



Agenda Item 6.2  
For Information

*Council*

*CNL(14)46*

*Canada's Management Measures for Wild Atlantic Salmon stocks*

*(Tabled by Canada)*



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### *Canada's Management Measures for Wild Atlantic Salmon stocks*

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#### **Purpose**

This document provides background on Canada's Regulations, Policies, and Legislative Obligations for fisheries on wild Atlantic salmon.

The key components include:

- The status of Canadian stocks throughout their extensive range,
- Designating sustainable harvest limits for river-systems with healthy stocks, while prohibiting and heavily enforcing harvest restrictions for river-systems with less than healthy abundance,
- Mixed-stock catches by Aboriginals off Labrador,
- Canada's Constitutional obligations to Aboriginal peoples, and
- Sustainable harvests where stock status permits.

#### **International Cooperation - NASCO's Role**

Rational management of shared wild Atlantic salmon can only be achieved in large part through international cooperation.

NASCO Parties have traditionally made management decisions which reflect the status of the stocks based on the best available science for the long-term benefit of the stocks, and for the Coastal people who depend on the stocks.

Canada continues to make management decisions on these shared anadromous stocks for the overall benefit of stocks, and the people who rely on these stocks as a food source.

#### **Canadian Stocks**

There are over 1000 Atlantic salmon rivers in Eastern Canada, with over 470 of these rivers having defined conservation requirements.

There are no commercial fisheries for Atlantic salmon in Canada, and there have not been since 2000. Prior to this, many Canadian fishermen depended on the commercial salmon fishery for

part of their livelihood. These harvesters were negatively affected by the resource decline and subsequent closure of the fishery.

Canada carefully and scientifically manages the resource, by region and by river system.

Current harvest levels in the recreational and Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries are based on scientific analysis and advice which considers information from counting facilities where available, sampling from the fisheries, and catch and effort data from the recreational and FSC fisheries.

Canada's conservation requirements are established for individual rivers based on the best available science.

The stock status is assessed based on the proportion of the conservation egg requirement (from all groups of salmon) achieved in a given year and the trends in abundance of various life stages.

Specifically in Labrador and western Newfoundland, there are important large salmon components that contain a mixture of maiden fish that have spent two (2SW) or more years (MSW) at sea before spawning, and repeat spawners which are returning for a second or subsequent spawning. In other Newfoundland rivers, the large salmon component consists mainly of repeat spawning 1SW fish (grilse).

### **Harvests of single and Multi-Stocks**

NASCO has a role to play in working to reduce the harvest of mixed-stocks by all of its Parties.

In Canada, analysis of data provided by to NASCO ICES indicates that a small portion of Labrador's harvests occur on mixed-stocks.

However, new sampling and genetic data indicates that 89% - 97% (over a 6-year index) of the Labrador subsistence harvests are of Labrador's stocks. The data also shows that these stocks are healthier than in Southern areas of Canada's range.

Canada recognizes that harvests of mixed-stocks in some cases may not contribute to the sustainability of the range of the wild Atlantic salmon resource. While it is a mixed stock fishery, the FSC fisheries off Labrador are mostly Canadian fish and the vast majority are of Labrador origin where the resource is sufficiently abundant to sustain these fisheries.

### **Canadian Management - Based on Science and Experience**

In Canada, there are three forms of fisheries that harvest wild Atlantic salmon:

1. Recreational Fisheries

2. Aboriginal Fisheries
3. Bycatch in Labrador Resident Subsistence Fishery

## **1. Recreational Fisheries in Canada**

All Canadian Recreational Fisheries are closely monitored, enforced, and reported.

Some of the management measures include:

- In most of eastern Canada, only small salmon (one-sea-winter or grilse) can be retained,
- Where large salmon are permitted for retention, it is only in the province of Quebec (40 rivers) and only allowed in rivers which are assessed for attainment of conservation objectives or which are relatively isolated and fishing pressure is low,
- Daily and seasonal harvest limits are established and there is a daily maximum catch and release limit,
- All harvested fish must be immediately affixed with a carcass tag, and
- Prohibition on selling or bartering salmon, caught recreationally.

Canada conducts region by region, and often river by river analysis, to make management decisions reflecting these diverse and changing conditions.

As an on-going review of Canadian management approaches, we are taking action to conserve all stocks.

In 2014, Canada instituted new measures which are expected to contribute to reductions in overall mortality of wild Atlantic salmon, and align stock exploitation with stock abundance;

- In New Brunswick, an overall reduction in tags for retention of grilse from 8 to 4,
- In New Brunswick, Salmon Fishing Area 15, the daily grilse retention quota is reduced from 2 to 1,
- In Nova Scotia, a reduction in tags for retention of grilse from 4 to 2, and
- Expanded catch and release measures on the Northwest Miramichi River system.

## **2. Aboriginal Fisheries**

Aboriginal groups traditionally harvested salmon for food throughout Atlantic Canada and Quebec. The remote nature of some of the communities means that sources of fresh and affordable meat/protein are limited. Salmon, through food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries, play a vital role in providing food for, and sustaining aboriginal groups.

Aboriginal access for FSC purposes is recognized in Canada's *Constitution Act*.

The Government of Canada, and the Province and Territories, maintain relationships with individual aboriginal organisations through which they negotiate the provisions of various FSC fisheries.

The provision of the FSC fisheries are included as conditions in the communal licence issued to the groups. The harvest levels are controlled through the issuance of a limited number of carcass tags and a limited and defined season, coupled with enforcement.

FSC fisheries for Atlantic salmon take place in most areas of eastern Canada in both in river and in coastal / estuarine areas.

The in river harvests occur only in areas designated as open (by Government of Canada / Province of Quebec) for recreational salmon fishing.

FSC fisheries are not permitted in rivers closed for conservation reasons.

Harvests are reported to authorities (Government of Canada / Province of Quebec)  
For harvests off Labrador, logbooks are mandatory.

There is a prohibition on selling or bartering salmon.

In addition to the season and the requirement to affix carcass tags to all harvested fish, the communal licences include numerous other management measures that control the fishery including:

- reporting catches to authorities (Government of Canada/Province of Quebec) and the requirement to complete and submit logbooks for the fisheries in Labrador,
- fishing gear type and number restrictions, and
- fishing location.

### **3. Bycatch in the Residents of Labrador Food Fishery**

The Resident Food Fishery occurs in Lake Melville (off Goose Bay) and southern Labrador coastal communities from Cartwright to Cape St. Charles. This fishery is for residents of Labrador and targets sea-run trout and arctic charr. There is no directed harvest of salmon for this fishery. If salmon is caught, it is a result of bycatch. Salmon are a by-catch. There is a maximum season retention of three salmon of any size. All fishing (for trout and charr) must end when the three salmon are retained.

For reporting, logbooks are used.

The government of Canada issues carcass tags (3 per resident licence).

There is a prohibition on selling or bartering salmon.