

**Phillip A. Edwards**  
**Chairman American EEL Board.**

**July 19, 2023**

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201

**Request to the ASMFC concerning stock enhancement and quota increase for Maine's Glass Eel fishery under Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel.**

Commissioners,

For two centuries dams blocked or delayed up and downstream passage for diadromous fish species on the Penobscot River. Since 2012 several large restoration projects have improved up and downstream passage into this watershed (summary attached).

With these improvements, American eels (throughout their life stages), now face reduced migratory delay and safer up and downstream movement. The Maine Elver Fisherman Association, a membership organization of commercial glass eel harvesters, estimates that an average of 25,000,000 glass eels enter the Penobscot each year. In recent years, fishermen antidotally report larger returns on the Penobscot and nearby waters. These large runs are often observed after fishermen have filled their annual quotas on other waterways across the state.

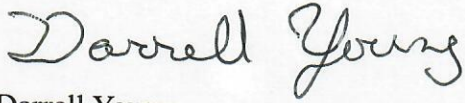
We believe that the restoration work of the past decade has not only improved conditions for glass eels' movement within the Penobscot but also acts as a stock enhancement activity for American eels. We believe these enhancements, all having occurred after January 1, 2011, satisfy section 3.1.1 of Addendum IV to the "Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel". We respectfully request that the Commission considers adjusting Maine's annual glass eel harvest quota in response to the last decade's worth of restoration and stock enhancement activities on the Penobscot River.

Any increase in available quota will not impact the State of Maine's robust system of monitoring annual individual and State catches.

Restoration work on countless other rivers and streams in Maine has also taken place and will continue into the future and we hope the Commission will consider adjusting the quota for the

glass eel fishery annually and increasing access to all eel fishers in Maine waters in response to these activities.

Respectfully,



Darrell Young  
President, Maine Elver Fishermen's Association

### Stock Enhancement Activity Summary

From 2012 to 2016 six major restoration and habitat enhancement activities were completed on the Lower Penobscot River and its major tributaries (the Stillwater and Piscataquis Rivers) as part of the Penobscot River Restoration Project. Collectively these projects directly reconnected over 1,000 river miles and nearly 75% of the area of the Penobscot River Watershed (*Strategic Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes to the Penobscot River* Maine resource agencies, March 2008) and are the result of major investments from State, Federal, and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.

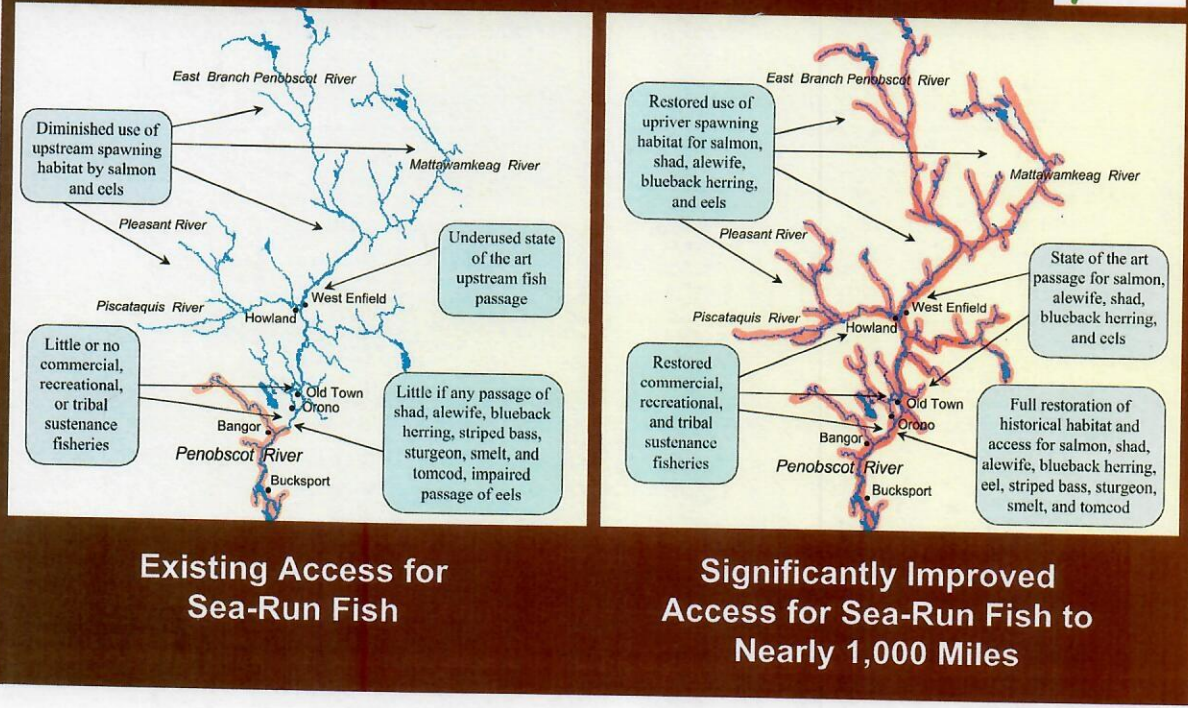
#### Summary of Major Activities of the Penobscot River Restoration Project:

| Activity                   | Year | Passage Direction |
|----------------------------|------|-------------------|
| Veazie Dam Removal         | 2013 | up/down           |
| Great Works Dam Removal    | 2012 | up/down           |
| Howland Bypass             | 2015 | up/down           |
| Milford fish lift          | 2014 | up                |
| Orono Dam eel passage      | 2014 | up/down           |
| Stillwater dam eel passage | 2016 | up/down           |

These mainstem passage improvements reconnected a watershed drained by over 1,600 miles of river and streams, and over 600 lakes with 254,600 acres of surface area (*Strategic Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes to the Penobscot River* Maine resource agencies, March 2008).

Supporting work throughout the watershed continues to reconnect smaller tributaries and sub-drainages and is guided and funded by State, Federal, and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.

# Penobscot River Restoration Project Before and After Habitat Access



**Existing Access for  
Sea-Run Fish**

**Significantly Improved  
Access for Sea-Run Fish to  
Nearly 1,000 Miles**

Map by the Natural Resource Council of Maine:  
<https://www.nrcm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HabitatAccessbeforeandafterPRRP.pdf>