

SAEN Newsletter 2024
April 2, 2024



Welcome to 2024 SAEN supporters!

As we look forward to warmer temperatures and our countdown clock on a new season is down to double digits, it is an opportune time to update you on SAEN's activities over the past year and a look forward on what we are planning.

As we have recently communicated via email, we are busy preparing for our 32nd annual Spring dinner and auction fund raiser. This year's event is again being held at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 56 ballroom in Pleasantville on Saturday, April 27th. Tickets can be obtained via our office (info@saen.org; 709-722-9300), any Board member or at <https://www.saen.org/dinner--auction.html>. We have included this year an option for youth/students (18 and under) at \$30, which can be obtained through the office. The highlight of our live auction will be a trip for 2 rods to Crooks Lake Lodge in Labrador.

Another highlight of the evening will be the presentation of the Dorothy Burton Conservation Award. We are accepting nominations until April 12th:
https://www.saen.org/dbca_nominations.html

Your support through taking a membership in SAEN continues to be vital to us. We have kept our fees low in an effort to encourage such. As a volunteer driven organization your moral support of our work through taking that membership is very important to us. Membership numbers matter when we are engaging with governments on issues! You can renew through our office, at <https://www.saen.org/membership.html> or at any of our social events.

Year in review 2023

Social events

We were pleased to be able to hold two live dinner/ auction events in 2023 for the first time since COVID hit our shores. The Spring dinner and the Fall Moose Stew events were both well attended. At these events, our annual awards were also presented. The Dorothy Burton Conservation Award was presented to Chris Verbiski (accepted by Atlantic Rivers Outfitting Company's store manager Tyrone Buckle) and the Guenter Behr Award went to Freshwater – Alexander Bays Ecosystems Corporation (accepted by FABEC board member Chris Warford).

We also returned full time in September to offering fly tying classes at our office and hope that this will continue into the future. Board member Craig Purchase also organized two fly casting instruction events with then Scouts and Ventures.

Our Christmas Social event on December 14th was held at the AROC community room and was well attended. In conjunction with that event, we also held the draw for our XMAS 50-50 ticket raffle. The prize of \$1510 was awarded to Jerry Adams of Mount Pearl.

SAEN actions in 2023:

DFO Temperature data logger placements

SAEN volunteers assisted DFO during the salmon fishing season in the placement of temperature data loggers and level loggers in various locations across the Island. A total of 22 rivers were covered (7 on the Avalon, 4 in Central, 11 in Western).

Grieg operated counting fences

Salmon Cove River

Rainbow Trout

Aquaculture expansion

Salmonid Council for NL AGM

The SCNL held its annual general meeting in Traytown on September 27-29th. President Kevin Power, Past President Bob Bishop, Treasurer Chris Warford and Director Valerie Power attended on behalf of SAEN. Highlights included:

- Bob Bishop was elected as President of SCNL for 2024. Kevin Power's term continued as Vice President.
- Curtis Pennel presented on 2023 Salmonid Research Activities for the Coastal and Freshwater Ecology Section of DFO. These included:
 - Effects of Catch and Release on the Exploits and Terra Nova Rivers, 3rd and final year of study.
 - Real time water temperature and level monitoring.
 - Downstream fish passage at Grand Falls fishway.
 - Terra Nova fish passage and temperature preferences.
 - Rattling Brook restoration.
 - Rocky River tagging program
- Nick Kelly presented on the DFO 2023 salmon monitoring results. Nick also outlined various other research initiatives underway in the department, which included smolt tracking programs, a follow up surveys on rivers done in 2020 as part of the

population trends survey, studying the role of sea lice on wild salmon survival near South Coast aquaculture and an Atlantic Salmon temperature tolerance study.

- Mark Lane, Blue Green Canada, was invited to give a virtual presentation of their company's marine donut technology for closed containment aquaculture systems. Such systems have great potential to significantly reduce or virtually eliminate the risks associated with escapes, sea lice and disease transference. The company have picked sites in Argentinia and Harbour Breton for fabrication of units. Blue Green is looking to partner with a farmer with an existing licence to demo the tech.
- Presentation by Stephen Chase on Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon. Stephen gave an overview of the Foundation's strategic focus for 2022-27. They have created a steering committee in each province to develop options suited to each Province to create an on-going discussion and action forum. Stephen, with Darren Sheppard of Indian Bay Ecosystem Corporation, also hosted a session on effective writing for funding/ grant applications.
- September 29th was dedicated to a further discussion among affiliates regarding an updated strategic plan for the Council.

DFO Inland Compliance and Resource Management Salmon Workshop

This meeting, November 23-24 in Gander, was attended by SAEN Secretary Dave Downton and Director Chris Warford. Some of the highlights included:

- In 2023 there were 102 inland fish violations recorded by Provincial wildlife division, 79 for salmon and 23 for trout. Inland fishery violations recorded by DFO were down a bit this year at 127 compared to 164 last year. In 2023 DFO's fishery guardian program did 60,000 hours of field work, including over 4100 salmon and trout inland inspections. SeaWatch has 90 guardians and DFO has 100 fishery officers. They were also assisted by some indigenous guardians.
- Nick Kelly presented on the 2023 monitoring results. Generally speaking, the return numbers overall this year were very poor. Nick noted that this was similar to 2017 overall, but the big difference this year was that the low returns and good returns were on different river groups than in 2017.
- 2023 was the first year of a two-year management plan. There are 2 scenarios in respect to declines whereby DFO Science would trigger revisiting that plan:
 - >30% decline compared to previous generation average in total returns on greater than or equal to 50% of our monitored rivers in any given year.
 - >25% decline in total returns on greater than or equal to 50% of our monitored rivers in 2 consecutive years.
- Both triggers were met this year. As a result, all groups attending were asked to give feedback as to what they would like to see in 2024 plan regarding retention limits, catch and release limits, temperature protocols, and anything else groups think are important. SAEN's response, filed after the meeting based on input from the Board, was that we felt DFO is well armed with information from their Science Branch and that any decisions on retention limits should be made on a balanced view, with the precaution and conservation goals holding the highest weight of consideration.

- Kristen Loughlin reported on the replacement of the fishways at Lomond River and Middle Brook. It was noted that the highest priority going forward is replacement of the 70-year-old main fishway on Terra Nova River.
- The overall river temperature dataset from 2023 showed that temperatures were over 20 degrees C all day for a number of rivers on the island of Newfoundland, mostly during the period July 19-27. There was much variation of temperatures on the island but not so much in Labrador. Labrador did experience some very high temperatures this year for a period of time.
- Kris Hunter of the Atlantic Salmon Federation gave an overview of their Wild Salmon Watersheds initiative and the current pilot program that FABEC has been funded for on the Terra Nova River.

SCNL meeting with the NL Regional Director General of DFO

2024 look forward

Member engagement

2024 Salmon and Trout Management Plan

River Temperature data logger placements

Conservation Projects