Information Summary for Consultations on the Proposed Listing of Atlantic Salmon (South Newfoundland Designatable Unit) as Threatened Under the Species at Risk Act

As part of the consultation process, the Government of Canada would like to hear your comments on the potential impacts of listing Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*), South Newfoundland Designatable Unit (DU), as threatened under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has prepared this summary to provide information on the state of the South Newfoundland DU of Atlantic Salmon.

**What is the Species at Risk Act?**
As part of its strategy for the protection of species at risk, the Government of Canada proclaimed SARA in 2003. One of the purposes of the Act is to provide for the legal protection of wildlife species and the conservation of biological diversity. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has the mandate to conduct assessments on the status of wildlife species and categorize them according to their level of risk for extinction (extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened, or special concern). The Government of Canada considers the scientific evidence, the comments received from Canadians during consultations, and the potential socio-economic impacts before making a decision whether or not to include the species on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA. Recovery planning is undertaken for all listed species, and prohibitions are put in place protecting species assessed as extirpated, endangered or threatened, from being harmed.

**About the Atlantic Salmon**
The Atlantic Salmon, *Salmo salar*, is an anadromous species, meaning it reproduces in fresh water but spends much of its life at sea. It has a pointed head, well-developed teeth and silvery sides. At sea, its back varies through shades of brown, green, and blue, and it has numerous black spots scattered along its body. When spawning, the Atlantic Salmon becomes bronze-purple in colour and develops reddish spots on its head and body.

The South Newfoundland DU of Atlantic Salmon extends from the southeast tip of the Avalon Peninsula, Mistaken Point, westward along the south coast of Newfoundland to Cape Ray. There are currently 104 known watersheds (58 scheduled rivers) containing Atlantic Salmon within the South Newfoundland DU.

**Proposed SARA Status: Threatened**
The level of protection and recovery actions undertaken for a species listed under SARA depends on its assessed level of risk for extinction. Atlantic Salmon, South Newfoundland DU, has been assessed by COSEWIC as threatened. This risk level indicates that the species is likely to become endangered unless something is done to address the threats it is facing. COSEWIC designated the DU as threatened because of the significant decline in abundance over the last three generations (15 years). This decline has occurred despite the fact that mortality from commercial fisheries in coastal areas has greatly declined since 1992.

**Threats to the Species**
COSEWIC has identified the following threats (actual or imminent) to this DU: recreational and illegal fisheries, the
commercial fishery in St. Pierre and Miquelon, ecological and genetic interactions with escaped domestic Atlantic Salmon in a small section of this DU, and poorly understood changes in marine ecosystems resulting in reduced survival during the marine phase of the life history.

Special Significance of the Species
Atlantic Salmon contribute to both freshwater and marine ecosystems. They have been traditionally harvested by Aboriginal peoples, and through commercial fisheries and recreational fisheries. Currently, there is no commercial fishery for Atlantic Salmon as there are moratoria in place (since 1992 for insular Newfoundland, 1998 for Labrador, and 2000 for all eastern Canada).

Protection and Recovery of Species under the SARA
If the Atlantic Salmon, South Newfoundland DU is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk as threatened, it will be legally protected under SARA and subject to prohibitions. Unless authorized by a SARA Section 73 allowable harm permit, it will be illegal to kill, harm, harass, capture or take an Atlantic Salmon of the South Newfoundland DU, or possess, buy, sell or trade any part of one. It will also be illegal to destroy any habitat deemed critical to the species survival and recovery.

Possible Management Measures
If the Atlantic Salmon, South Newfoundland DU, is listed under SARA, DFO will, in collaboration and consultation with stakeholders and partners, use the best available information to develop a recovery strategy and action plan for the species.

Potential Socio-Economic Impacts of Listing Under SARA
A summary of the socio-economic analysis conducted by DFO on the listing of Atlantic Salmon, South Newfoundland DU, under SARA is available on request.

The Consultation Process – Your Comments
As part of the consultation process, the Government of Canada would like to hear your opinions on listing Atlantic Salmon, South Newfoundland DU, as threatened under SARA, and any comments on the potential positive and negative impacts this listing would have on you, your industry, your community and/or the ecosystem. Your answers to the following questions will be used to help inform the decision whether or not to list the species under SARA:

1. Do you support listing the Atlantic Salmon, South Newfoundland DU, as threatened on the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under SARA? Why?
2. What would be the positive impacts of listing the South Newfoundland DU of Atlantic Salmon on your activities, the community, the environment, your culture and the economy?
3. What would be the negative impacts of listing the South Newfoundland DU of Atlantic Salmon on your activities, the community, the environment, your culture and the economy?
4. Do you have any other comments on the listing of the South Newfoundland DU of Atlantic Salmon?
5. If you are answering on behalf of an Aboriginal community, an industry, a small business¹, an association or organization, please specify.
6. In what province or territory do you live?

To submit answers to the above questions or share your comments, please contact:

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For a copy of the COSEWIC assessment for this species, or for other general inquiries, please visit www.sararegistry.gc.ca. For a copy of the Recovery Potential Assessment conducted by DFO, please visit www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/index-eng.htm.

Reference


¹ Defined as any business, including its affiliates, that has fewer than 100 employees or between $30,000 and $5 million in annual gross revenues.