

April 6, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONSERVATION GROUPS  
REQUEST MORE CHANGES FOR  
STRIPED BASS ANGLING

New Brunswick Wildlife Federation and Miramichi Watershed Management Committee, two organizations involved with consultation regarding the striped bass fishery for the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population would like to acknowledge the Department of Fisheries and Ocean's improved management plan for the 2017 fishery with its modest increase in harvest limits, but today suggested more changes should take place now before the season opens.

NBWF President Charles LeBlanc and Watershed Committee President Debbie Norton both noted that at DFO's Recreational Fish Committee meeting last December, conservation groups were unanimous in asking for a bag limit of three Striped Bass per day with a possession limit of six throughout the Gulf region. This request was based on the science of abundance of which there has been high numbers in the past few years.

Norton says the new bag limit of two is an improvement throughout the entire region with the exception of the Miramichi prior to June 15 which remains at one. She also pointed out that our organizations had also asked that the upper slot limit be eliminated for 2017, again based on science and the principle of harvest based on abundance. We felt that with such excessive numbers in the Gulf that this was no longer required.

Most importantly, LeBlanc stated, our members are discouraged with the closing of the Northwest Miramichi for a three week period. This area has been open to fishing under the same regulations as the rest of the Gulf area in previous years and the stock numbers continue to grow each year. Therefore, we believe that there is no science to support such a closure. Further, this was not discussed in any detail at the DFO Recreational Fish Committee meeting last December. Surely, if the Department had any concerns about fishing in that popular angling area over the past several years, it should have been raised at that meeting and the background science, if any, discussed. We are unaware of any such science and do not

understand why the area should be closed. We request that the Northwest area be open for fishing as it has been in the past.

Both Norton and LeBlanc stated our organizations believe that all management must be grounded in science and based on the harvest by abundance principle. Our groups salute the areas of the new management plan which adhere to this principle and respectfully request DFO Minister Dominic LeBlanc to address the above areas, which are not science based and thereby restore appropriate angling for the entire season in the Northwest Miramichi.

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Contacts:

Charles LeBlanc – 506.859.1240  
Email: Charlie LeBlanc <cleblan618@rogers.com>

Debbie Norton 506.627.6492  
Email : adventures@upperoxbow.com