



A Backgrounder from

Atlantic Salmon Federation

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State of the Population - Atlantic Salmon 2009

THE POPULATION

- The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) reports Atlantic salmon abundance in Canada fell from 1.8 million in 1975 to 625,000 in 2008 (see graph).
- While the numbers have trended upwards since 2001 from 475,000 to 625,000, the large salmon are still well below conservation limits and scientists with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea do not expect this to improve from 2009 to 2011.
- Large spawners that migrate to West Greenland have declined 82% over the past 38 years

ATLANTIC SALMON KILL

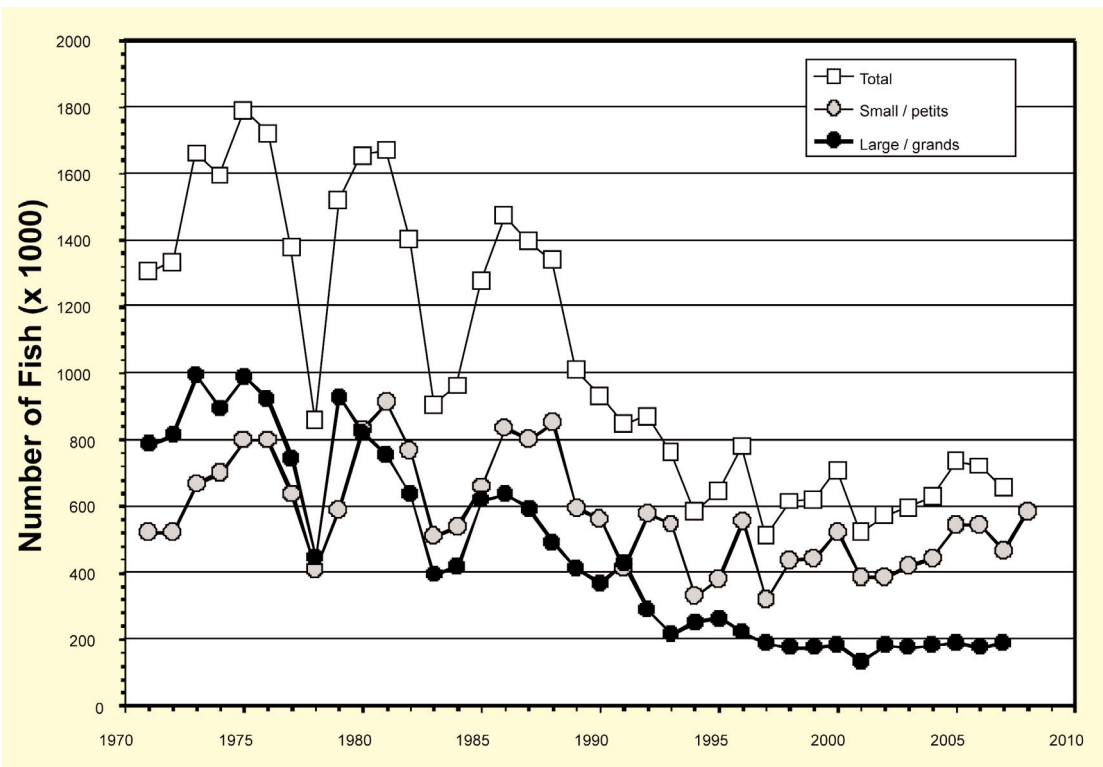
- Despite concern with the numbers, Canada's harvest of salmon in 2008 was 148 tonnes (64,099 salmon, 11,737 of which were the important large salmon).
- Canada allows the kill of large Atlantic salmon in recreational fisheries and First Nations & Labrador Resident fisheries. The respective harvests in 2008 were 2,840 and 8,897.
- Greenlanders have agreed to restrict their commercial fishery to zero since 2002.
- However, the internal use fishery at West Greenland steadily increased to 26.1 tonnes in 2008, up from 9 tonnes in 2002. Genetic studies say that 86% (8,000) of these salmon caught in 2008 were from Canadian and New England rivers.
- In 2008 the French islands of St-Pierre et Miquelon killed 3.5 tonnes of Atlantic salmon. This harvest is at the highest level in 19 years, and it consists of salmon originating in many different rivers in Canada and the U.S. (98% of the harvest is thought to be of Canadian origin).
- Some of the Atlantic salmon killed were from endangered Atlantic salmon populations of rivers in Maine and Canada's Maritimes.

MIXED POPULATION FISHERIES - A SPECIAL THREAT

- Atlantic salmon killed at sea and along coastlines may be heading back to rivers where Atlantic salmon populations are low or endangered. The nets do not discriminate.
- ICES advice for 2009 is that Labrador is reaching only 50% of the conservation limit for large salmon. In 2008, Canada allowed a mixed population fishery in Labrador that killed 3,909 large salmon, the greatest harvest in ten years.
- Canada allows the Labrador fishery, even though it harvests salmon populations for which there is no data on whether or not they can withstand a harvest. Canada collects assessment data on only 4 of more than 100 rivers with Atlantic salmon.

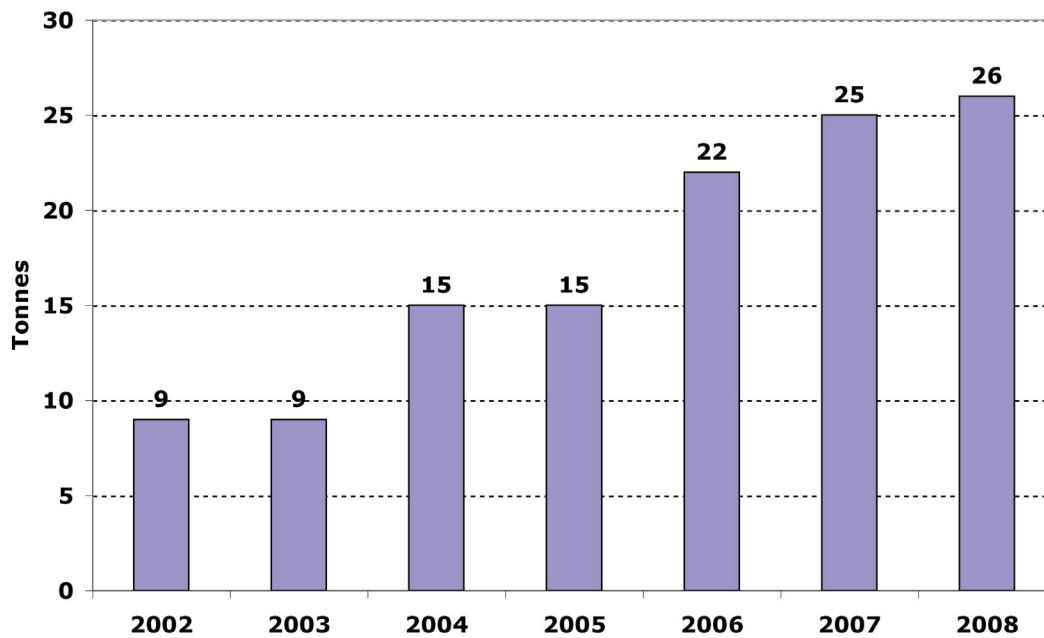
THE SITUATION WITHIN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

- ICES reports that in 2008 no region of North America met minimum conservation limits (CL) for its population of large or two-sea-winter (2SW) salmon as follows:
- **Newfoundland:** suffers reduced reproductive capacity (98% of 2SW CL)
- **Labrador:** suffers reduced reproductive capacity (50% of 2SW CL)
- **Québec:** suffers reduced reproductive capacity (74% of 2SW CL)
- **Gulf of St. Lawrence:** suffers reduced reproductive capacity (56% of 2SW CL)
- **Scotia-Fundy:** suffers reduced reproductive capacity (12% of 2SW CL)
- **United States:** suffers reduced reproductive capacity (7% of 2SW CL)



Numbers of large and small salmon returning to North American rivers have declined markedly since 1975. The large salmon are especially important for their ability to spawn large numbers of eggs. However, numbers remain low. (Fisheries & Oceans Canada)

Greenland Internal Fishery



The harvest of Atlantic salmon by Greenlanders for local use was in 2008 at the highest level since special conservation measures were taken in 2001. (ICES numbers)

