

Foreword

The hard times that the Quebec fishing industry has been experiencing in recent years underscore the importance of producing reliable statistics that are as up to date as possible. The requests for information that we receive have not only become more numerous and more pressing, but above all more complex. This is the background to this annual statistical report.

The eighteenth edition of the Annual Statistics Review of Quebec marine fisheries, produced by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), paints a detailed portrait of the industry in 2002 and 2003. In a nutshell, in this last year, the volume of landings totalled 58 190 mt and had an associated value of close to \$170 million and in 2003 the volume of landings totalled 54 709 mt and had an associated value of close to \$161 million.

A supplement entitled “Quebec Marine Fisheries: 2002 and 2003 Highlights” is included in a special pocket on the back cover. This handy, comprehensive reference tool was prepared jointly by the Statistics and Licensing Division and the Policy and Economics Branch to provide a snapshot of the state of Quebec’s fishing industry in 2002 and 2003.

The Statistics and Licensing Division, which is responsible for this publication, is mandated to compile, process, analyse and publish data on Quebec marine fisheries. The statistics produced are of vital importance, first, to assess and highlight the economic value of the industry, and second, to provide managers and scientists with a basis for the various analyses required for effective fishery resource management.

It is important to note that a federal-provincial agreement between DFO and the Quebec Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) has laid the groundwork for greater coordination in collecting data. It aims to eliminate duplication of effort by public servants seeking information from fishing industry players and to promote intergovernmental data sharing.

The three types of data in this report have been obtained in different ways. Catch data are based on the sales transactions between fishers and fish buyers when each vessel lands its catch. For data on fishing effort, used by scientists in their research work, we rely upon the excellent cooperation of skippers, who provided information on fishing grounds, type of gear, target species and species caught, among other things. Finally, statistics on fishermen, fishing fleets and licences come from the licensing process.

The quality of the data in this review depends on (a) the quantity of data that our system gathers from fishermen, buyers and processing plants, and (b) the accuracy of the data. With limited resources, the Statistics and Licensing Division does everything within its power to check the data it gathers, but cannot guarantee that everyone involved submitted all their data. We turn to resource management programs such as enterprise allocations (quota licences), for which strict monitoring methods exist, to ensure that data entered into the system are consistent with observations of landings by dockside monitors. This does not however apply to every fishery. In addition to that, consultations with Inspectors, Protection Officers, Policy and Economics Branch representatives as well as with industry representatives further enable Statistics and Licensing Division staff to produce reliable, representative data.

The descriptive narratives accompanying the tables and figures are not intended as an in-depth analysis of the state of the marine fisheries in Quebec in 2002 and 2003.

The publication of this annual review of Quebec marine fisheries has been made possible by the hard work and rigour of the Statistics and Licensing Division staff and groups in Sept Îles, Gaspé and Cap-aux-Meules. We would also like to thank the Policy and Economics Branch for its important contribution.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the fishermen, buyers and producers for their ongoing cooperation; knowing that supplying statistics is an extra burden for them.

On an exceptional basis, we are including in this Annual Review a section entitled “Erratum” in order to provide some amended tables for the 2001-2002 Annual Review. These tables were containing some errors that we unfortunately noted only after its printing and distribution.

All of us in Statistics and Licensing Division hope that you enjoy reading this annual review and welcome any comments or ideas that might help us improve it.