

## Maine's wild Atlantic salmon

### Gulf of Maine Coastal Program

Building partnerships to identify, protect and restore nationally important fish and wildlife habitat in the Gulf of Maine watershed



Protected riparian corridor along Dennys River



Juvenile Atlantic salmon

For further information, please contact:

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Atlantic salmon runs were once so numerous in the northeastern United States that their abundance was taken for granted. However, in the 1700s and 1800s, water pollution, overfishing, the construction of impassable dams, and widespread impacts from lumbering, agriculture and other land uses contributed to the disappearance of salmon in many New England rivers. By the late 1800s, only a few rivers in Maine sustained wild salmon runs. Today, in spite of dramatic progress in reducing water pollution, managing fisheries, and reintroducing salmon, the number of native salmon remains perilously low. Currently, only one small tributary of the Penobscot, two mid-coast rivers, and five downeast rivers are known to harbor wild Atlantic salmon. Those eight rivers, along with the mainstem of the Penobscot River are the focus of local, state and federal habitat protection and restoration efforts.

Atlantic salmon recovery is complex, and there is no one answer, no quick fix. The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program works with other USFWS field offices, state agencies, land trusts, watershed councils, industry representatives and stakeholders to provide critical funds and technical support to catalyze conservation activities that benefit salmon.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have actively supported Atlantic salmon recovery in Maine by providing \$11.6 million from 1997-2007 through the Maine Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund. Gulf of Maine Coastal Program staff co-administer the Fund and serve as Field Directors.

More than 150 projects have been completed, including:

- dam removal, fish passage and erosion control projects,
  - installation of wood in rivers to re-create historic riverine habitat diversity, and
  - protection of more than 81,000 acres of critical Atlantic salmon riparian habitat.
- Other projects have provided funds to:
- help build the organizational capacity of local conservation organizations,
  - monitor and enhance water quality,
  - conduct applied research to improve salmon conservation work,
  - support community outreach initiatives, and
  - assist salmon aquaculture and large-scale blueberry farm operators develop
  - best management practices that minimize impacts to wild salmon.

The Penobscot River Restoration Partnership, a landscape-scale restoration initiative, promises to remove two of the lowermost mainstem dams, provide passage at a third large dam and restore free passage to 500 miles of historic river habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with active involvement from Gulf of Maine Coastal Program and the Maine Field Office, has provided more than \$2 million to support this initiative so far.

Working with data collected by the USFWS Maine Fisheries Resource Office and the Maine Dept. of Marine Resources' Bureau of Searun Fisheries and Habitat, the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program has mapped spawning and nursery habitat in the wild salmon rivers. Gulf of Maine Coastal Program has collated this information in the Maine Atlantic Salmon Atlas, which has been shared with: 1) fisheries managers who use the maps and data to determine the optimal number of young salmon to stock in order to enhance survival rates, 2) forest product companies who use it to promote sensitive land management practices near salmon spawning and nursery areas, and 3) land trusts and watershed coalitions who use the data to catalyze and inform habitat protection and restoration projects.

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program provides expertise in river restoration and fish passage assessment and design to ensure successful implementation of priority restoration projects. The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program also serves as an Advisor on the federal Recovery Team for Atlantic Salmon.

**For more information on Atlantic salmon in Maine, go to:**

[http://www.fws.gov/northeast/gulfofmaine/publications/salmon\\_overview.htm](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/gulfofmaine/publications/salmon_overview.htm)



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# *Projects funded through the Maine Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund (2001-2006)*

## **2001 Projects:**

Best Management Practices for Agriculture: 2  
Best Management Practices for aquaculture: 1  
Habitat Assessment: 3  
Education and Outreach: 2  
Habitat Protection (fee & easement acquisition): 16

## **2002 Projects:**

Organizational Capacity Building: 8  
Habitat Assessment: 1  
Education and Outreach: 4  
Habitat Protection (fee & easement acquisition): 11  
Habitat Restoration: 5

## **2003 Projects:**

Organizational Capacity Building: 5  
Habitat Assessment: 5  
Education and Outreach: 5  
Habitat Protection (fee & easement acquisition): 8  
Habitat Restoration: 2  
Other: 1 (Greenland Conservation Agreement)

## **2004 Projects:**

Best Management Practices for Aquaculture: 1  
Organizational Capacity Building: 3  
Habitat Assessment: 7  
Education and Outreach: 6  
Habitat Protection (fee & easement acquisition): 7  
Habitat Restoration: 1

## **2005 Projects:**

Best Management Practices for Agriculture: 1  
Organizational Capacity Building: 1  
Habitat Assessment: 6  
Education and Outreach: 7  
Habitat Protection (fee & easement acquisition): 2  
Habitat Restoration: 4  
Other: 2 (Greenland Conservation Agreement and Aroostook Broodstock Program)

## **2006 Projects:**

Cherryfield Contaminants Restoration Project  
Downeast Maine Watersheds Community Outreach II  
Sedgeunkedunk Stream- Fish Habitat Enhancement  
Atlantic Salmon DPS Watershed Connectivity Restoration  
Sheepscot River Watershed Council Public Outreach  
Habitat Restoration and Downeast NPS Restoration  
Increasing Awareness of Cove Brook and the Importance of the Lower Penobscot River in Salmon Restoration Activities  
Community-Based habitat Protection and Education for Washington County  
SVCA Salmon Habitat Protection and Water Quality Monitoring Programs  
Ducktrap Coalition Coordination and Riparian Land Conservation and Rehabilitation  
Aroostook River Atlantic Salmon Enhancement  
Old Stream- Guidance for NPS Restoration Projects  
Evaluation of the Maine Atlantic Salmon Water Quality Monitoring Planning Initiative  
Atlantic Salmon Passage Assessment and Prioritization Program  
Greenland Conservation Agreement  
Machias River Project Phase III  
Atlantic Salmon Habitat Restoration Prioritization Project

## **2007 Project Announcements: pending**

