

From: [Bradford Burns](#)
To: ["dfo.atlanticsalmon-saumonatlantique.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca"](mailto:dfo.atlanticsalmon-saumonatlantique.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
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I have read this document a couple of times and discussed it with some of my salmon fishing friends who have also read it. I'm not really sure what the document is intended to accomplish or how it will accomplish it. I do know, though, that for various reasons some of our most important salmon rivers are really struggling, and in many cases for obvious reasons that DFO could do something about.

I have been a riparian owner on the SW Miramichi and Cains Rivers in New Brunswick for more than 20 years. I have written two books about these rivers. In my limited time I have learned that the Miramichi historically, and still today, hosts something close to 90% of all salmon fishing activity in NB. When it comes to public ownership of fishing rights, private ownership of fishing rights, indigenous participation in fishing and tourism fishing for Atlantic salmon the Miramichi stands head and shoulders above virtually every other river in Canada. The famous conservationist Percy Nobbs once wrote that the spawning gravel of the Miramichi was roughly equal to that of all the salmon rivers on the Gaspé combined. In 2011 we had a run of approximately 70K Atlantic salmon and grilse. Everyone was quite happy - relatively minor squabbles and poaching activity aside. The strength of the stocks seemed to be getting better not worse. When you drive across the border heading in to Houlton, Maine, the border guards usually look at you and simply ask "how was the fishing." They know you have been fishing on the Miramichi.

About this same time the ASF and the MSA discovered that the river's growing population of striped bass, which were gathered in the estuary and lower reaches of the SW and NW rivers to spawn, were eating an increasing percentage of the salmon smolts that were descending the river to reach the sea. At that point we had around 100,000 striped bass. You folks know the rest of the story.

Assigning a striped bass quota to the gaspereau traps in the Miramichi estuary

and partnering with the MSA hatchery could turn this situation around in 6 to 10 years. That is the kind of specific action that is needed. More consultations or additional restrictions stacked in the way of recreational fishing opportunities won't help a bit. Recreational anglers aren't now, never were and never will be the problem. In addition to all of the economic benefits that recreational angling brings to the Canadian Atlantic Provinces, the presence of recreational anglers along with outfitters and guides is the greatest anti-poaching tool available to DFO. Without a doubt, these days, poaching exacts more mortality on Atlantic salmon than the tiny amount that comes from all recreational salmon fishing activity.

Now is the time for a simple common sense approach and not more time-consuming deliberations. Here is a simple formula for success:

- Open striped bass commercial fishing in the Miramichi estuary with a commercial quota giving the gaspereau trap netters and rod and line fishermen a chance to sell their catch. Set a flexible quota designed to bring the striper population back to the 90 to 100,000 individual adult fish that we know to be compatible with a similar sized salmon population. This will cost the DFO nothing and be relatively easy to supervise.
- Fund and assist the MSA hatchery's stocking efforts allowing the activity to take place on a scale that will bring the population back to 2010 levels. This should take no more than 10 years and will undoubtedly show progress long before that.

Brad Burns
18 Merrill Rd.
Falmouth, ME 04105