

# Study Concerning a Marine Protected Area Around the Magdalen Islands 2012-2014



## Recap of discussions between the University du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) team and Magdalen Islands stakeholders

Newsletter

Issue 3

### Welcome

Summer is just around the corner, and with it comes an increase in marine activities. Fishermen are already out on the water **catching the sea's bounty for which the islands are famous.** We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a fantastic, abundant and successful fishing season.

This newsletter is an opportunity to highlight the halfway point of the Canada/Quebec marine protected area (MPA) study and report on the status of the initiative. We have prepared a few informative pages for you, and we encourage you to consult the **study's Web site, at [www.etudeairemarineim.ca](http://www.etudeairemarineim.ca).**

### In this issue

<i>Welcome.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Information exchange workshop.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Participants contribution .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Other achievements.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Next steps.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>How to reach us.....</i>	<i>4</i>



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## Recap of the information exchange workshop

On March 7 and 8, the UQAR research team, who are responsible for conducting the study components dealing with the ecology of the marine environment of the Islands and the uses within it, and 40 local stakeholders took part in a knowledge exchange activity. Various sectors were represented: thus stakeholders from the fisheries and mariculture sector, including key research and development players, and stakeholders representing the marine transportation, land use planning and development, biological, environmental, tourism and recreational tourism and maritime heritage sectors participated in the workshop.

The primary goal of this activity was to promote the involvement of local stakeholders, propose and discuss general conservation objectives and provide stakeholders with the opportunity to weigh in on the preliminary overview or portrait of the ecological, economical, social and cultural features of the study area.

Overall, participants appreciated the initiative, and their contribution helped to refocus certain elements of the study to ensure that the scenarios obtained reflect island realities.

The key topics discussed were:

- General conservation objectives;
- Magdalen Shallows marine ecology; and
- Coastal and marine environment resources and uses.



## Participants contribution

A number of important elements were brought to light in response to the various topics addressed at the workshop. First, participants clearly expressed the need to protect existing conservation activities and measures and to develop models fostering the protection of various sensitive elements of the study area. In addition, they expect the proposed conservation measures to be adaptive, to promote sustainable development perspectives and to enhance the dissemination of the resulting scientific data.

The information exchange exercise also enabled participants to identify certain missing data and, therefore, help improve the preliminary overview. Discussions highlighted the importance of taking the seasonal nature of the identified elements into account and of taking an ecosystem approach by explicitly considering the interdependent nature of the data.

Thus, pencils and marine map in hand, they made the most of their thorough knowledge of the study area and defined key protection areas and current and potential areas of interest. Discussions were lively and dynamic, and they resulted in the improvement of the preliminary data presented and the identification of concerns to be considered should a marine protected area be established around the Magdalen Islands.

The UOAR team is returning with new information to complete the preliminary portrait and will therefore be able to ensure that the proposed scenarios reflect **the community's expectations and concerns. In addition, an important contribution** by the participants must be highlighted. The UOAR team will be following **the participants' recommendation to include the lagoons within the study area**, a recommendation which was supported by the study co-directors.



## Other achievements

The Web site has been updated and improved to provide you with more information and food for thought with regard to creating a marine protected area around the Magdalen Islands. A full report of the information exchange activity and a summary of the presentations made – revised and tailored for online distribution – **will soon be available on the study's Web site at [www.etudeairemarineim.ca](http://www.etudeairemarineim.ca).**

In addition, the firm Cultura has been awarded a contract for a supplementary study to produce a portrait of the cultural heritage of the study area related to the marine environment and its uses. Cultura is to provide an annotated inventory of elements that could be highlighted as part of a marine protected area. Field work to meet with interested stakeholders is set to begin this summer.





## Next steps

The Consultative Committee will meet in early July to provide their input on the work completed and their guidance with respect to the results expected for the coming year.

Discussions are under way with a view to conducting a complementary study on the economic impacts of fishing and mariculture in accordance with the needs of the sector and of the study regarding a marine protected area.

The UQAR team must submit scenarios for protecting the study area in the fall; we will then initiate a public information tour to present these scenarios to you. The meeting format, dates and locations will be released in early fall.

## Feel free to contact us!

- For more information;
- To share your views on the current study;
- To share your initiatives and interests related to the protection and promotion of the marine environment; or
- To request a presentation on marine protected areas and the current study.

### Contact or meet with the study coordinators:

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