



*Contact* Charles LeBlanc, President of NBWF,  
(Moncton)  
President  
*Cell* 506.866.4345  
*Email* Cleblanc618@rogers.com  
*Website* <http://nbwildlifefederation.org/>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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THE ONE YEAR TEMPORARY MANDATORY MEASURE FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL GRILSE IN NEW BRUNSWICK IS UP.

IT IS TIME TO RE-ASSESS THE RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPAWNING.

Today New Brunswick Wildlife Federation President Charles LeBlanc made the following comments about the 2015 Mandatory Release of grilse and proposed extensions of those measures for 2016 and beyond. He stated:

1. Hook and Release originated as a management tool to be used where necessary and where releases of fish really contribute to increases in a river's salmon populations. There are certainly instances where Hook & Release is necessary, just as there are instances where no fishing is necessary.
2. Fisheries and Oceans have always stated that there is an at sea mortality problem with Atlantic salmon populations. Although returns to the rivers have been declining, the young fry, parr and smolt numbers in the rivers are high. Even though the adults are just not returning to their native streams, the rivers are still being populated. It is factors acting on the survival of the first and second years at sea that are constraining the abundance of Atlantic salmon.

3. The real problem with grilse in New Brunswick is on the Northwest Miramichi system, not the Restigouche, Nepisiguit or Main Southwest Miramichi rivers.

4. It is premature to request an extension of Hook & Release regulations for 2016 and beyond. Mandatory Hook & Release has to be grounded in science. The 2015 returns are not in and have not been analyzed; although preliminary reports show that the grilse returns are much better than for the years 2012-2014. Without a drastic reduction in returns in 2015, there should be a return to the management plans of 2014 and earlier.

5. We cannot have the same Hook & Release rules for the whole of New Brunswick. The 2015 cookie cutter approach is not valid scientifically. There are big differences in our various rivers which have to be managed on a river by river basis, NBWF has been promoting this concept for years. In fact the concept originated here in New Brunswick and was taken to Newfoundland, but seems to have been discarded by Fisheries and Oceans.

6. We note that grilse on the Main Southwest Miramichi are generally 85-90 % male, so they do not lay the eggs necessary for an increase in egg depositions. Those male grilse have historically been available for retention by anglers. The Northwest Miramichi system is different, some 35-40 % of the early pre-August grilse are female and do contribute to egg depositions. These points should be considered by Fisheries & Oceans in setting the 2016 regulations.

7. The 2015 mandatory grilse release rule affected a lot of New Brunswick resident anglers. Resident salmon retention licenses declined to 9,238 in 2015 from 16,486 in 2014, 20,471 and in 2013, although trout licenses increased in 2015 to 49,057 from 45,187 in 2014, and 45,758 in 2013. NBWF's mandate is to speak for both the ordinary resident anglers who want to keep a grilse and those who choose to release one. Resident anglers did stay away from the river in droves this past season because of the mandatory release of grilse.

8. This certainly resulted in socio-economic problems for our small communities.

9. The cost to the New Brunswick economy of the hook and release management measures introduced in 2015 could exceed \$30 million. The Gardiner Pinfold Study commissioned by the Atlantic Salmon Federation indicated that in 2010, 22,000 salmon anglers contributed \$70.8 million to New Brunswick's Provincial Gross Domestic Product. Those numbers of anglers were just not on our rivers this season. These Socio-economic factors should be taken into account in setting regulations.

10. The primary reason for the 2015 mandatory release of grilse programme was put in place so Canada would lead by example and show Greenland we were doing something, albeit a token gesture.

IT JUST DIDN'T WORK.

This year Greenland still implemented a 45 tonne quota for salmon, which are principally 70% North American origin.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Charles LeBlanc, President of NBWF, (Moncton) at (506)866-4345 or email at [clebland618@rogers.com](mailto:clebland618@rogers.com).