

Adult fish returns

Due to Covid-19, DFO did not install the trap nets in Millerton or Cassilis this year until September and then only fished them 4 nights a week until early October. It is hard to interpret the counts from this abbreviated fishing effort, but there were more large salmon captured at Cassilis this fall than all the salmon that were captured in the whole season in 2019, the worst return year ever. Millerton didn't exceed last year's count of salmon in the short season, but wasn't too far behind. The grilse counts in both traps were not spectacular this fall. Therefore, it appears that there was a decent fall run of large salmon this year. Anglers report a good run of early salmon on the Southwest Miramichi and Northwest Miramichi followed by a flat summer with low, warm water and salmon congregated in cold water holding pools. MSA operated the NW Miramichi and Dungarvon barrier pools this year and the NW Miramichi barrier had a good jump in large salmon numbers from last year, but a decline in grilse and the Dungarvon had a decline in both grilse and salmon from last year. One explanation for the decline in the Dungarvon counts was 2 beaver dams that were located downstream of the barrier that were a total obstruction during low water flows and reported illegal removals below these dams.

The summary of 2020 is an increase in large salmon numbers and perhaps a small increase in grilse numbers making 2020 a big improvement over 2019, but still not where we want to be.