

## NOAA Hazardous Waste Site Report

O'Connor Company (I-48)  
Augusta, Maine  
April 13, 1984

### Location and Nature of Site:

This five-acre site in Augusta, Maine is owned by the F. O'Connor Company (Figure 1). It is used as a scrap iron and metal storage yard. Used electrical transformers were one of the major items stored in the yard. In 1973, the State of Maine inspected the site when oil from the yard overflowed into Riggs Brook. The owner has not followed State requests to store the oil in a 20,000-gallon tank, but has instead built two interconnected lagoons, which still drain to Riggs Brook. Further State inspections in 1977 and 1979 have resulted in additional requests for containment, which have been partially or wholly ignored by the owners. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is preparing a Remedial Action Master Plan to investigate the need for Federal action at this site as of 1983.

### Proximity of Chemical Hazard to Marine Resources:

The O'Connor site is located two miles from the Kennebec River, a major freshwater river flowing through the city of Augusta. The distance to coastal marine waters is an additional 30 miles. Transport from the site to the Kennebec River is by surface streams in the local area. Normal rain and snow runoff and poor site operations are the major factors affecting pollutant releases.

Materials of concern are the PCB-contaminated oils associated with the transformer operation. Concentrations ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 parts per million (ppm) have been noted in the holding ponds located at the facility. Lower concentrations of PCB in the one to 10 part per billion (ppb) range have been noted in the sediments of the Kennebec River. Traces of TCDD, persistent DDX pesticides, methylene chloride, hexanone, and organic volatiles were found an EPA by Field Investigation Team analysis.

### Marine Resources at Risk:

The Kennebec River area supports anadromous fish runs and recreational fisheries (Tables 1 and 2).

The Kennebec River is an important anadromous fish spawning and nursery area for the species listed below. The American shad and Atlantic sturgeon are species of special State concern, and the shortnose sturgeon is a species of Federal concern.

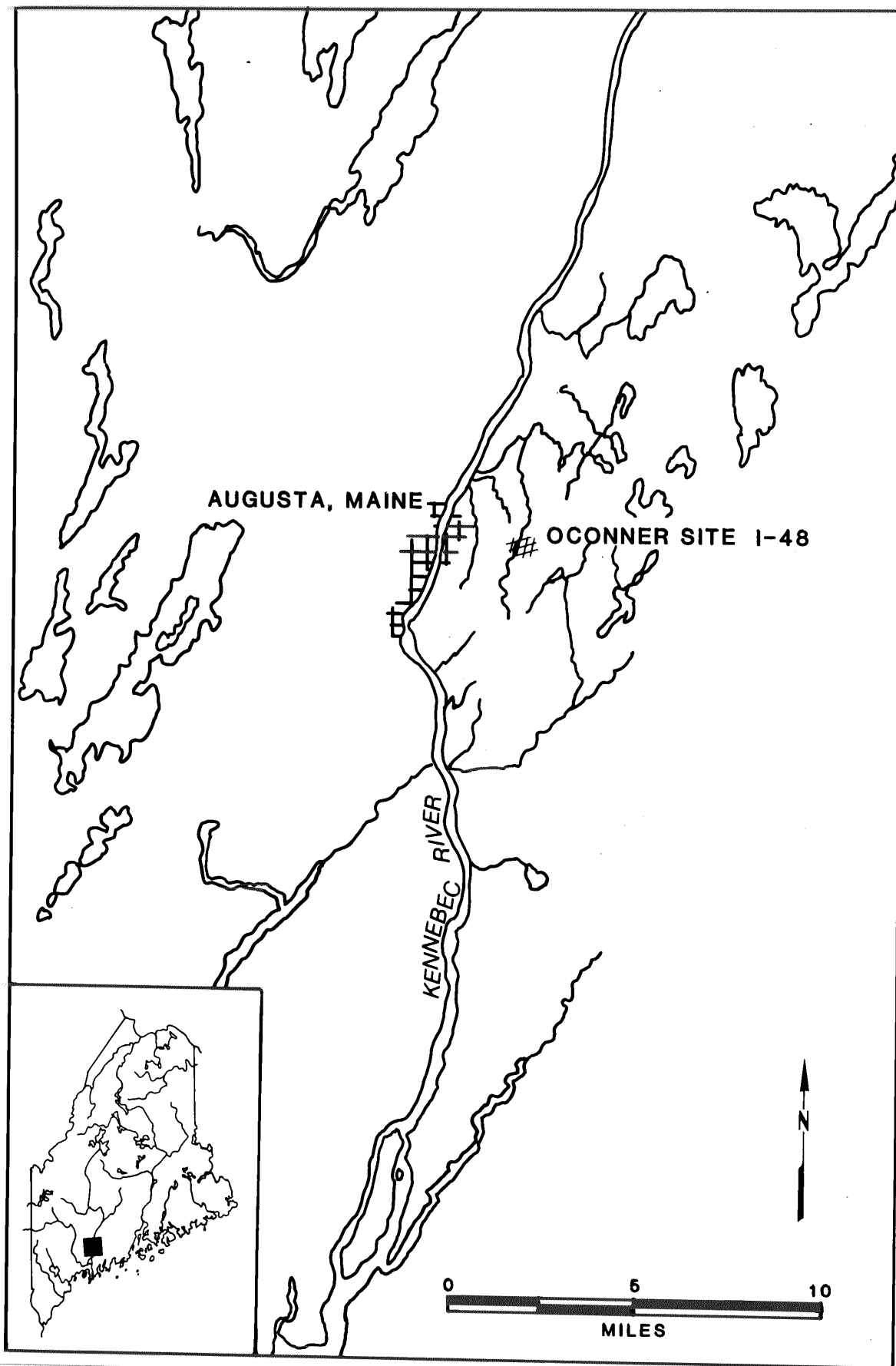


FIGURE 1. Site location.

Table 1. Fishery Resources of the Freshwater Regions of the Kennebec River (1,2)

Finfish Species	Adult Habitat	Spawning Area	Nursery Area	Comm. Fish.	Rec. Fish.	Migr. Route
<u>Anadromous</u>						
Alewife		x	x			x
American shad		x	x			x
Striped bass					x	x
Rainbow smelt		x	x		x	x
Atlantic sturgeon		x	x			x
Shortnose sturgeon		x	x			x
<u>Non-anadromous</u>						
White catfish	x	x	x	x	x	
American eel	x			x	x	
Sunfish	x	x	x		x	
Yellow perch	x	x	x		x	
Chain pickerel	x	x	x		x	
Largemouth bass	x	x	x		x	

Table 2. Fishery Resources of the Nearshore Waters Near Bath, Maine (1,2)

Species	Adult Habitat	Spawning Area	Nursery Area	Comm. Fish.	Rec. Fish.	Migr. Route
White perch	x				x	x
Flounder	x				x	
Northern kingfish	x				x	
Weakfish	x				x	
Atlantic tomcod	x				x	
Black sea bass	x				x	
Atlantic menhaden	x				x	
Seatrout	x				x	
Atlantic herring	x				x	
Bluefish	x				x	
Atlantic salmon	x				x	x
Atlantic tomcod	x	x	x	x	x	x
<u>Shellfish</u>						
Hard clam	x	x	x	x	x	
Soft shell clam	x	x	x	x	x	
Blue crab	x	x	x	x	x	
American lobster	x	x	x	x	x	

The Kennebec River provides nesting habitat for bald eagles and wintering habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and seabirds. The least tern and roseate tern nest near the mouth of the river, and within two miles of the mouth is a gray seal and harbor seal haul-out site.

Located at the mouth of the Kennebec River are Reid, Fort Popham and Popham Beach State Parks, and Pond Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Summary of Site-Related Actions:

- 1973, State of Maine investigations reported oil leak from site, required installation of 20,000 gallon holding tank.
- 1976, State inspected site, no tank had been built. Instead two lagoons with outflow to Riggs Creek were in place.
- 1977, State requested that the lagoons be pumped to tanks, and that the lagoons be clay-capped and regraded.
- 1978, State re-issued previous requests.
- 1979, State inspection found the lagoons empty, and contents in tanks, one of which was actively leaking.
- 1983, EPA assistance was requested by the State of Maine

NOAA Reviewer: Sharon Christopherson, SSC - Northeast  
(617)494-9139

References:

1. National Marine Fisheries Service, 1974. Anglers Guide to the United States 2. Atlantic Coast.
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1980. Atlantic Coast Ecological Inventory.
3. NUS corporation, July 1983. Site Inspector Report, Draft.