

## ***Area 5 Annapolis Kings, Hants***

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# **Recreational Fisheries Advisory Council Minutes 2008 Spring RFAC Meeting**

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The RFAC meeting for Area 5 was held on March 19, 2008 at the Old Orchard Inn in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. In addition to Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture staff, there were 38 people in attendance including five staff from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. Jason Leblanc chaired the meeting while Don MacLean, Alan McNeill, John MacMillan and Tara Marshall from the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture were also present. Greg Stevens and Kevin Juteau with Department of Fisheries and Oceans were present. The meeting began at 7:00 pm with a brief introduction of those present, and a review of the agenda by the Chair.

### **Sportfishing Regulation Changes for 2008**

Jason reviewed the 2008 regulation changes from Page 4 in the Angler's Handbook. The natural bait prohibition during the spawning season for smallmouth bass has been removed across the Province. The slot limit for bass has been replaced by a maximum length limit of 35 cm (13.8 in.) for trophy bass lakes in RFA5. The maximum length limit for High Harvest lakes is now 30cm (11.8 in.).

Across the Province, various regulations have been used to improve fisheries in Special Management Areas. Anglers have raised concerns regarding the complexity of some of these regulations. The Inland Fisheries Division intends to implement minor changes to regulations to improve consistency among specially managed fisheries over the next three years.

### **2007 General & Salmon Licence Sales**

Jason reviewed the 2007 General and Salmon fishing license sales. Then he reviewed both general and salmon for the three counties (Kings, Hants and Annapolis).

### **Preview of 2008 Field Activities**

#### **Coldwater Unit**

John MacMillan reviewed the results from Tangier Grand Wilderness Area Study and Mooseland Creel Data. Results indicated that exploitation did not seem to have detectable impact on the size and age structure of the catch. Catch and release rates were 25% greater compared to 30 years ago. In the three intensively studied Tangier lakes, crowding or trout population density was related to growth rate and size structure of the trout population.

John also reviewed the results of several years of creel data from the South River of Antigonish that indicated a dramatic increase in the number and size of trout caught since establishment of the West River of Antigonish Special Trout Management Area. Increased enforcement in this area and other Special Trout Management areas have benefited trout fisheries. Detailed reports are available on the Departmental website : <http://www.gov.ns.ca/fish/sportfishing/reports/>

John described the Freshwater Fisheries Research Cooperative (FFRC). The objective of the FRCC is to partner with other government departments and universities to assist in the collection of data that is relevant to inland fisheries management objectives. The Department of Fisheries and

Aquaculture will provide \$30,000 annually to support the FFRC. Funds will cover 50% of total project cost and the research projects will be designed to address concerns related to the management of fisheries including issues raised at RFAC meetings. A Terms of Reference for the FFRC will be developed in 2008.

John also provided a preview of the upcoming field season highlighting his plans for work in the Cape Breton Highlands, River Denys, and Antigonish Harbour.

### **Warmwater Unit**

Jason reviewed the smallmouth bass nesting project and went over some results from fieldwork in Lake Ainslie. Jason previewed his fieldwork plans focusing on the nesting project, a joint project with Waycobah First Nations on smallmouth bass in Lake Ainslie, and some smaller species specific projects (white perch, lake whitefish and goldfish).

Scott Cooke asked about the bass situation in Lake Ainslie. Jason mentioned that there was probably limited spawning in 2006 as they found some one year old bass in 2007. Ed light asked how many lakes in the Province had Chain Pickerel. Jason said there were about 81 lakes at last count.

### **Extension**

#### **Atlantic Salmon Enhancement**

Al McNeill provided an update from the Atlantic Salmon Enhancement Program, Sportfish Habitat Fund and the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation. Four rivers were stocked with 80,000 unfed salmon fry or parr in the spring and fall of 2007. Fifty-nine adult Atlantic salmon were collected for broodstock in October, 2007. The Nova Scotia Sportfish Habitat Fund raised \$245,000 in 2007 resulting in 20 volunteer groups receiving funding to work on over 50 watercourses. The liming project in the West River Sheet Harbour and two angler access projects were also funded. Al also provided an update on the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund explaining the Provincial Advisory Committee role and a list of eligible project types. A provisional disbursement of \$50,000 will be made available to each province in 2008 to initiate the program. The amount of funds available in subsequent years should be greater and will depend on the investment income from the Fund. A call for proposals and the application process will be forthcoming from the Foundation soon. The ASCF website is: <http://www.ascf-fcsa.ca/index-en.html>.

Scott Cook gave an additional update on the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation as he is the chair for the Nova Scotia committee.

### **Promotion and Development**

Tara Marshall reviewed the winter Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program and explained the Winter Sportfishing Weekend.

The weather cooperated for winter BOW and smelt fishing was a big hit thanks to our guide Gordie MacInnon and all the other volunteers who helped make the weekend a success. The Fall BOW for 2008 will be held at the Gaelic College in At. Anns, Sept 19 - 21. In response to tremendous interest, a new program similar to BOW involving the entire family is in the planning process. The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters (NSFAH) and their partners in government want to make that same kind of experience available to the whole family.

Tara also talked about the upcoming Nova Scotia Sportfishing Weekend in June 7 and 8 and the L2F (Learn to Fish) program. Twenty-eight L2F events and 4 summer nature camps are planned for 2008 and 2009 is already booked. The Inland Fisheries division is exploring ways to meet the increased demand for L2F. Tara has been invited by DNR to attend upcoming

Hunter Education Course meetings across the province to see if any of the Hunter Ed. Instructors may be interested in helping out with the classroom or outdoor component or both of our Learn to Fish program.

### **Trout Fecundity Study**

John MacMillan / Eddie Halfyard gave a presentation on the Trout Fecundity Project. Fecundity is the number of eggs produced by a female and is important information that will be used to develop a trout production model for Nova Scotia. Larger females produced more and larger eggs. For example, a one year old mature trout at a length of 11cm would produce about 100 eggs while a 30 cm, three-year-old will produce about 850 eggs. Brown trout matured at an older and larger size than brook trout. A detailed report is available on the Departmental website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/fish/sportfishing/reports/>

### **Hatchery Report Spring Stocking**

Don MacLean reviewed the spring stocking program for RFA 5. There was a request to have Ramsey Lake open all year for Rainbow trout. Don also mentioned that we would not be stocking Lumsden Pond as it lies in the Gaspereau River watershed which is one of the rivers being supported by the live gene bank for Atlantic salmon.

### **Sportfish Survey Results**

Al McNeill reviewed some of the highlights from the 2005 Survey of Sportfishing in Nova Scotia. This is the seventh in a series of mail-out angler surveys conducted across Canada. In 2005 over 63,000 anglers spent a total of \$53 million dollars on their sport. The survey highlights catches, species preferences, angler opinions on regulations, motivations and expenditures.

### **2007 Enforcement Summary**

Jason LeBlanc reviewed the 2007 Enforcement Summary provided by the NSDNR. In 2007, a total of 4,418 anglers were contacted by Conservation Officers resulting in 51 warnings and 31 charges.

### **Comments/Concerns and questions from audience are as follows.**

Stephen Jollymore with Hants West Wildlife Association invited the Province to hold the fall meeting in Windsor at their associations new facility.

Ed Coleman asked when brown trout were introduced? Staff explained that brown trout were introduced into our waters around 1923.

Llyod Duncanson explained his concern with not allowing families to take their children dipping smelts on the weekends. Lloyd mentioned that during that time is when many families have the time to do fishing activities and to have the smelt dip net fishery closed on Friday, Saturday and Sunday is not good. Weekends seem to be a good time to dip net smelts with the family but because the season is closed on the weekends you can't fish.

Greg Stevens explained the closure and then suggested an alternative closure of Thursday, Friday and Saturday, leaving Sunday open to dip net smelts. Lloyd like that idea because it gave families at least one day during the weekend to enjoy the smelt dipping fishery.

A member from the audience asked if we could open Lake Paul and Lake George for a Winter Fishery for chain pickerel.

Stephen Jollymore mentioned the possibility of amending the maritime fishing regulations to allow two lines, with tip-ups. Stephen also mentioned the concern he had with the construction of highway 101 around Meadow Pond.

An angler indicated that fishing was good on Silver Lake but that there is a large number of goldfish in the lake and another fish that he could not identify. He described the fish as being shaped like a football with black bands down its side. It was suggested that if one is caught to bring it to Acadia University or Inland Fisheries for identification.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30.