



Our organization was formed in 1979 when anglers recognized a decline in returning salmon. After years of enjoying superlative fishing, something seemed to be amiss. We weren't seeing near as many Atlantic salmon – data from counting sites confirmed this.

So, a small core of people, including our former magazine editor, Ches Loughlin, decided to form a salmon conservation group. The response was that hundreds of anglers paid five bucks to help get SPAWN - "**The Salmon Preservation Association for the Waters of Newfoundland**" started.

We are a member of the **Salmonid Council of Newfoundland and Labrador** and we are an affiliate of ASF, **The Atlantic Salmon Federation**. By working together we, effectively, have thousands of people getting out the message that "**We Care**" about our environment and the creatures that make it home.

SPAWN promotes equal access to all rivers by all anglers and is opposed to the privatization of any river in the province.

We have worked with Government to help improve the migrating numbers of salmon. We were responsible for recommending implementation of barbless hooks to reduce damage to juvenile and adult salmon. We support catch and release as a management tool. We lobby for improved and increased enforcement, because we know that poaching is a major factor in stock reduction. For years we have hired university students and entered into contracts to employ personnel on assessment facilities.

Our board consists of 14 members elected at an annual general meeting. In 2014 we had 450 paid up members.

SPAWN is very concerned about the wild runs of Atlantic Salmon here in the province and has been since 1979. When you review the salmon population numbers, things have not improved. When SPAWN was formed in 1979, there was a Salmon population here in our province of 195,000. In 2012 that number had risen to 229,000. When the results of the enhancement success of the Exploits River are factored into the equation things are not rosy as some would have you think. The Exploits River which is the provinces largest river having a drainage area of over 12,000 sq kms, it is twice as large as the province of PEI. The Exploits has seen its salmon population grow from 4,000 to a run exceeding 40,000. Most if not all of the growth in salmon population in our province has happened on one river.

Many people here will speak to the science of the problem. We know and understand the politics of salmon and how Canada interacts with the rest of the world. SPAWN will focus our presentation on what we consider are VERY IMPORTANT Short Term as well as Long term activities, policies, changes in

attitude etc. that need to happen for the seven generations that have yet to be born can enjoy our wild rivers and wild sea run Atlantic Salmon.

#### SHORT TERM; THIS YEAR

- While many anglers know the stocks are in peril, many are not willing to help save the stocks. Great care must be taken to ensure the remaining population of the wild Atlantic Salmon. SPAWN is it has in the past has always lined up on the side of saving the Salmon is: **“recommending a reduction by one tag for all river classifications.”** Where systems are not meeting the threshold to meet the bare minimum for stocking, more reductions will be required to help preserve fish. If the consensus is that we need to retain less fish SPAWN is willing to discuss this matter.
- If DFO is truly and seriously interested in saving the wild Atlantic Salmon, then, Spawn is: **“recommending that no in season review be done with the goal of increasing retention on any river system.”**
- It is common knowledge that the early run of fish in most rivers especially the rivers that are for the most part grilse rivers, any large salmon enter these waters very early. In an attempt to see many of these strong breeders reach the head waters SPAWN is: **“recommending that for the first three weeks of opening at best and two weeks at a minimum all rivers in the province be non-retention.”** IE June 1<sup>st</sup> is on a Monday so the earliest we would like to see retention happen would be Monday June 15, a better date for the salmon would be Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Meetings every 5 years based on DFO salmon plan is guaranteed to fail. Any plan worth its salt needs to be monitored, updated, and changed if needed yearly at least. SPAWN is : **recommending that the DFO revert to the yearly consultation process with stakeholders and put in place the resources to ensure that these consultations be meaningful, effective and productive.”**
- With the closure to retention to all anglers including out of province anglers in NB, NS and PEI, it is very concerning that there will be increased retention pressure placed on our resource by an influx of anglers to the province. SPAWN is: **“recommending that all non-resident licence holders be limited to a one fish maximum for the 2015 season.”**
- Discuss the option of having a non retention licence and a Kill licence, each one attracting a different cost.

#### LONG TERM

- At sea survival is critical. Harp Seals or Ice Rats , 9 million of them each one eating 3000 lbs of fish a year is a problem. If each Ice Rat only eats one Atlantic salmon a year, we are losing 10

times as many salmon that enter the rivers in North America to sea wolf predation. With no commercial sea wolf harvest, this alone would see the end to the wild stocks of Salmon among other fish species. SPAWN is: **“recommending that there be an Ice Rat removal process be implemented at the mouths of all scheduled river systems.”**

- SPAWN is: **“recommending that there be an aquaculture Moratorium on sea based open pen fin fish farms and all new projects need to be moved on land where proven systems have been developed by both the Danes and the Namgis First Nations on Vancouver Island.”** The returns to those streams on our south coast that have open sea based fish farms have shown the biggest declines in salmon runs.
- DFO science branch has basically disappeared. 4 % of our systems have fences. Some of the data is suspect. As the operators of the system along with DFO with the Didson on Harrys for years our board was extremely concerned last year when we learned that **40cm salmon** were being counted. That is mackerel size. SPAWN is : **“ recommending that the Federal government come to the table with sufficient financial and scientists and do their job here in the province with respect to Atlantic Salmon.”** In 1964 as reported by DFO scientists C Mullins, D. Caine s and S Lowe from a CSAS report entitled Status Report on Harrys River and Pinchgut Lake in 2000. The reported catch was 2673 grilse and 373 large MSW salmon. This was during a time when there was still a commercial salmon fishery in Bay St. George NFLD. And there was limited road access as the rail way was still running today most of the system can be accessed by driving the old rail bed in a small car. DFO set a threshold for the mid season review of 3700 fish and if met Harrys and another unrelated river in Bay St. George Flat Bay be changed from a class 2 to a class 4 river. In 2014 the river showed 3755 fish and DFO jumped to change the class, thereby in theory doubling the retention on that river and leaving less spawning salmon in the system. Are there factors that everyone is missing when it comes to salmon survival. Good question? Without proper science no one knows.
- All non-scheduled rivers, stream and brooks that have ongoing runs of Atlantic salmon be scheduled and receive the protection they deserve. SPAWN is: **“recommending that all streams, brooks and rivers that have sustainable runs of Atlantic Salmon be scheduled and receive the protection they deserve.”**
- SPAWN is : **“recommending that an increase in the fee structure for an angling licence be implemented and the extra funds be administered by a third party to be used to enhance, rehabilitate, clean up systems to provide my rearing habit.”**
- Increased enforcement, SPAWN agrees with all the other stakeholders. SPAWN is : **“ recommending that at a bare minimum each fishing zone in the province be allocated at least one more person to help monitor, protect and be that voice for the Atlantic Salmon”**

These recommendations speak of who we are. Lifelong anglers who love the Atlantic Salmon. We love everything about this sport, the catching, the eating, the releasing, but above all we will continue to work tirelessly as we have in the past to honor the work done over the years by those anglers who have passed on. Just as importantly to respect and honor those generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans who have yet to be born and instill in our children and grand children and for some of us our great grand children a love of the fish and the sport of Fly Fishing for the Atlantic Salmon.

We are not going away!!!!