



IF YOU CARE ABOUT THE ATLANTIC SALMON, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please read this.

We are witnessing the extinction of the Atlantic salmon from the Miramichi River in slow motion as bureaucrats in the **Moncton office** of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Gulf Region do little to address the issues facing the salmon.

Scientists, camp owners and conservation groups like the Miramichi Salmon Association (MSA) and the Collaboration for Atlantic Salmon Tomorrow (CAST) want to know why.

Predation by growing populations of bass and other challenges mean that only 1% of wild Atlantic salmon are making it back to the river from the ocean. This is not enough returning fish to allow for a long-term, sustainable salmon population. This year was the worst to date for wild Atlantic salmon returns on the Miramichi. We don't need more study, more talk or more of the status quo – we need immediate action – or it will soon be too late.

CAST has a science-based, action oriented plan. In May 2015, DFO permitted the capture of wild Atlantic salmon smolts (3 year old juvenile salmon) migrating to the ocean to be raised for two years at the MSA hatchery, giving them a head start and a better chance by avoiding predators on their trip to the ocean. CAST believes the head start program could make a positive difference like it has on the Upper Salmon River near Fundy National Park, as well as the Tobique River where DFO Maritimes Region **Halifax office** have approved and been supportive of similar restocking programs. The adult salmon from the MSA hatchery would then be released into the river to spawn naturally, increasing wild Atlantic salmon eggs in the Miramichi. There has been substantial funding provided to CAST over the past four years – a total of \$5.4 million, including \$2.3 million in private funding, \$1.3 million from ACOA (Federal), \$500,000 from DFO (Federal) and \$1.3 million from the Province of New Brunswick.

Since 2015, DFO has approved the collection of 16,500 wild salmon smolt, yet it has only approved the release of 80 mature egg-bearing salmon in 2017 and 2018 – these fish have been raised at the hatchery over the past four years at significant expense. Without explanation, on October 5 (last Friday), DFO confirmed there would be NO approved release of additional salmon permitted on the Miramichi in 2018.

Approximately four million salmon eggs for the next generation will be lost if these adult fish are not released to spawn in the next two weeks.

Without a permit, up to 1,000 fish may have to be destroyed and there is uncertainty for the fate of the remaining 13,000 maturing salmon in the MSA hatchery. Why is DFO allowing this waste of salmon, time and money to take place?

DFO had requested a 3rd party scientific review of the technical merits as well as the risks and benefits of the program. CAST has complied and completed two reviews over the last two years. The scientific peer review panel made recommendations. CAST complied with all the recommendations.

CAST has the benefit of having major scientific partners – University of New Brunswick, Canadian Rivers Institute, and the University of Laval. We are fortunate enough to have a first-class science team composed of 11 PhD and graduate student researchers who are experts in fish habitat, tracking technology, and genetics.

This year has been the most devastating for returning salmon, fishers and First Nations on the Miramichi. Camp owners all along the river have gone on record with written appeals to DFO to approve the release of the salmon at the MSA hatchery. Camp owners and scientists have also asked DFO to approve increased bass quotas for First Nations to reduce the threat of predators on wild salmon. All of these appeals have gone unanswered.

CAST have complied with everything DFO has requested. Wild salmon are on a downward spiral that unchecked, could drive the species to the verge of extinction on the Miramichi. DFO's failure to act is sealing the fate of this iconic Miramichi fish, the families who have operated camps along the river for generations as well as the First Nations who depend on the salmon for food. Why is DFO refusing to help save wild Atlantic salmon on the Miramichi?

About CAST

CAST is a unique New Brunswick organization that includes scientists, conservation groups, government and industry volunteers. The common ground we share is our commitment to save and strengthen wild Atlantic salmon populations. Funding for CAST research comes from federal, provincial and industry partners. CAST has invested time, talent, and significant financial resources to support four research projects by eleven respected, world-class scientists from UNB and the University of Laval.

We need DFO to show leadership NOW. There is no time to waste.

Please contact your local federal Member of Parliament, provincial MLA or mayor to voice your support for adult salmon release on the Miramichi to help conserve the Atlantic salmon.

Contact the DFO Gulf Region at info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

This week federal Minister Wilkinson announced Canada's five-year plan of "concrete actions the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will take to help rebuild Pacific wild salmon populations and their habitats."

We the undersigned agree, we need this same passion and commitment in New Brunswick for wild Atlantic salmon!

Push and Be Damned Camp
McKeil Camp
Gilman Brook Camp
Ledges Inn Corp.
Mountain Channel Lodge

Sutter Salmon Club
Buttermilk Pool Camp
Harris Ledge Camp
Wilson's Sporting Lodge
Rocky Brook Camp

Rocky Bend Fishing Camp
Miramichi Salmon Club
The Mayor and Council of Doaktown
Mayor and Council, Village of Blackville
Rural Community of Upper Miramichi (Boiestown)



Collaboration for Atlantic Salmon Tomorrow

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