



ISSUE: Striped bass harvest regulations in New Brunswick 2018

BACKGROUND:

- The New Brunswick Salmon Council (NBSC) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization, dedicated to protecting wild Atlantic salmon and supporting restoration and enhancement activity on all watersheds in New Brunswick
- The NBSC is comprised of 30 affiliated salmon angling and conservation organizations throughout New Brunswick.
- Council proposes that DFO continue to manage the striped bass population using an adaptive management strategy, whereby harvest levels increase as population abundance increases
- This methodology is consistent with Council's policy on Harvest Based on Abundance
- Given that the current estimate of over 300,000 spawners is nearly 10 times greater than the recovery target of 31,200 spawners necessary to open a directed fishery, the NBSC proposes that greater recreational opportunities be incorporated into the new management plan

APPROVED BOARD POSITION ON 2017 STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT PLAN:

- The NBSC's Board of Directors, on December 3, 2017 approved the following position regarding the management of Striped bass in New Brunswick in 2018 and that it be presented on behalf of the NBSC to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on December 14, 2017 at the meeting of the Eastern New Brunswick Coastal and Inland Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee

POSITION:

- Using the same format of an effort-based management plan that is currently in place, the NBSC proposes that:
 - Daily bag limit be increased to 3 fish/day;
 - Possession limit be double the daily bag limit
 - The possession limit be de-coupled from daily bag limit in the current legislation;
 - Eliminate upper size slot limit of 65 cm, but retain minimum size limit of 50 cm in tidal water to allow bass to spawn at least once before being susceptible to harvest;
 - Eliminate both the lower and upper slot limits for striped bass in waters upstream of the head-of-tide
 - The retention period in tidal waters be April 15 – October 31 (NOTE: Why restrict this? Could be liberalized further);
 - The striped bass recreational fishery in inland waters (above head of tide) close at the same time as the salmon season (September 30, October 15, or October 31)



- The harvest of 3 striped bass per day be permitted in inland waters during the open season;
- The gear type restrictions remain the same as present;
- DFO conduct creel surveys and angler effort surveys throughout the Southern Gulf range to determine harvest and angling effort over the season (necessary for establishing comprehensive and credible management plan);
- Estimates of spawner abundance be more precise than at present.

Enforcement: increase and incorporate creel census into patrols

- Additional staffing
- Joint patrols with province
- Work with trained First Nations Guardians
- Use of surveillance such as drones, spotting scopes
- Establish river watch program
- Educational programs (tourism potential, family participation)

Submitted to the Chair of the Eastern New Brunswick Coastal and Inland Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee

By Peter J. Cronin, President NBSC on behalf of the New Brunswick Salmon Council

Date December 14, 2017