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# 42 Portraits of Women Working in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sectors

Femmes de Mer 42 Portraits. Un Livre De Michèle Villemur

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This colourful and informative book celebrates the work of women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in France. It is designed to “let women speak” about their work in fishing, in aquaculture, and other related occupations.

The foreword traces the difficult history for women trying to engage as professionals in the marine domain. A 17<sup>th</sup> century law—the Colbert law—forbade women to go aboard fishing vessels, merchant ships and warships. Despite such laws being lifted, women continue to face barriers of tradition. The 42 portraits demonstrate how the times are changing.

Scarlette le Corre, in 1983, at the age of 28, became the first woman in France to qualify as a seagoing fisher. The mother of three children and daughter of a master fisherman and farmer, she hails from the village of Penmarc'h in Brittany. Along with catching fish which she sells locally, she works as seaweed harvester. She is also a processor of fish, and runs a shop. Additionally, she is the Vice President of the Regional Sea Fisheries Committee, and Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Atlantic Ocean

Cuisine.

Catherine Luccini from Corsica sees it as quite normal that she took up fishing. “In Corsica, women are actively engaged in the fisheries sector”, says this mother of two boys and the President of the Corsican Association of Fisherwomen.

Agnes Marie explains that her father is a mechanic (“and people say

that we have oil in our veins”). She works as engineer aboard the Jérémie-Teddie, a fine 18.5 metre trawler, whose beating heart is a 450 horse power motor. “When I started this work, I was worried what people would say. So I used to hide in the port with my jerry cans, till one day I decided to show people that it was me who serviced the engine aboard the Jérémie-Teddie.” But her work does not stop there: she also deals with the administration; the contracts; the bills—the everyday tasks of the wife of a fisherman. She became the first woman to sit on the board of Copeport (a cooperative specialising in sailors clothing, fishing and sports) in Port-en-Bessin. She sits on a number of fisheries- and port-related committees as well.

Christine Follet is a deepwater oyster farmer. She is a ‘Class 2A welder’, which means she is qualified to undertake underwater jobs down to 60 metres depth. After several years of work, she went on to study to become an aquaculture technician and then qualified as a fishing skipper. “To start with I wanted to cultivate seaweed on my concession, but then I chose to cultivate oysters at 10 metres. This allowed me to live out my passion: living underwater!”

Magali Molla is a seaweed harvester and co-manager of a business. After leaving school she studied aquaculture production techniques. In 1997 she became an aquaculture engineer and took up work in Ireland. Thereafter, she learned how to cultivate large seaweed from Jean-François, a French expatriate whom she married. The couple now manage an aquaculture company. The 42 professional women of the fisheries are tough go-getters, sometimes formidable business women who always keep their cool. Through this book they share their passions, hoping with their stories to strike a chord with young people.

To read the book, visit: <http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/Femmes%20de%20mer%20web%20VF.pdf>



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Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women

and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

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