



# Management of American Eel Fisheries in Canada

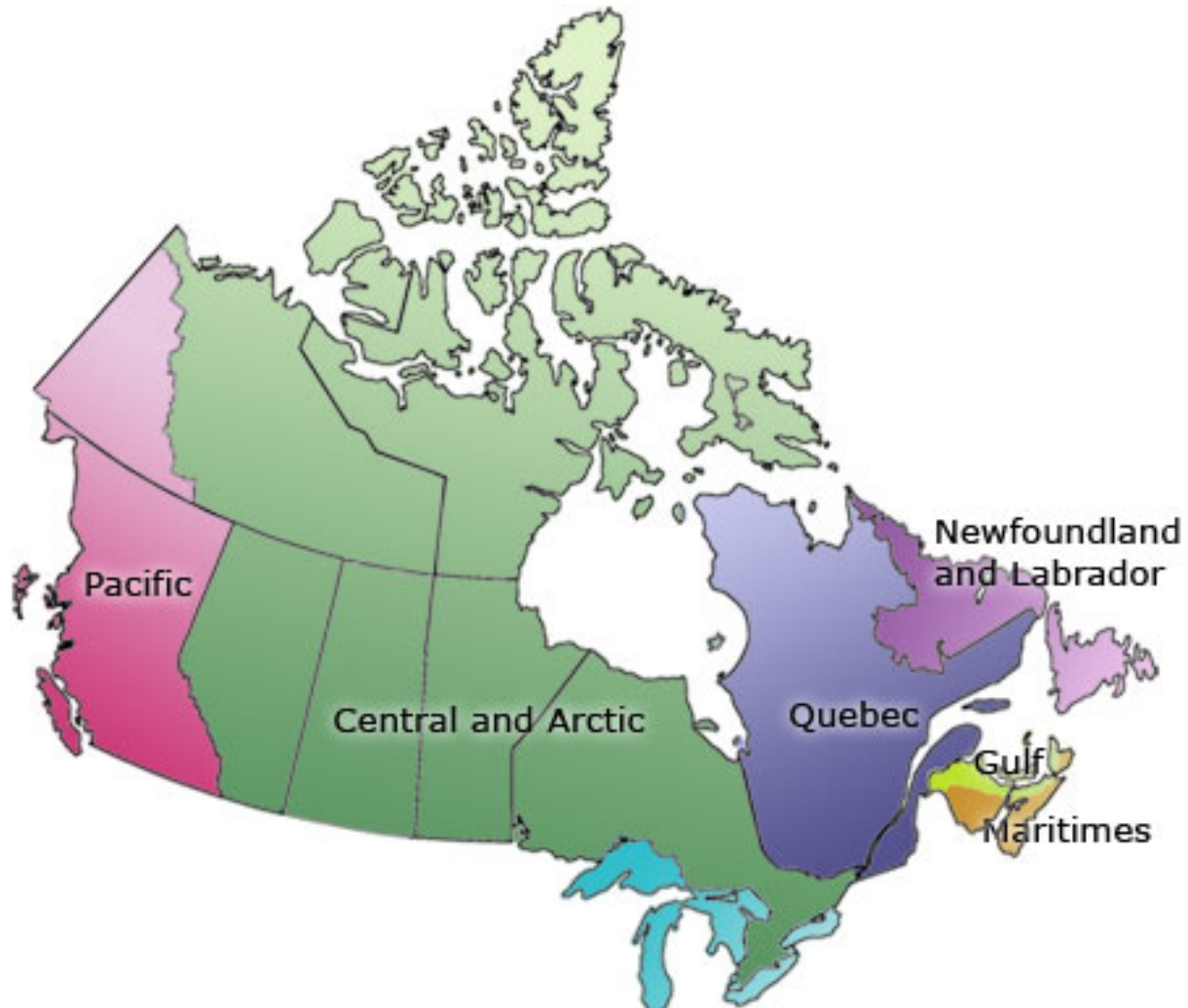
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# DFO Regions





# Overview: Management of American Eel Fisheries in Canada

- There are currently active commercial (including commercial communal (CC)) and recreational fisheries for yellow/silver eels in Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador
- Management varies by province/DFO Region
- No quotas for any commercial large eel fisheries in Canada – generally managed through effort controls such as gear limits, limited entry, also minimum size limits, etc.



# Overview: Management of American Eel Fisheries in Canada

- Commercial (including CC) elver fishery (<10cm) in DFO Maritimes Region (NS and NB) managed via combination of quotas and effort controls
- One elver licence in Newfoundland and Labrador linked to an aquaculture grow-out operation. This licence is limited to a relatively small annual quota.
- Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) large eel fisheries by Aboriginal groups in Gulf, Maritimes, Newfoundland Region



## Landings of Yellow/Silver American Eel in Canada in the Commercial Fishery 2013

Licences	Active Licences	Landings (metric tonnes)	Landed Value (\$000 CAN)
1,678	235	416.7	2,532



## Average Landings of Elver in Canada in the Commercial Fishery 2010-2014

Number of Licences	Landings (metric tonnes)	Landed Value (\$000 CAN)
9	3.6	11,400



# Ontario

- All commercial fisheries closed since 2004
- All recreational fisheries closed since 2005
- Unlikely any FSC fishing due to very low population levels (although American eel was and still is very important to Aboriginal people in Ontario).
- American Eel identified as an Endangered Species under Ontario's Endangered Species Act



# Quebec

- Commercial Large Eel Fishery
  - 52 tidal weir licences in St. Lawrence Estuary
  - Other multispecies licences not directed toward eel, but where eel may be retained and sold
- No recreational fishery in Quebec
- No FSC fishery in Quebec





## Gulf Region (Gulf coast of NB, NS, PEI)

- Commercial large eel licences:
  - Gulf NB – 151 licences including 7 longline licences, others fyke net
  - Gulf NS – 144 licences for fyke nets, pots, spear
  - Gulf PEI – 122 licences for fyke nets, pots (549 licences for spear under moratorium since 2005)
- Recreational fisheries for pots, spears, angling
- FSC access currently by 11 Aboriginal groups



# Newfoundland and Labrador

- 140 large eel licences for fyke nets, pots
- 1 elver licence restricted for aquaculture purposes
- Recreational fisheries with spear, pots
- FSC access currently by 1 Aboriginal group



## Maritimes Region (Atlantic coast of NB, NS)

- 359 commercial large eel licence for pots, traps, dip nets, longlines
- 9 commercial elver licences for dip nets, elver traps, elver pots, push trawl
- Recreational fisheries for angling, pots, spear, traps
- FSC access currently by 15 Aboriginal groups



# Maritimes Region – Large Eel Fishery

## Commercial Fishery

- Limited entry – no new commercial licences as of 1993
- Gear type/amount, fishing area (usually by County), restricted by licence
- Minimum size limit 35cm (increased from 20cm in 2005)
- Seasons set in *Maritime Provinces Fishery Regulations* (vary by gear type and whether the fishery occurs in tidal or non-tidal waters), also gear tending requirements (72 hrs)
- Gear spacing requirements in *MPFRs*, licence conditions
- Mandatory catch reporting



# Maritimes Region – Large Eel Fishery

## Recreational fishery

- No licence required for angling or spearing in tidal waters
- Provincial fishing licence required for angling in inland waters
- 144 recreational licences for pots, traps, but no new licences since 1997 and all existing licences are terminal
- Recreational bag limit is 10 eels per day
- Minimum size limit of 35 cm



## Maritimes Region – Elver Fishery

- Restricted to specific rivers (109 in total); overlap with large eel fisheries is avoided
- Each licence holder limited to an overall quota, as well as individual river caps (both non-transferable)
- Amount, type, size, and spacing of gear is restricted by licence/conditions
- Required to hail in/out; third party catch monitoring; daily catch reporting; all holding facilities, people and vehicles involved are identified



## National-Level Management Goals

- A national American Eel Management Plan was drafted in 2006 by the Canadian Eel Working Group
- Draft plan never officially adopted, but management actions consistent with the plan have been initiated in every region
- Long-term goal: to rebuild overall abundance of American Eel in Canada to its level in the mid-1980s
- Short term goal: to reduce eel mortality from all sources by 50% relative to the 1997 to 2002 average (adopted by DFO in 2004)



## Efforts to Reduce Eel Mortality

- Ontario and Quebec: fisheries closures and licence buybacks have significantly reduced fishing mortality
- Gulf Region: increases in minimum size, season shortened, closure of commercial spear fishery on PEI, increased enforcement of gear restrictions.
- Maritimes Region: minimum size increased, reduction of quotas in elver fishery, stricter catch reporting requirements, eel/green crab licence exchange program, buy out of eel licences by elver fishers.
- Nfld & Lab Region: gear reduction program, reduction in number of licences, size limit increased, stricter catch reporting requirements.





# Assessment for Possible Listing Under Canada's *Species At Risk Act*

- If listed:
  - **32. (1)** No person shall **kill, harm, harass, capture or take** an individual of a wildlife species that is listed as an extirpated species, an endangered species or a threatened species.
  - **(2)** No person shall **possess, collect, buy, sell or trade** an individual of a wildlife species that is listed as an extirpated species, an endangered species or a threatened species, or any part or derivative of such an individual.
- Federal Recovery Strategy and Action Plan required



# Measures Proposed Under Non-List Scenario

- Implement Precautionary Approach Framework including reference points and harvest control rules
- Expand eel for green crab licence exchange program
- Continue improving/implementing individual river quotas for elver fishery
- Investigate opportunities for reductions in commercial eel fishing effort
- Effort reductions in recreational fisheries (e.g. shortened season, reduced catch limits)
- Measures to reduce mortalities and improve fish passage (e.g. hydro facilities)