

# The Salmon Run



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A Publication of the Saco River Salmon Club, P.O. Box 115, Saco, Maine 04072, 207.282.6985

## From the President's Corner *By Jack Parker*

Our eggs have hatched and over 600,000 sac fry are vying for the attention of our hatchery crew. As of March 24 more than 98 percent of them have survived and now huddle in incubator trays, nurtured through their belly packs, awaiting imminent transfer to the feeding troughs. Our hatchery operation and maintenance crews have put in long hours this month, and our product and plant have never looked or operated better. Thanks to crews led by Steve Berry and Dick Neal and Bob Monroe for their great work and to Nick Sibilia for being everywhere we need someone.

Not all our efforts are confined to hatchery duties. Many recent activities focused on public outreach. Last Tuesday, Atlantic Salmon Federation officials Andy Goode and John Burroughs were favorably impressed during by a tour of our hatchery and FPL's Saco River fish elevators. On Thursday, forty high school ecology students and faculty enthusiastically viewed our operation. Other members manned a fund raising and publicity booth on Saturday at LL Bean's fly-fishing expo. Later that evening three couples represented us at ASF's annual banquet. The feedback from these events indicates much public approval of our endeavors. Many thanks to all members who participated in them.

Celebrate spring by attending our annual banquet at Seascapes in Cape Porpoise. For those of you who haven't been there, we will all share the good company and great cuisine we have long enjoyed at this fabulous location. Your purchase of the enclosed raffle tickets will help restore Saco salmon.

## March Meeting Combines Great Food and Entertainment *By John Cadwallader*

Thanks to all our members for another mouth watering repast and thanks to our guest speaker, Andy Goode, for some mouth watering slides of his Atlantic salmon fishing trip to Newfoundland last summer. Andy and friends left Maine in mid July and drove to Sydney, Nova Scotia, where they boarded a ferry to Port-aux-Basques on the southwest corner of Newfoundland. From there, they took a three hour boat ride along the southern coast to the town of Rose Blanche at the mouth of the LeFoil River. There are no roads along much of the Newfoundland coast, so the only access is by boat. A canoe ride up the river and then a three mile hike brought them to the camp, where they enjoyed a week of fishing for both Atlantic salmon and sea run brookies. Most of the salmon were 5-6 pound grilse, not unusual for

Newfoundland, although they did catch a number of 12 pound adult salmon. The trout ran in the 2-4 pound range. These were fresh fish, just in from the ocean, and looking for some poor fisherman's flies to mangle.

The backdrop included magnificent mountains and wandering caribou. Andy said the total cost of the trip, door-to-door, was \$1,100 per person. I'm sure he'd be willing to share details if you're interested. All in all, a great experience. Thanks, Andy, for sharing it with us. (Note: The March meeting was the final pot-luck supper at the church for this season.)

## Another Cliff Hanger *By John Cadwallader*

The March meeting also saw the continuation of a long-standing club record. No one has ever run for club office and lost. The successful candidates are; President: Jack Parker, Vice-President: Dan Bonville, Secretary (\*), Treasurer: John Cadwallader, Directors: Mike Arsenault, Dave Bean, Steve Berry, John Blunt, Ken Castner, Chuck Clark, Tom DeBruin, Ray Dussault, Dave Fenderson, Al Hodson, Bob Hopkins, Tom Knobloch, Art Leblanc, R.J. Mere, Bob Monroe, Dick Neal, Larry Orme, Harvey Patry, Bud Peck, Nick Sibilia, Bill Winward and Mark Woodruff. (\*) The Secretary's office is currently unfilled. Larry Orme will take on the duties for much of the year, but he spends his summers in Montana. Any volunteers (for Secretary, not Montana)? Congratulations to all.

## Spring Arrives: Let's Have a Banquet *By John Cadwallader*

Our annual Spring Banquet is scheduled for Friday, April 26, at Seascapes Restaurant in Cape Porpoise. The menu will include your choice of either delectable grilled salmon (my choice, as always), or "Boneless Pork Loin stuffed with Smoked Mozzarella and Sun Dried Tomatoes with Rustic Pan Sauce. Yummy!" The reason for the quotes is because the description is copied directly from an email that owner Angela LeBlanc just sent me. You can't go wrong with either choice. (I may change mine.) Please fill out the enclosed Reservation Form and drop it in the mail at least a week before the banquet. See you there.

The banquet will feature the swearing in of Officers and Directors for the year, and the annual presentation of several prestigious and coveted awards : the "Saco River Salmon Club Conservation Award", the "President's Award", and the "Sibilia Award". Recipients are those individuals or organizations deemed to have made the most significant contributions to the club's goals and activities

during the past year. The selection process is as follows: the "Conservation Award" goes (by vote of the Directors) to an individual, business or group from outside the club, the "Presidents Award" goes (by vote of the President) to an individual club member, and the "Sibilia Award" goes to two members of the Board of Directors (one by vote of the Director's and one by a random drawing). These latter two winners will be wearing especially big smiles: as part of their award they receive fishing trips to Florida compliments of a generous club member. By the time you read this, Dan Bonville and Tom DeBruin will have just returned from their Key West trips awarded at last year's banquet. We told Dan he could go, as long as the club got another slide show out of it.

The banquet will also feature many fine items to be auctioned or raffled off during the evening. Member and Captain Robin Thayer has donated a half day guided trip for two on the Kennebec River aboard her 20 foot center console Lund Alaskan. It's a \$250 value, which the winner can upgrade to a full day trip, if desired. The winner can choose to go after either browns and rainbows in the fresh water section between Shawmut and Augusta, or stripers, blues and mackerel in salt water. All tackle, snacks and refreshments will be provided. We will also have several nice fly rods, plus plenty of other items you would be pleased to go home with. And, yes, we will have another large box of smoked salmon filets, compliments of Horton's Smoked Seafood in Waterboro. Fair warning: R.J. Mere has a habit of going home with the salmon each year. Please feel free to bid against him, but be prepared to lose. I don't think we've hit his upper limit, yet.

### **Welcome New Members** *By John Cadwallader*

We have two to welcome aboard this month:

**Susan Polans Biddeford Pool, Me**

**James Hunt Kennebunkport, Me**

Susan is our student intern from the University of New England's marine biology program. She began to get involved with the hatchery last season, and has been a very welcome addition to our staff this year. Jim is also a marine biologist with connections to UNE, and has also volunteered to assist with our hatchery operations. We're fortunate to be located virtually next door to UNE, and we hope the relationship continues to develop to our mutual benefit.

### **Going once, going twice ...** *By Mark Woodruff*

Our annual banquet this year will once again be highlighted by a fine meal prepared by the staff at Seascapes and our fundraising auction. As they say in the auction business, "Items too numerous to list; brief listing includes:"

L.L. Bean 9 foot 4 weight Double-L Classic 4 piece fly rod

L.L. Bean 9 foot 5 weight Double-L Classic 4 piece fly rod

Horton's Smoked Salmon

Many more surprise items

### **Members Continue Support** *By John Cadwallader*

Our paid membership for the year now stands at 133 vs. 135 for the same date last year. We finished last year with 207 paid members, which means we still need to hear from about 1/3 of you. (Remember: P2, P3 or PL in your mailing label code means your dues are paid. Thank you.) We hope to hear from the rest of you soon (see enclosed form), and, as always, we hope you will consider including a donation for the hatchery. Our operating costs are up this year, while the level of member donations is down somewhat. The actual dues received from the 133 and 135 members, above, were \$1,985 and \$2,035, respectively (no change), while hatchery donations received with the dues were \$2,570 and \$3,385, respectively. We are not complaining, mind you, just reporting. We all know the economy is tighter this year, and we remain very grateful for the generosity of our members.

### **Saco and Biddeford Savings Bank Donates \$1,000** *By John Cadwallader*

We are happy to report the above donation, which is a repeat of donations Saco and Biddeford Savings Bank made in previous years. These are also the same good folks who gave us our major construction loan a few years back, without which we would not have been able to build the hatchery. In general, our friends in the local business community have kept up their support, in spite of the slow-down in the economy. We thank them for their generosity.

### **Grant's Camps Raffle** *By John Cadwallader*

Enclosed are two sheets of tickets (total of 18 individual tickets) with the final drawing to be held at the banquet. The lucky winner will receive a three day weekend for two at Grant's Camps on Kennebago Lake in the Rangeley region of Maine. The prize includes all meals, lodging in your own lakeside cabin, and use of a Rangeley style boat and motor. Kennebago Lake and River are noted for their trophy landlocked salmon and brook trout. As proof, a few years ago Maine started using Kennebago strain brook trout in its state hatcheries because they grow bigger. Access is by private gated road and all waters are fly fishing only. Owners (and club members) John and Carolyn Blunt will make your stay enjoyable and even point you to the best fishing. Ticket price is \$1/each or 6 for \$5. Be sure to get them back to us in time for the drawing on April 26. You can even mail them back in sheet form and we will cut them up. Good Luck!

### **In the Hatchery to On the River** *By Mark Woodruff*

In only six weeks we will be turning that corner from raising fry to releasing them. I stopped by the Hatchery just past hatch-out. Bob Monroe and his crew of pickers have done another

sensational job this year. While Sue Polans, Nick Sibilja, and John Blunt have teamed to monitor water quality. I understand the combined effort has resulted in a 99 percent survival rate thus far. Great job everyone!

Although the weather seems to be reversing to winter as I write, there are many sure signs that our stocking day is not far off. One important step toward that day is the Pre-Stocking Meeting being organized by Dave Bean of the National Marine Fisheries Agency and Paul Christman of the Atlantic Salmon Commission. They are inviting all people interested in stocking to meet Tuesday, April 16 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hatchery. The meeting is imperative for people planning to be team leaders. Dave and Paul will be reviewing stocking methods and the all-important record keeping. Please plan to attend this meeting to be apart of an exciting phase of our hatchery program. And stay tuned for the May and June issues of the Salmon Run for information about this summer's habitat surveys.

### **Hatchery Building Status** *By Dick Neal*

We have completed a number of Hatchery building projects in the last few months and I would like to acknowledge and give a big "THANKS" to the following members that gave of their time and energy to help me complete the following projects:

Replacing the overhead doors in the Feeding Room: Al Hodson and Russ Keith.

Completion of the Board and Battens on the rear of the building: Ken Castner, Dave Conway, Nick Sibilja, Jack Parker and Al Hodson.

Hooking up city water and the instant water heater in the lab: Nick Sibilja and Steve Berry.

Installing lights and battens in the Feeding Room: Al Hodson.

Hauling 3 loads of extraneous material to the dump: Bob Monroe.

Painting on the exterior of the Hatchery: Bill Nichols and Dan Bonville.

I would also like to thank all those that I may have missed who showed up on the work day that we had a few weeks ago. Their work is greatly appreciated.

### **The Biologist's Notebook** *By Ed Baum*

#### ***Atlantic Salmon of the Baltic Sea***

On March 14-15, 2002 about 175 scientists from all over the globe met in Vancouver, BC, Canada, for a joint meeting on causes of marine mortality of salmon in the North Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans and in the Baltic Sea. The meeting was sponsored by the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC), the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES). In a nutshell, the idea behind this meeting was to examine the status of Pacific and Atlantic salmon stocks to see if there might be common

factors affecting marine survival across the three oceans.

The meeting began with a review of the status of salmon stocks and fisheries in all 3 marine environments, then proceeded into scientific papers examining possible factors associated with increased marine mortality in the following areas: 1) climate and oceanographic factors (e.g., ocean temperatures and currents), 2) human induced factors (e.g., contaminants, salmon farming, etc.), and 3) ecological factors (e.g., predation by Pacific salmon sharks and gannets).

This issue of "The Biologists Notebook" reviews the status of Atlantic salmon stocks and fisheries in the Baltic Sea. Later installments will present information pertaining to the status of Atlantic and Pacific salmon stocks.

#### ***The Baltic Sea***

The Baltic Sea is a relatively shallow inland sea surrounded by the countries of Northeastern Europe and Scandinavia (see map). Its total area is about 370,000 km<sup>2</sup>, making it about 5 times the size of the State of Maine. The mean depth is 55m, and the maximum depth is 459m. Nine countries border the sea: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden. The sea also receives surface water drainage from five other countries (Belarus, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Norway, and Ukraine). About 80 million people live within the drainage area.

The Baltic Sea is connected to the North Sea through narrow and shallow sounds between Denmark and Sweden. The outlet consists of a series of basins separated by shallow sills which obstruct efficient water exchange. It takes 25-35 years for all the water from the Baltic Sea to be replenished by water from the North Sea. Without the constant, small influx of saline water through the Danish straits, the Baltic Sea would have been transformed into a gigantic fresh water lake long ago. Due to the limited water exchange, oxygen poor water predominates near the bottom of many parts of the Baltic Sea. Bacteria growing in this oxygen deficient water break down organic matter and release hydrogen sulfide, a toxic gas. Both the oxygen deficiency and the hydrogen sulfide production combine to make the bottom of the Baltic Sea virtually lifeless. Despite the poor water quality, viable commercial fisheries for cod, herring, sprat, and Atlantic salmon exist.

#### **The Baltic Sea Drainage Basin.**



#### ***Baltic Salmon***

The Baltic is fed by 88 salmon rivers originating in Sweden (28), Poland (8), Lithuania (6), Latvia (11), Estonia (10), Russia (6), and Finland (19). Baltic salmon stay within the Baltic Sea throughout their life cycle, thus they are genetically and geographically separated from their "cousins" in the North Atlantic. Historically, there were about

120 salmon rivers flowing into the Baltic, but the damming of many rivers for hydropower (especially in the 1940s) destroyed much of the free-flowing salmon habitat. Today there are about 50 salmon rivers with significant wild salmon smolt production remaining in the Baltic. Commercial catches of 1 million or more salmon were common into the 1980s; however, since 1997 the commercial catch in the Baltic has been limited to about 450,000 fish.

About 90 percent of the commercial catch is of hatchery origin while only about 10 percent is from wild salmon production; this disparity is a direct consequence of the 5.5 million hatchery-reared smolts that are stocked in rivers annually to mitigate for the construction of hydro-dams.

An oddity in the Baltic is a salmon disease called M74, which caused the mortality of more than 50 percent of all young salmon during 1992-1996 (but only if the mother had spent time at sea). Research has recently shown that M74 is actually a vitamin B1 (thiamine) deficiency, which seems to be associated with changes in the diet of Baltic salmon. Oddly, Latvian salmon were not affected by M74.

Due to declining salmon runs and fisheries in the Baltic (from the construction of dams, over fishing, pollution, and M74) the Baltic Sea Fishery Commission instituted a "Salmon Action Plan" in 1997. The ultimate goal of the Plan is to restore wild, self-sustaining salmon populations. This will be accomplished by keeping catches at low levels, targeting reared salmon in fisheries (i.e., allowing wild salmon to do the spawning), closing some areas to fishing altogether, and providing funds for additional law enforcement and research. One of the main short-term objectives of the Plan is to increase the productivity of each river to at least 50 percent of its the potential capacity by 2010. This will be accomplished within safe genetic limits in order to achieve a better balance between wild and hatchery-reared salmon. The Plan appears to be "on target" with 72 percent of the wild smolt production potential already achieved in most of the rivers involved. In a recent survey of Baltic fishermen, it was reported that "the plan is a 100 percent success story."

### **Déjà vu**

The Baltic Sea story reads like a chapter from Maine history - dams, pollution, and over fishing destroy a national treasure. Fishery managers, politicians, and others think that they can "mitigate" these negative impacts through the stocking of hatchery-reared fish (Band-aids, rather than cures!). Just as it required a devastating blow (M74) to awaken the Baltic States, the listing of Maine's Atlantic salmon as endangered under the Endangered Species Act was required to "wake up" the State of Maine and others to the need for a more scientifically-based recovery program for "our" salmon. The State Conservation Plan and the (soon-to-be) Federal Recovery Plan are a good beginning to that effort, but Maine's salmon rivers, like those of the Baltic, are out of balance.

The ratio of reared to wild salmon needs to be reversed from the current preponderance of reared salmon to one of a preponderance of wild salmon. It's going to be a long - and costly

- road to recovery, but Maine Atlantic salmon, the only wild Atlantic salmon left in the United States of America, are finally getting the attention that they fully deserve.

To have your questions answered or to contact Ed, write to:  
**Ed Baum, Fisheries Consultant, Atlantic Salmon Unlimited,  
 PO Box 6185, Hermon, ME USA 04402-6185 or E-mail  
 address: ASUnlimitd@aol.com or visit his website at:  
 maineatlanticsalmon.com**

### **Sportsman's Forum Submitted by Chuck Clark**

Sponsored by The Associated Sportsmen's Clubs of York County.  
 Where: At the American Legion Hall on Main Street in Sanford, ME ( next to Miller Ford Garage)

When: On Tuesday, April 16, 2002

Time: Social Hour at 6 PM. Forum starts at 7 PM

We will have representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Departments from the State of Maine and New Hampshire to listen to your gripes and to answer any questions that you may have concerning any border problems or in-State problems. This will provide an opportunity for you to provide inputs to both departments directly.

It will also provide you with an opportunity to meet and talk with the biologists and law enforcement officials of both states. Mark your calendar and plan to attend. Bring a friend.

### **Grand Lake Stream/Big Lake Trip 2002 by Bill Winward**

Date: June 6 through 9 (Thursday through Saturday)

Cost: \$32 per night per person plus tax

Payment required by May 15 to assure availability of accommodations.

Fishing: Grand Lake Stream for salmon and Big Lake for smallmouth bass. Some of us will be taking a boat with us.

However, boats are available for rent at about \$50 per day.

Salmon can be caught trolling in Big Lake as well as West Grand Lake.

Cottages are equipped for housekeeping and meals will be assigned as they were on last fall's trip. Contact: Bill Winward 207-773-1673

### **Sibilia Conservation Award 2002**

The two members scheduled to journey to Key West this year John Cadwallader and Harvey Patry both had recent surgery and could not go on the fishing trip with Captain Wally Albrecht of Key West. Their backups, Dan Bonville and Tom DeBruin, will be taking the trip. I'm sure they will have some great stories to tell. Last month Captain Albrecht had two world records in 4 and 6 lb tippets aboard his boat. Good Luck, guys!

## Fishing Tips

*By Nick Sibilis*

### The Leisenring Lift

Probably one of the most effective nymph methods to catch trout known. Originated by James Leisenring . He tied his nymphs to imitate the back colors of the nymph he was imitating for he believed the fish do not see the belly of a nymph unless it is at the surface during pre-hatch and live nymphs do not turn upside down while alive on the bottom.

He used this method for fish he could see or where he knew the fish's lie at hatch time. Cast your fly upstream so that it will be at or below level of the fish and in direct line with it. When the fly reaches a spot 2 feet in front of the fish, bring the line taut by lifting the rod tip from low over the water to overhead in a smooth even lift. It's the action of the fly that entices the fish and unless you have spooked the fish it is almost always productive, especially during caddis hatches. Many times when you get a strike at the end of a drift it is because the stream current, pulling on your fly line, has caused a "Leisenring Lift".

### *Submit your short article for "The Salmon Run."*

General interest stories, recipes for fly tying or foods, comments and suggestions are welcomed. The editors reserve the right to edit all materials. Send to RJ Mere, 9 York St., Kennebunk , ME, 04043 or email to [rjmere@gwi.net](mailto:rjmere@gwi.net)

Visit our website at [www.sacosalmon.org](http://www.sacosalmon.org)

## Saco River Salmon Club Membership Form

Name:

Address:

City:

State: Zip:

Phone: (   )

E-mail address

*Dues are annual - January through December*

Single \$15 Family \$25 Student \$5 Senior \$5 Life \$300  
Donation to hatchery \$

I would like to volunteer in the following areas:

Board of Directors

Newsletter

Hatchery Operations

Stocking

Hydropower Issues

Legislation

Public Relations

Membership