

Judge: Maine salmon lawsuits should proceed

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PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A federal magistrate is recommending that two lawsuits against dam owners on Maine's Kennebec and Androscoggin rivers be allowed to move forward.

The Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and Environment Maine environmental groups filed four complaints last winter seeking to have the owners and operators of seven dams take action to protect dwindling populations of endangered Atlantic salmon.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John Rich last week recommended that motions by Miller Hydro Group and Topsham Hydro Partners — seeking to have the lawsuits dismissed — be denied. Federal Judge George Singal will make the final determination.

Atlantic salmon were declared endangered in the two rivers in 2009. The two groups want dam owners to take measures to protect the fish from being killed by the dams' spinning turbines.