



STRIPED BASS

Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population

Special concern status

Consultations on listing under the *Species at Risk Act*

Information summary and questionnaire for consultations on adding striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population, to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk

November 17, 2014 to February 27, 2015

We would like to receive your comments on the potential impacts of adding or not striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population, to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk.

Your comments are important.

Please fill out the questionnaire: we want to hear from you.

CONSULTATIONS

Let your opinion be heard

The purposes of the *Species at Risk Act* are to prevent the disappearance of wildlife species, to provide for their recovery and to encourage the management of special concern species. All Canadians have a role to play in the conservation of wildlife species.

Before deciding whether the **striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population**, will be added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, we would like your opinion, comments and suggestions regarding the possible ecological, cultural and economic impacts of listing or not listing this population under the *Species at Risk Act*.

For more information, or to fill out the online questionnaire, go to www.sararegistry.gc.ca under "Get Involved".

SOME FACTS on the striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population

The striped bass is an anadromous fish. That means that its life cycle is divided between fresh water and brackish water or salt water. In the spring, striped bass in the Southern Gulf population reproduce in the Northwest Miramichi River in New Brunswick. After hatching, the young swim downstream to brackish water and then to saltwater to feed and grow. Striped bass are typically associated with estuaries and coastal waters, and they feed on invertebrates and fish. Since 2013, this population is part of a recreational fishery and an Aboriginal fishery for food, social and ceremonial purposes.



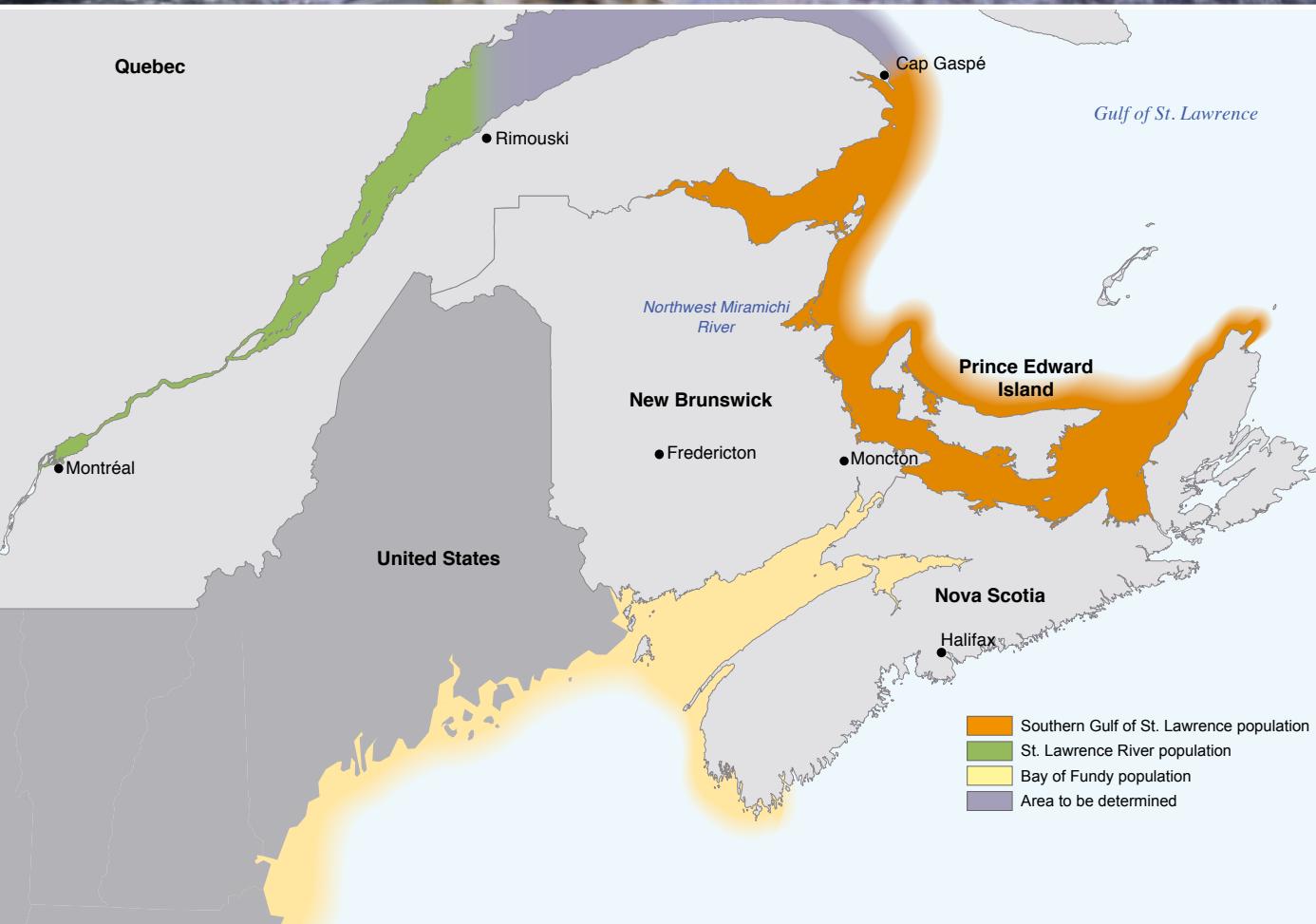
STRIPED BASS in Canada

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assessed the striped bass in Canada and defined three populations: Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, Bay of Fundy, and St. Lawrence River. This consultation targets only the **Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population**, which was reassessed in 2012 and obtained a **special concern status**. The other two Canadian populations (Bay of Fundy and St. Lawrence River) were assessed and assigned an endangered status.

WHY was the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence striped bass population assessed at risk?

This population is at the northern tip of its range. It could therefore be affected by certain factors that naturally limit its abundance, such as inter-annual variability in recruitment and mortality due to winter temperature extremes. Bycatch in certain fisheries and illegal fishing have been the main threats to the striped bass's recovery. Although its abundance has increased considerably in recent years, this population continues to depend on a single spawning location, the Northwest Miramichi River.

POPULATION	STATUS	ESTIMATED ADULT ABUNDANCE	DISTRIBUTION	NUMBER OF KNOWN SPAWNING AREAS
Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence	Species of special concern: <i>at risk of becoming threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats</i>	Annual average of 50,000 spawners between 2006 and 2010 Over 200,000 spawners in 2011	Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Atlantic Ocean	Only one area, the Northwest Miramichi River, in New Brunswick





Adding a population to the **LIST OF WILDLIFE SPECIES AT RISK**

The process of listing a species under the *Species at Risk Act* consists of several steps. It begins with an assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and ends with a government decision whether or not to add a species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk. Consultations are conducted to gather views of Canadians and are an important step in this process.

Who assigned a status of special concern to this striped bass population?

COSEWIC is an independent committee of experts that assesses and designates which wildlife species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada. The status of all the striped bass populations in Canada was assessed in 2012. This assessment was based on the best available information, including scientific data, community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge, where available.

If a population is listed...

Listing this striped bass population as special concern would lead to the development of a management plan under the *Species at Risk Act*. This plan's purpose would be to mitigate threats resulting from human activity. Given the status of this population, the automatic prohibitions (for example, prohibited from killing, harming, catching) in the *Species at Risk Act* do not apply, so the listing would not trigger the closure of the fisheries.

For a copy of the COSEWIC Striped Bass Assessment and Status Report or other information, visit the **Species at Risk Public Registry**: www.sararegistry.gc.ca.

Historical and current **SITUATION**

At the end of the 1990s, the abundance of the striped bass population in the Southern Gulf was roughly 3,000 to 5,000 spawners, which led to the closure of the commercial fishery of the species in 1996, and then to the closure of the recreational fishery and Aboriginal fishery for food, social and ceremonial purposes in 2000. In 2004, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada assessed the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population as threatened. The population was not listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. However, since that evaluation a series of additional conservation measures were implemented to ensure its recovery.

Between 2006 and 2010, the abundance of spawners reached annual averages of 50,000. In 2011, the estimated abundance was greater than 200,000 individuals, which was the threshold for reopening the fishery for food, social and ceremonial purposes as well as a limited recreational fishery in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence region in 2013.

SOME ANSWERS

to your questions

Will the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence striped bass population automatically be added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk?

No. As the department responsible for aquatic species, Fisheries and Oceans Canada reviews the scientific information, evaluates the socio-economic impacts and conducts consultations to inform the Government of Canada's decision on whether to protect the species under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Will I be able to continue to fish striped bass from the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population if it is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk?

Yes. Listing a population of special concern would not lead to the fishery's closure. The fishery conditions would be determined as usual, in accordance with the *Fisheries Act*.

What are the advantages of adding the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence striped bass population to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk?

The framework of the *Species at Risk Act* sets out how governments, organizations and individuals can work together to ensure the species recovers. This Act complements the existing protection tools and determines the priority species in which to invest additional effort. For example, additional studies could be conducted to improve our knowledge of the threats facing this striped bass population and implement mitigating measures.



QUESTIONNAIRE

***You can make a difference:
your comments are important!***

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your comments on adding the striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk under the Species at Risk Act.

For more information, or to provide your comments online, go to www.sararegistry.gc.ca under "Get Involved".

1. Do you support adding the striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population, to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk?

Yes No

Why?

2. What could be the **positive** environmental, social, cultural or economic impacts of listing the striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population?

3. What could be the **negative** environmental, social, cultural or economic impacts of listing the striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population?

4. Do you have any other comments on the listing of the striped bass, Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence population?

5. Indicate your sector of activities (e.g., fisheries, environment). If you are answering on behalf of an Aboriginal community, an industry, a small business¹, a community or organisation, please include its name below.

6. In what province or territory do you live? In what province or territory does your organization operate?

Indicate your name, contact information, and your email address (optional):

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire. To send it, click on one of the Submit buttons or save the completed form and send it by email to one of the following addresses. You may also print this questionnaire (if necessary, add extra pages) and mail it.

New-Brunswick, Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island

Species at Risk Management Division
Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Gulf Region
PO Box 5030, Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 9B6
Email: glf-sara-lep@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
1-506-851-7780

Quebec

Species at Risk Management Division
Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Quebec Region
PO Box 1000, Mont-Joli, Quebec G5H 3Z4
Email: lep-sara-qc@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
1-877-775-0848

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.