

Response Statement - Striped Bass, Bay of Fundy population

December 18, 2013

Common Name: Striped Bass, Bay of Fundy population

Scientific Name: *Morone saxatilis*

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 governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Striped Bass, Bay of Fundy 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 Striped Bass, Bay of Fundy 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 large-bodied fish occurs at only a single known spawning location where it continues to be susceptible to exploitation from recreational fishing, by-catch in commercial fisheries, and from poaching. Habitat degradation continues in areas of historical spawning populations which limits recovery potential.

Occurrence: New Brunswick, 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:

New Brunswick

Nova Scotia

Applicable federal legislation: Fisheries are managed and fish habitat is protected under the *Fisheries Act*. When the species is found within national parks of Canada or other lands administered by the Parks Canada Agency, it is protected or managed under the *Canada National Parks Act* or through measures or management tools available to the Parks Canada Agency under other legislation.

Conservation activities underway: In recent years a number of new management measures have been implemented for the Striped Bass recreational angling fishery, as well as measures to reduce Striped Bass bycatch in commercial fisheries. Some of these measures include: • Retention of Striped Bass in large sections of the Shubenacadie River and Stewiacke River is prohibited during the Striped Bass spawning period (May 10 to June 10). Gear restrictions (e.g. bait is prohibited) have also been implemented on these two rivers for the same period to facilitate the live release of Striped Bass. • Amendments to the licence conditions for the shad drift net fishery and the brush weirs in the Minas Basin have reduced authorized by-catch of Striped Bass from 3 per day to 1 per day (minimum 68cm in length). An annual season retention limit for the brush weirs has also been implemented by licence condition. • A complete angling closure has been implemented on the Shubenacadie River immediately downstream from the outlet of Grand Lake to protect Striped Bass congregating prior to their downward migration to the spawning grounds. Since the previous COSEWIC assessment of Striped Bass, DFO, stakeholders, and other partners have undertaken research to address knowledge gaps for this species. Striped Bass intercepted at the Fish Collection Facility, located at the base of Mactaquac Dam on the Saint John River, are counted, tagged, and biological data and tissue samples are collected. This information will be used to help establish a framework for the monitoring of the status of Canadian-origin Striped Bass in Maritimes Region. In addition, an annual young-of-the-year Striped Bass abundance survey on the Shubenacadie River has been undertaken since 1999. Data from this long-term survey is used to inform fisheries management decisions.