

	<p style="text-align: center;">North American Commission</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>North American Commission Annual Report (Tabled by the United States)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NAC(25)03</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Agenda item: 7</p>
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North American Commission Annual Report (Tabled by the United States)

United States, 2024 Activities

Submitted by: National Marine Fisheries Service

Date: 2025

1. Summary of Salmonid disease incidences

Every year critically endangered adult Atlantic salmon returning to the Penobscot River are captured for broodstock and held at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery until spawning, after spawning the fish are released back to the river. These fish contribute eggs to fill future production needs to support the Atlantic salmon recovery efforts in Maine. Some of the eggs will be stocked directly into rivers, while others will be grown out and stocked as fry and parr, some eggs will be transferred to other hatchery facilities to be reared and stocked into Gulf Of Maine Distinct Population Segment (GOM DPS) rivers at various life stages. During their time in captivity, all of the captive broodstock are screened for specific pathogens of concern. In 2024, there were two fish confirmed with highly polymorphic region non-pathogenic (HPRO) positive detections, a non-pathogenic variant of Infectious Salmon Anemia virus; these fish were released back to the river in the fall.

In September 2024, and for the second year in a row, routine fish health screening at the Downeast Salmon Federation's Peter Gray Hatchery in East Machias, Maine detected the Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis Virus (IPNV). The IPNV virus (A6/Canada1) infected both East Machias and Narraguagus River stocks of Atlantic salmon destined for stock enhancement purposes. The hatchery was holding approximately 90,000 Narraguagus River and East Machias origin parr. Given that there is no cure for IPNV, and the threat that it poses to wild stocks, the Maine Department of Marine Resources required that all fish on the premises be destroyed and the entire hatchery be disinfected, which was done in September, 2025.

U.S. Point of Contact on Disease:

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2. Summary of breaches of containment of salmonids from net cages

In 2024, there were no reported escape events from freshwater hatcheries or marine net pen sites in Maine. However, in early October 2024, a suspected multi sea-winter aquaculture origin fish (approximately 80cm) was reported by Brookfield Power captured at the Ellsworth dam in the fishway trap on the Union River (10-11-2024). The fish could not be positively identified as an aquaculture origin fish and according to trap handling protocol, the fish was tagged, and scale and fin samples were taken prior to the fish being released downriver. The

tissue samples were sent to Cooke Aquaculture and the USFWS - Lamar Fish Technology Center and Northeast Fishery Center genetics lab for further analysis. Shortly after, Cooke confirmed the fish was not in their database. Lab results from the USFWS to confirm the origin of the fish are still pending.

Notes:

For commercial aquaculture permits in Maine (the location of all Atlantic salmon aquaculture in the eastern United States), a reportable escape is defined as any escape greater than 50 fish at sites where individual fish weigh more than 2 kg. For sites where the individual fish weigh less than 2 kg, operators must report any escape that exceeds 25% of cage biomass.

3. Summary of Salmonid introductions from outside the Commission Area

Listed below is information on salmonids brought into the Commission Area in 2024. No salmonids that originate from outside the NAC area are stocked directly into salmon rivers in the GOM DPS. Fish brought in from outside the Commission area are stocked in inland ponds and lakes (e.g., private farm ponds) and pose no identifiable risk to Atlantic salmon in the wild as there are no connections between the water bodies where these fish are stocked and waters where Atlantic salmon occur. Any potential risks to the receiving environment are further minimized by adherence to both state and federal fish health regulations which would require a stocking permit from the Maine Inland Fish and Wildlife.

Species (strain, if applicable)	Number	Life Stage	Origin ¹	Destination ²	Purpose ³	Date
Rainbow Trout	25,000	eyed eggs	Trout Lodge, Washington State	Maine	Recreational Fisheries-private pond stocking	2024
Rainbow Trout	400	fingerlings	Trout Lodge, Washington State	Maine	UMaine research	2024

1. This would be the province or state for introductions from the west coast; or country for international introductions. It was decided that introductions between Canada and the US that are within the Commission Area (between Maine and NB, for example) would not be included here as those introductions would be captured in other avenues (ICES WGITMO, for example) and because these are not as relevant. 2. The more specific the information the better, however Bay level is considered sufficient. 3. This refers to the intention for the introduction – aquaculture, research, stock enhancement, etc.

4. Summary of Transgenic activities within the Country Annex 1 of NAC(10)6

AquaAdvantage® salmon are genetically modified Atlantic salmon developed by AquaBounty that grow to market size in half the time of conventional salmon. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the scientific evidence, as required by the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, the FDA determined that AquaAdvantage Salmon meets the statutory requirements for safety and effectiveness. This approval applied to only one U.S. facility located in Indiana. Under the approval, AquaAdvantage salmon were subject to stringent conditions to prevent the possibility of escape into the wild. That said, in 2024, following widespread opposition and market rejection to genetically engineered AquaAdvantage salmon, AquaBounty ended all U.S. operations and sold off the Indiana fish farm.