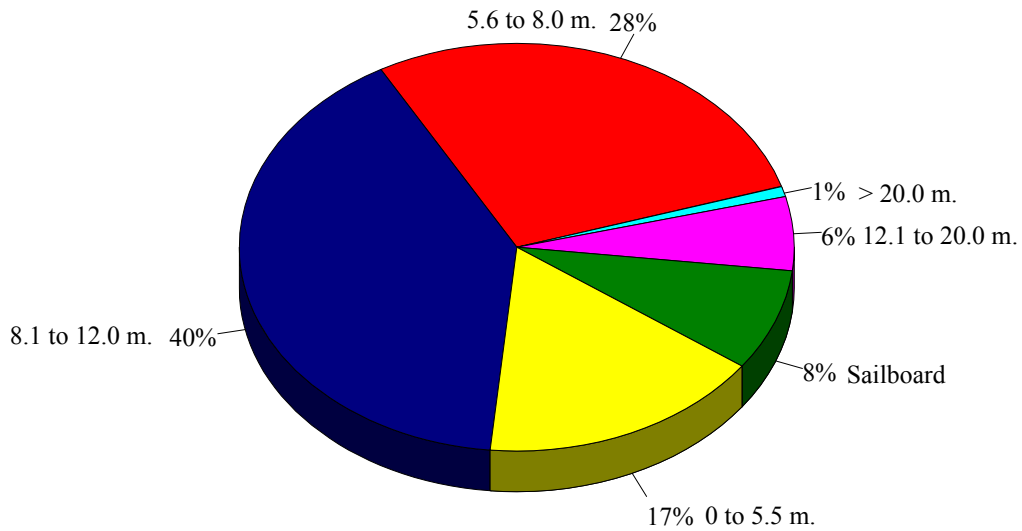


Table 6

Characteristics of Incidents

Regular readers of our annual reports will readily notice that a slight change has been made to Table 7. This modification came into effect in 1998, eliminating "mechanical breakdown" as a distinct type of incident. A mechanical breakdown is now considered as one factor that can handicap the movement of a ship or craft and thus render the craft disabled. This term therefore designates all incidents where a request for assistance is required subsequent to running out of fuel, a mechanical breakdown, a collision between ships or with a fixed object.

Readers should take note of the positive findings for the year 1999. While the proportion of serious accidents is generally between 12% and 14%, year after year, in 1999, it dropped to only 9%.

As previously noted, water levels were very low for a second year in a row, resulting in more cases of vessels running aground (27%).

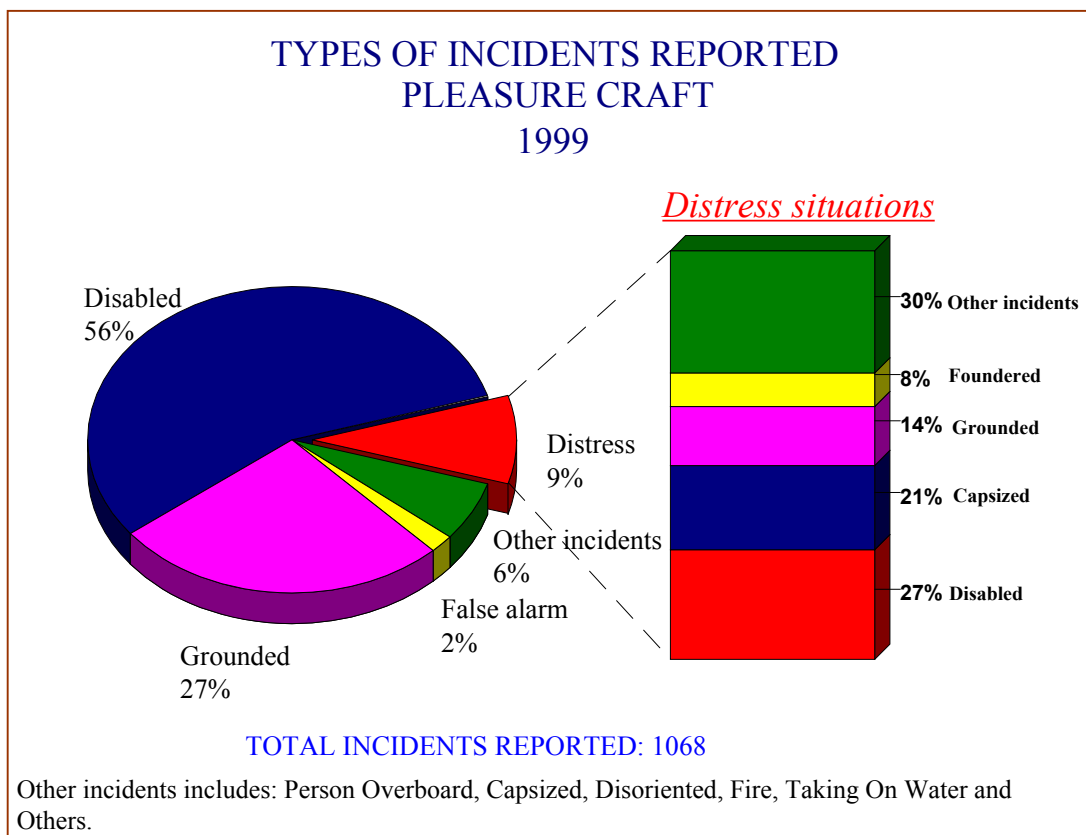


Table 7

Geographic Distribution

Lac Saint-Louis was the site of the most significant increase in requests for assistance; the total number of requests increased 55% over the 1998 figure. An indication that water levels are clearly an important factor for this relatively shallow water surface: 63 (41%) of the 155 craft involved in an incident on the lake had touched bottom or had remained grounded until help arrived. What is more, beginning in late June, a number of suppliers in the Montréal region were running low on propellers and stern drives.

The number of boaters reported in distress in the Port of Montréal also dramatically increased by 30%, from 137 in 1998 to 178 in 1999. Of the 178, 38% had also run aground. Sorel is another sector where there was a significant increase--23%--in the number of incidents in the recreational boating category over the past year. Even though Greater Québec remains one of the four busiest sectors, the number of recreational boaters in trouble dropped in 1999, from 152 to 141 (-7%). The low water levels also claimed their due on the Rivière des Prairies.

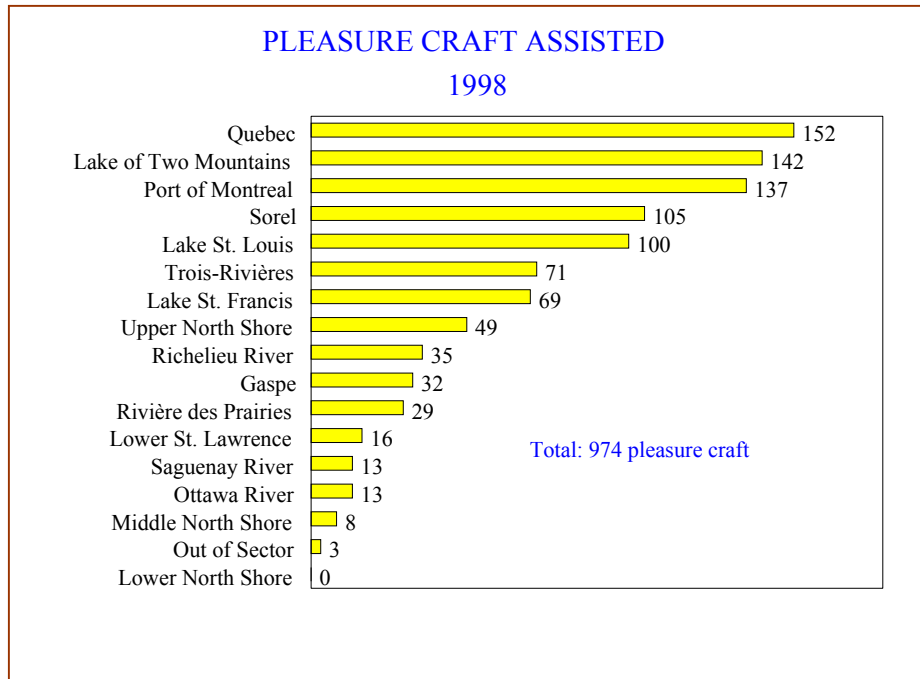


Table 8

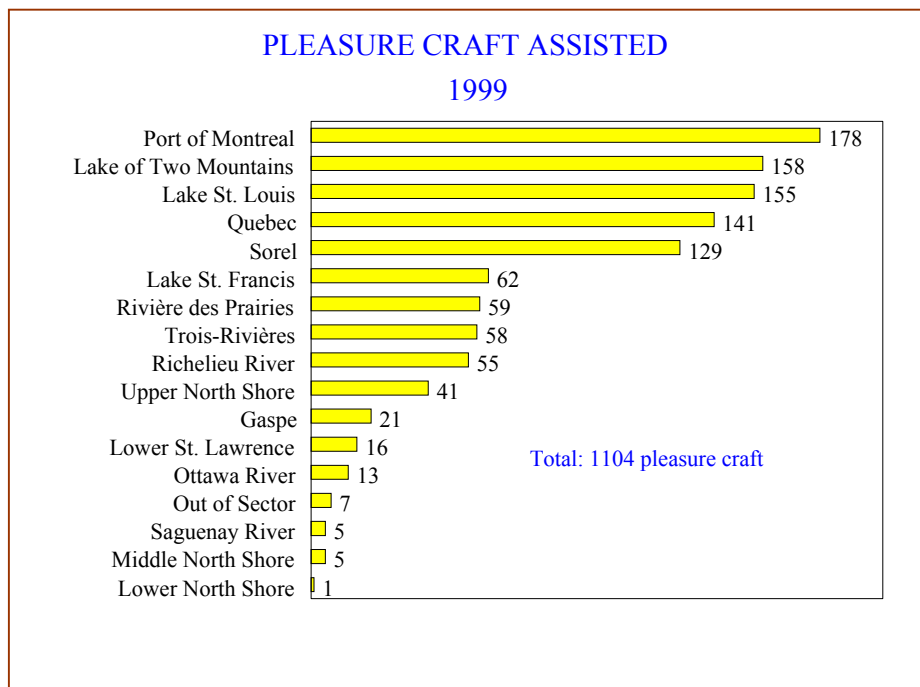


Table 9

The various types of craft involved in incidents are very effectively presented in Table 10. Of course, the traffic level of each type of craft navigating our waters has a direct impact on the proportions indicated. One type of craft in particular stands out: powerboats between 5.6 and 8.0 metres in length alone account for more than 40% of our recreational boating incidents.

The repeated increases in the number of accidents in the recreational boating category over the past two years can primarily be attributed to this specific clientele. In 1997, there were 294 incidents involving powerboats between 5.6 and 8.0 metres in length; in 1998, the total climbed to 343 (+15%) and, in 1999, to 446 (+30%).

Is there reason to be alarmed? Judging from the record for lives in danger for this category of clientele, no. The danger curve actually follows a reverse slope, going from 1 boater in danger for every 3.9 incidents in 1997 to 1 boater for every 7.6 incidents in 1999. The fact remains that continually greater efforts to promote prevention among persons operating powerboats of 8.0 metres in length and less will have to be made.

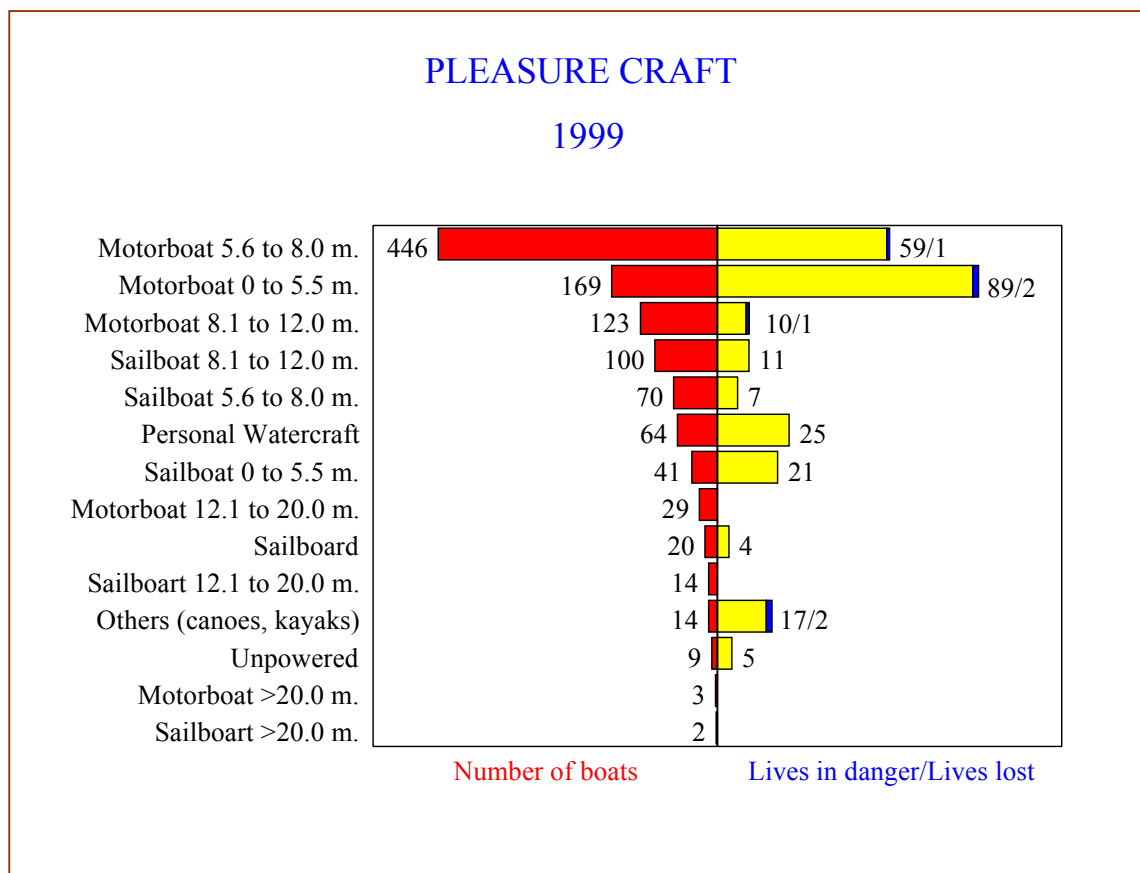


Table 10

1999 statistics on kayakers reveal that the number of incidents was halved: eight incidents, involving ten craft. Unfortunately, for the first time in five years, one fatality was recorded among kayaking enthusiasts. We also invariably hear of kayakers who fall victim to bad weather during excursions that clearly justify more elaborate preparation in view of the small size of the crafts in question.

Fatal Accidents

A rescue centre is there to respond to incidents and strive to prevent accidents from evolving into fatal ones. Is not our mandate founded on the need to reduce the number of fatal accidents? Regrettably, while a number of boaters, sitting around the hearth with their friends and family, can tout their good fortune as they recount their misadventures, some may perhaps have assumed...wrongly!...that the Coast Guard is a miracle worker.

During a friendly "Poker Run" sports competition, a high-performance craft was heading toward the mouth of the Saguenay River and, upon striking a wave, was literally pulverized. Among debris of all sorts, the largest piece of which was a seat, the rescuers located the dazed owner. Unfortunately, his female companion was not wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) at the time of the accident; her body was never recovered.

In the region of Rimouski, people were out for a stroll near the islands off Île Bic when they came across a partially submerged kayak. Their discovery, however, came too late for the kayak's occupant.

Neglecting to wear a PFD also resulted in tragic outcomes in three separate boating incidents. The body of one boater was recovered from the waters of the St. Lawrence at Varennes, another was found near Cornwall and a third in the Seaway near the Mercier Bridge.

PART IV: COMMERCIAL FISHING

In commercial fishing, the total number of incidents remained fairly stable, being directly proportional to the levels of activity for the different types of fishing. Crab, lobster and shrimp fishing are lucrative activities; these fishermen thus do well to see to it that their vessels are properly maintained so as to avoid losing precious days at sea. Though there are fewer vessels in the fleet, usually the best boats are operated on the various fishing banks in the Laurentian Region.

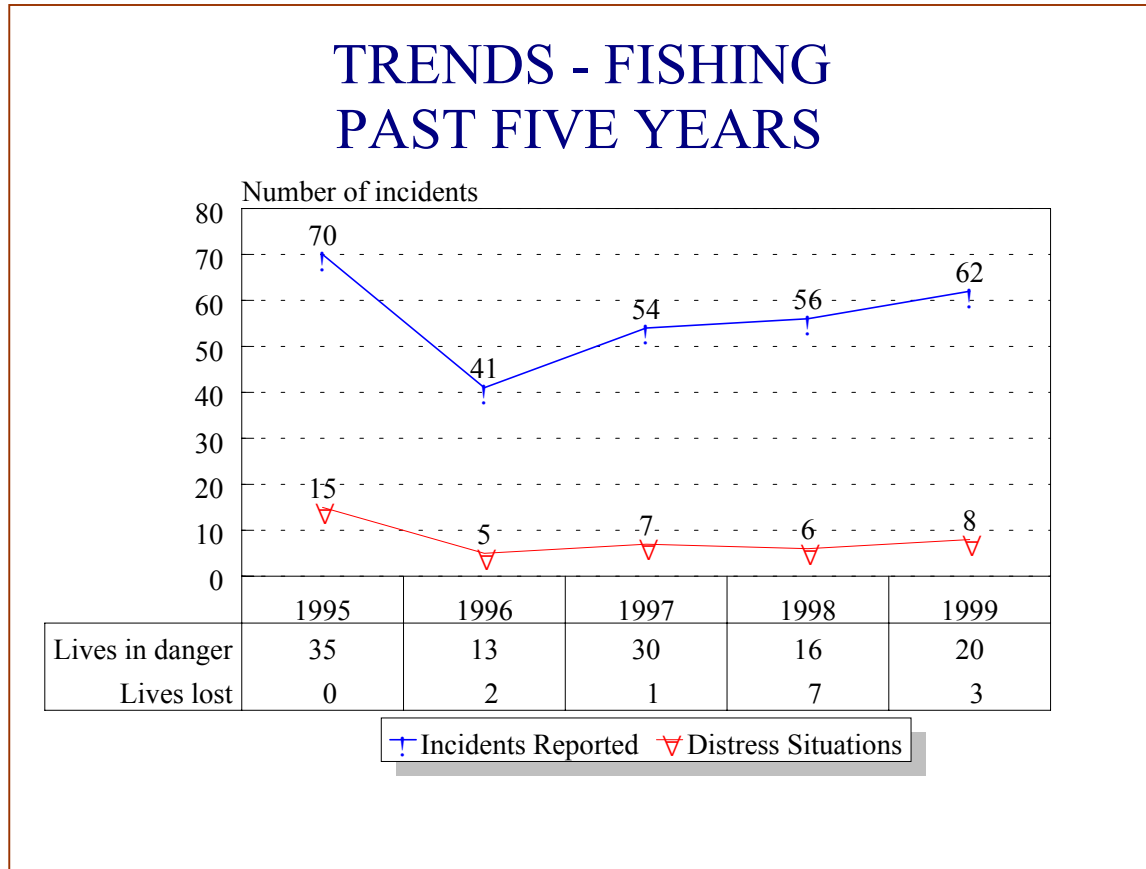


Table 11

Characteristics of Incidents

The number of incidents in the commercial fishing sector that were reported to the Rescue Centre rose from 56 in 1998 to 62 in 1999. This is comparable to the five-year average (1994-1998) of 66 incidents. Mechanical breakdowns generally account for three-quarters of these incidents; disabled, the boats must be towed to the nearest port.

With respect to commercial fishing, eight distress incidents occurred, putting a total of 20 lives in danger. In all, 195 individuals were provided with assistance.

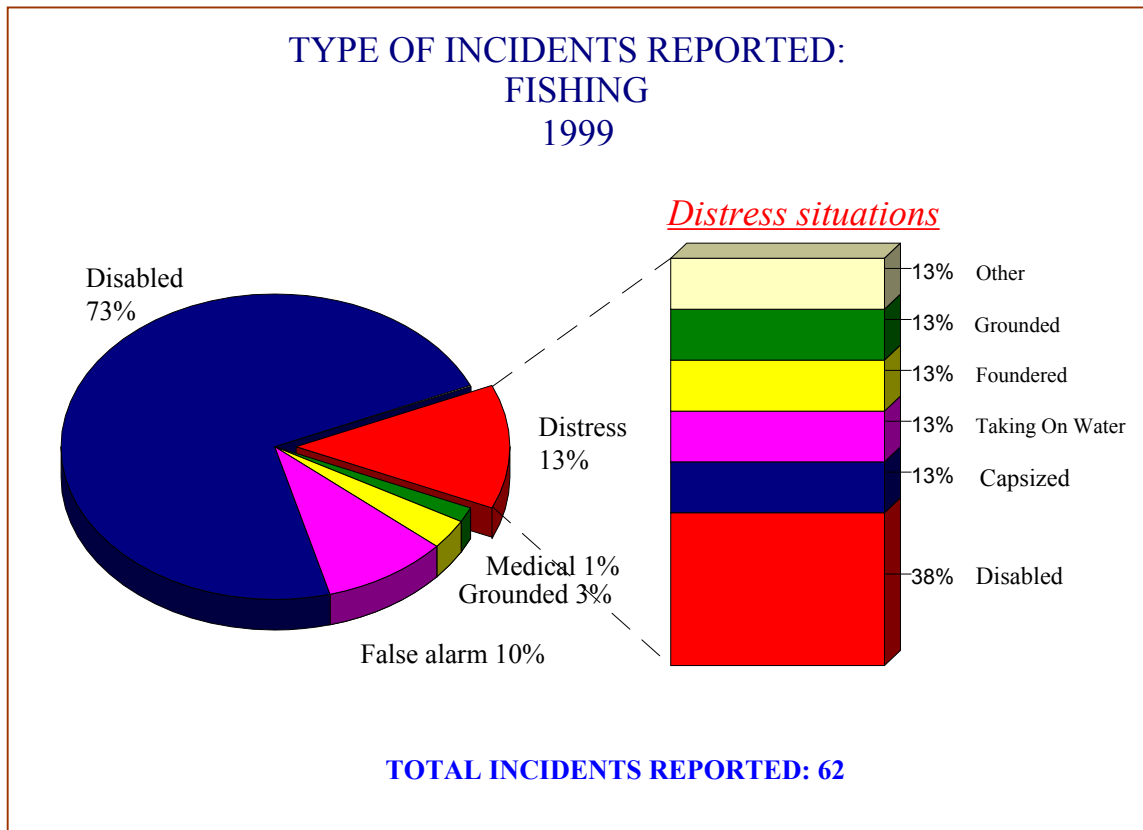


Table 12

Table 13 clearly illustrates the two main categories of clients that fall victim to either a breakdown, a leak or the craft running aground. The ratios and number of craft are in keeping with the trends observed during the previous years.

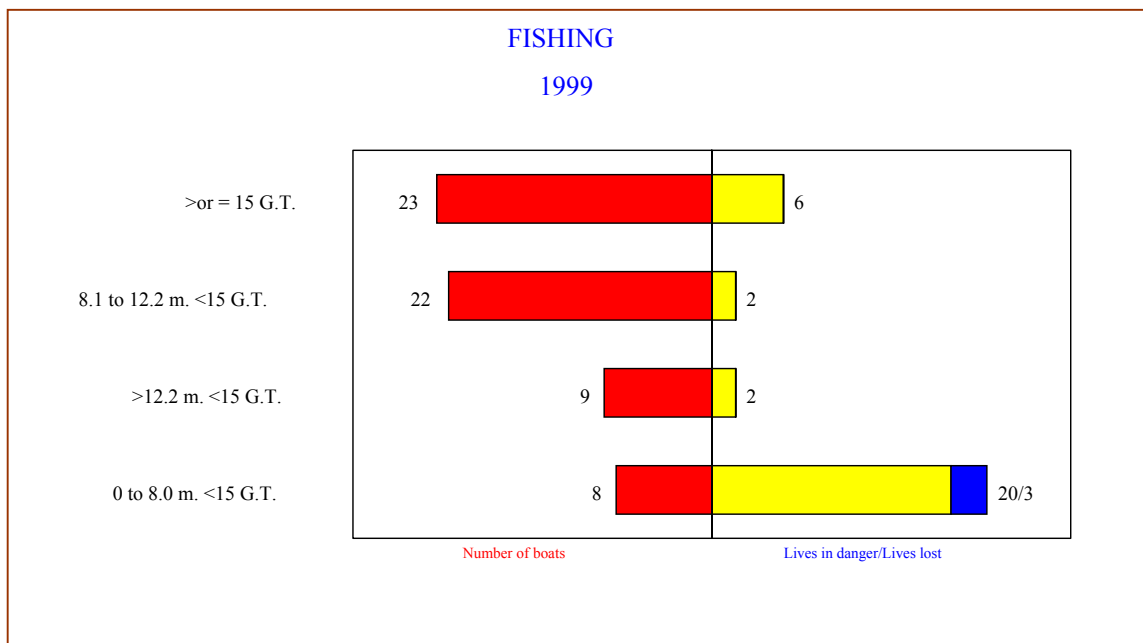


Table 13

Among the origins of incidents that occur in commercial fishing, breakdowns are definitely the commercial fisher's Achilles' heel. Problems with the ship's transmission or propulsion motor, and electrical problems, are the most commonly cited causes.

Nearly half of the commercial fishing incidents took place off the Gaspé Peninsula. It should be explained that the three fatalities recorded in 1999 occurred during the incident involving sports fishermen on board a commercial fishing boat on Lac Saint-Pierre.

Magdalen Islands

The Magdalen Islands sector does not come under the jurisdiction of MRSC Québec. Statistics for the sector were compiled by the Halifax Rescue Co-ordination Centre. These data, which are not included in the official data for the Laurentian Region, have been added to this report for information purposes only. A total of 65 incidents were reported off the Magdalen Islands archipelago, based on the administrative boundaries of the Laurentian Region. Of the 65 incidents, 41 (63%) involved fishing boats and vessels. The lives of four fishermen were in danger during distress, or potential danger, situations. Luckily, the incidents did not result in any loss of life.

Note: For more information on SAR incidents in the sector of the Magdalen Islands, please contact the person in charge of statistics at the Halifax Rescue Co-ordination Centre at (902) 427-2108.

PART V – OTHER ASSISTANCE

Commercial

A total of 52 commercial vessels were involved in incidents warranting the activation of the SAR system. Whale-watching boats and cruise ships accounted for over half of the total. The incident receiving the most media coverage was, without a doubt, the grounding of the cruise ship NORWEGIAN SKY on the shoal around Île Rouge. Fully 33% of the 52 incidents were serious and put the lives of 67 persons in danger. Regrettably, one life was lost.

Safety inspections and checks aboard foreign and domestic vessels are the responsibility of the Marine Safety Branch of Transport Canada. Inspections of foreign vessels under the Port State Control Act are effective in detecting serious deficiencies, in which case the vessel is detained.

Other Assistance Rendered

Civil authorities regularly call upon the Rescue Centre for assistance during measures taken to prevent, when possible, any loss of life. In 1999, MRSC Québec staff played a role in incidents involving aircraft, suicide attempts made from structures over water, the rescue of people in distress in the water who are not, per se, aboard a craft (fishermen, bathers, divers, hikers) and the emergency evacuation of injured persons in isolated locations.

It is indeed unfortunate that considerable energy is oftentimes expended in futile searches. In 1999, 133 false alerts were recorded. More often than not, they result from the uncertainty that arises when someone is overdue or when a suspicious situation is reported. Sometimes the rescue services themselves fall victim to hoaxes.

During the summer of 1999, the land and marine resources in the region of Boucherville were mobilized on four different occasions because of hoaxes played using a cellular telephone. However, the origin of these false calls was successfully retraced using the security services of the communication companies in question. The 18-year-old was arrested by the Boucherville municipal police and given a six-month prison sentence in view of the serious consequences of his thoughtless actions.

PART VI: RESCUE OPERATIONS

When a marine incident occurs, the dispatching of marine resources, and their impact, represent the primary facet of a rescue response. This response constitutes one of the Canadian Coast Guard's principal mandates. However, assistance may also be rendered by Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) volunteer members, firefighters, marine patrol police officers research) or through a buddy system among boaters and fishermen in the vicinity of the incident.

In the event of more serious incidents, the Canadian Coast Guard's special units are called out, as are aircraft, mainly from National Defence.

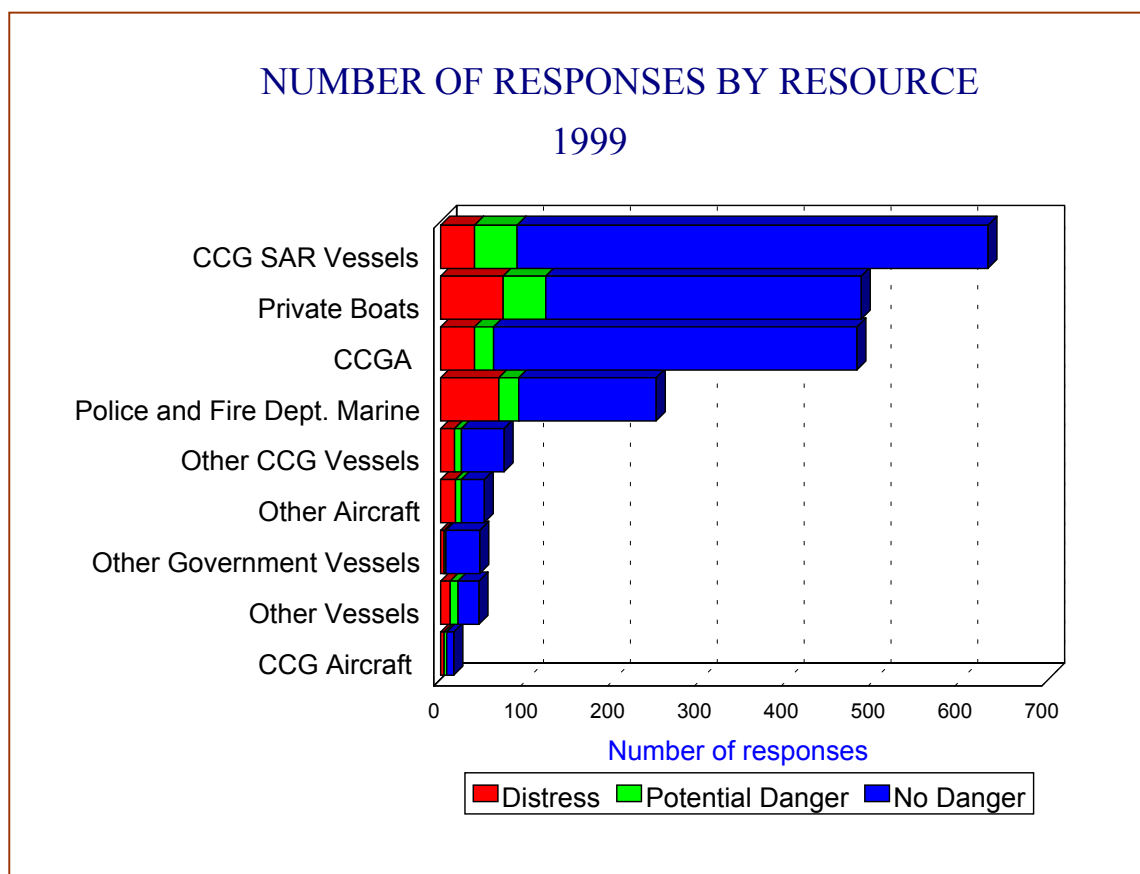


Table 14

During the summer of 1999, the Canadian Coast Guard operated six small fast rescue craft, which were deployed between Valleyfield and Trois-Rivières. From April to November, two seasonal rescue boats are based in Québec City and Tadoussac and, from April to December, the remaining special unit is based at Cap-aux-Meules. Finally, to ensure a year-round presence, the Canadian Coast Guard operates a multi-tasked vessel 12 months a year, which is deployed to the estuary and to established strategic points when its seasonal units are not in operation.

Marine Rescue Centre - Québec was also able to rely on more than 175 craft registered with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. The latter was involved in nearly 45% of all responses.

M/V NORWEGIAN SKY shown aground on Ile Rouge shoal, off the Saguenay Fjord's entrance and being assisted by CCGS ISLE ROUGE.

PART VII: CONCLUSION

Despite the positive records in 1999 in recreational boating, lack of concern is still too often evidenced. For example, boaters may fail to respect the marked channel, even when media announcements are continually made in an effort to warn them that water levels are very low. Worse still, some boaters let children and adolescents sit at the bow of the craft, their legs dangling. All it takes is the least little wave to set them--or anyone practising such a dangerous habit--off balance.

With respect to personal watercraft (PWC), we would first like to remind the reader that a fatal accident involving a PWC occurred in the Chambly basin in 1997. PWC manufacturers subsequently ran advertisements targeted at users of this type of craft. This measure, along with the considerable safety tips provided by the Canadian Coast Guard, assuredly contributed to the fact that the number of incidents reported has remained stable over the past two years.

It will be a while before we are able to determine the impact of the recent introduction of a mandatory pleasure craft operator card for youth 16 years of age and under. This measure is hoped to have a very positive effect.

On a final note, it may be added that one clearly need not be a professional analyst to understand that a person who drowns cannot come back to life in order to tell you that, without a lifejacket, no one can float!!

A FEW INCIDENTS

Recreational Boating

Just how deep is it?

On May 29, 1999, shortly before midnight, two personal watercraft (PWC) riders were amusing themselves on Lac Saint-Pierre, near the mouth of Rivière Saint-Francois. However, the water level was so low that the two craft--which were rented--became stuck in what had become a vast swamp. They had neither light nor flares, just a whistle. Luckily, one of them had a cellular telephone and the two succeeded in requesting assistance. The Auxiliary craft OASIS 2, sent to assist them, arrived at the scene but, since there was so little water, was unable to get any closer than 1 km from the PWCs! Finally, the riders managed...just barely...to push one of the two craft and succeeded in joining their guardian angel. The other PWC remained stuck....(long live the pleasures of renting!)

A bad habit

In June, a woman was sitting on the bow of a powerboat, her feet dangling overboard, when the operator decided to make the craft jump over a wave. The result: the woman suffered a fractured left arm and a head injury.

The tone rises...

Saint-Jean-Baptiste weekend. Two powerboats, one of which was towing a water skier, were approaching in opposite directions in a curve northeast of Île Sainte-Thérèse in the Port of Montréal. One of the two boats, a Princecraft, deviated from its course and ran into the other. The operator of the Princecraft had manoeuvred toward the left to avoid a collision but the movement was wrongly interpreted by the other boater who also altered course in the same direction to avoid him. The resulting collision saw the one craft climb over the other, cutting it in half and tearing off its motor. One of the occupants of the Princecraft was seriously injured and taken to hospital. With the occupants of the two craft suffering from shock, the tension mounted so much so that the police had to intervene to calm everyone down.

Is there an operator on board?

In mid-July, a powerboat about 6 metres in length was reported to be riding along in the water, but there did not appear to be anyone on board. The situation was investigated. Apparently there had been a downpour and the operator of the craft had taken cover under a tarp and ended up falling asleep at the bottom of the boat.

Sports fishing...

1999-10-12 On Thanksgiving morning, four fishermen and their guide went fishing on Lac Saint-Pierre. By evening, the guide's spouse had become worried since her husband normally returned before nightfall. An intensive search was initiated and conducted throughout the night. The craft was finally found in the morning, capsized near Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville. An investigation confirmed, on the basis of the survivors' testimony, that the winds were very strong in the early afternoon of their outing and the craft subsequently capsized. Three of the boat's five occupants died from hypothermia and cardiac arrest.

... and commercial fishing

1999-10-13 On October 13, the fishing vessel Veryan reported that her transmission had broken down. However, the vessel declined Coast Guard's offer to tow her toward Havre Saint-Pierre, despite the port's proximity. The master of the Veryan preferred to arrange to have a fishing boat from Rivière-au-Renard proceed to his vessel and tow her back to Rivière-au-Renard. The two vessels thus set out for the Gaspé Peninsula, despite the unfavourable weather forecasts. During the second night of the towing operation, the weather rapidly deteriorated and the towing cable broke. Before long, the Veryan found itself on its own, adrift on a raging sea. When weather conditions finally permitted, hours later, her crew was at last rescued by a Canadian Forces rescue helicopter. Once the storm had subsided, the Veryan was recovered.

1999-09-23 The cruise ship NORWEGIAN SKY had sailed from Québec City and was en route for Boston when she reported having run aground on the Île Rouge shoal, near the mouth of the Saguenay River. The master requested that the Rescue Centre see to it that preparations be made to evacuate his 1924 passengers. An armada of ferries and whale-watching boats was soon put together and ready to take action. Fortunately, however, before the evacuation had gotten under way, the cruise ship succeeded in refloating, owing to both the rising tide and the assistance of CCGS ISLE ROUGE. The NORWEGIAN SKY had nonetheless been heavily damaged and had to go into drydock.

Des pêcheurs passent une nuit d'enfer
Prisonniers d'une mer en furie, les pêcheurs s'en sortent indemnes.
BERNARD BELANGER
... du correspondant L'Express
... d'enfer de
... par

S.O.S. NORWEGIAN SKY
Départ en bateau, retour en avion!
Les délinquants sur l'eau épargnés jusqu'à la fin juin

Cruise ship runs aground
Leak discovered after accident near Tadoussac
UYEN VU
The Gazette
Inspectors from the federal Transportation Safety Board were trying to determine last night why a cruise ship ran aground in the St. Lawrence River, a hot spot for whale watching.

Des civils qui n'ont pas peur de se mouiller!
LA GARDE CÔTIÈRE AUXILIAIRE
... n't happen
... ours on
... ra

Un pilote qui n'ont pas peur de se mouiller!
SILÉRY — Dans le secteur de la Côte-Nord, les petites îles. Ces petites îles sont les plus précieux éléments de la Garde côtière auxiliaire.

Tragédie sur le Saguenay
Fin tragique d'une excursion de pêche
Trois personnes qui prenaient part à une excursion de pêche sur le lac Saint-Pierre se sont noyées, mardi, après que leur embarcation a chaviré à la hauteur de Baie-du-Février. Deux autres personnes ont survécu, après avoir passé plus de 16 heures dans l'eau.

Sains et saufs grâce à leur gilet de sauvetage
Trois personnes qui prenaient place hier après-midi dans un petit bateau de 16 pieds en fibre de verre, ont eu la vie sauve grâce à leur vêtement de flottaison individuel, lorsque leur embarcation a coulé après avoir heurté un rocher dans le Saint-Laurent.

Un homme gravement blessé et sa conjointe portée disparue durant un rallye en bateau

SUMMARY

RECREATIONAL BOATING - 1999

- 1 068 incidents were reported in 1999 compared to 930 incidents in 1998.
- The number of recreational boating incidents was 20% greater than the annual average of 890 incidents.²
- 101 incidents were judged serious (9%).
- The lives of 248 persons were endangered, compared to 295 in 1998 (annual average: 293).
- 6 boaters lost their lives (4 fatalities in 1998).
- In 1999, the fatality/incident ratio was 1 fatality per 178 incidents--a very positive record, since the five-year average ratio is 1 fatality per 101 incidents.
- In terms of lives in danger, the ratio was 1 fatality for every 41 persons whose lives were in danger (compared to 1 fatality for every 33 persons for the five-year period).
- Coinciding with the low water levels in Greater Montréal (particularly between May and July), there was an exceptional increase of 132% in the number of cases of craft running aground (229 groundings in 1999 compared to 129 in 1998). Nearly half of the incidents occurred on Lac Saint-Louis alone, that is, 63 out of a total of 141 which consisted in a craft running aground.
- The boaters who were reported in difficulty can be divided into four categories:
 - * craft fitted with a motor (70%); more than three quarters of this category were under 8.0 metres in length;
 - * sailing vessel (22%);
 - * personal watercraft (6%);
 - * small unpowered craft (e.g., paddleboats, inner tubes, canoes, kayaks, etc.) (2%).
- 64 personal watercraft required assistance, compared to 57 in 1998. In 30% of the incidents, the riders were in distress.
- Despite a significant drop in the number of incidents reported in this category, 11 of 14 canoes/kayaks that had reported problems were in distress.
- In terms of the absolute number of incidents, the Port of Montréal ranks first with 176 incidents, followed by Lac des Deux Montagnes with 153, Lac Saint-Louis with 141, and the Québec region with 136.
- Fully half of the incidents in the Laurentian Region occurred on the waters around the Island of Montréal, whereas Greater Québec accounts for 13% of all boating incidents.
- 32% of the incidents occurred on a Sunday, 24% on a Saturday.
- 3 203 boaters in all were involved in incidents reported to the Coast Guard in 1999.
- According to Environment Canada, the summer of 1999 was the third warmest in the past 52 years.

² The average annual is based on the period between 1994 and 1998.

SUMMARY: FISHING, COMMERCIAL AND CIVIL AIDS

FISHING - 1999

- 62 fishing vessels were assisted, compared to 56 in 1998; 37% of the 62 vessels had a gross tonnage of more than 15 tons.
- 62 incidents were reported in 1999 (annual average: 66³).
- The number of incidents involving fishing was 6% below the annual average.
- 8 incidents were judged serious (13%).
- 195 commercial fishermen were assisted, with 3 fatalities reported (7 in 1998).
- The lives of 20 persons were in danger compared to 17 in 1998 (annual average: 27).
- Three disabled craft, one taking on water, and one foundering put the lives of 12 persons in danger.
- The fishermen who had reported being in difficulty can be divided into four categories, according to the length and tonnage of their craft:
 - * 0 to 8.0 m < 15 GRT (13%)
 - * 8.1 to 12.2 m. < 15 GRT (35%)
 - * > 12.2 m < 15 GRT (15%)
 - * > or = 15 GRT (37%)
- 29% of the incidents involved fishing boats on the North Shore and 44% around the Gaspé Peninsula.
- 18% of the incidents occurred on a Monday.

³ The annual average is based on the period from 1994 to 1998.

GLOSSARY

ADRIFT:

Vessel carried by winds/currents with nobody on board.

CAPSIZED:

Vessel overturned because of improper loading, taking on water and/or a sudden squall.

CCG:

The Canadian Coast Guard.

CCGA:

Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (marine sector volunteers).

DISABLED:

A situation in which a vessel with people on board is not under command due to human factors, weather conditions or mechanical problems (windsurfer or sailboats in high winds, nets caught in the propeller, mechanical failure, strong currents, adrift, out of fuel, collision, etc).

DISORIENTED:

Vessel's operator is unable to fix his or her position (lost by day or night or in fog).

DISTRESS:

Any incident where a person's life is in danger or lost.

FALSE ALARM:

Any incident resulting in a search/investigation that turns out to be a false alarm. (Distress flares spotted, boat overdue, loss of radio contact, false distress signal, presumed incident that turned out not to be one).

FIRE:

Fire on board (includes explosions).

FOUNDERED:

Refers to a vessel that has sunk because of complete flooding of the hull.

GROUNDED:

Describes a vessel that has struck bottom and all accidental groundings (excludes deliberate groundings to avoid sinking after a collision/taking on water).

LIVES IN DANGER:

When lives are threatened during an incident involving distress or potential danger.

LIVES LOST:

Involves the victims of an accident recognized as a distress incident.

LIVES SAVED:

Persons rescued during a distress incident.

MEDICAL:

Evacuating a sick or injured person, transporting a physician, delivering organs.

MRSC:

Marine Rescue Sub-Centre.

OTHER:

Any incident not included in another defined category (swimmers, automobiles in the water, persons caught in rising tide, etc).

PERSON OVERBOARD:

A person who accidentally falls out of a vessel (excludes swimmers and divers).

POTENTIAL DANGER:

An incident that could pose risks to the persons involved if assistance is not received in time.

SAR:

Search and rescue.

SUICIDE:

Person taking his/her life by jumping into the water off a bridge, wharf or vessel, or other other means.

SUICIDE ATTEMPT:

Any attempt by a person to take his/her life.

TAKING ON WATER:

When water enters the vessel's hull below the water line, but the vessel does not founder.