

## An Intern's-eye view of the Sea Around Us Project

by *Emilie LeBlond*

**T**ravel broadens the mind. And in my case, it broadens knowledge too!

When Tony Pitcher and Nigel Haggan told me in an e-mail, "yes, we have work for you in the Fisheries Centre"; I said to myself that a new page was about to be turned!! At this time I was a student of one of the five French National Schools of Agronomist Engineers, and my fourth year of study was drawing to a close. There are a great many fields encompassed by Agronomy, including fisheries and the marine environment, and they are the fields I especially chose to study. So having an internship in those fields was a really good means to round off my studies.

Jacques Moreau, a teacher of mine at the ENSAT (*Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie de Toulouse*), had already told me about the Fisheries Centre and its activities. Subsequently I tried my luck, submitting

my application for a summer job to Tony Pitcher. The Fisheries Centre was going to give me an opportunity to work for a research organisation, to learn through contact with specialists, to put my competences in the service of research and of course, to visit Vancouver for the first time of my life, the famous town I had been told so much about!

I had an offer from Jackie Alder to work on a project she was coordinating to assess the sustainability and FAO Code of Conduct compliance of North Atlantic fisheries using Rappfish. As some French fisheries were going to be included in the analysis, she suggested setting up a project whereby I would assess a range of those fisheries and undertake the analysis. That project seemed very interesting to me and even fitted exactly what I was looking for: it was an excellent means to acquire a good background to work in with French fisheries and

to enrich my knowledge. I expected to learn a lot about the running of French fisheries and all their aspects. *A priori* I was more interested in the ecological aspects but it turns out that all the aspects are worth knowing and studying, especially when some connections can be established between them.

I have been working on this project for just one month, yet it soon became apparent that it was difficult to study French fisheries without encompassing all the fisheries of Europe – it's common fish stocks and common fisheries policies! Despite the fact that each country has its own perspective of the situation and despite fishermen and governments who tend to behave according to the country's culture. That's why I find the project particularly motivating and captivating: there are plenty of aspects and

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# Progress Reports from the

**By Dirk Zeller**

The life-history depth profile work is continuing (see Zeller & Pauly, Sea Around Us Project Newsletter Issue 4), with life-history depth information gathered for another four species. The list of target species is (slowly) shrinking! Major thanks to Shawn Booth, who is putting a lot of effort and good work into the gathering and assimilating of large volumes of literature and data. I am sure this ability will benefit him in his future as a graduate student at the Fisheries Centre. The associated depth-profile graphics will be generated over the next month, while the depth information is used directly by Reg Watson and his database team to help

assign catch data to areas.

With regards to geographic areas and efforts to gather regional catch data to supplement our official databases, a minor societal hiccup is happening at the moment. Our collaborations with colleagues in northern Europe is progressing, although for the time being at a reduced pace. This can be attributed to a phenomenon called “summer”, with symptoms that can only be described as “a merry mass-departure to locales sunnier and warmer than northern Europe”!! Despite this seasonal migration, progress has been made. A preliminary dataset from Iceland has been received (thank you Hreidar), and the Faroe data is being assembled as I write this article. Both regions appear to have good

data records, and Peter Tyedmers looks set for another two examples to use for his fishing fleet analysis.

Progress has also been made with the building of ecosystem models. Eny Buchary is updating the ecosystem model for the Icelandic area first compiled by Asberr Mendy in 1997. During the FAO sponsored workshop on “The use of ecosystem models to investigate multispecies management strategies for capture fisheries” held at UBC in July, Katia Freire and I completed a preliminary model for the Faroe Island area. Simulations initiated during this workshop, however, indicated that better location specific data is required for the

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The Sea Around Us website may be found at [www.fisheries.ubc.ca/projects/saup](http://www.fisheries.ubc.ca/projects/saup), and contains up-to-date information on the

**By Reg Watson**

The databases for the Sea Around Us project continue to swell with data from around the North Atlantic. Meanwhile plans develop for making estimates of unreported, misreported and discarded catches. A recent visit by Dr Paul Medley provided insights that can be adopted for the estimation of discards. We hope to work with Paul on this and other topics in the future. More recently Dr Guy Fontenelle brought with him fishing catch and effort data from French ports to enrich our database. As in other cases, there seem to many opportunities for rewarding future collaborations. Hreidar Valtysson brought with him a wealth of Icelandic fisheries

data going back to the turn of the century. The project expects to receive several additional datasets from consultants over the coming months.

Our work has attracted interest from Ken Sherman’s group in NOAA who are responsible for organizing data associated with the world’s large marine ecosystems. A recent visit by Cdr Peter Celone provided interesting discussion which demonstrated many common interests. With this and other groups there has been an exchange of spatial data expanding the Project’s geographical information system archives.

*Reg Watson is Senior Research Associate with the Sea Around Us Project.*

# Sea Around Us team

**By Sylvie Guénette**

**A**t the April methodology workshop, responsibilities were reallocated on geographic basis. As a result, I am now responsible for obtaining catch data and constructing ecosystem models for the southern section of the Eastern Atlantic (France, Portugal, Azores, Spain, Canaries, Morocco). We intend to obtain the total extractions, including discards and unreported catch, in short, any catch that is not included in the ICES catch record. At the moment, important things like vacations and field work are slowing

down the process. Nevertheless we have established fruitful collaborations with several countries. For example, the Moroccan catch data has been assembled and Dr Baddy and I are starting to write a report describing the Moroccan fishery for the period 1950-1998.

Three different ecosystem models are under construction: the Azores Arquipelago, the Bay of Biscay and the Moroccan coast. This tremendous work would not be possible without the help of a dedicated team. The Azores model will be completed soon (I hope) and presented for discussion with

biologists of that region this fall. Cam Ainsworth, Bridget Ferriss and Emilie Leblond are working on the Bay of Biscay model which should be finished by September. A new student, Richard Stanford, has just undertaken the Moroccan model. Other collaborators will join us during the fall.

*Sylvie Guénette is a Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Sea Around Us Project.*

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model to be representative. Currently we are in the process of updating model parameters in collaboration with scientists from the Faroe Islands.

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questions to consider – much more than I had expected!

What seemed really interesting too in the Rapfish project was the possibility of comparing all the countries fishing in the North Atlantic. A lot of people in France asked me, "Do you really need to go as far as Vancouver only to study FRENCH fisheries?" It turns out that the Fisheries Centre is one of the few places where fisheries are studied in a way that encompasses the whole North Atlantic. This is the one of those unusual places where I had the opportunity to take part in such a project.

When I leave the Fisheries Centre at the end of my internship in late August, I will have acquired an overview of the north Atlantic fisheries and especially French fisheries. That's why my training period here is going to be an excellent experience, which will be very

## LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

**By Daniel Pauly and Reg Watson**

**I**n recent years, the formerly generic term 'Large Marine Ecosystem' (LME) has become specific, and is now mainly used for regions of ocean space encompassing coastal areas out to the seaward boundary of continental shelves and the outer margins of coastal current systems. As such, LMEs are regions of the order of 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> or greater,

useful for my future career! Thus I would like to thank Tony Pitcher, Nigel Haggan and Jackie Alder for allowing me to have this great experience, as well as Bridget Ferriss and Dorothy Schreiber for their invaluable help.

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characterized by distinct bathymetry, hydrography and productivity patterns (Sherman 1994; Sherman and Duda 1999).

The 50 LMEs (see Figure 1, page 4) identified by Sherman and Duda (1999) are the source of about 95% of the world's annual marine fisheries yields. Also, most of the global ocean pollution, overexploitation, and coastal habitat alteration occur within these 50 LMEs. They provide, therefore, a convenient framework for addressing issues of natural resources management. Moreover, given that most of them border developing countries, LMEs also provide a framework for addressing issues related to issues of economic development.

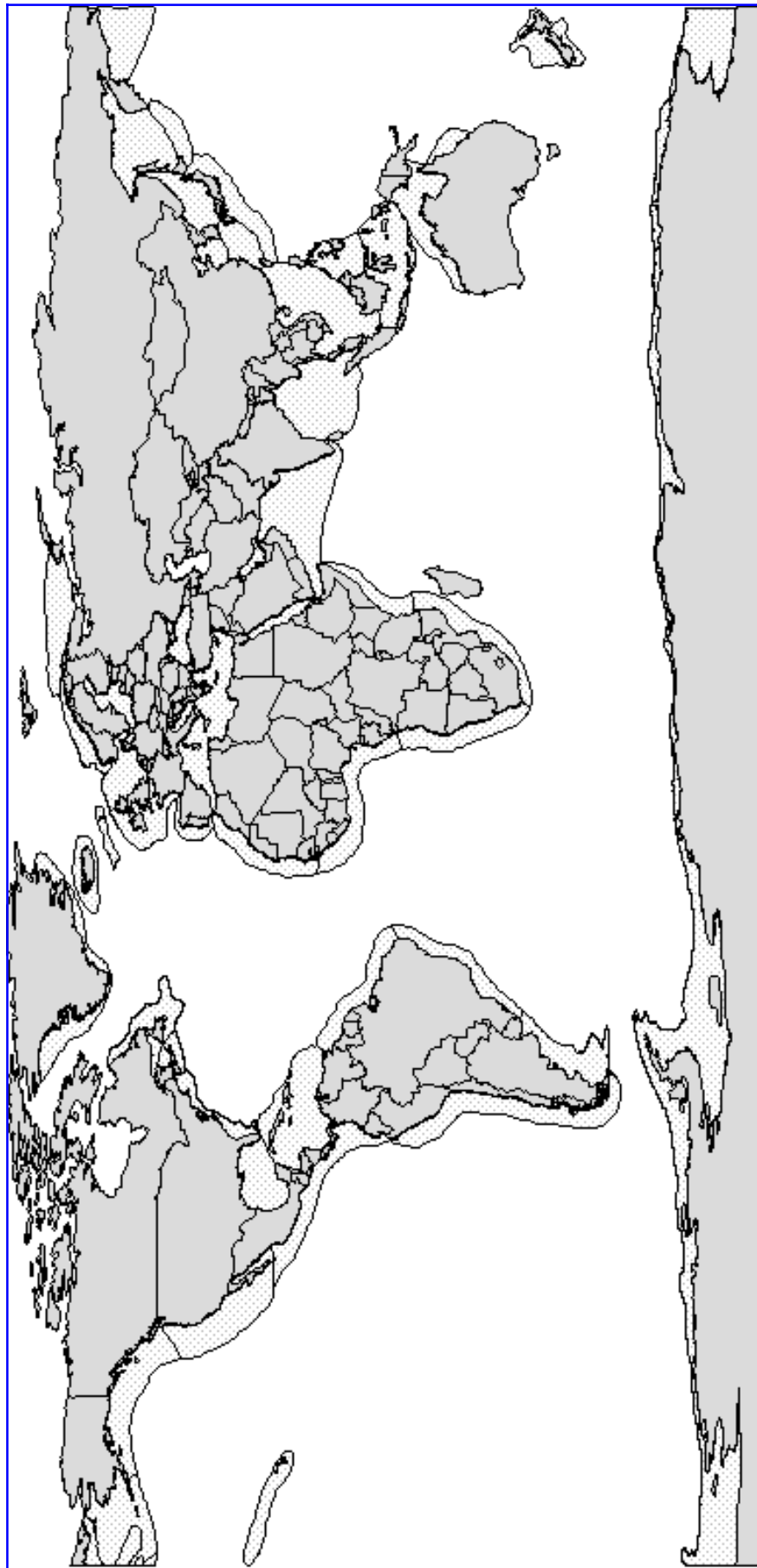


Figure 1: Large Marine Ecosystems shown are areas of the ocean characterised by distinct bathymetry, hydrography, productivity and tropic interactions. For more information visit [www.edc.uri.edu/ime](http://www.edc.uri.edu/ime)