

**BUREAU D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES
SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT**

ÉTAIENT PRÉSENTS : **Mme MARIE-HÉLÈNE GAUTHIER, présidente**
Mme JULIE FORGET, commissaire

**CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE
SUR LA RÉSERVE ÉCOLOGIQUE DE L'ÎLE-BRION
DES ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE**

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Ligne 500, page 13

Ligne 1303, page 33

Ligne 1810, page 46

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Gymnasium 006, Chemin Jerry
Grosse-Île

MR. DAVID BURKE:

Nuisance seals.

MR. CÉDRIC ARSENEAU:

Nuisance seals? My accent is pretty bad, so I'm sorry guys but so there are still some options for fishermen that really have issues with seals if they want to take a decisive action regarding those problems, but like we've seen yesterday too, we have seen a decrease in the number of licences that were taken regarding nuisance... So, yes.

THE PRESIDENT:

But do you know why? Because this is something we were wondering since the seal seems to be quite a big nuisance and just accelerate, but then there is a decrease of permits being asked to deal or to trap or kill those seals, do you know why there is such a discrepancy?

MR. CÉDRIC ARSENEAU:

It is difficult to go hunting even if you do with – you go hunting with a nuisance licence, you still have to, you know, respect the different management measures that are in place so you do still have to check if you're actually – you had a good strike on the seal. You need to “palper”, to check on the seal... I don't know what is “palper” in English, but you need to check if you really crashed his skull and then afterwards, you need to bleed it properly so even for nuisance licence, you still have a lot of manipulation that you need to do in order to respect your conditions of licence, so that's why we may have a decrease in the number of licences that were acquired.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Mme Forget?

THE COMMISSIONER:

I just want to make sure I understand, Mr. Clarke. So, your concern is the reducing population of lobsters locally and you believe, the fishermen believe that it's the over population of seals that cause that, like for nuisances but also by eating them. Is that what your statement was?

MS. JESSICA GOODWIN:

1270 Okay. But now that we see that the seal population has increased significantly and that the
beaches are literally now nothing but seals, is it not seen that the point of that status being on these
beaches is sort of illogical or it's not serving its purpose or...

THE PRESIDENT:

1275 Monsieur Bouchard.

M. FRANCIS BOUCHARD:

1280 Je pense que je vais y aller en français pour celle-là. Les réserves écologiques habituellement
ont... en fait, le phoque fait partie de l'écosystème. Donc, les réserves écologiques, on les laisse
aller avec l'ensemble de l'écosystème. Là, on comprend ici qu'il y a une problématique pour la
plage. Maintenant, c'est un peu pour ça qu'on a une commission aujourd'hui, c'est pour entendre
1285 l'ensemble des commentaires sur ce territoire-là. Mais habituellement, une réserve écologique, on
laisse le système aller – on le laisse aller, tout simplement. Donc, c'est-à-dire qu'il est protégé, c'est
la nature qui agit. On laisser aller. Oui, tu veux compléter?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

1290 Monsieur Bergeron?

MR. MICHEL BERGERON:

1295 I would like to complete. I would like to complete. Initially, when they chose to protect Brion
Island, they said, that's a sample of all the Magdalen Islands. They said, Magdalen Islands, there is
a population, that's fine. They had a situation where we could protect that sample that was Brion
Island, that was representative of the whole ecosystem, except for the lagunas. But Brion Island
has – except for the lagunas – has everything that it has on the main archipel.

1300 So, that was the major aim for to protect the island. They could have protected the whole
island, but because of the needs to have an access, that's why they chose to subtract a little part of
it. And the beach, as the forest, as the rocks, is as much important. In those days we said: okay, we
have endangered species that locals focused on, but it was the whole island as a whole ecosystem
which has its natural dynamic that we want to preserve. So that was the objective to have an
1305 ecological reserve and that's why they chose that status because an ecological reserve is there to
save from the human inference, direct human inference.

status of part of an ecological reserve? And, also, one thing to understand, you've also presented yesterday – just to add to my question ahead of time, I'm sorry – you talked about biodiversity, projected biodiversity reserve, how does this apply in this context here?

Alors, Monsieur Bergeron?

MR. MICHEL BERGERON:

Just before to start, I would like just to give you, to share with everyone an information. I forgot to mention earlier about where can I get information from our ministry? I would like to remind there is an employee of the Ministry in Cap-aux-Meules. So, her objective, her task is not to work with Brion Island ecological reserve, but if you need information, you can contact that person in Cap-aux-Meules and she will be helping you to find out who, in the ministry, can give you the information.

So, that slide and the context. So, we're back two nights ago and we did the presentation of why we did the ecological reserve and so on. At the end, we were knowing the problems with the seal population and the impact on Brion, we have that request from the Communauté maritime and here, what you have in the front, those were the two options at this moment that are still on the table for our ministry.

There is no decision made, it's just two options that we are considering. That was before we start this consultation this week and all the feedback we get is going to help us to document the recommendation we will do eventually to the next new minister. Okay.

So, the two options: Option 1, of course, we maintain the actual ecological reserve as it is, as it was for the last 30 years, and the fact is because usually, when we do **protect an** area as this one, ecological reserve, the idea is we do it for a long-term process. It's there to protect the biodiversity on a long-term. It's not easy to change. So, it's really, like when you think about a government decision, there is a legal act that will make that for a long term. So, of course, the minister at this moment has to consider that option.

The other option is knowing the problem with the seal situation, if the minister decided to change, well, he has to change for what? So, we put here four options.

The first one is, knowing there's the – on the western part of the island where it's called, on that slide we call it "hors reserve" which is outside of the ecological reserve, so that means if we subtract a part of the actual ecological reserve, we can give it the same level of protection... the same administrative regulation as the outside part of so which means there is no legal protection on that part that will be removed.