



Mixed-Stock Fisheries
(Tabled by the Russian Federation)

Introduction

In 2024, with regard to decisions in the 'Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO', CNL(24)14, Council agreed to include an agenda item in each of the Commissions to allow for an annual update on coastal, estuarine and in-river mixed-stock fisheries and the justification for their continued prosecution, CNL(24)88rev, paragraph 6.12. Parties / jurisdictions are asked to provide papers with a brief description of any mixed-stock fisheries still operating, the most recent catch data for these fisheries, any changes or developments in their management and the justification for their continued prosecution. In 2024, mixed-stock fisheries papers were provided by Canada, the EU, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. However, these did not contain information to justify the mixed-stock fisheries as that had not been requested for the 2024 papers.

Fisheries regulations

Atlantic salmon fisheries in the Russian Federation's inland waters and territorial sea are carried out in accordance with Article 29.1 of the Federal Law 166-FZ of 20 Dec 2004 'On fisheries and conservation of aquatic biological resources'.

Management of Atlantic salmon fisheries in the Russian Federation is based on decisions of a commission for regulation of fishery of anadromous fish (hereinafter referred to as Commission). The Commission is established by the relevant subject of the Russian Federation. It is headed by the highest rank official of the subject. Annually, the Commission decides on the catch limits, times, locations of harvesting as well as other conditions of fisheries for anadromous fish. Harvesting of Atlantic salmon in commercial fisheries, indigenous people (traditional) fisheries and in recreational fisheries is only allowed on the basis of contract for the use of fishing site and within its limits.

Fisheries of aquatic biological resources in the Northern Fisheries Basin are regulated according to the Fisheries Regulations for the Northern Fisheries Basin (current version is approved by the Order N 292 of 13 May 2021 by the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia (hereinafter referred to as the Fisheries Regulations)).

Brief description of existing MSFs

Atlantic salmon commercial, traditional and recreational fisheries in the Barents Sea are prohibited by the Fisheries Regulations.

Atlantic salmon mixed-stock fisheries are still prosecuted in coastal waters of the White Sea within boundaries of the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions except for the following areas and periods:

- the Kandalaksha Gulf;
- along the Tersky coast of the Kola Peninsula from Cape Svyatoy Nos to the River Sosnovka (the village of Sosnovka, 66°31' N - 40°36' E);
- in the estuaries of Atlantic salmon rivers and creeks, at a distance of less than 500 m from each side of the estuary and at the same distance offshore where the rivers enter the sea;
- on days (periods), as established by the Commission, to allow Atlantic salmon spawners migrate to their spawning grounds in rivers.

Atlantic salmon caught in the White Sea originates from the White Sea rivers. None of the adult salmon sampled in the White Sea in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions originated from rivers outside the White Sea basin (Niemela et al., 2017).

Significant structuring of Atlantic salmon populations is occurring in many large river systems, and this may have implications for fisheries management. Commercial and recreational salmon fisheries with drift nets in the lower part of a large river system – the Pechora River (the main stem length is 1809 km, catchment area is 322,000 km²) most likely exploit salmon populations from different tributaries of the river. These populations are genetically distinct to some extent (Ozerov et al., 2017). However, there is no data available on the origin and composition of salmon catches in the lower part of the Pechora River. The fisheries are currently considered as single-stock in-river fisheries and are managed correspondingly.

Catches, changes or developments in MSFs management

The coastal fisheries for Atlantic salmon in the White Sea remained unregulated until late 1980s. In 1987, for the first time, a catch limit was established for coastal fisheries in the Murmansk region. The quota was set at 60 t, which, on the basis of the average weight of salmon, corresponded to 21,000 fish. Fishing effort in commercial coastal fisheries for Atlantic salmon in the White Sea has been gradually declining since the early 1990s due to management measures (Prusov et al., 2021). As a result, the coastal catches decreased from over 100 t in 1980s to around 50 t in 1990s and to around 30 t in 2008-2018. In subsequent years, catches declined even further in both the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions.

In 2024 the total catch limit for Atlantic salmon coastal fisheries in the White Sea was 26.58 t:

- in the Murmansk region the catch limit for commercial coastal fishery was 13.10 t and for traditional fishery – 0.75 t;
- in the Arkhangelsk region the catch limit for commercial coastal fishery was 9.80 t and for recreational fishery – 2.93 t.

In 2023 and 2024 total declared catches of Atlantic salmon taken in coastal waters of the White Sea were 16.55 and 5.33 t, respectively (Table).

Table. Nominal catches of Atlantic salmon in Russia in 2023-2024 (in tonnes round fresh weight)

Provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2024	In-river	Estuarine	Coastal	Total
	34.21	0.0	5.33	39.54
Confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2023	35.38	0.0	16.55	51.93

Justification for continued prosecution MSFs

The first references to regular Atlantic salmon coastal fishery in Russia came from the Pomors, ethnographic group thought to be descendants of the Russian settlers (primarily from Veliky Novgorod), who came to live on the White Sea coast. The fishery was documented in the chronicles of Novgorod of the 1300s, showing that the Pomor lifestyle was for centuries depended on the salmon sea fishery, which also was among the reasons for emergence of Pomor villages and settlements. The coastal salmon fishery remains an important source of income for the villagers today. However, since the early 1990s the fishing effort in commercial coastal fisheries in the White Sea has been considerably limited. Some coastal areas were closed for salmon fishing, with the aim of conserving Atlantic salmon and enhancing recreational in-river

fisheries. Nowadays coastal salmon fisheries in the White Sea are viewed more as a socio-economic measure supporting a traditional way of living of local people from villages and settlements along the White Sea coast. They are carried out in accordance with NASCO 'Guidelines for incorporating social and economic factors in decisions under the Precautionary Approach', CNL(04)57.

References

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