

# Search for the 'Ravenel' Wreck in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon



A research campaign that aims to find the wreck of the *Ravenel* fishing trawler, which disappeared in January 1962 off the coast of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon (France), began on 23 May 2021. Despite several attempts over the past decades, the wreck remains unfound. Thanks to the use of the DriX Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV), designed, developed and operated by iXblue, this new research campaign will

use unprecedented technological capacity to solve the mystery surrounding one of the most important shipwrecks in the history of French fishing.

The 15 sailors aboard the *Ravenel* left for sea in January 1962 but disappeared suddenly after 8 days of sailing. The wreck of the vessel has never been found. In April 2021, the French maritime minister Annick Girardin announced the launch of a major research campaign, which aroused great interest from the local population. A search area of 439 km<sup>2</sup> has been defined thanks to information and documentation collected by Ravenel and Ravenel Research, two associations of descendants of the missing, as well as by teams of Meteo France (the French national meteorological service) and the Department of Underwater and Submarine Archaeological Research (DRASSM).



DriX and 'le Ptit\_Saint-Pierre'. (Courtesy: Jean-Christophe Paulau)

## Clues About the Wreck Location

Since 23 May of this year, the [iXblue DriX autonomous surface vessel](#) has been mapping the seabed of this newly defined area, looking for clues about the location of the wreck of the *Ravenel* or components of its structure. Developed by iXblue, this drone is equipped with powerful means of localization and detection of obstacles, allowing it to perform these missions autonomously. It is in constant contact with the ground and an accompanying vessel. The [DriX](#) operates 24 hours a day and is supervised by three iXblue surveyors. To accompany the DriX, four government vessels take turns on the surface: the French Navy *Fulmar* patrol boat, the *P'tit Saint-Pierre* from the 'Armement des Phares et Balises', the *Charente*, a vessel from the 'Service des affaires maritimes et portuaires' (SAMP) of the Préfecture de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, and the SAO vessel from the French Gendarmerie Nationale. The Canadian authorities issued their authorization for the prospecting in their international waters and offered their assistance in this research, which will last a total of one month.



DriX being launched for the research campaign. (Courtesy: Rosiane de Lizarraga)