



NEA(13)4

Atlantic Salmon Mixed-Stock Fisheries in the Russian Federation

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The Atlantic salmon occurs in the rivers of five regions of the Russian Federation – Murmansk region, Archangelsk region, Republic of Komy, Republic of Karelia and Nenets Autonomous Okrug which is a part of Archangelsk region.

The status of individual river salmon stocks vary considerably and overall they have not shown the same negative trend in salmon abundance as observed in all other parts of the distribution area on the both sides of the Atlantic. However, a number of salmon stocks are suffering reduced numbers of spawning salmon due to various anthropogenic factors such as over-fishing in coastal areas, poaching, etc.

The approach to the management of the salmon fisheries in Russia is based on applying the Precautionary Approach, NASCO's agreements and enforcing the adopted regulations. The objectives for the management of the fisheries for wild salmon in the Russian Federation are as follows:

- to preserve biodiversity and enhance the number of Atlantic salmon;
- to minimize the risk from management actions taken;
- to rationally utilize natural biological resource to ensure continuity of its reproduction;
- to preserve Atlantic salmon habitat;
- to resolve socio-economic issues by improving economic returns to local communities through salmon fishing.

In accordance with the Federal Law “On fisheries and conservation of aquatic biological resources” (No. 166-FZ, 2004) Atlantic salmon fisheries can only be conducted under a TAC. TACs are developed annually on a region-by-region basis by scientific institutions under the Federal Agency for Fisheries. Regional TACs are allocated to the subjects of the Russian Federation by the Federal Agency for Fisheries.

The regional TAC is distributed to the fisheries and allocated to users by the Federal Agency for Fisheries, its Territorial Directorates and by the Regional Commissions on Regulation of Harvesting the Anadromous Fish. There are 6 types of fisheries that can be conducted on a legal basis. They are listed below in the order of priority in terms of quota allocation:

- Fishery to support traditional way of living of indigenous small nations of the North;
- Scientific fishery;
- Fishery for enhancement purposes;
- Fishery for education purposes;
- Recreational fishery;
- Commercial fishery.

The TAC for a fishery to support the traditional way of living of indigenous small nations of the North is set by the Territorial Directorate of the Federal Agency for Fisheries upon request from the indigenous small nations of the North.

The TACs for the scientific fishery, education fishery and fishery for enhancement purposes are determined on the basis of applications from research institutions, universities, and the regional directorates for enhancement of fish stocks and then allocated to users by the Federal Agency for Fisheries.

The TACs for recreational and commercial fisheries are set and the quotas are allocated to users by the Regional Commissions on Regulation of Harvesting the Anadromous Fish on the basis of recommendations from scientific institutions of the Federal Agency for Fisheries.

The fisheries are allowed at the fishing sites only allotted to the users. The Commissions regulate the type of fishing gear that may be used, method of fishing, fishing season and fishing areas. The Commission's decision should be approved by the Territorial Directorate of the Federal Agency for Fisheries.

Every fishery is licensed by the Territorial Directorate of the Federal Agency for Fisheries (control and enforcement authority). Once the allocated quota is fished the fishery is closed. All fisheries are conducted in accordance with the fishing regulations in force.

The biggest commercial Atlantic salmon catch in Russia was recorded in 1960 and was over 1,100 tonnes. Subsequently the total catch began to decline. The average annual catch declined from 625 tonnes in the 1960s to 486 tonnes in the 1980s. Over the last two decades the effort in commercial fisheries has been further reduced which aimed at conserving Atlantic salmon stocks and enhancing recreational fisheries. In recent years, the total declared catch has been below 100 tonnes.

No coastal fisheries have been conducted in the Barents Sea area since the 1950s. There are coastal mixed-stock fisheries operated in the White Sea in Murmansk and Archangelsk regions primarily with trap nets. The fisheries intercept salmon migrating to the White Sea rivers. The fisheries were defined as mixed-stock fisheries on the basis of tagging experiments conducted in the past.

Overall quotas for commercial fisheries have been gradually reduced with the aim to enhance recreational fisheries. However, socio-economic factors are taken into account in making decisions on the management of the remaining coastal mixed-stock fisheries in the White Sea. The quotas for these fisheries are set annually by the Regional Commissions on Regulation of Harvesting the Anadromous Fish to ensure economic returns to local communities of Murmansk and Archangelsk regions through salmon fishing.

The fishery by Sami communes of the Murmansk region was started in the White Sea in 2010. The fishery was continued in 2011 and 2012 in the river Uмба and in the coastal areas of the White Sea.

The total 5-year mean (2008-2012) declared coastal catch for the Murmansk region was 25 tonnes and for the Archangelsk region was 10 tonnes.

In 2012, the total declared catch of Atlantic salmon in the Russian Federation was 82.4t, below the updated catch for 2011 (89.4t) but at the same level as the means for the previous 10 and 5 years. 46.5t was harvested by commercial fishermen, whereas 26.7t was caught by rod and nets in recreational fisheries, 5.9t was taken for scientific and enhancement purposes and 3.2t by Sami communes. The catch taken in the coastal areas was 37.9t while the in-river catch was 44.5t. The commercial catch was at the same level as in 2011. In the Murmansk region 21.3 tonnes were declared for the coastal fishery and 4.9 tonnes were declared for commercial in-river fishery. In the Archangelsk region, the commercial in-river catch was 4.8t and commercial coastal catch was 11.3t. Also 4.3 tonnes were taken in the Pechora River. No commercial and recreational quotas were established for fisheries in the Republic

of Karelia.

Nowadays coastal salmon fishery in Russia is viewed more as a social measure – a traditional way of fishing by people from villages along the White Sea coast.

The main threats to wild salmon and challenges for management in relation to fisheries are as follows:

- Unreported catches: high level of unreported catches in some areas and the lack of data to estimate the level of unreported catches in other areas; there is, therefore, a need for improved enforcement to reduce unreported catches and for the data in the problem areas;
- Mixed-stock fisheries: The lack of information to characterise the exploited stocks; there is, therefore, a need for a clearer policy and management approach for these fisheries;
- Stocks below conservation limits: The lack of data to set CLs for all salmon stocks; there is, therefore, a need for a development of conservation limits for all regions;
- Unclear legislation: Inadequate rules to manage the fisheries conducted by Sami communes; there is, therefore, a need for a clearer legislation for these fisheries.