

CANADA'S NATIONAL STRATEGY

TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF ATLANTIC SALMON

2024–2036



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Canada 

Cover Artwork:

Salmon (Plamu) Community, 2024

Artist: Marcus Gosse (Ala'suinu – Traveller)

Artists Description: In this image titled “Salmon Community” we see a group, or, run of salmon (plamu) jumping out of the river together at the same time. The salmon are embracing the spirit of the water, land, and each other.

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FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the publication of the National Strategy to Ensure the Future of Atlantic Salmon. The protection of this vital and iconic species, with its deep cultural and

economic significance to Atlantic Canada and Québec, is a commitment for our government.

Atlantic salmon has long been an integral part of Canada's history and identity, and it is with great pride that we present this strategy, developed through collaborative efforts with Indigenous organizations, provincial governments, grassroots organizations, and other key stakeholders.

This strategy aims to support a healthy and sustainable future for Atlantic salmon and the ecosystems upon which they depend. It is the result of hard work, dedication, and shared commitment to preserving this important species for generations to come.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the development of this strategy. The process of collaboration and reconciliation has been central to our efforts, reflecting the importance of working together to protect Atlantic salmon and the environment. Your input has been crucial in shaping a strategy that balances the need for conservation with the perspectives and knowledge of all parties involved.

The challenges facing Atlantic salmon are significant, particularly in the face of climate change. Rising water temperatures, lower water levels, and more frequent extreme weather events are all contributing to the decline of salmon populations. The impacts of these changes are felt deeply by Indigenous communities, and it is essential that Indigenous knowledge and perspectives continue to play a central role in our conservation efforts.

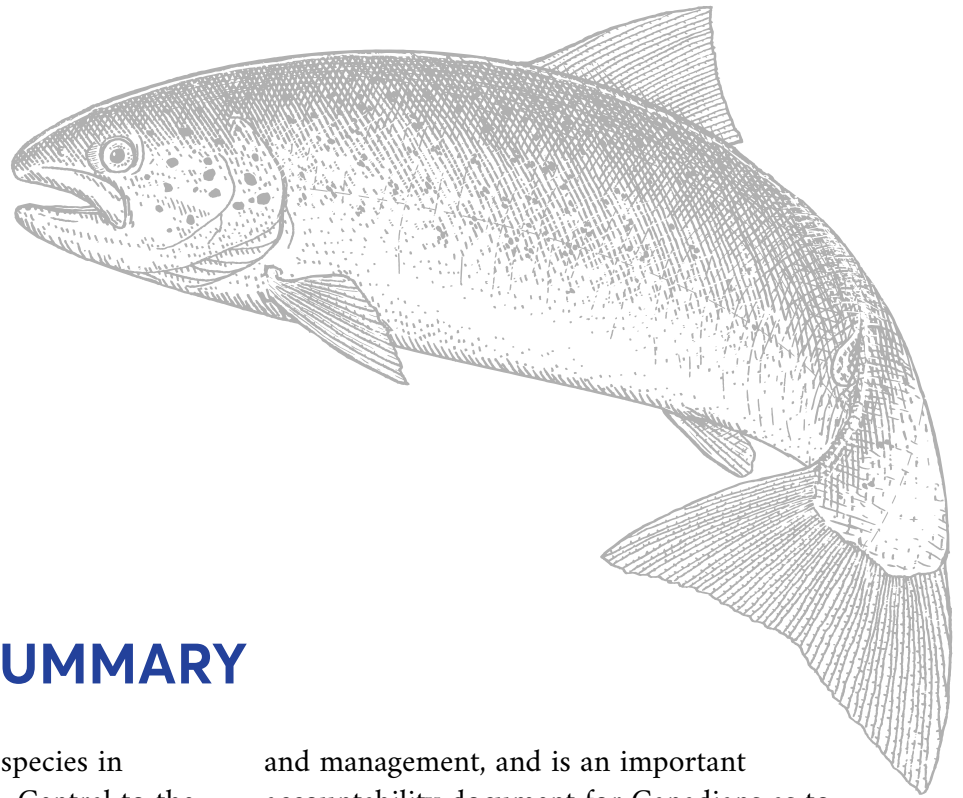
The protection and recovery of Atlantic salmon is critical not only to the health of our ecosystems but also to the social and economic well-being of many communities across the Atlantic Canada and Québec.

We are committed to working with Indigenous communities, provinces, stewardship organizations, and all partners dedicated to managing and stewarding Atlantic salmon. Together, we will create a healthier, more sustainable future for this important species.

Thank you once again to all who have contributed to this important work. I look forward to continuing our collaboration and seeing the positive impacts of this strategy on the conservation of Atlantic salmon.

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier

Minister of Fisheries, Oceans,
and the Canadian Coast Guard



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Atlantic salmon is an iconic species in Atlantic Canada and Quebec. Central to the cultural identities of Indigenous peoples, crucial to the health of the ecosystem, and prized by recreational anglers, Atlantic salmon is woven into the fabric of many East coast communities. Atlantic salmon is also a species in decline, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has heard a growing sense of urgency and concern from Indigenous peoples, provincial governments, and a broad range of stakeholders about the state of Canada's Atlantic salmon.

The first-ever national strategy for Atlantic salmon sets out a vision for the future of this species across its Canadian range. Paramount to this vision is creating space for the Indigenous knowledge of Atlantic salmon accumulated since time immemorial to be shared, respected, and meaningfully integrated. Underlying all areas of this strategy is a commitment to work collaboratively to create the conditions necessary for Atlantic salmon to thrive. Through its vision, strategic outcomes, and outputs, the strategy serves as a guide for Atlantic salmon restoration, science, policy,

and management, and is an important accountability document for Canadians as to how the species is stewarded.

DFO did not develop this strategy alone; discussion and collaboration with Indigenous peoples and the Atlantic salmon community was instrumental in shaping the strategy's vision, to create the conditions necessary for Atlantic salmon and the Atlantic salmon community to thrive. Taking into consideration the knowledge shared through ongoing conversations with Indigenous peoples, extensive feedback received over the course of nearly two years of engagement, and the expertise gained over decades of study, four strategic outcomes have been identified to guide the future of Atlantic salmon activities for the next twelve years.

Lastly, the strategy sets a path for how the Atlantic salmon community will be kept up to date through progress reporting on its implementation over the 12-year cycle (approximately two to three salmon generations) and how all those with Rights, accountability, or a commitment to salmon can get involved with its delivery.

1.0

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) revised the [Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy](#) (the *Policy*) to provide a framework for the Government of Canada to meet its objectives for the conservation of Atlantic salmon. The goal of the *Policy* is to “restore and maintain healthy wild Atlantic salmon populations”. Canada’s national strategy to ensure the future of Atlantic salmon (the *Strategy*) is intended to create the conditions necessary for this goal to be achieved over the next 12 years and beyond. To do so, the *Strategy* will rely on the experience, knowledge, and dedication of Indigenous peoples, provincial governments, and stakeholders in the Atlantic salmon community. It is intended to be adopted and implemented by all.

The *Strategy* emphasizes a thoughtful, selective approach to intervention that commits us to the achievement of our vision, while also compelling us to be strategic about where and how we act to ensure the greatest impact. In some rivers, due to

environmental changes or other challenges, it may not be feasible to restore salmon populations. By focusing efforts in the areas where actions can be most impactful and where the benefits of connecting people and salmon are the greatest, the salmon community will ensure a future for this species in Canada. This balanced approach reflects both optimism and dedication to helping salmon, while acknowledging the significant challenges they face in an ever-changing world.

In light of evolving relationships between Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada, as well as “what we heard” through engagement with Indigenous peoples, a review of the *Policy* itself is also proposed to better reflect the needs and expectations of Indigenous peoples in the context of Reconciliation, including the [United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) and the [United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action plan 2023-2028](#).



SALMON IN CRISIS

Atlantic salmon fisheries in the North Atlantic peaked in the 1970s and abundance has been declining in all areas since, including in parts of Canada. Population declines have been most significant in the southern range of the species where salmon populations of the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia were assessed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife Species in Canada (COSEWIC) in 2010. Many salmon populations of the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence have declined below a critical level over the past decade where serious harm to the stock is likely occurring. For example, in the Miramichi River, the annual abundances of the past decade have frequently been at record lows, particularly for the earlier maturing one-sea-winter salmon. Salmon populations in the southern regions are impacted by rapidly changing marine, estuarine and freshwater environments,

and by anthropogenic stressors, including land-use and the spread of invasive species.

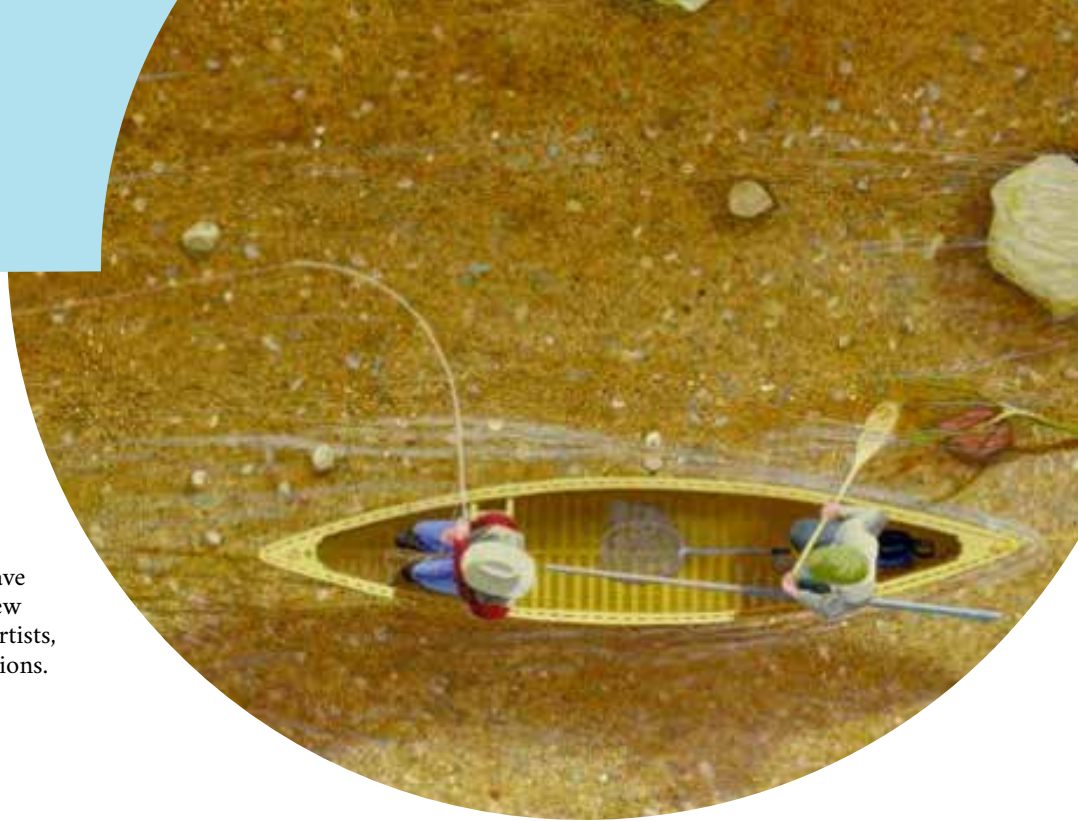
Atlantic salmon spawn and grow to smolts in freshwater; consequently, local and regional actions to protect and recover their essential freshwater habitat and ecosystem components are key to providing time and opportunities for salmon to adapt to the rapid ecosystem changes driven by accelerating climate warming.

In addition, stakeholders have expressed concern about predation which occurs throughout the salmon life cycle, both in freshwater and at sea. Migrating smolts face predation from species such as striped bass and cormorants, while adult salmon may be preyed on by seals or other larger predators. Though natural, predation can exacerbate challenges associated to human activities, climate or ecosystem shifts for Atlantic salmon throughout its range.



- ▶ **Fly Fishing II,**
Acrylic on canvas, 1999
Reproduced with permission
by artist Andrew Giffin.

Atlantic salmon and the connection we share with this species and its environment have inspired the images that Andrew Giffin, as well as many other artists, have painted for many generations.



2.0

SIGNIFICANCE OF ATLANTIC SALMON

Atlantic salmon is an iconic species in Atlantic Canada and Quebec that has held cultural and spiritual significance to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial, and has been an important part of many Canadians' lives and livelihoods for generations. Salmon fisheries continue to be an important expression of people's connection to the species. Over forty Indigenous communities fish Atlantic salmon for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes. In central and coastal Labrador, subsistence fisheries for Atlantic salmon provide an important source of food for local communities. Recreational fishing for Atlantic salmon is a popular activity for residents and visitors alike and is important

to local economies where it occurs. A Gardner-Pinfold study conducted in 2022 estimates the GDP value of Atlantic salmon recreational fishery to be \$218M¹

However, the social-cultural and social-ecological values of Atlantic salmon far exceed its economic value — wherever salmon and people coexist, the connection is deep. As such, our relationships with salmon and its importance in creating a sense of connection to nature is frequently expressed in science, literature and the arts. Our interconnectedness with Atlantic salmon is why the species' future matters to people.

¹ Economic Value of Wild Atlantic Salmon. Prepared by Gardner Pinfold for the Atlantic Salmon Federation (2022).



- ▶ **Salmon (Plamu) Friends, 2024 –Reproduced with permission by artist Marcus Gosse (Ala’suinu – Traveller)**

Artist’s Description: In this image titled “Salmon Friends” we see four salmon swimming around a Mi’kmaq Star. They are coming together to show their cultural pride and spiritual connectedness. The Mi’kmaq Star displays unity amongst all the cultures of the world through the medicine wheel colours. Through all the double curves connected in a circle, we are able to see that the salmon are connected to their habitat and community. The salmon are connecting with the surrounding culture, and the spiritual energy of the river. Msit No’kmaq (All My Relations – We Are All Connected).

- ▶ **The Coat of Arms of the Province of New Brunswick, 1868**

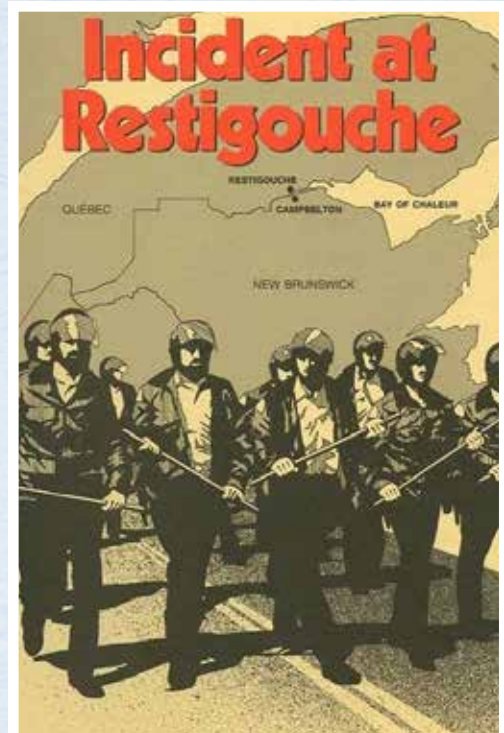
The crest of the Coat of Arms of New Brunswick features an Atlantic salmon leaping from a coronet of gold maple leaves and bearing St. Edward’s Crown on its back.



- ▶ Cover of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, the unspoiled summerland of America featuring an artist’s rendition of “Salmon Angling on the Margaree”, 1930. Atlantic salmon rivers, like the Margaree River, continue to attract recreational anglers from all over Canada and the world. Recreational angling for this species provides an opportunity to interact with this species and supports local economies.



Credit: Nova Scotia Archives



- ▶ **Poster for the documentary Incident at Restigouche (1984) directed by Alanis Obomsawin.**

On June 11 and 20, 1981, the Quebec Provincial Police (QPP) raided Restigouche Reserve, Quebec. At issue were the salmon-fishing rights of the Mi’kmaq. Because salmon has traditionally been a source of food and income for the Mi’kmaq, the Quebec government’s decision to restrict fishing aroused consternation and anger

Source: National Film Board of Canada

▼ “Salmon King of the Rivers”, 1932

A 10 cent Newfoundland postage stamp depicting an Atlantic salmon attempting to leap a waterfall. Credit: Photo by J.C. Parsons for The Newfoundland Tourist Development Board.



- ▲ Rita Kennedy and Eileen O’Rourke fly fish for salmon in the Humber River, Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador in 1949. In Canada, women have made up a small, but growing, proportion of anglers in the Atlantic salmon community.

Credit: Library and Archives Canada/National Film Board of Canada fonds/e010948841



- ▲ Parks Canada is responsible for the management of Atlantic salmon where the species occurs within the agency’s boundaries. Activities conducted by Parks Canada which support Atlantic salmon management and conservation include snorkel surveys, as shown here conducted by Fort Folly Habitat Recovery in Fundy National Park, to monitor the number of adult salmon returning to rivers within national parks.

Credit: Nigel Fearon, 2018.



- ◀ The badge of Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s Fisheries Management, which is responsible for managing the Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic and non-tidal fisheries of Canada, which are represented here by a salmon displayed on a fish net with a green background. The eight maple leaves represent the department’s eight management regions when the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc was Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Royal Crown represents the authority under which this work is done.



- ◀ Constructed in 1980, ‘Restigouche Sam’, located in Campbellton, New Brunswick, is the world’s largest stainless steel salmon sculpture, measuring 8.5 metres (28 feet) in height.

Source: Tourism New Brunswick



3.0

MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

3.1 INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

The diverse cultural relationships of Indigenous peoples with Atlantic salmon are of the highest importance to many Indigenous peoples across Atlantic Canada and Quebec. Indigenous peoples hold rights to access Atlantic salmon for FSC purposes and have told the Department through engagement that their ability to exercise their rights has been impacted by the continued decline of Atlantic salmon populations across much of its range.

[The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP) was adopted in 2007 and describes a comprehensive international human rights instruments on the rights and the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous people around the world. In Canada, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous People Act (UNDA) came into effect in 2021, to advance the implementation of UNDRIP and to ensure our laws in Canada are consistent with it. To achieve the objectives set forward by the this Act, Canada released its UNDA Action plan 2023-2028 providing the roadmap for its implementation.

The development and implementation of the national strategy for Atlantic salmon will be guided by [Principles respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous peoples](#). These Principles are rooted in section 35 of the Constitution, recognizing Indigenous and treaty rights, and guided by UNDA. The Government of Canada is committed to achieve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, recognizing the rights and acknowledging the wrongs of the past, knowing the true history, and working together to implement Indigenous rights.



3.2 ATLANTIC SALMON FISHERIES

Responsibility for the protection and management of Atlantic salmon is shared across multiple jurisdictions and levels of government. The federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard has the authority and tools under federal legislation (i.e., *Fisheries Act*, *Species at Risk Act* and *Oceans Act*) to manage Atlantic salmon and protect its habitat, including the management of FSC fisheries and some recreational fisheries. The Parks Canada Agency assumes management authority where Atlantic salmon occur within its boundaries, under the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Canada National Parks Act*.

Provincial governments also have powers with respect to the management of Atlantic salmon and their habitat in inland waters. Fisheries management regimes vary between provinces. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, the provincial governments issue licenses for recreational angling and provide support for science, restoration, and stewardship activities. In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, further roles and responsibilities with respect to the conservation and management of Atlantic salmon are specified for each province and

▲ **Labrador Subsistence Fishery,**
L. Goodbrand, 2019

Seasonal outport communities in Labrador, like this one near Sandwich Bay, are used in the summer months by residents to fish for Atlantic salmon and pick berries. The Labrador Subsistence Fishery is important to the culture and food security of many residents in Labrador.

the federal government in their respective Memorandums of Understanding. In Newfoundland and Labrador, DFO manages recreational fisheries and the Resident subsistence fishery in Labrador, while the province is responsible for access to fisheries, and both DFO and the province have a shared responsibility over the fisheries in non-tidal waters. Further consideration to the operation of recreational fishing camps is given in the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement. In Quebec, the management of migratory fish, including Atlantic salmon, was delegated to the province in 1922.

In addressing the impact of human activities on fish and their habitats, provinces contribute essential regulatory oversight for actions like watercourse alterations, mining, forestry, and agriculture, working in tandem with the *Fisheries Act* protection provisions led by DFO. In addition to management activities directed at Atlantic salmon

fisheries, there are also many DFO programs and activities relevant to Atlantic salmon that are supported by provincial governments and others, including the Species at Risk Program, Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program, Aquatic Invasive Species program, among others.



▲ Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada logo

3.3 SPECIES AT RISK

Under Canada’s *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard is the competent Minister with

respect to aquatic species, other than individuals occurring in or on lands under the administration of Parks Canada Agency. Currently, one population of Atlantic salmon (Inner Bay of Fundy) is legally listed on Schedule 1 of SARA. SARA aims to prevent wildlife species from becoming extirpated or extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered, or threatened because of human activity, and to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened. Whereas conservation strategies under SARA focus on listed populations, the Strategy aims to set the conditions necessary for Atlantic salmon and the Atlantic salmon community to thrive at the species level, including where populations are SARA listed.

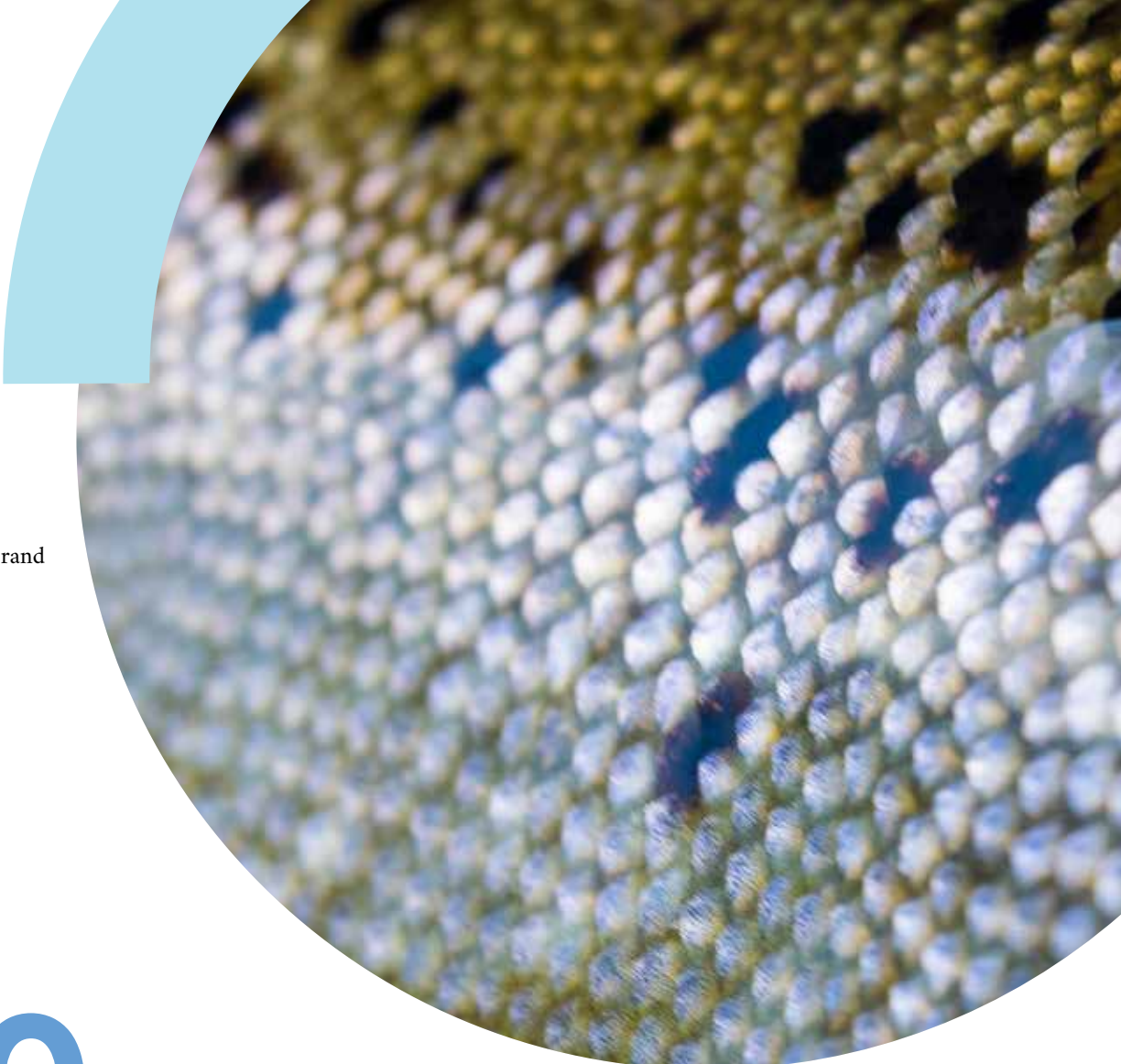


▲ North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization logo

3.4 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In an effort to ensure alignment between domestic and international goals for Atlantic salmon in Canada, the Strategy

acknowledges and integrates Canada’s work and commitments at the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). This work is achieved through the Canadian delegation, which is comprised of representatives from federal and provincial governments, Indigenous organizations and non-government organizations. NASCO is a regional fisheries management organization. Its mission statement is to support and promote urgent and transformative actions directed at the protection, conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon throughout the species’ range. All eight parties (Canada, Denmark – in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, the European Union, Iceland, Norway, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) implement NASCO’s mission using the best available science and in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. Additionally, Canada and the United States work cooperatively to support transboundary approaches.



► Credit: L. Goodbrand

4.0

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

DFO drafted the elements of the Strategy through engagement with Indigenous peoples and the Atlantic salmon community. In addition to reflecting feedback received through engagement, the Strategy builds upon the work already undertaken through the *Policy*, the [Wild Atlantic salmon conservation: Implementation plan 2019 to 2021](#), the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report “[Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada](#)” (2017), the Minister’s

Advisory Committee “[Special Report on Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada](#)” (2015), as well as the extensive body of work on Atlantic salmon that speaks to the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, the scientific community, anglers, and others interested in this species. A full summary of the engagement process and ‘what we heard’ is available in the report, “[Engaging on a Strategy to restore and rebuild Atlantic salmon](#)” (2023).

5.0

VISION

The Strategy envisions a future state where rivers sustain Atlantic salmon and Atlantic salmon sustain our rivers, the cultural identities of Indigenous peoples, and the connections that many Canadians share with nature. It is through this community that Atlantic salmon populations are understood, restored, and celebrated as an integral part of the ecosystems they inhabit. Building on

the iconic status of Atlantic salmon and its prevalence in social, cultural, economic, and academic domains, this species motivates stewardship actions at local and global scales and inspires the pursuit of a sustainable future for generations to come. In order to move towards this desired future state, the Strategy will be guided by the following vision over its 12 year lifetime:

CREATE THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR ATLANTIC SALMON AND THE ATLANTIC SALMON COMMUNITY TO THRIVE



WHO IS THE ATLANTIC SALMON COMMUNITY?

The Atlantic salmon community consists of any individual or organization that studies, stewards, advocates for, or shares a passion for Atlantic salmon. The community is diverse and includes Indigenous peoples, Indigenous organizations, federal, provincial and municipal governments, recreational anglers and the angling industry, conservation organizations, academia, authors, artists, and many others. Within the community, important distinctions exist. For example, the rights held by Indigenous peoples are distinct

from the privileges held by others. Differences also exist across the community in terms of the values and ideas held on how best to help salmon. The Strategy seeks to build understanding and respect for these distinctions and differences where they exist while championing a unified approach across the community as a whole. At this crucial time for Atlantic salmon, it is imperative for the community to be strong and unified. (Ways to participate in the community are suggested in Section 7.0.)

- ◀ Participants in an Adult Atlantic salmon release led by Fort Folly First Nation in the Pollett River, New Brunswick. Indigenous leadership in Atlantic salmon conservation, in partnership with local organizations, academic institutions, federal agencies and provincial governments, contributes to salmon recovery efforts, ensuring the future of the species and maintaining our connection to salmon for generations to come.

Credit: Jordan Mattie, 2023.

- ▼ The rivers of the Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec, are renowned for their crystal-clear waters and abundance of Atlantic salmon. In Quebec, the management of Atlantic salmon is the responsibility of the provincial government.



6.0

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The Strategy places emphasis on the achievement of conservation gains for Atlantic salmon in freshwater habitats. The management of Atlantic salmon in the high seas will continue to be influenced through the actions of NASCO, and improved understanding and mitigation of marine threats will continue to be pursued through partnerships that can address conservation issues at large geographic scales. Four strategic outcomes frame the direction for the Strategy over the next 12 years. The strategic outcomes and corresponding outputs focus on achieving the current *Policy*

goal – “to restore and maintain healthy wild Atlantic salmon populations” – through an integrated approach for science, restoration, policy, stewardship, and management activities. Strategic outcomes represent the change in state for salmon and the salmon community over the lifetime of the Strategy. Each strategic outcome has corresponding outputs that represent the actions or products that are generated as a result. The achievement of outputs will be reported against quantitative and qualitative metrics to allow for the overall progress of the Strategy to be measured.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1:

A collaborative, place-based approach to stewardship ensures healthy, climate-resilient ecosystems that can support Atlantic salmon.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2*:

Atlantic salmon-related processes and policies are aligned with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and its supporting Action Plan.



STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3:

A vibrant, inclusive, and knowledgeable Atlantic salmon community is positioned for success.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4:

Practices that support the management and protection of Atlantic salmon are transparent, well-informed, and responsive to the needs of salmon in a rapidly changing world.

* **Strategic Outcome 2 Icon: Northeastern Woodland Style Salmon, 2019** – Reproduced with permission by artist Gerald Gloade. Mi'kmaw artist, Gerald Gloade, created this artwork for the Fundy Salmon Recovery project as part of the International Year of the Salmon initiative in 2019.

Strategic Outcome

1

A collaborative, place-based approach to stewardship ensures healthy, climate-resilient ecosystems that can support Atlantic salmon.

With roughly 1,000 Atlantic salmon rivers within Canada's jurisdiction, it will not be possible to invest everywhere. Therefore, decisions on where and how to prioritize resources and efforts need to be made across the species range. Taking a collaborative place-based approach in priority places can help.

A collaborative place-based approach is one that addresses complex social, environmental, and economic issues through tailored interventions at varied geographical scales (e.g., river or watershed), taking into consideration the unique local environment. An integrated watershed or river management plan communicates the agreed upon approach, which is meant to be developed and implemented collaboratively by Indigenous peoples and local communities, governments, partners, and stakeholders who are all accountable in reaching the shared goal.



In Canada, where the range of Atlantic salmon extends all the way from the border of Maine to central Labrador, the key threats impacting salmon are varied. For example, the cause of declines in the Miramichi River (NB) are different than the causes in the Conne River (NL) and the Clyburn River (NS). Even climate change, a force that puts pressure on Atlantic salmon wherever they occur, has different impacts in different localities. For example, in Labrador, populations may be expanding their range as waters warm. For this reason, a collaborative place-based approach is the best way for a national, species-wide strategy to provide meaningful and relevant support for salmon. Decisions on where, when, and why rivers and/or watersheds are adopted into the network of priority places over the lifetime of the Strategy will be made collaboratively, and will consider a diversity of knowledge sources (e.g., Indigenous knowledge, science, socio-economic factors, etc.), and scaled to resource availability.

OUTPUTS

- Atlantic Salmon Roundtables or Advisory Committees are established in each province where they do not currently exist, and facilitated on an annual basis to enhance coordination amongst federal and provincial governments, Indigenous organizations, and stakeholders. The selection of priority places will be informed by the Roundtables/Advisory Committees and by input from Indigenous peoples.
- An integrated watershed or river management plan is developed and implemented for each priority place to address key threats for Atlantic salmon. A suite of shared reporting measures will be integrated into each plan to guide best practices and to communicate the collective impact of activities across all places adopted into network.
- Resources and capacity from DFO, the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon, Provincial governments and other funding sources are aligned towards delivery of actions outlined within integrated watershed management plans.
- A project life-cycle approach to permitting is introduced to support the implementation of integrated watershed management plans in a way that is efficient, transparent, and predictable
- The establishment of conserved areas that can support broader provincial and federal conservation and social goals (e.g., [conserving 30% of Canada's land and water by 2030](#)) will be explored in collaboration with other jurisdictions in priority areas to mitigate specific threats to Atlantic salmon.

- ▶ In the spring, Atlantic salmon smolts (age 2 to 3 years) migrate to the ocean where they will feed and grow to become adults. During this migration, many organizations – like the Miramichi Salmon Association shown here – conduct Atlantic salmon smolt population estimates using rotary screw traps, also known as smolt wheels, to inform decisions about the management of Atlantic salmon.

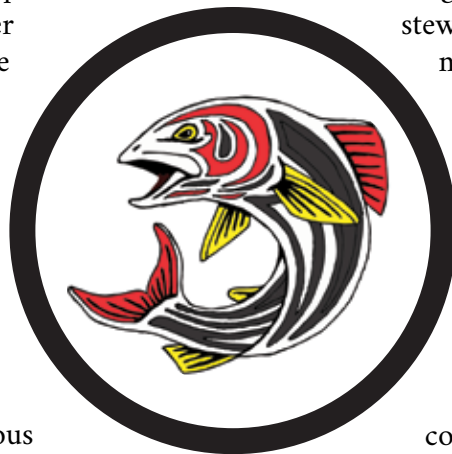
Reproduced with permission by Miramichi Salmon Association



Strategic Outcome 2

Alignment of Atlantic salmon-related processes and policies with *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and its supporting Action Plan.

Many Indigenous peoples' everyday lives are interconnected with Atlantic salmon, and the species is critical to the ongoing mental, physical, cultural, and spiritual health and wellness of Indigenous peoples. Many Indigenous peoples have expressed their concern and grief over the loss of salmon, but have also expressed hope for a future with salmon. For some, this loss is symbolic of the larger forces of colonization that have devastated Indigenous cultures, languages, and identities. At the northern extent of the species' range, Indigenous peoples are aware — and in some cases, concerned — that Atlantic salmon populations are increasing or are moving into areas where they were not previously seen. Indigenous peoples have expressed that their knowledge, rights, values, and perspectives have not been adequately considered or respected by the Government of Canada, where important discussions and decisions on Atlantic salmon are held.



At a species-wide level, Canada establishes its position on Atlantic salmon domestically through the *Policy*, and internationally through NASCO. Locally, many Indigenous-led organizations and communities play a leading role in Atlantic salmon stewardship and research. However, many barriers exist that limit the inclusion and leadership of Indigenous peoples at all levels. The Strategy recognizes that the spiritual, cultural, and socio-economic relationships Indigenous peoples share with Atlantic salmon are diverse and unique to each community. The collaborative place-based approach adopted in Strategic outcome 1 will support the aspirations and leadership of local Indigenous communities. Strategic outcome 2 will create space for Indigenous peoples to be heard at the national and international levels, and ensure that Government of Canada employees working with Atlantic salmon are provided with the information and education needed to conduct their work in a way that supports Indigenous participation in all Atlantic salmon activities.



◀ Eating salmon is part of the long-standing reciprocal relationship Mi'kmaq have with Plamu (salmon). This salmon was prepared for the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resource's annual salmon ceremony in Margaree, Nova Scotia. Reproduced with permission by the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.

OUTPUTS

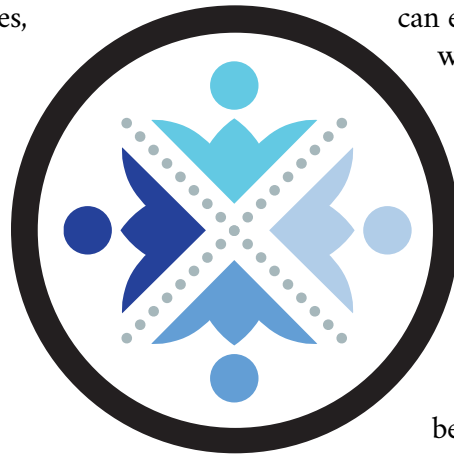
- Canada will champion an increased role for Indigenous peoples at NASCO, and create space for meaningful consideration of Indigenous perspectives in Canada's work at NASCO through the creation of an Indigenous advisory process.
- The *Policy* will be reviewed with Indigenous peoples and updated to better align with the *UNDA* and its supporting Action Plan 2023-2028.
- Partnership tenets and/or common data-sharing agreements will be actively supported in their development and respected in their implementation through Indigenous organizations that are actively involved in Atlantic salmon monitoring and research.
- Space is created for Indigenous peoples to achieve excellence in the advancement of Indigenous knowledge systems for Atlantic salmon.
- Indigenous knowledge is applied to Atlantic salmon science, research and management activities.
- DFO staff involved in Atlantic salmon programming will actively seek opportunities for Indigenous participation in their work, be supported to train and enhance their awareness of Reconciliation, and promote Indigenous inclusion across their professional networks

* **Strategic Outcome 2 Icon: Northeastern Woodland Style Salmon, 2019** – Reproduced with permission by artist Gerald Gloade. Mi'kmaq artist, Gerald Gloade, created this artwork for the Fundy Salmon Recovery project as part of the International Year of the Salmon initiative in 2019.

Strategic Outcome 3

A vibrant, inclusive, and knowledgeable community on Atlantic salmon is positioned for success.

With a Canadian range spanning five provinces, four DFO regions, and roughly 1,000 rivers, the Atlantic salmon community is large, complex, and diverse. There are varied perspectives, values, and beliefs held by individuals and organizations across this range, which are supported by different knowledge sources and systems. Understanding and sharing the many diverse ways in which Atlantic salmon bring value to the social, cultural, and economic lives of people across this network — including fisheries, scientific research, restoration activities, and cultural expressions — can support new ideas, innovation, and inclusion across species range.



While the Strategy is focused on stewardship activities for Atlantic salmon in its freshwater habitat, Strategic outcome 3 also recognizes that connecting people, projects, and data can enhance the benefits of what we learn to better serve salmon, and encourage the level of partnership and collaboration necessary to better understand the challenges faced by salmon at sea. Large, complex, multi-jurisdictional issues, such as low marine survival, cannot feasibly be solved by Canada alone, but can be influenced through positive actions taken in our home waters.

This strategic outcome aims to provide the Atlantic salmon community with the data, information, and tools it needs to succeed in supporting the vision of the Strategy.

OUTPUTS

- The FAIR² Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship will be adopted by DFO to support Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reuse of all Atlantic salmon data that it collects, in line with the Government of Canada's open data policy. Data collected by others will be encouraged to follow the same principles.
- To complement the existing FAIR principles, the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance³ will be understood and respected by DFO, taking both people and purpose into consideration in their advocacy and pursuits.
- A strong, inclusive conservation economy to support Atlantic salmon is understood and valued for its contribution to diverse, inclusive, and sustainable economies in areas of science, stewardship, fisheries, and arts.

- Canada will report on the population status of its Atlantic salmon stocks internationally, through the new NASCO Salmon Atlas and State of Salmon report.
- Through partnership and collaboration, DFO will work beyond Canada's borders to understand and mitigate pressures that impact Atlantic salmon in the marine environment, where feasible.

2 [The Fair Guiding Principles for Scientific data management and stewardship](#) are an international best practice for improving the findability, accessibility, interoperability and reuse of digital assets.

3 [The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#) are people and purpose-oriented, reflecting the crucial role of data in advancing Indigenous innovation and self-determination

- ▶ A map from NASCO's State of North Atlantic Salmon report indicating the status of salmon populations (or stock) in specific rivers and their migration routes.



Strategic Outcome 4

Practices that support the management of fisheries and protection of Atlantic salmon are transparent, well-informed and responsive to the needs of salmon in a rapidly changing world.

People's sense of connection to Atlantic salmon motivates many valuable stewardship and restoration activities for this species across Atlantic Canada. Evidence suggests that Canadians are willing to invest more in the conservation of Atlantic salmon compared to any other aquatic species at risk in the country.⁴ For many people, a sense of connection comes from recreational angling and other opportunities to directly interact with salmon. Maintaining those opportunities



is important: recreational angling supports many rural economies, and the angling community is a driver of Atlantic salmon conservation and advocacy work. Of equal importance, however, is ensuring that these interactions do not pose a significant threat to the restoration or maintenance of Canada's Atlantic salmon populations. Strategic outcome 4 supports sustainable connections to salmon, now and into the future.

⁴ [National values for regional aquatic species at risk in Canada](#)

OUTPUTS

- Federal-Provincial Memorandum of Understandings or Agreements that define roles and responsibilities with respect to Atlantic salmon recreational fisheries will be reviewed, renewed, or explored, to better reflect current contexts and relationships and to modernize approaches.
- Increased understanding of how Atlantic salmon and its habitat respond to climate change supports effective management decisions and climate change projections are used to guide investments.
- Temperature monitoring and implementation of warm water/ environmental protocols will be expanded where recreational angling occurs to minimize harm.
- Enhanced angler education will increase awareness of Indigenous rights-based fisheries as first priority, and reinforce best practices for recreational fisheries including importance of warm water protocols.
- Collaboration between local law enforcement agencies, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders will be explored to deter poaching, especially during warm water periods when salmon are most vulnerable.
- Policy guidance to support decision making for Atlantic salmon stocking activities will be developed collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and the Atlantic salmon community, taking into consideration a range of knowledge and evidence sources, including Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, scientific research, international best practices, socio-economic factors, and other human dimensions.



7.0

GET INVOLVED

The achievement of the Strategy's vision – to create the conditions necessary for Atlantic salmon and the Atlantic salmon community to thrive– depends on the collective knowledge and expertise of everyone: Indigenous peoples, provincial and

other levels of government, partners and stakeholders. There are different ways to get involved, and opportunities to contribute are not limited to what is suggested below. As a start, consider the opportunities that are most relevant to you or your organization:



INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

Consider how the strategy can support the aspirations and goals of your local community or organization, as well as how you'd like to contribute to the Strategy's reporting and review cycle.

Explore and apply for project funding that supports the implementation of the Strategy through various DFO Grants and Contribution funding (including those specifically intended to support Indigenous peoples), through the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon annual funding program, or through other available programs.

Consider developing partnership tenets to clearly define terms of partnership and collaboration with Government and non-government organizations, including how you want your salmon knowledge and data to be shared.

Contribute to international management and conservation efforts at NASCO, through (new) annual Indigenous engagement to support development of Canada's mandate, or through connecting with NASCO's (new) Indigenous delegation.

Participate in local, regional, and national Atlantic salmon consultation processes that matter to your organization and/or community.



STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS

Get organized through your local watershed group or in your community and consider aligning your organizational programming, strategies, and reporting with the Strategy so that your actions can contribute to its reporting and review cycle.

Explore and apply for project funding that support the implementation of the Strategy through various DFO Grants and Contribution funding, or through the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon annual funding program.

Participate in the networking and partnership forums facilitated through the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon, including provincial salmon roundtables or advisory committees, provincial symposia, or interprovincial symposia.

Get trained in the principles of FAIR³ and CARE⁴ to improve your organization's understanding and management of data and knowledge according to best practices. Be open to others also sharing their knowledge and perspectives to support strong partnerships and collaborations.

Stay informed and participate in future engagement opportunities that support achievement of the Strategy's outcomes; for example, the development of stocking policy guidance.

Learn about Indigenous history, Treaties and Rights, UNDRIP and UNDA, and the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports](#), along with its 94 [Calls to Action](#). Educate your organization to support Reconciliation and local Indigenous communities.



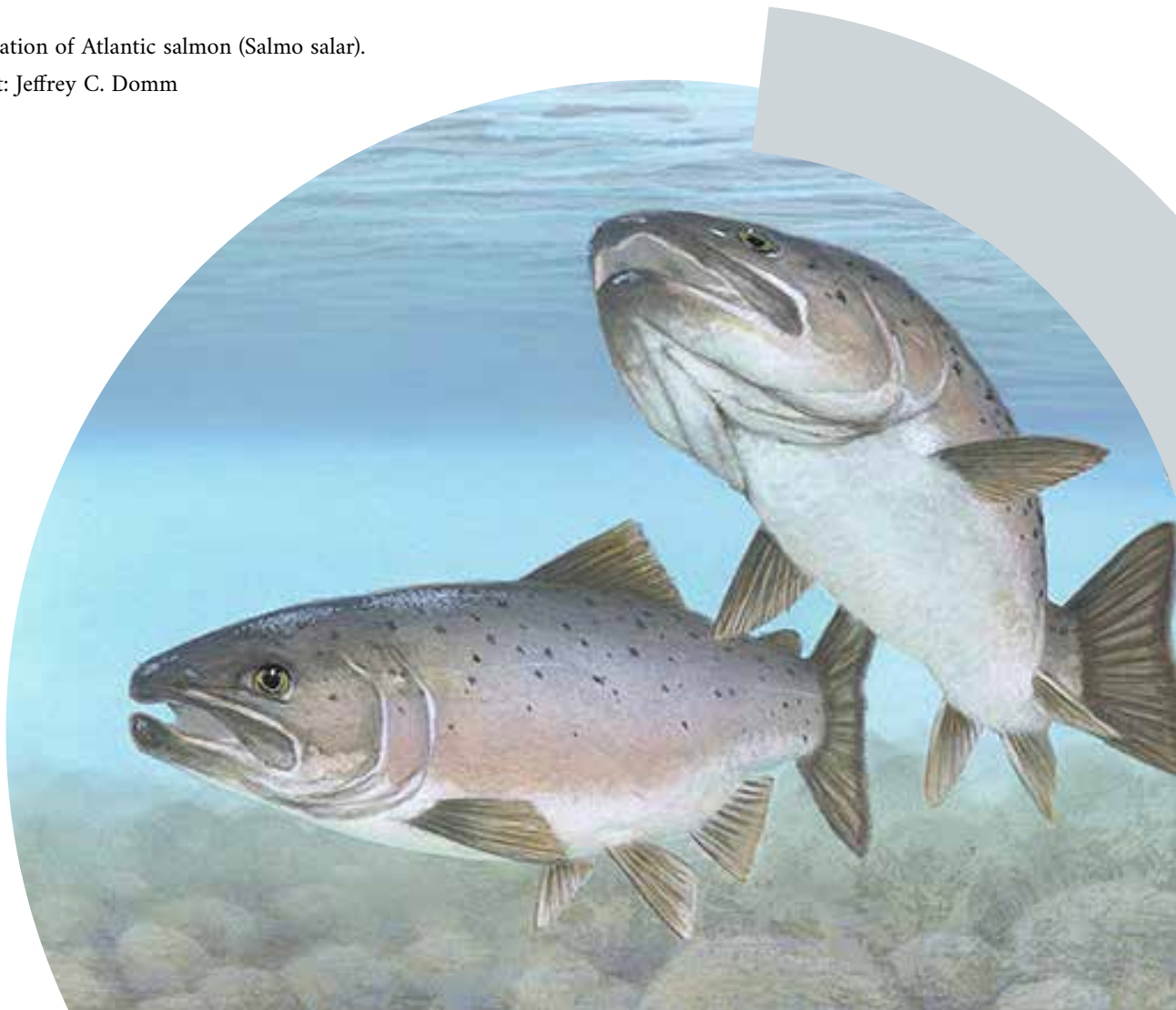
INDIVIDUALS

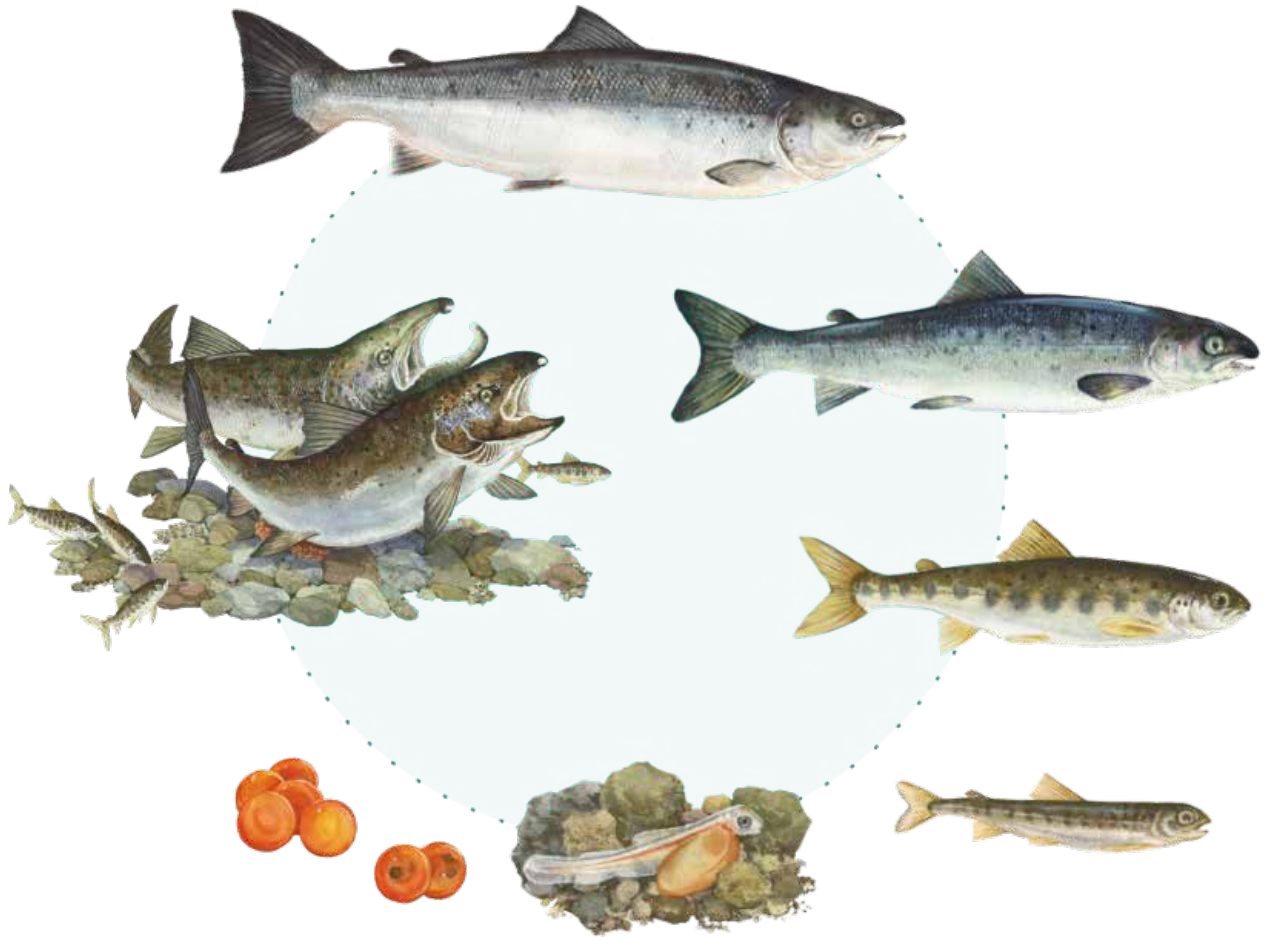
Support, advocate and participate through your local watershed group, angling association, provincial salmon association, or other organizations that share your vision and can help keep you informed on Atlantic salmon.

Practice responsible angling by learning and practicing safe catch-and-release techniques, photography techniques, and by staying informed and respecting local warm water and/or environmental protocols.

Learn about Indigenous history, Treaties and Rights, UNDRIP and UNDA, and the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports**, along with its **94 Calls to Action**.

- ▶ Illustration of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).
Credit: Jeffrey C. Domm





8.0

IMPLEMENTATION LIFECYCLE

Recognizing that priorities, resources, and the needs of Atlantic salmon will change over the next 12 years of the Strategy, opportunities for periodic review have been built into its implementation lifecycle. Every four years, the Strategy will be reviewed in collaboration with the Atlantic salmon community to ensure its relevancy over the long-term. Status reporting every two years

▲ Illustration of the Atlantic salmon's incredible and transformative lifecycle.

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will allow progress to be measured against its strategic outcomes and outputs. DFO will provide opportunities for the Atlantic salmon community to contribute their achievements to these reports. In areas where progress is deemed to be poor, DFO will work with the provincial Atlantic salmon roundtables to evaluate causes, re-align resources, and make recommendations for better results.

