

THE COLD HARVESTER

NEWFOUNDLAND AQUACULTURE

*Conne River
Wild Salmon
Numbers
Are Up*

Concern Rises
Over Proposed NMCA

*CAIA's Farmed Salmon
Sustainability Report*

Canada's Great Kitchen
Party Visits St. John's

Highlights from

**COLD
HARVEST
2024**



WINTER 2024/2025



Newfoundland and Labrador
Aquaculture Industry Association



30th ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

St. John's, NL Canada

September 23rd – 25th, 2025

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Message from President and Chair of the Board

Sheldon George

Hello Cold Harvester readers, I trust all are doing well. It is my pleasure to be re-elected as Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association's President at the last Cold Harvest Conference in October. I would like to thank all the growers who put their trust in me to help guide our association through some difficult times. We have faced some rough waters since our conference, with the departure of Jamie Baker as NAIA's Executive Director, and with being presented with our Federal Government's threat of taking away a major section of our coast that is the future of our salmon industry.

I would like to take this time to thank Jamie Baker for being our Executive Director for the past 3 years. You came into the role with an open view and perspective on the industry and welcomed our issues with opened arms. You were a great go to person for the industry when needed, and you always met our challenges in a cool and calm manner, even when things would get you personally frustrated. Thank you for your time, and we look forward to working along side you in your new ventures, making a path for different industries to work together.

As Jamie was departing, our federal government, via Parks Canada began eroding our province's ability to manage our aquaculture industry. Many people are aware; however, I am afraid that even more are not aware, that Parks Canada are trying to develop a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) on the southwest coast of Newfoundland. NMCA's are a great way to try to conserve our environments, however they need to be properly established. By properly established I mean they must be developed with all users kept in mind and not take away a major area where people can fish, boat, grow fish or even visit beaches and enjoy nature. The industry has been battling the proposed NMCA for the southwest coast of the province over the past few months as it will drastically limit any growth the industry will have in Newfoundland, and possibly even shut down what industry the province currently has.

Over the past couple of months, I have seen all industry members come together to work on getting this NMCA established in a manner that keeps our industry viable here in Newfoundland. It is times like this that the benefits of being a part of our industry association become very evident. All companies come from different corners of the world and have a vast amount of expertise and skills between us all. It is amazing to see communications people, regulatory staff, certification experts, biologists and so on come together and agree on points to present as to why our industry, one that sustainably grows food for the world, must exist and expand, right here in Newfoundland. I won't get into the economics of what dollar value this industry brings to not only the southwest coast of Newfoundland but the whole province and even Atlantic Canada because its importance is growing daily. Between direct and indirect employment, aquaculture has a positive impact on all areas of the island.

In keeping with the NMCA topic, I would like to thank the government officials who have been supporting our industry to make sure the development of the NMCA does not negatively affect us. Premier Furey, Minister Loveless and others, thank you for your letter you have written to Minister Guilbeault in Ottawa stating you will not support the NMCA as it is currently proposed, due to its limitations and impacts it will impose on Newfoundland's aquaculture and wild fishing industries. We appreciated hearing Premier Furey's remarks at our Cold Harvest conference, and seeing this letter is proof the Premier has no trouble putting his words into action; again thank you Mr. Premier for your support.

I would like to end off by wishing all our members and readers a very Happy New Year and best wishes as we enter into 2025. While everyone is gathered together, please remember those farmers who continue to grow a premium tasting product for people worldwide to enjoy.

ANNOUNCEMENT



NAIA Welcomes New Executive Director Keith Sullivan

January 6, 2025

The Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association welcomes the arrival of its new Executive Director, Keith Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan has extensive leadership experience gained through holding several executive positions including President of Newfoundland and Labrador's largest private sector Union, FFAW-Unifor. Mr. Sullivan has a career immersed in the seafood world and is esteemed for collaborative skills, strategic communications, and public policy creation. He will now apply his many years of experience in advocating for continued growth in coastal communities through sustainable aquaculture that provides good jobs and regional economic growth.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) is a member-based organization that represents the interests of seafood farmers and their suppliers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"I am very excited to welcome Keith as our new Executive Director for NAIA. Keith joins us at a very important time in our industry as our companies continue their investments to expand our production, sustainably and responsibly. I am very confident that Keith can ensure the positive impact of sustainable aquaculture is effectively communicated and understood in this province and abroad, by educating everyone with facts and science about our industry. I wish him every success in this role and look forward to working alongside him."

- NAIA President Sheldon George

"I am thrilled to be joining the team of NAIA. The aquaculture industry has such a vital role in our province's economy, particularly in rural regions. Throughout my career I have been advocating for sustainable development of coastal communities and promoting seafood from Newfoundland and Labrador. Working with the



"aquaculture industry is an amazing opportunity to work in a community with so much potential to do great things in our province."

- Incoming NAIA Executive Director – Keith Sullivan

The Board of Directors and staff of the Newfoundland Aquaculture Association would like to welcome Mr. Sullivan in his new role and are looking forward to working with him as we expand our sector, driving rural economic development and providing healthy, low carbon and sustainable seafood for tables here at home and around the world.

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Statement from the Board of the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association

**SAVE SOUTH
COAST JOBS
NO NMCA**

Hermitage, NL - On behalf of our member companies and everyone working in aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador, we are grateful that Premier Andrew Furey, Minister Elvis Loveless, Mayor Steve Crewe and Member of Parliament Clifford Small are standing up for the people and communities they represent. By opposing Ottawa's proposed south coast National Marine Protected Area (NMCA) boundary, these representatives are ensuring that no one in the fishing and aquaculture industries and the livelihoods of families who rely on these industries are negatively impacted.

Charting the best course for our marine environment should not come at the expense of the seafood industry and the livelihoods it supports; it doesn't have to. Environmental activists have attempted to sell coastal communities on the promise of potential activity with National Marine Conservation Areas and Marine Protected Areas they cannot guarantee. Meanwhile, the seafood sector already brings people to the rural coastal communities where operations employ people regularly and year-round.

Activists embedded within Parks Canada by the federal government are pushing this south coast NMCA to be established first and are telling communities they will develop a site management plan impacting fishing, aquaculture and recreational activities afterwards. Parks Canada has

admitted that some ocean areas will have restricted fishing activities. The fact is that the NMCA in Gwaii Haanas, British Columbia, has restricted fishing in nearly half of the ocean area and completely restricted all commercial aquaculture.

It's clear that Ottawa, Parks Canada, and DFO, are being lobbied by activists including the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Ecology Action Centre, and others who are willing to jeopardize local food security and employment by destabilizing economic opportunity to attract funding donors.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation is far from Atlantic Canadian – its major donors are wealthy Americans living in big US cities. ASF hosts lavish New York City events and invests millions in political lobbying and sensational campaigns claiming the need for funds for wild salmon conservation projects.

Charity Intelligence Canada¹, a national organization that assists the charitable sector in being more transparent, reports that in 2023 ASF Canada took in \$2.8 million in "International donations" from the US while only \$830,000 came from Canadian donors. ASF's 2023 Impact Report lists Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia clothing, as a "platinum benefactor" donor of more than \$100,000. Chouinard also happens to be an investor in Nova Scotia land-based salmon tank farming company Sustainable Blue. The American chapter of ASF is sliding US funds across the border to influence Ottawa politicians and negatively impact Newfoundland and Atlantic Canadian jobs and communities where ocean salmon farming has existed for decades.

Sadly, the Atlantic Salmon Federation Canada's 2023 financial statement of operations² reveals that they spent a mere \$258,000 on "wild salmon watersheds" in all of Canada. When ASF was asked last week for a list and expense amount of their 2023 research and conservation programs in each Atlantic Canadian province, ASF refused to provide details. The reality is that they are fundraising off the backs of hard-working Atlantic Canadians in the seafood industry while spending very little on actual wild salmon

conservation projects in Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada.

Provincial and federal governments should end all grant funding to the Atlantic Salmon Federation. ASF Canada received \$687,000 in government funding representing 21% of total revenues in 2023, while the NGO sits on \$5.7 million in reserve funds. The federal government must immediately suspend the charitable status of ASF and end its support of ASF's campaign against Newfoundland food security through local salmon farming production.

Non-governmental organizations of this devious nature who claim to be charities should be legally bound to function independently of any government and should not receive government grants from taxpayers' money. There is nothing charitable about the dishonest, outdated, inaccurate claims ASF continues to promote about the aquaculture industry. ASF donors should also be asking critical questions about how their funds are being used.

The fact is that ocean salmon farming is the most environmentally sustainable form of animal protein farming in the world, with the lowest carbon footprint. Time and time again, science has shown that aquaculture does not negatively impact lobster and has a minimal impact on

wild salmon and other species.

We are appreciative that our local Newfoundland and Labrador elected representatives follow fact and science. Protecting our oceans should be the common ground on which the industry, government and environmental NGOs agrees and aligns. It is shameful that ASF and others continue to conduct misinformation campaigns, which muddy the dialogue to mislead stakeholders, influence politicians, and ultimately attract the donations they rely on to fund their egregious campaigns.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) is a member-based organization that represents the interests of seafood farmers and their suppliers in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are passionate advocates on behalf of our members to facilitate and promote the responsible development of the aquaculture industry.

1 [https://www.charityintelligence.ca/](https://www.charityintelligence.ca/charity-details/272-atlantic-salmon-federation)

[charity-details/272-atlantic-salmon-federation](https://www.asf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-09-30-ASF-Canada-Final-FS.pdf)

2 <https://www.asf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023-09-30-ASF-Canada-Final-FS.pdf>

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Wild Salmon Numbers Up on the Conne River

By: Darrell Green, Research and Development Coordinator, NAIA

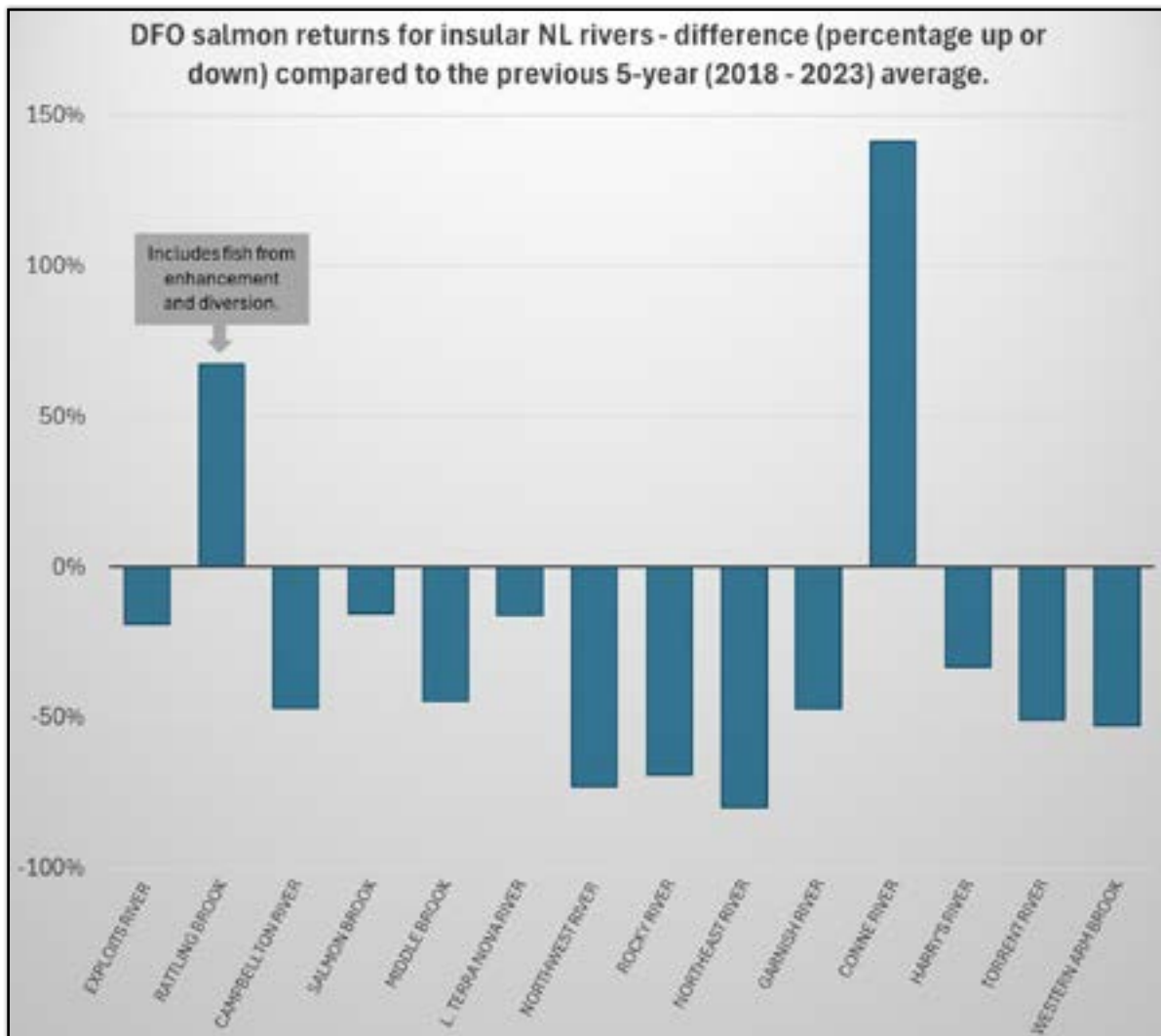
A river on the south coast of Newfoundland called the Conne River, has been the poster child for groups pointing a finger at aquaculture as one of the main causes of wild salmon declines in Atlantic Canada. Groups that raise money by criticizing salmon farming, make their point loudly in years when salmon returns on the Conne River are low, but not so much when they are high, which is the case this year. Thus you may not have seen anything about this.

A document published this spring, before the start of salmon runs, pointed out that wild salmon numbers at the Conne River have not been behaving like most other rivers in the region. Indeed, Conne River salmon returns have been down more than most rivers in NL in recent years. The paper pointed out that the Conne River is close to salmon farming operations while other Newfoundland rivers are not. It said

that this correlation suggests that aquaculture is one of the main causes of the decline at the Conne River.

This past summer we saw a different pattern in salmon returns. DFO's numbers show that while returns at all other monitored rivers in Newfoundland were way down compared to the previous 5-year average, the Conne River was up by about 140 percent! You could sarcastically say that since the Conne River is the only one of these rivers located close to salmon aquaculture, salmon farming must be the cause of the high returns. But correlation is not causation. (By the way, there were no reported escapes in the region this year and there were no farmed salmon found in area rivers this year).

Rattling Brook was also above the 5-year average this year, but this river has been subject to enhancement efforts using



Source of data: <https://www.nfl.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/en/atlantic-salmon-fishway-counts>

fish from the Exploits River.

But has the Atlantic salmon population in the Conne River really behaved differently than other populations? The most recent report on global salmon populations by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) gives river return data up to 2016. The Conne River shows a pattern very similar to the global trend. Strikingly, over the period from 1985 to 1994, when global salmon populations plummeted by about 40 percent, populations at Conne River showed an even more drastic decline of about 85 percent. But the Conne River is a relatively small river, so changes in climate, predation, water chemistry, prey abundance, etc., might be expected to have a larger effect than in larger rivers with bigger populations.

Admittedly, this doesn't tell the whole story, as runs on the Conne River have continued to decline since 2016 but NASCO hasn't published global numbers for a comparison.

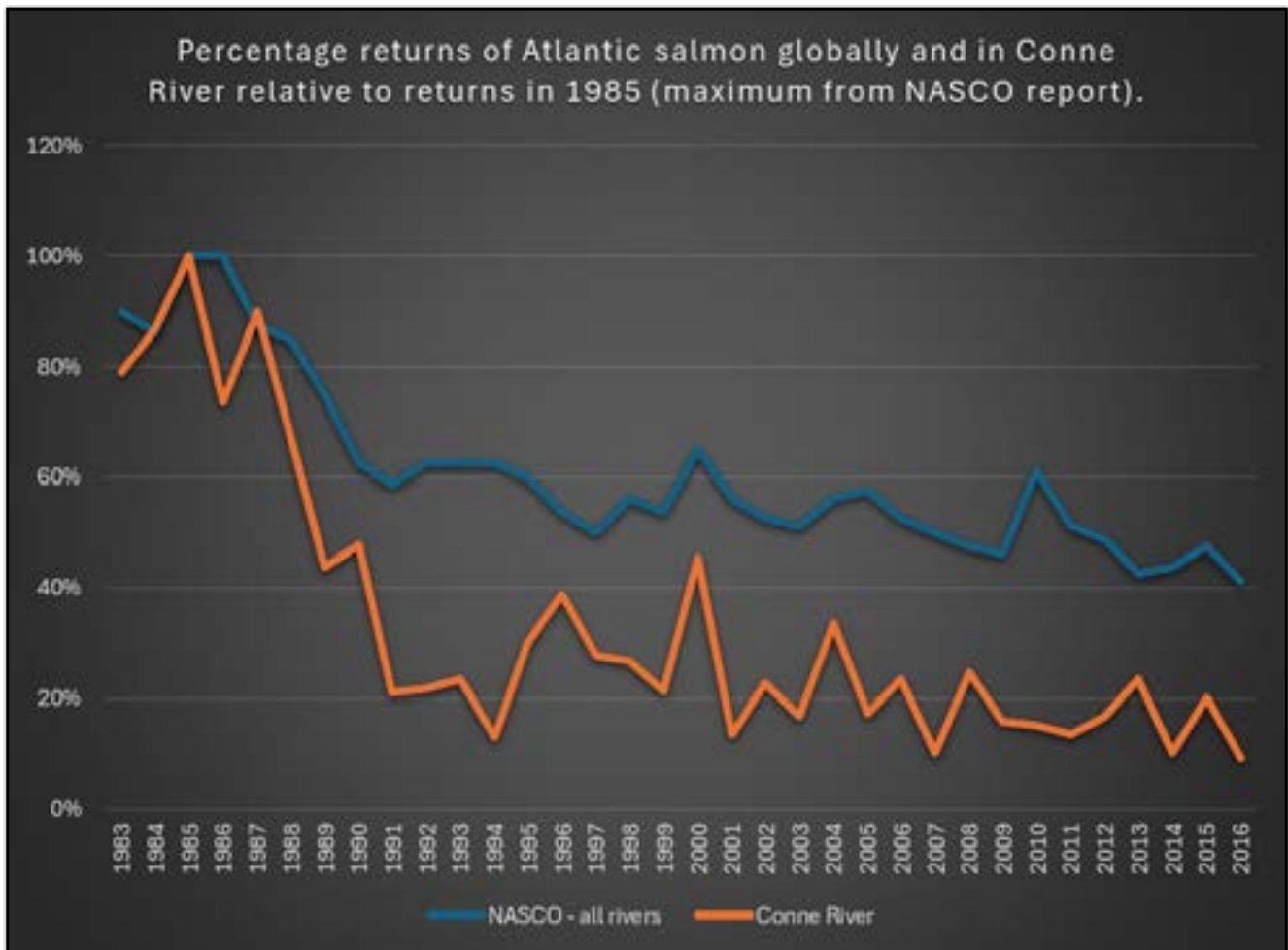
For all the excellent and sophisticated science on salmon runs done worldwide, we simply don't know what drives wild salmon survival and resultant numbers returning to rivers. The whole thing seems far too complex for us to be

able to accurately model. People have been notoriously bad at predicting salmon runs and evaluating natural or anthropogenic effects on them.

For example, some of us remember back in 2007 when a researcher at the University of Alberta (Math Dept.) published a paper that predicted the probable extinction of pink salmon within 4 years due to sea lice from salmon farms. But that didn't happen. In fact, in 2010, just 3 years after the paper was published, more than 17 million pink salmon returned to rivers in the region, and this rose to a near-record 26 million in 2013.

[Google: Krkošek, Morton, Declining wild salmon populations in relation to parasites from farmed salmon. And if you want to read more on this, there was a good op-ed in the Financial Post in 2010 titled "Junk Science Week: This science is fishy."]

Whatever the cause, whatever the factors, many of us were glad to see the salmon returns on the Conne River rebounding a bit this year, and despite not knowing what the future holds, we hope this trend continues. We all wish the best for Conne River salmon!



Estimated from data from NASCO document: STATE OF NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON.

Marine Institute's Partnership with the Aquaculture Sector

By: Cyr Couturier, Marine Institute of Memorial University of NL



Group photo of about half of the industry leaders, future graduates, and researchers from the Marine Institute of Memorial University in attendance at the NAIA Cold-Harvest 2024 conference and trade show. Courtesy @feistypuffin and NAIA.

The NL aquaculture sector has undoubtedly benefitted from nearly four decades of partnership with the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University. Since 1987 the MI has provided training, education, applied research, technical services and labour

needs for the Newfoundland Labrador seafood farming sector. Did you know, the first post-graduate diploma program offering at the Marine Institute was in aquaculture, commencing in 1987? Since then, a variety of programs have been given in support of the sector, in

collaboration with Memorial University, including technical certificates in cod, salmonid and shellfish farming; technical certificates in aquaculture management and fishing masters; grad diplomas in food safety and sustainable aquaculture; diplomas in marine environmental technology and food technology; masters degrees in science (aquaculture), environmental science, technology management (aquaculture), marine studies (aquaculture). And there have been many more in short course, marine related training programs in support of the sector.

It is estimated that nearly 500 students have made it through the post-graduate



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programs, including the master's level, a few hundred more in the diploma of technology and certificate programs, and perhaps a few hundred in the short course programs over the past 38 years or so. Many still participate in fish, shellfish and seaweed production on farm, in the supply and services sectors (e.g., feed, fish health, consulting, technical support, environmental management), and in the government sector (e.g., DFO, CFIA, NLFFA, CCFI) in our Province, to help the sector in its development efforts. Quite a few have gone on to lead major aquaculture operators as managing directors or production managers in the finfish and shellfish sectors in NL, but also across Canada, and even as far away as New Zealand.

In addition to training and education of Highly Qualified Personnel, MI researchers have been intimately involved in

other developmental aspects of NL aquaculture sector for over 30 years. Some examples include: development of new products for market in the aquaculture sector, advances in byproduct utilization, seed production for shellfish and finfish, feed development trials, participating in organizing annual conferences for NAIA, presenting findings of research in workshops and conferences for the sector, developing new technologies and evaluating benefits, development of fish health tools, escape mitigation efforts, site evaluations, fish and shellfish environmental performance monitoring, strain performance evaluation, development of eco standards, product analysis, hatchery development for shellfish and seaweed, market and logistics analyses. And this is but a VERY SMALL SAMPLE of MI's efforts in support of the seafood farming industry over nearly four decades.

The recent NAIA Cold Harvester Conference held October 8-10, 2024 in St. John's was a fantastic display of the sector's resilience, innovation, and public support (Premier and several Ministers attended). Well over 300 industry, academic and government officials attended. Of these in attendance there were no less than 60 attendees from science, government, education and industry, all graduates and future graduates of the Marine Institute's aquaculture programs (See Fig. 1). Many of whom are leaders now in their specific endeavors related to seafood farming in our Province.

The sector is now worth about \$500 million in economic and social benefits in rural and coastal Newfoundland and Labrador, in dozens of communities, and the MI can be proud of its accomplishments and development efforts in support of the sector over the years.





A Special Thank You!

The Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association would like to thank everyone who attended our Cold Harvest 2024 Conference and Tradeshow.

Cold Harvest 2024 which took place in St. John's, NL attracted almost 400 delegates from across Canada and from countries such as, Norway, Taiwan, USA, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Over the three days, almost 80 presenters provided CH24 guests with information on the following topics: Advancements in Finfish Aquaculture, Extensive Aquaculture (Shellfish and Kelps), Service and Supply Innovations, Climate Change and Adaptation, Environmental Performance Reporting, Human Resources and Community Development, Marine Health and Safety

and Strengthening industry's Social License.

On day one the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland facilitated a Seaweed Workshop which attracted just over 60 guests. The workshop covered topics such as opportunities in seaweed farming, seaweed marketing and economics and technology advancements in areas such as AI and Topo-bathymetry. Updates were also given on some of the seaweed ventures in Newfoundland and Labrador, including hatchery and grow out results and novel products being produced or under development. The workshop was sponsored by CCFI and MSRDF.

The opening session started day two with welcoming addresses from Chief

Brad Benoit of Miawpukek First Nation and His Worship Danny Breen, the Mayor of the City of St. John's as well as The Honourable Dr. Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Premier spoke of the tremendous level of support there is for the aquaculture industry within his government.

Also, on day two our keynote address was provided by Dr. George Chamberlain, President of The Center for Responsible Seafood, who talked about how we can use collaborations to drive innovation and continuous improvement in support of sector sustainability. Another plenary speaker, Dr. Bente Torstensen, CEO of Nofima, kicked off the panel session "Dynamic Perspective on Strengthening Your Social License". The NAIA Annual General Meeting was also held on day

HARVEST 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



two and a new Board of Directors were sworn in.

The Opening Reception at the Sheraton (day one), The Newfoundland Farmed Seafood Soirée at the Bellavista (day two), and the NL Kitchen Party at O'Reilly's NL Irish Pub (day three) were also very well attended.

The Cold Harvest Conference and Trade Show began 29 years ago as a way

to foster connections and collaborations within the seafood farming sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. It offers our seafood farming companies and service / supply companies an opportunity to get together to learn about new and innovative practices, equipment and research within the aquaculture sector both here in Canada and internationally.

We would like to send special thanks to our sponsors for their continued support and commitment: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Province of Newfoundland & Labrador, Mowi Canada, Truefoam NL (formerly NL Styro), 360 Marine Ltd., Grieg Seafood NL, Cooke Aquaculture, Aqua Marine Services, Pharmaq, Wellfish Tech, Oceans Advance, Entreprises Shippagan Ltd., DSS Protection and Destination St. John's.

The NAIA staff of Jamie Baker, Darrell Green, Roberta Collier, and Jackie Richards organize the Cold Harvest conference each year with a host of hard-working volunteers. We sincerely

appreciate their support. Special thanks go out to the Program Committee for their continued support and dedication in framing up the program for CH24: Darrell Green – NAIA (Chairperson), Chris Hendry – Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Stephanie Synard McInnis – NL Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, Laura Halfyard – Connaigre Fish Farms, Sheldon George – Ocean Trout Canada, Melissa Burke – Ocean Trout Canada, Cyr Couturier – Marine Institute, Jonathan Gagné – Entreprises Shippagan Ltd., Candice Way – LGL Ltd., Aaron Bennett – Mowi Canada East, Amy Negrijn – Mowi Canada East, Jonathan Kawaja – Mowi, Marilyn Butland – Butland Communications, Stephen Backman – Skretting, David Seeley – Skretting and Chalena Biggar – Cooke Aquaculture.

We look forward to seeing you at Cold Harvest 2025, NAIA's 30th Anniversary Conference and Trade Show taking place September 23-25 in St. John's NL!





Cold Harvest 2024 Awards

Congratulations to Lifetime Achievement Award

Recipients: Roger and Marjorie Brett

We were honored to present the NAIA Lifetime Achievement Award for 2024 to Roger and Marjorie Brett of Norlantic Processors and Thimble Bay Mussel Farms during Cold Harvest 2024 in October.

The NAIA Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador over their lifetime. The recipients have demonstrated a commitment to responsible and sustainable aquaculture development, made significant contributions to the field of aquaculture, and served as a model that inspires excellence in others.

Roger and Marjorie Brett, from Pleasantview NL, both retired from the industry in 2023 and the gap they left was immediately apparent to Terry Mills, the owner of Norlantic Processors and Thimble Bay Mussel Farms. Terry recently said, of his long-time loyal employees “There are no two people in the

aquaculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador more deserving of a Lifetime Achievement Award than 'Rog' and 'Marj.' That is about as strong an endorsement as a business owner could give.”

Roger, the Plant and Farm Foreman and Supervisor for both Norlantic and Thimble Bay and Marjory the Quality Control Supervisor, had a combined 49 years of sector experience. Marjory accepted a two-week position and stayed for 24 years! They were among the ranks of what we would call the unsung heroes of the mussel aquaculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador; those hard-working, experienced, accomplished professionals who are the very heart and soul this industry. Few people anywhere in the world can match the level of experience and expertise in both mussel farming and mussel processing that this couple possesses.

Congratulations Roger and Marjorie!



Photo L to R: Heather Mills, Marjorie and Roger Brett, and Terry Mills at the CH24 awards ceremony in St. John's, NL in October.

NAIA Aquaculturists of the Year 2024

We were pleased to also present 2024 NAIA Aquaculturists of the Year Awards to Gilbert Simms and Shane Simms of LBA Enterprises.

This award honours individuals for their outstanding contribution to the development of the aquaculture sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. The award is open to any person from the farming side of the industry, the supply sector, academia, government or other stakeholder groups, who has made a significant contribution to the NL aquaculture industry over a prolonged period of time.

Thanks to Gilbert Simms, and in recent years, his son Shane, LBA Enterprises has been one of the most consistent and innovative mussel farming operations in Newfoundland and Labrador over the past 20 years. For each of the last 15 of those years they have consistently harvested over one million pounds of organic-certified blue mussels, for tables across Canada and the United States, from their aquaculture sites in Little Bay Arm, near Springdale, NL.

Gilbert started LBA Enterprises in in 2004, and with steadfast determination and many long days of hard work, developed the

operation into a successful business. The company's farms now covers an area of over 175 hectares and currently employs 2 full-time and 6 part-time staff.

In 2013, LBA was among a group of Newfoundland mussel farms that offered the first organically certified mussels in North America and has held this certification ever since.

But their accolades don't end there; never one to be satisfied with what is "good enough" Gilbert has always been an innovative problem solver. When he needed a work platform for his mussel seed collection, grading, and socking operations, he designed and built his own 30-foot aluminum barge. Then in 2008 Gilbert started an innovative project to design and build a new hydraulic system that would operate multiple hydraulic motors at the same time, replacing several smaller less efficient systems. The operation can now sock up to 350,000 lbs of mussel seed per day, which is double the socking capacity of their old systems.

Gilbert and Shane weren't in attendance due to commitments on the farm and Laura Halfyard, NAIA Board member accepted it on their behalf. Congratulations Gilbert and Shane!

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Concern Over the Proposed National Marine Conservation Area

By: Darrell Green, Research and Development Coordinator, NAIA

In October 2024, NAIA salmon and trout farming member companies, rural Town Councils and other industry stakeholders, voiced serious concerns about the potential establishment of a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) on the southwest coast of Newfoundland, within which salmon farming would be a prohibited activity.

The year prior, in June 2023, the Government of Canada, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Miawpukek First Nation, Qalipu First Nation, and the Town of Burgeo signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on an assessment of the feasibility of creating this NMCA. The NMCA would encompass an area of 9,112 square kilometers and would include areas of the offshore and south coast fjords.

Currently the feasibility assessment is ongoing and is studying the benefit of establishment in terms of marine conservation, social factors such as indigenous use and economic components such as tourism. Rural councils in the Coast of Bays region of NL, and other local aquaculture stakeholders, could have added much to the assessment, especially in terms of the negative economic effects, or loss of potential economic gains, but have not been part of the conversation until recently. While this is the normal process for NMCA consultations, many think they should have been engaged sooner.

The area of ocean included in the feasibility assessment represents an important expansion area for the salmonid aquaculture sector in Newfoundland which would be blocked if the NMCA were to be implemented in its current form. Denying this expansion will have serious repercussions for sector growth towards critical mass. Our large finfish farming companies, Cooke, Mowi, Grieg and Ocean Trout Canada set up operations in Newfoundland and Labrador because of the competitive advantage we have with our proximity to large markets in the USA, and for the opportunity that exists for company expansion. If these companies aren't able to expand, will they stay? We don't know. We do know that if they leave, the aquaculture service / supply sector throughout the province will suffer, as will rural economic development on the south coast. Furthermore, even suggesting there could be an NMCA sends a message to farming companies and sector investors, that the salmonid sector in NL is under threat. This could put

company investment plans for Newfoundland and Labrador, and livelihoods in both farming and service supply, at risk.

The original MOU for the NMCA clearly states that existing and proposed aquaculture sites, such as those covered by the Bays West expansion MOU between Grieg Seafood NL and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, will not be affected. It was indicated that, if the NMCA were to be put in place, the final NMCA boundary would be drawn such that these areas would be outside the NMCA. However, the map published by the NMCA Steering Committee shows these locations, important for industry expansion, included within the proposed NMCA.

Since October, our salmonid-farming member companies have been lobbying and meeting with the NMCA Study Area Steering Committee (Parks Canada, the Province of NL, Miawpukek First Nation, Qalipu First Nation and the Town of Burgeo) to request that they redraw the existing boundaries to allow aquaculture development along the south coast. They were also in touch with the Premier and several provincial Ministers to get governmental support for this request.

In early November NAIA reached out to our member companies and organizations to ask that they send letters to the provincial government to support industry's request for a boundary change for the proposed NMCA. A template letter was sent with this request and 38 letters from members were sent to Premier Furey, Minister Byrne, Minister Loveless, Minister Dempster and Minister Ried. NAIA and our Board of Directors would like to thank all organizations which sent letters to the Premier on NL and Ministers. See "PROPOSED NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA" on www.naia.ca for a list of organizations.

Reflecting on the decision by the Government of Canada to transition all salmon farming operations onto land in British Columbia, the devastation this has caused to the industry there, and the estimated \$1.17 billion in lost economic activity, concerns for our industry here in Newfoundland seem justified. NAIA is urging all members of our sector to do what they can to support our salmonid sector and to help us protect our industry, our jobs and our communities here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Link to the proposed NMCA: <https://parks.canada.ca/amnc-nmca/cnamnc-cnmca/fjords-cote-sud-south-coast-fjords>

Conrad Fitzgerald Students Visit Cooke Aquaculture Lumpfish Hatchery



In October, K-6 students of Conrad Fitzgerald Academy in English Harbour West, NL travelled to Belleoram to visit the Cooke Aquaculture Lumpfish Hatchery.

All the students, who fundraised to help pay for the trip were given the opportunity to feed and interact with a lumpfish! Special thanks to Carter Savory, Rick Skinner, and Riley Savoury, staff of the Hatchery for providing them with this exciting opportunity!

Photos by Conrad Fitzgerald Academy

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Love Salmon: CAIA's Inaugural Salmon Farming Sustainability Report

By: Ben Normand, Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance

On November 12, 2024, the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance (CAIA) released its inaugural Sustainability Report. Born of 3 years of discussion, planning, information gathering, analysis and design, this report delivers the real goods on the Canadian salmon farming sector's commitment to sustainability, transparency and continuous improvement by comparing real, aggregated data on industry performance against the various goals and best practices described in the Love Salmon commitments.

Of the report release, Tim Kennedy, President and CEO of CAIA said, "Our goal is to be nothing less than the most sustainable animal protein product in the world, and this report is a crucial tool in building that knowledge across Canada. As the first annual

report for the Canadian salmon farming sector's national Performance Commitments, this document is the product of extensive collaboration across the sector."

This report includes data from 5 of Canada's 7 major salmon farming companies, with all 7 on-track to be represented in the 2025 report. One of its core strengths as an inaugural report is it offers a real assessment of where companies are in their own sustainability data collection journeys and the breadth of company practices while aggregation allows for maximizing collaboration. For example, 3 out of



5 companies reported donating salmon meals in Canada. This shows that companies are pursuing social sustainability in strategic ways that make sense in their communities, and this should be celebrated.

Speaking of celebration, there are many praise-worthy points of performance highlighted in this report. In 2022:

- Escapes were at an historic low: 13 incidents resulting in the loss of just 110 fish
 - Canadian salmon farming had the lowest carbon footprint of all major domestic animal protein production systems – 0.58 metric tonnes of (tCO₂e) generated per tonne of harvest weight fish produced
 - Canadian farm-raised salmon was 100% traceable
 - 87.95% of salmon feed was composed of non-marine nutritional ingredients
 - 96.13% of each harvested salmon was used (see graphic)
 - 100% of companies provided donations or in-kind support for wild salmon recovery or enhancement programs
- Whereas the report offers readers the data, it was also accompanied by a report card, which offers an honest assessment of industry’s performance in these metrics. In reflecting on overall performance, Tim Kennedy noted,

“This is just the beginning. While we celebrate our achievements, we are acutely aware that there is always more work to be done. With the right regulatory environment and a commitment to innovation, we will continue to advance the sector’s performance, responding to challenges and ensuring a healthy, secure and high-quality Canadian source of good for all Canadians.”

An updated report will be published annually going forward, offering stakeholders and interested parties multi-year performance data. While much of this data is typically available to anyone who cares to seek it out, by bringing it all together in one, easy-to-read, reliable package, Canada’s salmon farmers have put forth a bold effort to demonstrate meaningful transparency and progress in performance.

Ben Normand is CAIA’s Policy and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

Readers can find a link to the report, report card and commitments at lovesalmon.ca

Follow Love Salmon on [Instagram](#) and X ([@lovecdnsalmon](#))

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COOKING WITH **Chef Steve Watson**

Newfoundland Farmed Atlantic Salmon in a Sundried Tomato & Spinach Cream Sauce

Ingredients:

- 3 Atlantic salmon fillets
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) vegetable broth
- 5 oz. (150g) jarred sun-dried tomato in oil, (drained)
- 1 3/4 cups heavy cream
- 3 cups baby spinach leaves
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- 1 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 5 cloves garlic, finely diced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season the salmon filets on both sides with salt and pepper, and sear in the hot pan, flesh-side down, first for 5 minutes on each side or until cooked to your liking. Once salmon filets are cooked, remove from the pan and set aside.

In the same pan, melt the butter in the remaining juices. Add garlic and fry until fragrant (about one minute). Add onion and fry until translucent. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and fry for 1-2 minutes until they release their flavors. Finally, pour in the vegetable broth, and allow the sauce to reduce down slightly. Reduce heat to low. Add the heavy cream and



bring to a gentle simmer while stirring occasionally. Season the cream sauce with salt and pepper to your taste.

Add the baby spinach and allow to wilt in the sauce. Add in the parmesan cheese. Allow the cream sauce to simmer for a further minute until the cheese melts through. Add the grilled salmon filets back into the pan. Sprinkle with the

parsley. Spoon the sauce over each filet once its plated. Serve the salmon on top of a evo fired crostini.

NOTES:

This dish was prepared during a masterclass at the Cold Harvest networking event at the Bellavista in October and served to the guests in attendance.

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The Great Canadian Kitchen Party Visits St. John's

The NL segment of a prestigious culinary competition event called Canada's Great Kitchen Party was held on October 17 at the St. John's Convention Centre and drew an audience of 300 and a spectacular showcase of culinary excellence. Six renowned chefs participated in the evening showcase and competition where the judges were presented

the dishes during the event and awarded the medals. NAIA staff was in attendance and was happy to sponsor blue mussels for the event.

Canada's Great Kitchen Party St. John's awarded Chef Nick Walters from Merchant Tavern the gold medal. He will now represent St. John's at the Canadian Culinary Championship in Ottawa on January 31st and February 1st, 2025. There, Chef Walters will compete against 9 other top chefs from across Canada, each of whom has earned the honour of representing their city.

Funds raised from the event will support MusiCounts ensuring music education is inclusive, sustainable and accessible for youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. To date, 9 schools have received instruments through the MusiCounts program including Juniper Ridge Intermediate School, St. Teresa's Elementary School and Holy Trinity High School in Torbay to name a few. Raffle sales also support Kids Eat Smart Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Learn more about Canada's Great Kitchen Party and the Canadian Culinary Championship at www.greatkitchen-party.com



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Couturier on Culture

Aquaculture IS Agriculture (Part 2): A call to action, support farmers

Cyr Couturier is marine biologist, aquaculture scientist, and advocate for sustainable seafood production and farming. He has 35+ years of experience in applied research and development, training and education in aquaculture and fisheries (seaweed, finfish, shellfish). He is a Board and Executive member of several farming & development associations, including CAIA, CFA, CAHRC, HORIZON TNL, RDÉE Canada, AAC and is a past president of NAIA. He has worked in aquaculture and fisheries development in over 18 countries. The views expressed herein are his own. Contact: cyr@mi.mun.ca or follow on Twitter [@aquacanada](https://twitter.com/aquacanada)

By: Cyr Couturier, Marine Institute of Memorial University of NL

There is no doubt NL Aquaculture is on the rise again, in a responsible fashion. Recent statistics for 2023 showed a substantial increase from post-pandemic low to almost 20,000 tonnes of finfish and shellfish (salmon, trout, oysters, mussels), valued at about \$250 million. This amount only refers to the production value, but if we include the supply sectors, and local businesses, the economic contributions to rural NL far exceed \$500 million, spread over dozens of communities on the south coast and northeast coast of the Province. In fact, the recent census of Canada in 2021 shows net growth and in migration in a dozen communities on the south coast of the island, much of which is the result of aquaculture activities. In total about 550 families rely on aquaculture employment in farming for their subsistence, but well over 1,000 if one includes plant workers, and suppliers spread across the island, in Stephenville, Grand Falls-Windsor, Corner Brook, St. John's, Marystown and several other locations. This year in 2024 and next year in 2025 are poised for further growth in the sector, possibly putting the Province in the enviable



Fig 1. Say NO to NMCA graphic, courtesy of NAIA.

second position in terms of farmed seafood output among all provinces and territories in the country. Wouldn't that be a fantastic achievement!

Say NO to South Coast NMCA

The Province and the feds and a few other stakeholders have entered into an MOU to undertake a feasibility study on a proposed National Marine

Conservation Area (NMCA) over much of the south coast of Newfoundland. Unfortunately, this is part of the overall plan of the Federal Gov't to have 25% of our marine areas designated as marine national parks by 2025. While it is a noble effort to "conserve" marine areas, the issue really is that fisheries, aquaculture, even other sustainable economic activities will not be permitted

in or nearby these areas. There are no guarantees either that the so-called “natural” ecosystems will remain the same, in fact they are changing rapidly owing to climate impacts already as noted in several recent studies by DFO as well as Natural Resources Canada. So, conservation efforts will likely be limited in a warming and changing environment, and of little real consequence when one looks at this in 20 years down the road.

Does the Province really want to put the fishery and the aquaculture sectors under the bus, and lose these excellent sources of sustainable income and revenues in our rural areas of the Province? What do you say to the thousands of people (including suppliers, businesses) that would go out of business? Moreover, under an NMCA the Province would not be able to exercise its right to co-manage our natural resources, including oil and gas, fisheries, and aquaculture. Premier Furey has said repeatedly he will always fight for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to co-manage these resources. Really, the only solution here is to “Say NO to the NMCA” (Fig. 1). Perhaps the Province ought to remove itself from the MOU altogether, even before the feasibility study is complete? Just a suggestion. If concerned, feel free to write the Premier, or your MHA, or even your MP about all of this


Aquaculture IS Agriculture (CAIA)

The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance recently held lobby days in Ottawa to advocate for aquaculture. We met with a variety of MPs, Senators, and even some Ministers of the Crown (see Fig. 2). The concepts were to define

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Fig. 2. Aquaculture is Agriculture lobby days in Ottawa, Nov. 2024. From left to right C. Couturier (MI), V. Windsor (Grieg Seafood), J. McGrattan (Merck Canada), MP C. Small, A. Bennett (MOWI Canada East), and P. Warris (PEIAA).



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Modernization of Canada's shellfish management program is an opportunity to unleash potential for job creation and nutritious, low-carbon food production.

Establish A Smart Plan for BC Salmon Farming

Develop a smart plan for BC salmon farming to attract investment and new technology and job creation.

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- **Jobs:** The sector can grow thousands of jobs and secure healthy communities in coastal and rural areas. However, overall production is in decline, largely due to recent government policy decisions related to BC salmon farming.
- **Canadian Supply Chain:** Over 3000 businesses across Canada – e.g. science advisors, truckers, technologists, feed suppliers, Prairie farmers, and many more – contribute to the success of the sector.
- **Food Security:** Canada and the world need more access to reliable, healthy, affordable food to feed 8B+ people. Canada has a special responsibility to responsibly expand our seafood production: only farming can do this.
- **Stewardship:** Farm-raised seafood has amongst the lowest carbon and environmental footprint of all animal proteins and our farmers are committed to ocean stewardship.

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 Further contact: Tim Kennedy, President & CEO (Ottawa), 613.878.1251 (cell) or tim.kennedy@aquaculture.ca
 Learn more by visiting www.aquaculture.ca or following @CDNaquaculture on X.

Fig. 3. Aquaculture is Agriculture infographic with industry asks and details. Courtesy CAIA.

aquaculture in the Fisheries Act, to at least legitimize it as an activity supported by Canadians, while also asking for the consideration in the development be turned over to Agriculture and Agrifoods Canada, which has a mandate for rural economic development. DFO has all but dropped its support for aquaculture development across the country in the past several years, obviously they are not interested or able to support the development needs for the sector. In addition, requests were made to modernize the shellfish sanitation program to allow for new and existing sites to grow, and of course a request for a smart transition plan for the BC salmon industry, as the current plan is both unrealistic and non-existent [See Fig. 3 for details].

Salmon Sustainability Report (CAIA)

Finally, some good news to share with the recent release of the sustainability report card for salmon producers in Canada, including the producers in this Province (see Fig. 4 for details). There are important commitments in this report card, and we are clearly moving in the right direction in several areas of seafood production. Take a look at the commitments and metrics



Fig. 4. Canadian Salmon Sustainability Report Card 2022. Courtesy CAIA.

in the Figure, and you will see significant improvements in many areas. After all, sustainability is really a progressive

journey towards social, economic, and environmental stewardship, and salmon farming is leading in many respects.

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In Memory of John Kealey

NL Aquaculture Pioneer

It is with deep sadness that the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association acknowledges the passing of our friend and aquaculture pioneer John Kealey. John passed away at the Connaigre Peninsula Health Centre in Harbour Breton on Monday, November 18, 2024, at the age of 88. He was predeceased by his wife Frances (Fanny) Kealey who was an active partner in their business endeavors.

John and Frances Kealey developed a proposal for the culture of finfish in 1977, in collaboration with the Bay d'Espoir Development Association of which John was a Director. John presented the proposal to Honorable Brian Peckford, then Minister of Mines and Energy at a public meeting in St. Alban's. The submission included the construction of a hatchery on NL Hydro property to utilize 8-degree water from the turbines. In 1979, after negotiations with the Provincial and Federal governments, the Bay d'Espoir Development Association was awarded \$60,000 in funding from the Research Council of Canada to complete a feasibility study for the project. The Bay d'Espoir hatchery was completed in 1985 at a cost of \$2 million.

In 1986, a grower's co-operative was established for joint purchase of feed and some processing and marketing initiatives as the Newfoundland salmon aquaculture industry began. Due to a lack of access to vaccinations



Former Premier of NL Cathy Dunderdale presenting John with an Aquaculture Pioneer Award in 2011.

or good-performing broodstock, the industry faced early challenges and some of the family-run sites were shut down. In 1991 the existing three farms were amalgamated into one company; SCB Fisheries of which John was a shareholder.

In 1998, John and Frances began farming steelhead trout stocking 300,000 fish on four sites in Bay d'Espoir. In 2003 they formed Nordic Salmon and in 2008 they began stocking both Labrador Fraser River and Nauyak NWT charr strains. They partnered in research with DFO and found that the Nauyak Arctic charr strain was very compatible with the Bay d'Espoir marine environment and in 2013 signed a collaborative agreement with the University of Moncton for the development of a Nauyak broodstock program.

For their early work as pioneers in aquaculture in Newfoundland and Labrador, Fanny and John, were jointly awarded NAIA's Aquaculturist of the Year award in 2016.

John will be missed by the aquaculture community in Newfoundland and Labrador and remembered as a friend, a pioneer and an ardent supporter of the salmonid farming sector.



Frances and John Kealey accepting their Aquaculturist of the Year Award in 2016.



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