

Celebrating 70 Years of Salmon Conservation

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Constructed in 1873, the Miramichi Salmon Conservation Centre in South Esk, New Brunswick is the oldest continuously-operating fish hatchery in North America.



The MSA partnered with the hatchery in 1982 for the Miramichi Salmon Enhancement Project - a multi-year program where the MSA oversaw the expansion of the facility and its salmon stocking program.



In 1997, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans transferred the hatchery to the Miramichi Watershed Management Committee - an umbrella organization made up of local conservation groups and stakeholders. Since then, the MSA has operated the hatchery on behalf of the Committee.

The Miramichi Salmon Association began a 5-year smolt study research project in 2001. The cost of this project was \$1 million, making it the single largest salmon research project ever undertaken on the Miramichi.



Between 2014 and 2018, the MSA restored ten key cold water refuge habitats throughout the watershed. These pools are revisited each year to assess if the restorations are still functioning and to carry out necessary maintenance work. In 2022, the MSA partnered with Dr. Antóin O'Sullivan for a novel cold water research project which includes the enhancement of at least three additional cold water pools.

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On October 8th, 1953, a small group of conservation-minded pioneers from Canada and the United States, all who shared a common love for the Miramichi watershed and who feared for its future, registered a fledgling new organization called the Miramichi Salmon Association (MSA). The group, made up of anglers, guides, camp owners, commercial outfitters, and sporting good merchants, drafted a statement that declared its mission; “the propagation, protection and perpetuation of the Atlantic Salmon in the Miramichi River system”. That fundamental goal still directs the programs and activities of the MSA today.



As a response to excessive poaching in the area, the MSA began a privately-controlled warden service on the Miramichi River. Between 1954 and 1958, the MSA employed two wardens with uniforms donated by Tom Boyd. The program was met with overwhelming local support and highlighted the need for more protection on the river.

In 1954, Jack Fenety created the MSA Education for Conservation program - an art, essay, and writing contest with a salmon conservation theme. By 1958, 62 schools throughout the Miramichi area were participating. This program, now known as the Bruno Bobak Memorial Art Contest, still exists today.



In 1961, Jack Fenety was elected MSA president. Jack helped our organization take a leading role in public awareness and education regarding salmon conservation, and steered the MSA's advocacy work for over three decades.

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J.W. "Bud" Bird took on the position of MSA president in 1996. As a former Minister of Natural Resources and a successful Fredericton businessman, Bud was well-suited to carry out the MSA's advocacy work and advance our organization's fundraising strategies. In 2013, Bud Bird became Chair of the MSA's Campaign 60, which raised \$2.67 million for salmon conservation on the Miramichi River.



In 2000, Mark Hambrook became the MSA's first full-time president. An experienced biologist who had worked at the Miramichi Fish Hatchery for several years, Mark was key in establishing the association as a boots-in-the-water conservation group. Many of the field programs we carry out today were founded under Mark's leadership.

The Miramichi Salmon Association hired its first summer student, Susan O'Donnell, in 1987. Susan's job was to publicize the objectives of the MSA and solicit Miramichi River anglers to become members.



In 1964, the MSA awarded its first major scholarship to UNB student Edward Johnson. The MSA continues to award funding to students to promote the Miramichi River, conservation, and salmon research, including the Eldrid Bailey Memorial Award, established in 1988, the Jack T.H. Fenety Scholarship, established in 2003, and the Brian D. Moore Legacy Fund, established in 2021.

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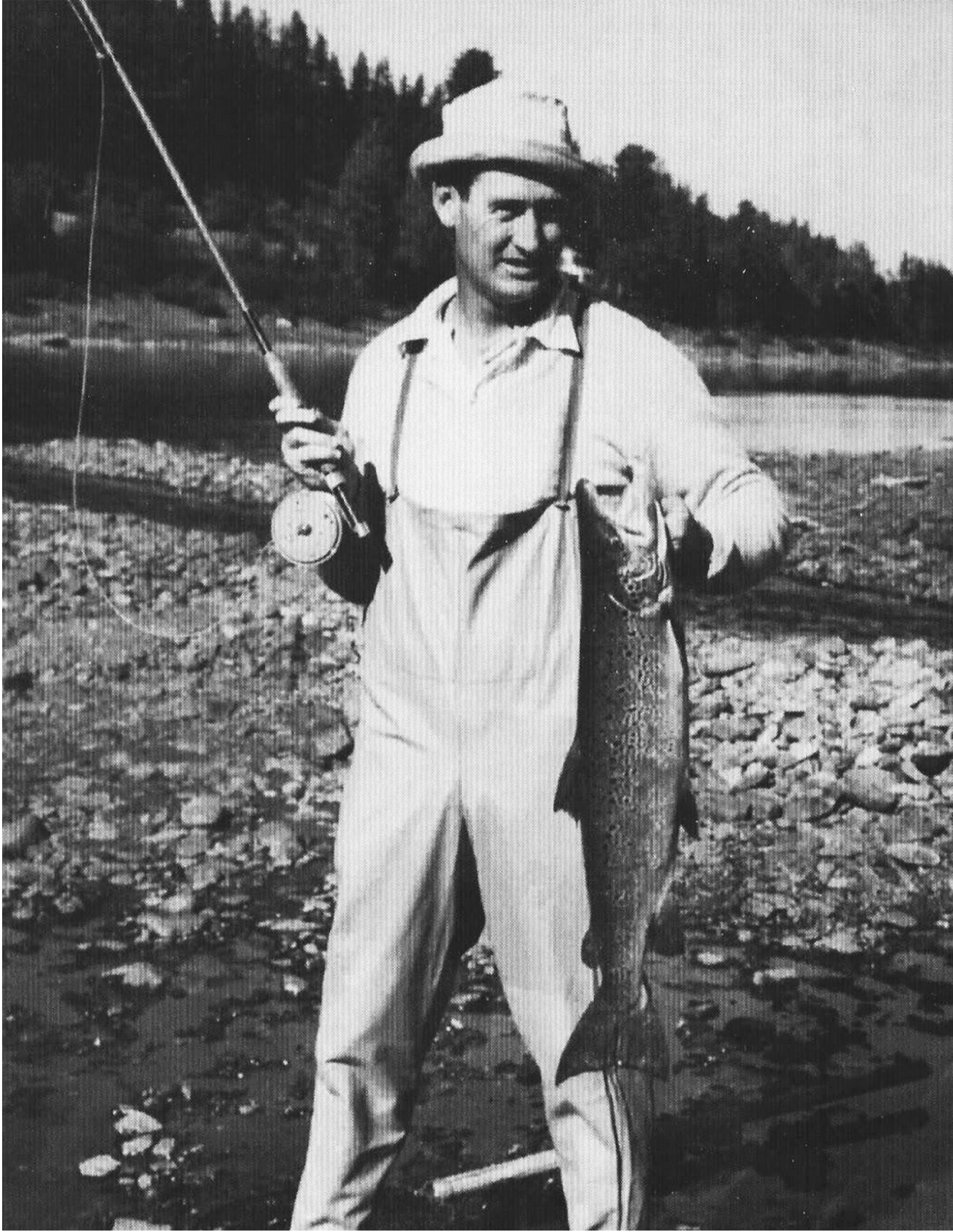
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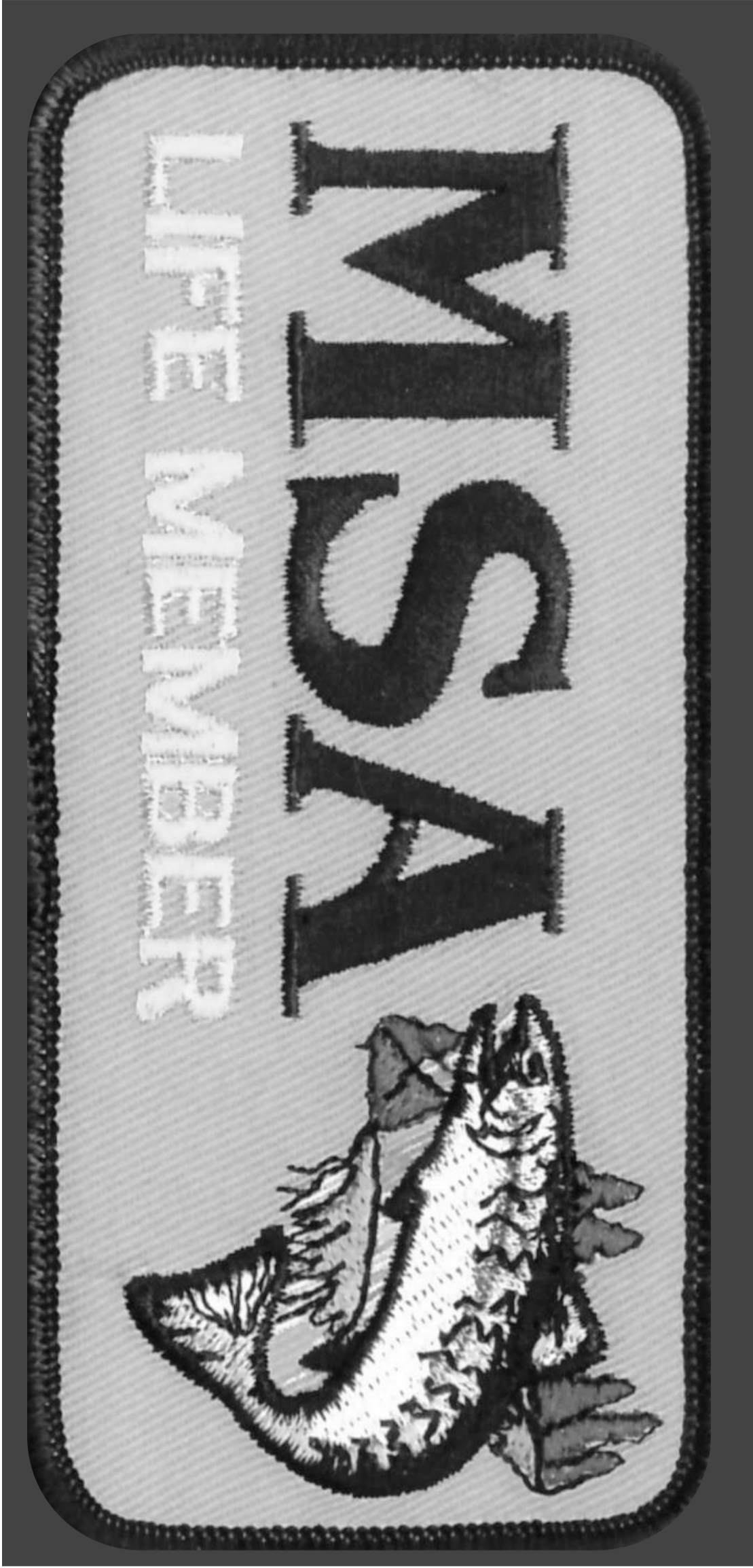
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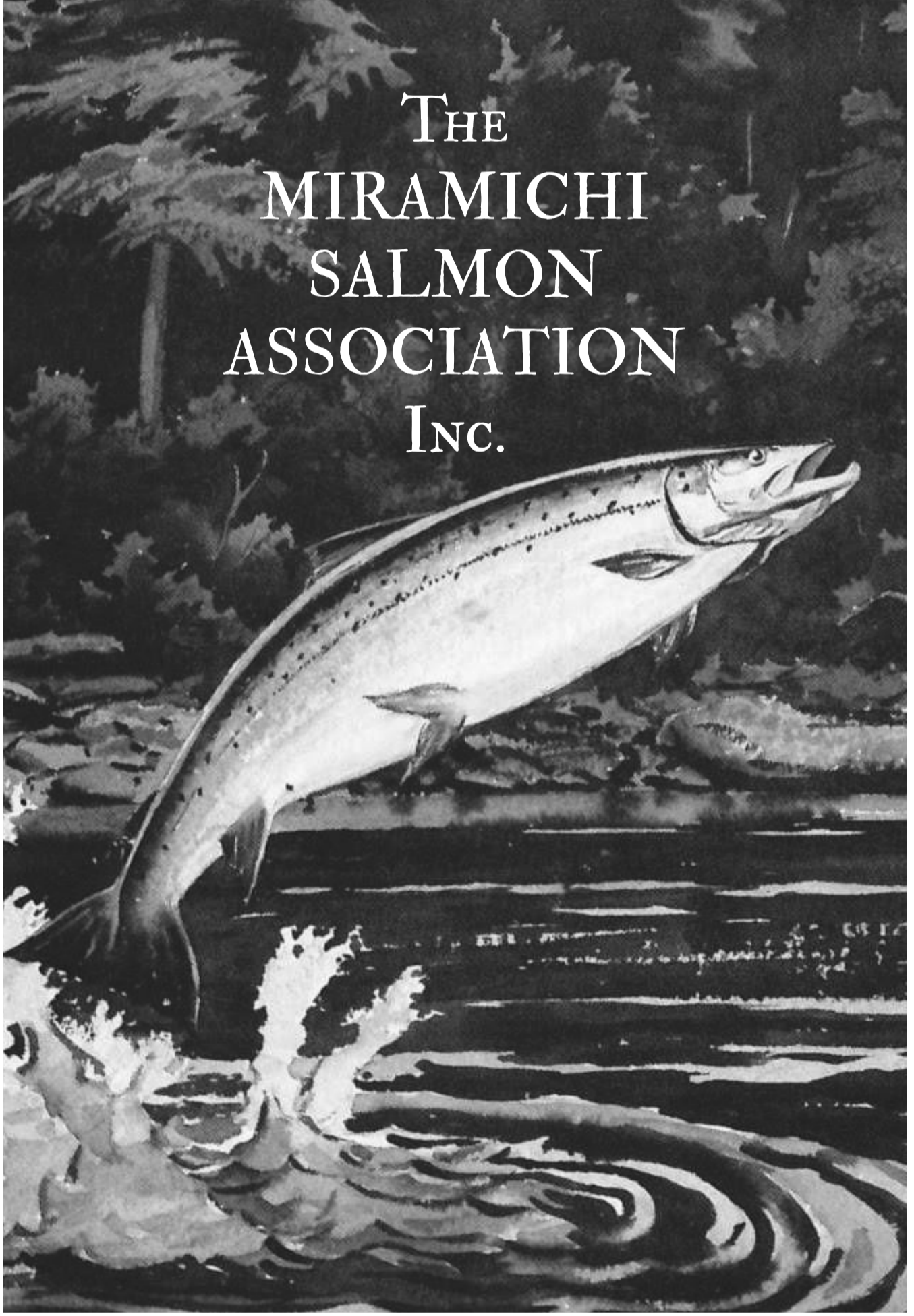
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In 1981, long-time MSA director and hall-of-famer Ted Williams became the first MSA Life Member.



Ted Williams was not the only celebrity to fish the Miramichi River! Big names from around the world have fished our waters, including the Rockefellers, Marilyn Monroe, Gordie Howe, Babe Ruth, Benny Goodman, Tom Selleck, and even King Charles III!



It was 1965 when the MSA purchased its first electric typewriter. By 1981, the MSA office had invested in a photocopier, allowing staff to more easily send communications to MSA members and supporters, such as including an insert in WW Doak's first outfitting catalog.

THE MIRAMICHI SALMONLETTER

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Volume 1 Issue From the Desk of Jo-Anne Briggs September 1996
 Management Assistant and Salmonletter Editor

In 2001, the MSA launched www.miramichisalmon.ca. Online communications have allowed the MSA to share information like never before, including hosting a live video feed of the Miramichi River.



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