



Council

*Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon
Salmon Fishery*

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Agenda item 7g)



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ET MIQUELON**

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**Direction des Territoires,
de l'Alimentation et de la Mer**

**Direction des Territoires,
de l'Alimentation et de la Mer**

Saint Pierre, 18 January 2023

Reference: D2023/SAMP/009

The Director of Territories, Food and the Sea

To

The Director General of Maritime Affairs,

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Maritime and Port Affairs Service

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Annual Report on the Atlantic Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon 2022 Season

Introduction

The archipelago of St Pierre and Miquelon (France) is one of the territories in North America which continues to authorise an interceptory mixed-stock sea fishery using gill nets to target Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

Only one river in the archipelago (the Belle Rivière) has a resident salmon population but fishing is only permitted on brook trout and eels. The latest genetic analyses, carried out in 2017, show that almost 90 % of fish caught in the archipelago's waters originate from the Gaspé Peninsula, the southern part of the Gulf of St Lawrence and Newfoundland (Bradbury *et al.* 2016).

Substantial work has been undertaken to increase awareness among fishers in order to improve the quality of the available data. The legislation that applies to this fishery is subject to

¹ This document has been revised to include as an addendum a letter from the Head of the Sustainable Aquaculture and Maritime Fisheries Service.

dedicated inspection programmes, carried out by the Department for Territories, Food and the Sea's Maritime and Port Affairs Service. Catches have been decreasing since 2014 while the number of licenses issued has remained stable.

1. Regulatory Framework

Salmon fishing at Saint Pierre and Miquelon is governed by:

- the Rural and Maritime Fishery Code (CRPM), in particular Book IX;
- the Order of 20 March 1987 which establishes a number of conservation and management measures for marine resources in the French territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone around the coasts of St Pierre and Miquelon;
- the Order of 24 March 2015 which establishes a number of technical measures and catch sizes for the professional fishery in the French territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone around the coasts of St Pierre and Miquelon;
- the Order of the Prefect no. 304 of 8 June 2021 which limits the number of Atlantic salmon fishing permits that may be issued to recreational fishers in St Pierre and Miquelon to 80; and
- the Order of the Prefect no. 242 of 29 April 2022 for the allocation of fishing permits to professional and recreational fishers (including management measures, gear, catch size, location of nets and reporting obligations).

These texts establish the following measures:

- the fishery is subject to authorisation and an Annual Fishery Plan;
- the minimum catch size is 48 cm;
- nets must be declared and marked;
- the minimum mesh size is 125 mm;
- the fishery season is restricted to 1 May – 21 July;
- fishing gear must not be placed within 300 m of a river mouth;
- all catch must be declared (through fishing log-books and annual declarations / log-books for recreational fishers)
- fishing effort is restricted by limiting the number of nets in the water.

2. Permit Allocation

Fishing permits are allocated to professional fishers (who may sell their catch) and recreational fishers (who are not authorised to sell their catch and fish only for personal consumption).

The allocation procedure is based on fishery precedence and on the applicant's compliance with catch declaration obligations throughout the previous year.

The Maritime and Port Affairs Service deals with permit requests and allocates each permit holder with a specific site to fish for the season. The overall fishery site plan is mapped and published annually by Order of the Prefect (recreational and professional Atlantic salmon fishing permits for the 2022 season were allocated under Order of the Prefect no. 242 of 29 April 2022).

In 2022, 4 professional permits were issued. Since 2021, the number of recreational permits issued has been limited to 80.

3. Salmon catch

The 2022 catch was as follows:

Professional catch: 100 kg (compared to 216 kg in 2021). 47 salmon were harvested by four vessels.

Recreational catch: 1,142 kg (compared to 1,384 kg in 2021). 431 salmon were caught by 80 vessels.

Fishing effort varies greatly between vessels. 21 vessels caught less than five salmon each. A number of fishers only fish for a very short period and bring their nets in well before the end of the season (on 21 July). Finally, 17 permit holders did not place their nets in the water in 2022 and therefore did not catch any salmon.

This traditional fishery allows the island's recreational sailors to go to sea after a long winter period and, along with hunting in September, is one of the few leisure pursuits available on the island. There are estimated to be over 600 recreational vessels in the archipelago, where there is a population of 6,000 people. The 2022 fishery did not begin in earnest until the beginning of June due to particularly unfavourable weather conditions. High winds during this period meant that it was not safe to go to sea. Further, fishing conditions were also affected by the presence of drifting seaweed, which tangled in the nets. Finally, several recreational fishers stated that fuel costs prevented them from going to sea.

4. The Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon 2017 – 2022

Season	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Professional Fishery						
No. of licences	8	9	7	5	4	4
Volume (kg)	593	155.5	72.21	90.52	216	100
Recreational Fishery						
No. of licences	80	80	80	81	80	80
Volume (kg)	2,223	1,130	1,214	1,648	1,384	1,142
Total	2,816	1,286	1,286	1,739	1,600	1,242

The total weight of the 2022 catch was 1,242 kg, compared to 1,600 kg in 2021. The catch has, therefore, decreased since 2021, in both the professional and recreational fisheries.

69 % of catches were less than 63 cm in length.

There is no export of salmon by professional fishers and all catch is consumed by the local market. Most are retained for personal consumption, with only a few (less than 100 kg) being sold. Only some salmon caught by professional fishers are sold directly to restaurants or individuals.

In 2022, the Ministry for the Sea presented a new framework for the professional fishery. This framework allows the fishers to diversify their catch (including lobster and scallop fishing and rod fishing for various species) to supply fresh produce to the archipelago's fishmongers, supermarkets and restaurants. This diversification has led to a marked reduction in the quantity harvested in the professional fishery, to around 100 kg (220 lbs).

The recreational harvest has returned to its 2018 levels, and the reasons for this reduction are given above.

Overall, the 2022 catch in the combined recreational and professional fisheries has fallen by 22.31% when compared to the 2021 catch.

5. Fishing Effort





Fishing effort is mainly concentrated around the East and South-East of the island of St Pierre. Other fishing sites are located around Miquelon and Langlade. Both professional and recreational fishers are allocated an individual fishing site.

6. 2022 Report

In total, 61 inspections were carried out by the Maritime and Port Affairs Service in 2022. Forty-nine of these took place on the recreational fishery and 12 on the professional fishery. The inspections were carried out at random during the mornings and / or the evenings during the period 18 May – 12 July. **There is believed to be no undeclared catch.**

7. The Outlook for 2023

The Maritime and Port Affairs Service plans to strengthen its monitoring team by recruiting new staff members, increasing the number of fishery inspectors to three. Further, a new monitoring vessel will be obtained in May 2023. This vessel is being built in a naval shipyard in mainland France and will allow inspections to take place at sea in addition to those carried out on land.

It was deemed necessary to discuss the comments made by the Members of NASCO's North American Commission, during its 2022 Annual Meeting, with the professional and recreational fishers.

Professional Fishers

A meeting was held with the professional fishers (there have been four professional fishers since 2021) on 15 December 2022 to discuss the concerns held by the NASCO Parties. They understood the issues raised, but asked that they be considered in the context of the low levels of professional catch sold to fishmongers or the local market in St Pierre. They wish to contribute to scientific knowledge by assisting the French National Institute for Ocean Science (IFREMER), or any other body as part of regional scientific co-operation.

Recreational Fishers

The President of the St Pierre and Miquelon Recreational Fishers Association, which represents the majority of the archipelago's recreational fishers, was open to the proposals put forward to improve the management of the salmon fishery. They also indicated that several measures have already been taken on their initiative such as:

- voluntarily restricting the fishing season to 1 May – 21 July each year, despite the regulations allowing the fishery to be open from 1 May – 31 July;
- being involved in the management and assessment of the resource: implementing a fishing log-book scheme which records the size, location and estimated weight of all salmon caught. The recreational fishers commit to providing this information to the administration and scientists. This is one of the most important measures in improving scientific knowledge. It should be noted that while it is obligatory for professional fishers to declare their catch in France, it is not obligatory for recreational fishers to do the same. This participation in the scientific process is, therefore, voluntarily undertaken by the recreational fishers.
- contributing to scientific knowledge through taking salmon scale and adipose fin samples and providing these samples to the scientists;
- diversifying their fishing methods so that net fishing will gradually be replaced by trolling. A voluntary trial of this fishing method is being undertaken by a number of recreational fishers.
- fixing the number of permits allocated each year at 80 (since 2021).

The signing of a charter in 2023 commits the recreational fishers to complying with both the legal and voluntary measures in order to guarantee the sustainability of Atlantic salmon and the archipelago's marine ecosystems. The members of the recreational fishers' association also commit to continue to be actively involved in scientific programmes carried out by IFREMER and through regional co-operation with the Canadian scientists.

For their part, the maritime administration and IFREMER commit to promoting good Atlantic salmon fishing and safety at sea practices and to remind fishers of the catch declaration obligations included on the fishing permits. Finally, signatories to the Charter commit to consider and implement, within a reasonable timeframe, new measures which aim to limit annual Atlantic salmon catches by the archipelago's recreational fishers. This limit should be consistent and agreed by all recreational Atlantic salmon fishers.

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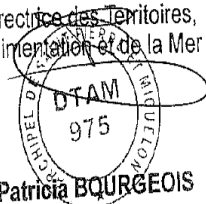
Glossary

Mixed-Stock Fishery Atlantic salmon from many different rivers are found in the ocean, coastal areas and in a number of estuaries. Some of these are from at-risk populations and are harvested along with salmon from healthy populations. This kind of fishery operates in Greenland, on the Labrador coast and at St Pierre and Miquelon.

The Director

La directrice

La Directrice des Territoires,
de l'Alimentation et de la Mer



Patricia BOURGEOIS

Addendum



GOVERNEMENT

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**Direction générale des affaires maritimes,
de la pêche et de l'aquaculture**

La Défense, le 15 mai 2023

*Le Directeur général des affaires maritimes,
de la pêche et de l'aquaculture*

Monsieur Arnaud Peyronnet
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Objet: rapport annuel sur la pêcherie de saumon à Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

Monsieur le Président,

J'ai l'honneur de vous transmettre le rapport annuel sur la pêcherie de saumon à Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon pour 2022, avec un niveau de captures qui a baissé par rapport à 2021.

Je vous confirme qu'une délégation représentant la Direction des Territoires, de l'Alimentation et de la Mer Saint Pierre et Miquelon participera en tant qu'observateur à la réunion annuelle se déroulant du 5 au 8 juin 2023.

La France poursuit ainsi, comme elle s'y est engagée, la coopération avec l'OCSAN, ses membres et la communauté scientifique.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'expression de ma considération distinguée.

La cheffe du Service pêche maritime
et aquaculture durables

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*Copie :
Monsieur le Directeur général des Outre-Mer*