

December 26, 2018

RE: NAPETIPI RIVER 2018 NEWSLETTER

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Happy Holidays to everyone. It is my pleasure to send you my annual salmon fishing newsletter for the Napetipi River on the north shore of Quebec. Considering how busy we all are, it is a feat to get this out before New Year's, but here it is.

2018 was a very strange year throughout Atlantic Canada, but better than 2017, although no less odd. June was very cold, the water was cold, yet the Straits and the Greenland Sea were not full of icebergs. The water was very high and cold through week 0 and week 1. The fish did not enter the river until the end of week 1, with the first salmon caught July 11, and July 12. The brook trout fishing was actually better than normal this early in the year and better than past years. There were some nice trout coming out of the lower pools of the Napetipi River and Rocky Lake. Several native brook trout were caught in the 3 pound class and that did offer some nice diversity from having no salmon until the end of the week. The salmon run on the north coast of Quebec and Labrador was generally late. There were some exceptions, like the Mosie, but mostly the salmon were at least 2 weeks late, and in some cases up to 3 weeks late across the boards in Newfoundland, Labrador and the north coast of Quebec. The bulk of the run was grilse, with the big fish run less than 2017 in the north shore rivers, including the Napetipi. Our big fish run was 7% for the year, and anecdotally, reports from other rivers indicate that that was average or pretty good compared to other rivers. The larger rivers like the Eagle and St. Pauls did produce pretty sizeable big fish runs in addition to a grilse run, but they were very late. The fish did eventually come in and by week 3 and week 4, the run was full on. The run sustained into August with week 5 providing good fishing and did not taper off until the middle of August. What I did learn going out was that the overall commercial fishery also was very strange and may have affected the salmon runs. First, no stripers of any substance showed up this year in the north shore of Quebec which is very positive for the reduced mortality of smolts going out. Second, we caught a number of smolts in week 1 and 2, and several in week 3, which is very unusual because they had not gone to sea yet. Also, this year was one of the best years in 50 years for capelin, in the Straits, bringing the whales with them. The bulk of the capelin tended to congregate on the Newfoundland side of the Straits. The salmon congregated and were feeding on the capelin apparently through the month of July, something that has not been seen in a very long time. It is possible that the run was impacted by a substantial amount of bait fish available before they entered the river to spawn. The herring population on the north coast did not materialize and the herring catch was off by approximately 50% based on comments by the fishermen, limiting the bait fish that would have attracted the stripers. All in all, it was different.

The sea run brook trout were also late, but they did come in during week 4. It was the best sea trout run and the highest quality of sea trout that I have ever seen on the Napetipi. Big sea runs averaging 2-3 pounds with some 4 pounders were seen and several were hooked at the end of week 4 in the lower reaches of the river. They were in excellent shape, had been feeding heavy and were good fighters. It is interesting to note that, if you look at the counting records reported from the

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Atlantic Salmon Federation in Labrador, Newfoundland and the North Coast, there were several rivers that did very well, such as the Sand Hill and the Humber, but most were off. The St. Pauls was way off for the year. The run reports seem to indicate a pick-up in the fall and, in many cases, a better total run than 2017, it was just a late run coming in. We certainly hope 2019 will drift back to normal, but time will tell. As always, when days are slow, we have the ability to switch over to both native brook trout and sea run brook trout as part of the catch for the Napetipi. So, as a reminder to everybody, bring your trout rod, some trout flies and bombers, especially orange and white for the Napetipi (that is orange hackle, white body), or natural gray deer hair body and orange hackle. For the surface feeding native brook trout, the march brown may fly and small caddis in sizes 14-18 are an excellent choice. The river also holds a tremendous population of stone flies which work well along with the wooly buggers.

Despite the high water, and late run, the Napetipi River produced 217 landed fish for the 2018 season, 71 more than 2017. 202 grilse were landed, and 15 big salmon. The fish were healthy and weighed heavy. We did not see hardly any of the small grilse reported in the other rivers, and saw the least amount of net marks that we have ever seen. This is an indication of the ever-reducing amount of poaching and the enforcement against it on the north shore. The table enclosed is our 12th year running with statistics. Week 0 and week 1 were not a sport fishery due to the late fish run. Week 2 produced 63 fish, for a total of 2.6 fish per rod day. Week 3 produced 60 fish, for a success rate of 3.3 fish per rod day. Week 4 produced 21 fish for a total of 4.2 per rod day, week 5 produced 39 for a total of 3.9 per rod day, and week 6 produced 28 fish for a total of 1.2 fish per rod day. Total rod days for the year were 105, and total success rate was 2.1 fish per rod day. This compares well against other rivers in 2018, including the St. Pauls at 1.5 fish per day this last year. The table below provides the 12-year running tally at the Napetipi. Over 12 years, the average big fish rate is 11%, and the rod catch is 2.6 fish per day, all weeks, all times, good years and bad. Once again, though, we did notice this year that the fish weighed heavy for their size. They were broad and well proportioned, weighing 10-15% over their length, indicating good feed in the Labrador Sea and the Straits of Belle Isle.

CATCH RATES, 2018, NAPETIPI RIVER AND A TEN-YEAR HISTORY

WEEK 2018	DATE 2018	ROD DAYS	GRILSE	SALMON	TOTAL	RATE PER ROD DAY	% SALMON
0	6/30 – 7/6	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	7/8-12	25	6	0	6	0	0
2	7/14-19	24	58	5	63	2.6	8%
3	7/21-26	18	53	7	60	3.3	12%
4	7/28-8/1	5	20	1	21	4.2	5%
5	8/4-9	10	38	1	39	3.9	3%
6	8/11-16	23	27	1	28	1.2	4%
TOTAL	2018	105	202	15	217	2.1	7%
TOTAL	2017	100	119	27	146	1.46	18%

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TOTAL	2016	100	289	32	321	3.21	10%
TOTAL	2015	64	235	34	269	4.2	13%
TOTAL	2014	33	101	7	108	3.3	6%
TOTAL	2013	76	87	24	111	1.5	22%
TOTAL	2012	146	239	15	254	1.7	6%
TOTAL	2011	111	295	45	340	3.1	13%
TOTAL	2010	142	316	36	352	2.5	11%
TOTAL	2009	89	280	44	324	3.6	14%
TOTAL	2008	79	370	33	403	5.1	8%
TOTAL	2007	105	117	11	128	1.2	9%
GRAND TOTAL AND AVG		1150	2650	323	2973	2.6	11%

Please note, we have a new regime for 2018. There were too many conflicts and delays with the airplane and the St. Paul's turnover since the St. Paul's moved to Saturday like we did before them. We are therefore going to test a **Wednesday changeover**. There will still be a four-rod max, more or less, for weeks 1 - 6. Everyone should fly into Deer Lake on Tuesday of the week. This should ease up some of the flight congestion also. The van will pick everyone up at the airport for the hotel and will take everyone to either Ten Mile Pond or the ferry, depending on the weather the next day, for the flight into camp. Here again, Gary Cooper will handle all the pickups. You will come back through Ten Mile Pond on the next Wednesday. Schedule the next day (Thursday) to return home **I have booked rooms for all except Michel Blais at the Deer Lake Motel for weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4 on Tuesday coming in, and Wednesday going out.** For the reduced price of weeks 6-9, everyone will go to the ferry and across. Riess will take you in by water. The same on the return. This should allow everyone to get out of Deer Lake on Thursday and back for the weekend. Please make week 5-9 hotel reservations soon as Newfoundland fills up with tourists. See the enclosed telephone list for the phone numbers. The current schedule and groups committed as of this writing are shown in the following table.

WEEK	FISHERMEN	STARTING DATE (WEDNESDAY) 2019	ENDING DATE (TUESDAY) 2018	REMAINING RODS AVAILABLE
0	Open	Wed. July 3	Tues. July 9	4
1	Skip and Family + Jon (5)	Wed. July 10	Tues. July 16	0
2	Skip, B. Hoye, P. Grote, D. Genter	Wed. July 17	Tues. July 23	0
3	Skip, P. Grote, Dave Genter, Michel Blais, Pat Sawyer	Wed. July 24	Tues., July 30	0
4	Skip, Bob Day	Wed. July 31	Tues. August 6	2
5	Open	Wed. August 7	Tues. August 13	4
6	Open	Wed. August 14	Tues. August 20	4

7	Open	Wed. August 21	Tues. August 27	4
8	Open	Wed. August 28	Tues. Sept. 3	4
9	Open	Wed. Sept. 4	Tues. Sept. 10	4

The operating regime, on the Napetipi, is unique on the north shore of Quebec and Labrador for a salmon fishing experience. I do not know of any other river where four fishermen can have the entire upper beat of the river to themselves for an entire day. They can choose dry fly pools, wet fly pools, or any type of water they wish to fish over a stretch of what is now three miles and expanding. This is still a relatively new camp in relationship to other camps on the north shore and Labrador fishing beats. The river is demonstrating a good run of salmon. Riess is still not requiring a catch limit per day, other than any limit self-imposed by the groups themselves depending on the river conditions, but please remember that the camp is a 100% ASF certified catch and release salmon camp. Brook trout can be kept for meals. I would urge everyone to take the opportunity to let Riess know sooner rather than later on booking so that he can plan accordingly, and if anyone has friends they wish me to send the newsletter to, please do not hesitate to email or call. It's important that we spread the word for Riess on the Napetipi River in order to assure the success of this new camp so that all of us have good salmon fishing well into the future. As a reminder to anyone wishing to catch both sea run brook trout and Atlantic salmon, the sea runs generally start to come in at week 3 with weeks 4 and on being the best for the sea run brookies.

Everyone not flying to Blanc Sablon should come into Deer Lake Tuesday night and make hotel reservations at the Deer Lake Motel, where I have not. That is the meeting point. Gary Cooper is the point person in Deer Lake and will meet you at the airport to take you to the motel. You will also need a return reservation at the Motel for the following Wednesday night. Gary Cooper will have your flight information and will be tracking your progress. He will also handle any lost luggage, should it occur.

- On Wednesday, you will go to Ten Mile Pond for the float plane. If the weather closes in on us at Ten Mile Pond, there are 2 hotels within 10 minutes of Ten Mile Pond, one at Plum Point and one at St. Barbe. The van will stay with us. If necessary, we can still ferry over on Thursday and go in by ocean if a major fog bank has socked in the north coast.
- I need everybody's flight schedules and room (I have Michel Blais's) emailed to me, attention Linda Thomas of my office at lthomas@sansoucy.com, phone 603-788-4000, when you have them. I will be going up early in late June and make arrangements for the van so that there is no time lost at the airport. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Thomas in my office at 603-788-4000 or via email at gsansoucy@sansoucy.com.
- Anyone who loses their luggage in this changeover with the airlines should keep coming to camp. We will have spare rods, waders, raincoats, etc. until the airline gets your luggage to Riess to be brought into camp by water. Pack a change of clothes, raincoat, and toiletries in your carry-on.
- Don't forget your liquor. You can buy anything you want on the van ride to Ten Mile Pond at the liquor store by the Torrent River on Wednesday afternoon, or let Gary Cooper know ahead of time so there is no down time. His number is 709-636-3309.

- The camp is a Globalstar base station and has satellite internet, so the guides will be in touch with everyone during Wednesday afternoon on the changeover.

The prices will be as follows: (including van ride from Deer Lake and float plane for weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.) (No float plane weeks 6, 7, 8, and 9.)

Week 0 - \$3,000 (USD) plus taxes – 4 maximum – 2 guides per 4 people (no float plane, all by water).

Weeks 1 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 - \$5,000 (with float plane) (USD) plus taxes per person – 4 maximum – 2 guides per 4 people.

Weeks 6 (overlap), 7, 8, and 9 - \$3,000 (USD)(without float plane, all by water) 4 maximum – 2 guides per 4 people.

Prices exclude hotel, air fare, liquor, tip, and taxes. All prices are FOB Deer Lake. Deposits are 50% and are due by February 1 if at all possible, and I need a headcount sooner rather than later. All meals, linens, and miscellaneous are provided, but you need to bring your own liquor.

Should fishermen elect to fly to Blanc Sablon, there will be no price adjustment in weeks 1-5, but arrangements must be made with Riess. Please arrive early Wednesday afternoon at the latest and you will be boated into camp or flown in depending on weather. Ferries will be running from St. Barbe Wednesday afternoon, and back. It is important that people book early their Tuesday or Wednesday evening hotel room in Blanc Sablon or L’Anse au Clair if you are going out of Blanc Sablon. If not flying, you must make your own cab and hotel arrangements for Wednesday in Blanc Sablon. The north shore is becoming a very attractive travel spot for tourism and the hotels are filling fast. Deer Lake hotel rooms also fill fast, and I recommend booking as early as possible, **other than the ones we make**. Should anyone have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Riess, Linda Thomas or me.

As a reminder to everyone, I would ask that you bring new or ultra-clean felt boots, or sterilize the ones you have. Felts work the best on this river, but we do not want any ditmo transferred to the river. If you could, please buy a new pair of boots just for the Napetipi or soak your existing boots in bleach overnight and let them dry before you bring them to make certain that there is no ditmo on your boots if you have had any other river contact including certain rivers in Labrador that are suspected of having ditmo.

Below is a list of the important phone numbers for the Napetipi camp, Deer Lake, and the north shore of Quebec:

Riess Bilodeau	1-418-379-2183
Farron Bilodeau	1-418-379-2904
Ron Letto Straight Air (bush pilot)	1-709-931-2196
Gary Cooper	1-709-636-3309
Napetipi Camp Base Phone (Globalstar)	1-613-982-8090

Blanc Sablon Taxi	1-418-461-2216
Roger Jones Store (Louri, special order wine and liquor in Blanc Sablon)	1-418-461-2010
Deer Lake Taxi	1-709-635-2521
Deer Lake Star Taxi	1-709-638-3933
St. Barb Ferry	1-866-535-2567
Deer Lake Motel	1-709-635-2108
Northern Lights Hotel, L'Anse au Clair (on north shore)	1-709-931-2332
Auberge Motel (Blanc Sablon)	1-418-461-2024
Motel 138 (Blanc Sablon)	1-418-461-3222
Global Rescue (subscription required for emergency evacuation)	1-617-459-4200
Linda Thomas (Skip's office)	1-603-788-4000

Tight lines,

Skip