



COSEWIC
Committee on the Status of
Endangered Wildlife in Canada

COSEPAAC
Comité sur la situation des
espèces en péril au Canada

Original St. Lawrence River Striped Bass Extinct

OTTAWA, ONTARIO (Dec 2, 2019). The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has reassessed the status of the original St. Lawrence River population of Striped Bass -- one of three distinct populations in Canada -- and concluded that this population is Extinct. The last known original St. Lawrence River Striped Bass was caught in 1968, and the population of Striped Bass that historically lived in the St. Lawrence River is gone, the victim of overfishing and habitat degradation.



Striped Bass © Steven G. Johnson. Image taken from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Striped_bass,_Boston_Aquarium.JPG (license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

A successful stocking program started introducing Striped Bass in 2002 from the Miramichi River in New Brunswick into the -- now healthier -- St. Lawrence River, and this program has established a reproducing population. Importantly, these Miramichi-derived fish come from a separate population of Striped Bass and so are different from the original St. Lawrence River population of Striped Bass.

“A designation of Extinct may seem unusual, but it reflects the reality of the situation,” said Nick Mandrak, Co-chair of the Freshwater Fishes Subcommittee. In 2012, COSEWIC assessed the original St. Lawrence River population as Endangered, but the committee later determined that the introduced fish should not be considered part of the original St. Lawrence River population. “This new assessment highlights our commitment to both identify and assess Canadian biodiversity, using rigorous, standardized methods that are applied to the loss of unique populations.”

COSEWIC plans to re-evaluate all Striped Bass in Canada in 2022.

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