



New Brunswick Wildlife Federation

Report on April 16th Meeting With DFO

Regarding the April 4th 2014 conservation and Harvesting Plan for Striped Bass

Southern Gulf Region

Following the release of the above mentioned plan and a April 4th news release on the 2014 striped bass recreational fishery, the NBWF was invited to attend an advisory committee at the Gulf Fisheries Centre on April 16th.

DFO, the ASF, NBSC, NBWF and two Miramichi salmon groups were represented.

At this meeting I put forward the NBWF's position (as discussed at fisheries committee -AGM) that we would like to see an increase in angler harvest but that we above all wished the fishery to be sustainable.

DFO stated that striped bass was currently not managed under SARA but certain conditions of the fishery with regards to SARA had to be met or it would be listed. If the latter occurred then regulations would be much more restrictive. Striped bass is at present a species of concern not because of it's numbers but because of it having only one proven spawning area.

One thing mentioned was a plan to increase first nation catches from being limited to 3,000 in Miramichi watershed to other include watersheds with a total of 15,000 allowed. I think this was to be at 3,000 per watershed. This allocation is to allow other first nation reserves to fish the resource. The other reserves would therefore be fishing the stock after it has dispersed to feed. Recreational angling catch is meanwhile estimated to be 20,000 fish.

DFO mentioned that they were intending to increase the presence of Protection Officers during this year's fishery. This was being done to try and reduce the illegal fishery, which has been listed as a major source of striped bass mortality.

Diet studies are currently being undertaken on striped bass. So far 665 bass stomach contents have been examined, caught between May 1 to Oct 10. Most of these bass were caught in the Miramichi system in May and June. Most of the bass (60 to 70%) had empty stomachs and in those that weren't, smelt was the major food found. Only 10 bass of 665 contained salmon smolt, A total of 21 smolt, one had 6 and the other 5. This meant that only .03% of food from stomach samples was salmon. There is a plan to try gill nets to sample bass as it is felt that this method will produce a more representative sample.

The presence of striped bass higher in the river system (reported as high as Boiestown) was brought up. It was said that some were being caught at the camps by salmon anglers. They wanted them kept and I had suggested that a system similar to that discussed with in an October meeting DNR for small-mouth bass. This proposed system allowed for more retention of a species in an area of a river where it was not desired.

With regards to the change in the slot size limit, the lower slot limit was reduced as some areas complained of a abundance of fish between 50 and 55cm and few caught over 55.

DFO plans to set up a webpage with a FAQ page where users may give opinions on and receive information on striped bass.

Creel survey.

Anglers will be asked to complete a creel survey on striped bass catches.

Please request your members to complete this survey. This survey is important, as it gives DFO a realistic estimate of catches. If they do not have this data, they must use the best numbers they have no matter what the accuracy.

Following is DFO's proposed striped bass workplan for 2014



Fisheries and Oceans
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Workplan 2014

November 2013 - February 2014

Advisory meetings in Eastern New Brunswick, Prince-Edward-Island and Gulf Nova Scotia

February 3, 2014

Science review - creel data and spawning abundance

April 2014

Decision on the 2014 Striped bass fishery

May – September 2014

Spawner population monitoring, distribution (tagging) study , diet study, creel survey

Fall-Winter 2014

Science review – Spawner population update, creel results, assessment of management measures

Winter 2015

Advisory meetings in Eastern New Brunswick, Prince-Edward-Island and Gulf Nova Scotia



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