

# Response Statement - Atlantic Salmon, Eastern Cape Breton population

**December 8, 2011**

**Common Name:** Atlantic Salmon, Eastern Cape Breton population

**Scientific Name:** *Salmo salar*

**Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC):** Endangered

**How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment:** The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will undertake consultations with the government of Nova Scotia, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Atlantic Salmon, Eastern Cape Breton population, should be added to the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered. The Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC assessment of the Atlantic Salmon, Eastern Cape Breton population, to the Governor in Council upon completion of consultations.

Once a species has been assessed by COSEWIC, further steps must be undertaken before it is added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. For more information on this process, please view [The Species Listing Process Under SARA](#).

**Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC:** This species requires rivers or streams that are generally clear, cool and well-oxygenated for reproduction and the first few years of rearing, but undertakes lengthy feeding migrations in the North Atlantic Ocean as older juveniles and adults. This population breeds in Cape Breton Island rivers draining into the Atlantic Ocean and Bras d'Or Lakes. The numbers of adults returning to spawn has declined by about 29% over the last 3 generations; moreover, these declines represent continuations of previous declines. The total number of mature individuals in 5 rivers, thought to harbour the majority of the population, was only about 1150 in 2008. There is no likelihood of rescue, as neighbouring regions harbour genetically dissimilar populations, and the population to the south is severely depleted. A current threat is poor marine survival related to substantial but incompletely understood changes in marine ecosystems.

**Occurrence:** Nova Scotia, Atlantic Ocean

**Competent Minister(s):**

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency

**Province(s) and territory (territories) to be consulted:**

Nova Scotia

**Applicable federal legislation:** Fisheries are managed and fish and fish habitat are protected under the *Fisheries Act*.

**Conservation activities underway:** As a management measure DFO closed all but four rivers in Eastern Cape Breton to salmon angling in 2010 and 2011. In rivers open to hook and release salmon fishing, it is mandatory that barbless or pinched barb artificial flies be used. DFO annually monitors the abundance of adult Atlantic Salmon in two rivers in Eastern Cape Breton, as well as collecting data on the recreational fishery in the region. Parks Canada also monitors abundance in one river in this area.