**Whales and fishermen in Gaspésie: towards a coexistence on the maritime territory.**

Since 2017, we are experiencing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence a major crisis related to the North Atlantic Right Whale, a species increasingly present in our waters. Beyond the stakes related to the spatio-temporal distribution of this endangered species in a Gulf, there are some specific, finer scale concerns relative to the zones that overlap fishing areas and the challenges of coexistence that this entails. This is especially true for coastal areas (less than 20 fathoms), where an important lobster fishery takes place, and for which almost no information was available to implement the NARW protection measures. This project is the first of its kind in Canada and is based on the expertise and interdisciplinarity of experts in ecology, economics, social sciences, and fishermen. It is a project made FOR and WITH fishers, who are adapting to a changing and challenging future. Our project allowed us to meet fishermen to collect their opinion on the NARW crisis, to produce a social analysis on the history and social context of this fishery in Gaspésie and its evolution in recent years, and to propose a series of recommendations to fishermen, scientists, and the governments regarding this fishery. Moreover, the vessel-based surveys of the coastal zone during the lobster fishing season covered more than 1000 km2 each year and allowed to assess the biodiversity of an area that is important for both fishers and marine mammals. No NARW was observed in shallow areas, and no species typically known to be associated to NARW were seen either. These results will improve the level of confidence of fishermen in the management measures (based on better data, involving fishermen), and measures the level of compliance and respect for the measures to protect right whales in this part of the Gulf.

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