

# UNREPORTED CATCH CANADA

# Unreported Catch - Canada

1. Unreported catches are a concern in fisheries management
2. Underreporting and illegal fishing threaten conservation
3. Measures taken to restrict legitimate fisheries in response to declines in stocks can be nullified by unaccounted fishing mortality
4. Socio-economic losses can occur

# 1. Sources of unreported catch

It is illegal to retain salmon caught in gear directed at other species (applies to marine, estuary and fresh water)

Unreported catches can occur in a multitude of small, localized fisheries taking place over a very broad geographic expanse (upwards of 700 rivers in eastern Canada and 10 000 km's of coastline)

Some of these fisheries are illegal but some underreporting occurs in legal recreational and aboriginal fisheries

It is difficult to quantify the unreported catches as they are considered to result mainly from illegal fishing activities

## **2. Methods used to estimate unreported catch**

In the past, Fishery Officers estimated illegal catches and underreporting in legal fisheries based on local knowledge

Surveys of river, estuarine and coastal areas by Fishery Officers for illegal fishing activities combined with local knowledge of the extent of illegal activities were used to estimate the total illegal catch

Frequently, because of a lack of information, unreported catch values have been carried forward from previous years

### **3. Trends in Unreported Catch**

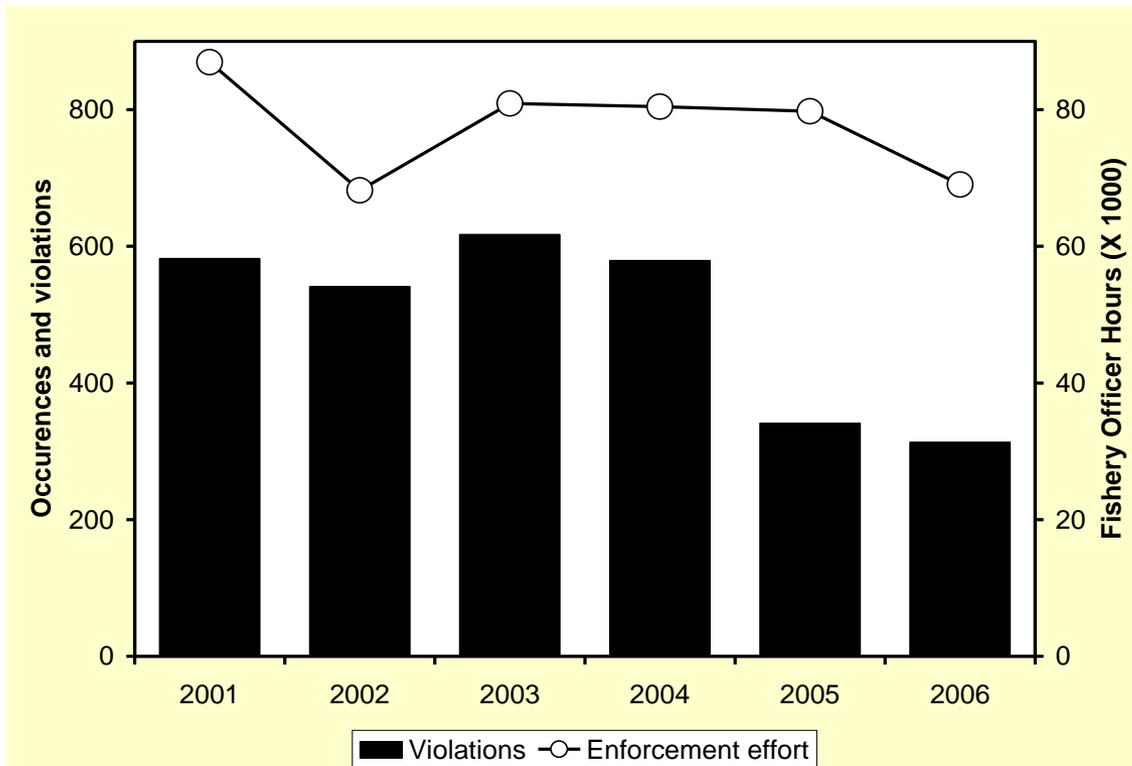
Canada has tabled unreported catch values of about 100 t since 2001

The proportion of the unreported catch vs the reported catch has increased as directed and intensive fisheries with reported landings (commercial fisheries with tractable landings) have been reduced or closed.

In some areas, sources of unreported catches were from aboriginal fisheries but as a result of negotiated Food / Social / Ceremonial agreements, these are now accounted for in the reported catch.

# Trends in Unreported Catch, con't

Fishery officer activities reports provide a quantified index of unreported catch trends.



Enforcement effort has averaged about 75,000 hours per year (~ 40 person years)

Violations declined by appr. 43% in 2005 and 2006, respectively, compared to average of 2001 to 2004

## Trends in Unreported Catch, con't

Declines in violations in 2005 and 2006 correspond to increases in successful prosecutions and the severity of the penalties imposed.

- *Conviction rate exceeded 75% in 2005*
- *Average monetary fine in 2004 was \$1100 Can*
- *Maximum fine imposed was \$5000*
- *Penalties included equipment forfeiture, and on occasion jail time*

Declines in levels of illegal activities are expected to continue as conviction rates remain high, penalties remain severe and public attitudes to illegal fishing change.

## 4. Measures taken to reduce Unreported Catch

- Management of seasons and gears for legal fisheries
  - *Closures of directed pelagic fisheries to minimize bycatch*
  - *Closure of sections or entire rivers to fishing activities under low water conditions*
- Active protection of salmon using headwater protection barriers to eliminate illegal fishing



# Measures taken to reduce Unreported Catch, con't

- Increased enforcement efforts: *Atlantic salmon enforcement effort and cost is enormous - enforcement by federal fishery officers on average is equal to about 40 officers working year round*
- Public involvement in reporting illegal activities i.e. telephone tip lines
- Education and public notices
- Increased severity of penalties for illegal activities
  - *details of convictions are published in local newspapers*
  - *convicted individuals are increasingly asked to make restitution to local conservation organizations*

# Canada's efforts on unreported catch

- Canada's Implementation Plan noted the need to deal with unreported catch
- In 2007, examinations have begun on past catch, catch and release and unreported catch estimates
- Unreported catch estimates in some areas are being based on direct observations, including fish seized from illegal activities
- In 2008 Canada will implement changes to reporting methodology to improve reliability and consistency in reporting of unreported catch.

# Topics for Consideration

- Are unreported catches a science issue?  
(probably more relevant for fish managers)
- Few organizations track unreported catch.
- Are unreported catches meaningful or a useful tool?