

SALMON CONFERENCE

October 6, 1939
Cambridge, Mass.

*copy to
New England 10/18/39*

The meeting was called at 2.15 p.m. State representatives present were Mr. Stobie and Dr. Cooper, Maine; Professor Warfel, New Hampshire; Mr. Davis, Vermont; Messrs. Agnew and Barnes, Massachusetts; Dr. Hunter, Connecticut; and Mr. Adams, New York. Representing the Bureau of Fisheries were Messrs. Herrington, Rounsefall, and Webster.

Mr. Herrington briefly discussed the background for the meeting, pointing out the commercial and recreational value to New England of restored salmon runs and the type of program required if any large-scale restoration work is to be done. Following this, Commissioner Stobie described present conditions on the Maine rivers where the only natural Atlantic salmon runs in the United States remain. Moderate to small runs are found in a number of rivers from the Dennys to the Duckstrap; the Kennebec is highly polluted and has no spawning grounds; while the Saco is obstructed by dams. In the St. Croix, the fishways are not satisfactory and the Canadian Government is unwilling to cooperate in installing satisfactory types. The Dennys is unobstructed, has many nice pools (Mr. Stobie has seen 200 females in one pool), and is in a satisfactory condition. The Narragausus has five dams all with fishways, one of which is not very satisfactory, and Maine expects to get 100,000 eggs from this stream this fall. The Machias River has a small annual run but practically no spawning grounds. Several other small rivers are in a similar condition. The Penobscot has fishways in all dams

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and has pollution in some tributaries. Counts on Bangor dam showed 27 salmon going up the fishway in 5 minutes. The downstream migration of young salmon appears to be the most serious problem since all or nearly all the water goes through the turbines during much of the year. Counts indicate that 80 percent of the young may be killed in the turbines. Experiments with electric screens have not been successful.

In answer to inquiries, Mr. Stobie reported that planting of chinook salmon in ponds and lakes was successful in some cases and unsuccessful in others for reasons as yet unknown. Chinooks were sometimes known to reach 12 pounds but usually were 4 to 6 pounds. He also stated that he was of the opinion that Atlantic salmon was the most promising species for restocking New England rivers but that he would be willing to see experiments with any West Coast salmon which appeared suitable for our conditions. He also reported that observations on spawning salmon in the Dennys River indicate that they prefer rather slowly moving water and coarse sand.

In connection with regulations, Mr. Stobie reported that the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game was empowered to call hearings and make regulations. The fishing season opens April 1 on the Penobscot River and closes on July 1; on other rivers, it opens as soon as ice goes out.

Fish ladders in Maine have cost the State \$250,000. He stressed the importance of studying fish migration routes before locating fishways.

Mr. Stobie favored a survey of all potential salmon waters and a study of conditions to:

1. Determine what streams were suitable for salmon.
2. Provide factual data for legislatures in support of legislation recommended to restore salmon.

Professor Warfel suggested that work be concentrated on the Connecticut River since it was common to most of the States and once had been an important salmon stream. However, after some discussion it was agreed that selection of rivers for the first work should be based on the results of the survey of conditions (obstructions, pollution, etc.).

Mr. Barnes reported that within the past 10 to 15 years, there was a salmon run in one of the Rhode Island streams whose name he did not recall. Mr. Webster reported that considerable numbers of salmon were taken in the Cape Cod traps, during the summer of 1938 about 50 were taken in two weeks at Provincetown.

Mr. Adams mentioned the possibility of developing salmon runs in New York tributaries of the St. Lawrence and discussed the necessity for a sound scientific program as a basis for restoration work.

Mr. Agnew reported that salmon held by Massachusetts at Sandwich reached a length of 12 to 14 inches in two years, and that 20,000 two-year-olds and 100,000 yearlings were now^w on hand. It is planned to plant these in the North River and Palmer River. The latter was the last salmon stream in Massachusetts.

Dr. Rounsefell discussed the Bureau's salmon work in Alaska and described some of the methods which have proved so successful in restoring and maintaining the great salmon runs in this territory.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Dr. Hunter moved that:

"The Program for Restoration of Salmon in New England, discussed at this meeting, be presented in its present form to the National Wildlife Federation, and that it is recommended that the Bureau of Fisheries carry out the program and coordinate it with the work of the State fisheries organisations."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis and carried unanimously. Present at the time of voting were Commissioner Stobie and Dr. Cooper of Maine, Professor Warfel of New Hampshire, Commissioner Davis of Vermont, Commissioner Hunter of Connecticut, Commissioner Adams of New York, and Messrs. Herrington, Rounsefell and Webster of the Bureau of Fisheries.