

North American Commission

NAC(00)10

Review of the Atlantic Salmon Management Measures for 2000

(Tabled by Canada)

NAC(00)10***Review of the Atlantic Salmon Management Measures for 2000*****Introduction**

Atlantic salmon stock status continues to be of concern throughout Atlantic Canada. There are areas where returns and spawners are consistently above conservation requirements, other areas where returns are adequate (or close to being so) for conservation, and there are too many rivers where there are serious concerns for conservation of the stocks, and where we are not reaching conservation limits.

Management measures have been tailored to the needs of specific areas (rivers) while striving for an overall precautionary approach.

Aboriginal Food Fishery

Aboriginal food fisheries for Atlantic salmon take place throughout Atlantic Canada and Quebec. Aboriginal fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes are permitted after conservation requirements have been addressed, and take precedence over recreational fishing.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans seeks to develop food fishery licences with Aboriginal groups that identify allocations, monitoring system requirements (guardians/logbooks, etc.) and scientific projects such as tagging or gear trials (such as the use of trapnets instead of gillnets), where practical.

The Aboriginal food fishery harvests accounted for a reported 45t of Canada's 1999 preliminary catch of 143t, a decrease from 48t in 1998.

Commercial Fishery

There are no longer any commercial fisheries for Atlantic salmon on Canada's east coast. There was a small commercial harvest by commercial fishermen on Quebec's Lower North Shore in 1999, resulting in landings of 3.6t, while fishermen entertained offers under a voluntary buy-back program. The program ended March 31, 2000 with \$1.4 million expended for licence retirements. An additional retirement of seven remaining Gaspé licences was completed at a cost of \$0.7 million.

Other commercial fisheries moratoria (Labrador, insular Newfoundland) remained in place.

Recreational Fishery

Newfoundland and Labrador

The second year of a three year management plan is being implemented for the 2000 angling season.

The plan features a river classification system for insular Newfoundland (includes SFA 14B) which allows different retention limits based on the health of the river in question. These limits range from retention of six grilse on a Class I river to catch and release only on a Class IV river. The retention of MSW salmon is not permitted.

Other key management measures include the use of barbless hooks on all scheduled salmon rivers, closures based on low water levels or high water temperatures, as well as river closures for the entire season for conservation reasons.

Retention limits in Labrador (SFA 1 and 2) are set at 4 fish, one of which may be a large salmon.

Recreational catches totalled 29.9t in 1999 compared to 38.6 t in 1998.

Maritimes and Gulf Fisheries

The 2000 Atlantic salmon management measures are similar to those that were in place for 1999. Measures include retention limits from two grilse per day, eight tags for the season and a daily hook and release limit of four, to river closures for the season. The retention of MSW salmon is not permitted. Rivers in the Inner Bay of Fundy have been closed since 1991. Work is underway with regard to developing a recovery plan for these stocks.

Multi-year management plans are being developed for 2001-2005 which will focus on a river classification approach.

Recreational catches in 1999 totaled 27.5t compared to 27.9t in 1998.

Province of Quebec

The Province of Quebec has developed a multi-year (2000-2005) salmon plan which establishes conservation limits and management targets for each river.

The fishing of MSW salmon is permitted, with restrictions, on 75 rivers; catch and release only is permitted on 33 rivers while seven rivers are closed to fishing altogether.

Catches in the 1999 recreational fishery were 36.3t as compared to 37.4t in 1998.