

THE ATLANTIC SALMON

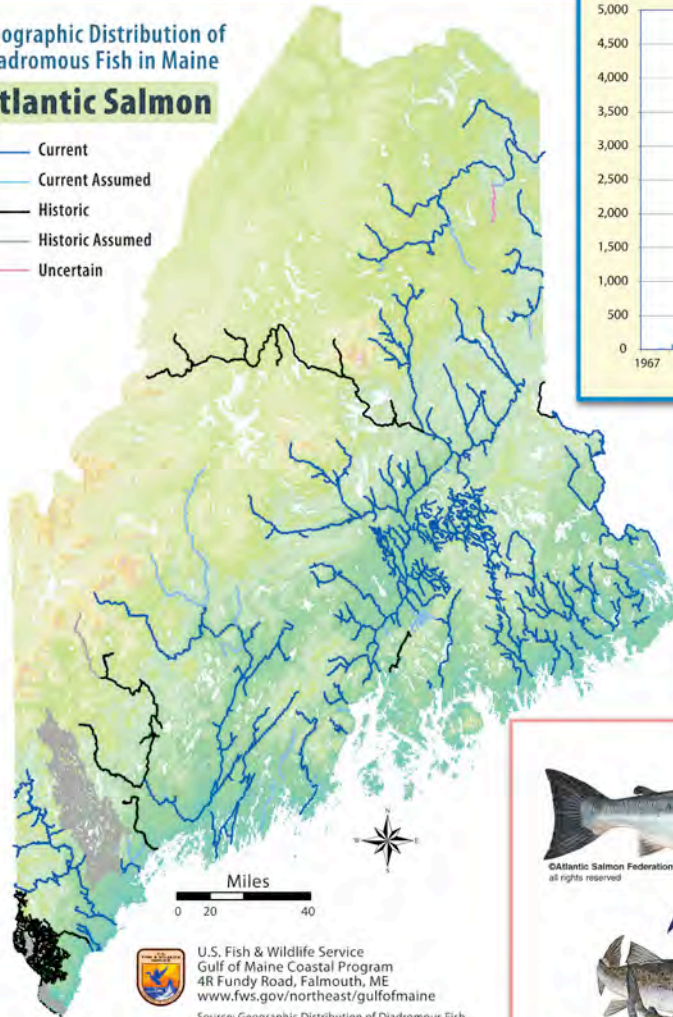
12 different kinds of fish make their way up the Penobscot River from the ocean: including American eels, shad, Atlantic and shorthose sturgeon, striped bass, tomcod, sea lamprey, alewives, rainbow smelt, blueback herring, sea-run brook trout... and Atlantic salmon.



Geographic Distribution of Diadromous Fish in Maine

Atlantic Salmon

- Current
- Current Assumed
- Historic
- Historic Assumed
- Uncertain

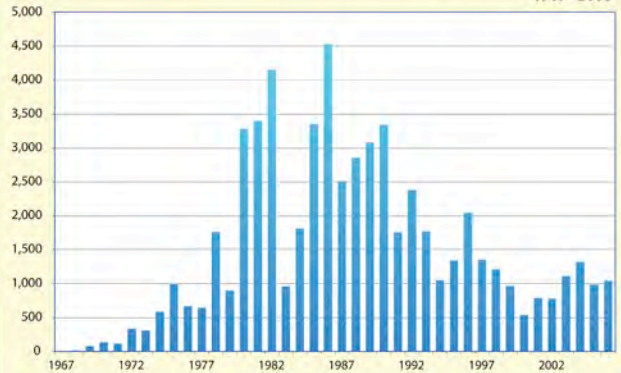


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Gulf of Maine Coastal Program
4R Fundy Road, Falmouth, ME
www.fws.gov/northeast/gulfofmaine

Source: Geographic Distribution of Diadromous Fish in Maine, 2007. USFWS, MAS, Digital Data

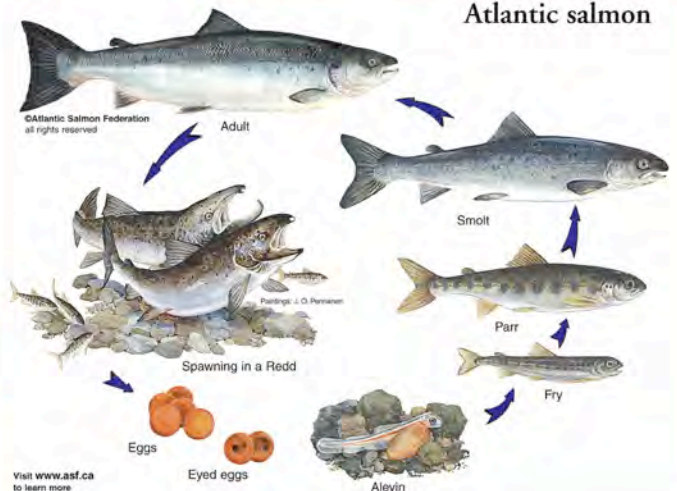
Broun 12 April 2007 Map K014

Number of Adult Salmon Returning to the Penobscot River 1967-2006



The Penobscot River is home to the largest remaining Atlantic salmon run in the United States, with around 1,000 salmon returning to the river in recent years. Multiple efforts by state and federal agencies such as the Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service to restore this endangered species build on a long history of salmon research and restoration. Wild fish are supported by a tremendous hatchery effort that stocks over 2,000,000 juvenile salmon in the river every year.

Atlantic salmon



Like all fish that move between the ocean and freshwater rivers, the Atlantic salmon has a complex life cycle.

Adult Atlantic salmon begin returning to the Penobscot in April and May on their way to spawning grounds upriver. Pea-sized orange eggs are deposited in gravelly sections of the river and tributaries in autumn. The following spring, the eggs hatch into tiny alevin which stay in the gravel of the stream bed. The alevin grow into fry, about 3-4 inches long. The fry continue to grow, developing dark, vertical bars along their sides as they turn into parr. Several years later, when they reach six inches or more in length, the parr begin getting ready to migrate to the ocean. They take on a silvery sheen, and their gills and other internal organs prepare for the transition to salty water. Now called smolts, the young salmon leave the streams where they were born and move down the Penobscot River, through Penobscot Bay to the Gulf of Maine. They spend one to three years in the Atlantic Ocean, eating small crustaceans and fish as they rapidly grow into adult *Salmo salar*. They must avoid predators including larger fish and marine mammals, and eventually travel thousands of miles through the ocean and back to the Penobscot to spawn, completing the cycle of life.

Poster produced by Maine Sea Grant in partnership with NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service, Orono, ME. Salmon return data from U.S. Atlantic Salmon Assessment Committee.

