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News

Rethinking the future of fisheries in the face of climate change

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Raising of the trawl by two deckhands to unload the shrimp into the boat.

- [Pierre Chapdelaine de Montvalon \(View profile\)](#)Pierre Chapdelaine de Montvalon

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Speech synthesis, based on artificial intelligence, makes it possible to generate spoken text from of a written text.

Faced with disruptions to the fishing industry caused by climate change, fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence should abandon specialization and turn to multispecies fishing, according to Daniel Pauly, a leading Canadian fisheries expert. /p>

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Marine resources specialist at the University of British Columbia, Daniel Pauly, whose expertise is globally recognized, believes that the region's fishermen should focus on species that benefit from ongoing changes in the estuary and the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.



If fishermen specialize in one species, of course they will sink, warns Daniel Pauly. We will have to adapt to changing species.



In Europe, this adaptation is taking place, according to him. He takes the example of England where fishermen catch fish that were previously caught in Morocco or Spain.



Hugo Bourdages, biologist at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and shrimp specialist, also believes that fishermen should focus on winning species, such as lobster, in a context of climate change.



He is of the same opinion as Doctor Pauly. The Gulf is changing with some species winning and others losing, like the northern shrimp. The industry will have to be able to adapt to these changes by exploiting species that are doing well and reducing fishing pressure on those that are disadvantaged.

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Faced with this reality, Daniel Pauly believes that fisheries should be able to change from one species to another quickly.

We cannot have the climate changes we are experiencing now and hope that fisheries can continue. What will happen is that we will have to adapt to the changes themselves, explains the scientist.

Management of Fisheries and regulation are becoming important issues. You need to have a management system that is flexible. However, DFO cannot be flexible because it does not know what is happening and it does not monitor the catches. It's a vicious circle, he explains.

According to a recent report from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Fisheries and Oceans Canada does not have an overview of the quantity of fish caught, which poses a risk of overexploitation of stocks of fish.

According to Daniel Pauly, the biomass of northern shrimp in the Gulf of St. Lawrence estuary should not return to its former level unless climate change stops.

The species has collapsed over the past ten years, due to warming Gulf waters and falling oxygen levels, a consequence climate change.

Daniel Pauly explains that this reduction in shrimp biomass slows down the adaptation of the species to the new conditions of its natural habitat through Darwinian selection.

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Fishing effort should be reduced so that there are enough individuals in the water for populations to maintain their ability to adapt.

A quote from Daniel Pauly, Professor at the Institute for Oceans and Fisheries, University of British Columbia

Daniel Pauly considers that the northern shrimp is a passing species which was able to proliferate in the early 2000s due to the decline of one of its predators, the cod, before this predator was replaced from the 2010s by another, redfish.

We must maintain an ecosystem without large predators to be able to have access to resources like shrimp, because they are prey big fish, he explains.

The renowned scientist also adds that because of climate change, species tend to move towards the poles. In the case of shrimp, it is not the individuals that move towards the north pole, but rather it is the distribution of the species that moves because it is better in the north than in the south, explains Daniel Pauly.

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One day, there will even be species from Florida in Gaspésie.

A quote from Daniel Pauly, professor at the Institute for Oceans and Fisheries, University of British Columbia

Opening a commercial redfish fishery is very risky for the survival of the species, warns Daniel Pauly.

However, this is a repeated request from shrimp fishermen in the estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence, in order to reduce the pressure exerted by redfish predation on shrimp biomass.

The scientist fears that exactly what happened in the 1990s will happen again, when the fishing industry practically

emptied the Gulf of St. Lawrence of all its redfish, which led the DFO to ban its fishing in 1995.

Since then, the redfish biomass has recovered and an exploratory fishery was launched in 2018.

The scientist recalls that redfish have a life expectancy very long and are therefore very exposed to overfishing. In the event of the opening of a commercial fishery, the risk of exterminating the redfish is very great, according to him.

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Of course we're going to kill the redfish, it's the chronicle of a death foretold.

A quote from Daniel Pauly, Professor at the Institute for Oceans and Fisheries, University of British Columbia

Reducing redfish predation would only have a marginal effect on shrimp biomass, adds Daniel Pauly, because in any case the species is doomed by changes in the temperature of the waters in which its habitat is located.

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