



**FÉDÉRATION RÉGIONALE ACADIENNE
DES PÊCHEURS PROFESSIONNELS inc.
(FRAPP)**

May 6, 2018

Members of the committee,

“Avant-Propos”

“In 2050, the world population will reach 10,000,000,000 people. In order to provide food for everybody, we need to increase the actual production by 69%. Right now, only 5% of actual production comes from the sea”

Manuel Barange, Director of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division at the World Seafood Congress, Sept 10, 2017, Reykjavik.

Bonjour to all,

First, let me thank you for this invitation giving all of us the opportunity to share ideas & point of view on this hot topic within the fishing community.

When I start in this line of work 11 years ago the topic of the day on the science side at DFO was « **Protection of Benthic area** » So as the new kid on the block then, I had to find out rather quickly « What the heck is that » but before my benthic area crash course

101 was done, it was no longer on the agenda as DFO had move elsewhere on a better buzz word or expression for my ears when I start hearing « From fishing to plate ».

As I was coming from the municipal world where « sustainable development » was very « À LA MODE » then; to me, that made more sense. At least you didn't need a PHD degree in nautical science to ask a question. So that very common sense, easy to understand, easy to explain to the fishermen that the concept was appealing and interesting. But guess what! The person who had the file then, by the way his name is Mr. Kevin Stringer, who was trying then to sell the approach was probably too good at his job, so he was transferred elsewhere. And the file with the plate disappeared under the table as if Mr. Stringer was the only person within DFO holding the hot plate.

Then a couple years after « Certification » arrive as the solution to everything: all kinds of concept, all kinds of name, expressions, labels etc. From adequate science, to market specialist recognition. So here in Canada, DFO decided that MSC was the winning concept and hence the way to go. Never mind the effort and cost associated with this, as the industry will be forced to pick up both. We did and we still are paying every time a kilo of fish or seafood is being catch by a Canadian fisherman. Atlantic shrimp fisheries were one of the first to go through the process without being sure that it was the right thing to do, but it was presented in a way that if we where not doing it, we most likely would burn in hell forever and ever.

Then « **Precautionary approach** » arrived along with «**Integrated Fisheries Management Plan** » plus the market dropping MSC for

another acronym called « BRC » certification or other type of real market driven form of approval.

Recently, the protection of benthic area resurfaces again along with the addition this time of « **Corals & Sponges** » protection

Now in the same period, the « Oil & Gas » industry didn't seem to be spectator of this subject playing their own game, deciding basically that the Canadian oceans east, north or west is their property doing prospection & drilling wherever, whenever they feel like doing. « Does the « Old Harry » file is raising any questions here today? What about the “Irving Whale” scandal with it's 7000 liters of BPC spill hidden to all Canadians. As “All things must have passed” let's get back on today's agenda.

Fall 2015 arrive with a new government and a new agenda. A new acronym is now presented to us. MPA is the discussion and the no 1 item on DFO agenda as again, we may fall in hell for a long time if we don't pass « Go » with a 10% stamp of approval by the end of 2020. With all the existing challenges in today's fisheries, it's is strange that the most important item is not about fishing but about protecting some areas to please environmentalists group.

As fishermen are we nervous with this? Yes, we are! Before saying why, let's look right now how a fisherman goes fishing:

- 1st You've got to have your licence and so is your crew
- 2nd, you need to have a boat
- 3rd, you need a quota
- 4th, you need to provide insurance coverage or workmen's com. for your crew

- 5th, you need to go on line to purchase your licence condition
- 6th, you need to pay for the science related to the species your fishing
- 7th, you need to buy your tags (in the case of traps/pot)
- 8th, you need to pay for « observer at sea » coverage, either by manpower or by camera,
- 9th, you need to have a Vessel Monitoring System or VMS for those who are familiar with it
- 10th, you need to pay for «dock side monitoring »
- 11th, now Transport Canada comes in with it's pack of rules on safety & regulations.
- And now you think you are about ready to leave the wharf, but guess what?
- Here come the Conservation & Protection crew with their conformity rules that you can't start fishing before they go through the check list of the items I just indicated.

Finally, you can sail and go fishing, but then you must comply with the processors needs, check if your VMS works, apply by-catch protocol or other type of conservation measure. (like small fish & soft-shell crab)

So now, we are looking at adding MPA'S in this long **“To do”** list along with other types of controlling measures like the « Haddock Box » in Nova Scotia.

Let's take a step back and ask ourselves:

- Why do we need that?
- Are we over fishing in Canada?

- Are there any species in danger right now?
- What is the rush?
- Who is asking for this?

Those are the hard to answer questions when you talk to all fishermen's and you consider the Canadian fishing history.

Presently, possibly & probably due to climate changes, water warming, etc. fishing pattern are changing rapidly and have different results from one fishing territory to another from disappearing resources at one place to over abundance at others. Ex: Snow crab in Newfoundland vs snow crab in the golf (Area 12) (-40% to +107% in 2017) and lobster moving north disappearing from the New England coast and appearing on the shores of Anticosti Island in record catch, where lobster was traditionally not found at all. Very similar pattern to be noted with our shrimp moving further north and appearing as far as Greenland & Norway

Everybody knows that there is a big return of cod along the east coast of Newfoundland and that is probably the reason for the disappearing shrimp and crab fisheries over there.

There is also the largest stock of « redfish » coming into the Gulf St-Lawrence right now, by the way, still under COSEPAC list. Conservative estimate of this huge biomass is at 2,5 million mt. We are expecting to start fishing in 2020. If we go as plan with those MPA'S, how will it affect that fishery? So how will we address this? You can't catch redfish with pots. At a time where protein is more that needed to feed the planet, how do we manage and protect?

And I'm sure that all of you are aware about the right whale situation right here, right now. Everybody concerns in this file are trying to find answers to all kind of questions. And moreover, we recently heard a scientist calling to put up a MPA in the gulf as a solution to protect those whales. Totally impossible to implement but a person with credentials is asking for this. To propose such an approach in an area where the crab fishery is generating over \$80,000,000/year of new money before spinoff, plus thousands of jobs is in our language "pure non- sense"

Now let's have a look at the fishing effort in Canada. How many fishing vessels do we have active? How many fishing vessels did we have 20, 30 or even 40 years ago? How many foreign fishing vessels were active then in Canadian waters? How many fishing's vessels are presently trawling or seining? And did anybody took the time to look at those techniques recently? Trawling gears is completely different today of what it used to be with minimal impact on the oceans floors.

- For one, the Kirby report published in 1982 indicated a number of 27,800 fishermen or boats for 1981 all types of fleets combined. 36 years after the total number is below 12000 with more than 9000 in NFLD and Labrador.
- For two, the fishing effort is completely different with the 200 miles zone limit. Foreigners fishing is gone. Seiners and trawlers represents a fraction of what they were before, merely not existent with very few of those left. Right now, in all Atlantic Canada, the total number of trawlers boats is around 200, all types of fisheries combined. The fishing effort of today is minimal compare to those days. So how

many fishing vessels do we have around the proposed MPA'S compare to the fishing effort of the past? Minimal! Why is that? With the closure of ground fish fisheries, all those fleets disappeared along with the processing plants.

- To be more specific here, in the Acadian peninsula, we don't even have 20 of those boats active in all fisheries. Moreover, where the fishing season used to start from April to December, we do fish now between 4 to 6 months. So again, the fishing effort is minimal in what it used to be.

Before moving into closing zones, and installing barriers, what we are saying is let's think twice! Think outside the box! We need to ask ourselves very basics but important questions like: Who will be fishing in 10 years? How will we fish? What will we fish?

To give you an example, « Le Banc des américains » near the Gaspé coast is being looked as a zone of interest. Historically, this was one of the best cod fishing ground, so in the possible return of this resource, what do we do?

Last year at the "World Seafood Congress" held in Reykjavik, I had the opportunity to ask to Ray Hilborn who is a Professor in the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, University of Washington and member of the Royal Society of Canada (2006) his opinion on MPA'S. His public answer to all participants was:

- a. In countries, where you have "well managed fisheries", you don't need does MPA's because there are better ways to protect the fisheries environment and its resource
- b. It also changes the fishing effort and have a negative impact because it creates a concentration of this fishing effort elsewhere.

And to his return question to me asking me where I was from. When I said Canada, his reply was “Canada don’t need that”

In addition to this, after all the efforts from DFO, the 5% goal for 2017 was not easy to attain generating all kinds of conflicts like in crab fishing Area 19 in Cap Breton. 10% level for 2020 is out of the radar for us and I would say, for all the fishing industry in Canada. In our case, this MPA file should stop at that 5% level.

That being said, we need to have a much broader discussion on where is going the Canadian fisheries. I did suggest to Minister Leblanc last December that it is more than time to have a national conference on the future of our fisheries. As we all know the minister did announced a substantial amount of money (\$325 millions and we recently heard \$400 millions) for different initiatives in the sector. We do appreciate that very much but for us, it sounds more like spending money to build a house before having a plan. We need to stop chasing around and put out fire every spring.

In reading the old Kirby report, it says that Canada was the no 1 exporting country in fisheries. We were last year at the seventh position. Why is that? Why did we loose so much ground? We all know that the seal situation is responsible for a good portion of that. So, do we have any intention of doing something about it, or we just want to be witness of this sad situation? The actual format where everybody is working in silo need to change. Per species advisory committee is to us no longer the formula!

Everybody around this table knows that conservation measure on a per species is not possible anymore, but right now that is how we manage our resources.

The main function of DFO has always been around “Conservation & Protection”. This need to change. In the concept of “Sustainable Fisheries”, this C&P approach is only part of the equation. The production, the economics, the marketing to name some aspects is not the responsibility of the DFO and fell under provincial ground. When we look at the success stories in countries like Norway and Iceland it does raise questions like **“Why & How?”** did they attend that level of success? The answer is:

- Leadership
- Concertation
- Marine Research (MATIS)
- Investment in product development
- Investment in marketing,
- Investment in infrastructure etc.

With all the resources we have in the Canadian waters and with the knowledge of our fishermen, there is no reasons why we can't be as good as they are. But we need to change the way we are doing things. We need to look at ourselves. We need to have a plan and put in into application.

As a first step we need to bring everybody to the table. We need to have a much broader discussion on theses fundamentals questions. So let's plan a national conference on the subject at the soonest.

And then, we need to create a “Canadian Marine Research Network” where government, academia, and industry work together, not in the conflict mode as we are in right now.

Thanks for permitting us to share those ideas and opinions with all of you!