


# dia: An R package for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration dam impact analysis

Daniel S. Stich<sup>1</sup>, Julie L. Nieland<sup>2</sup>, and Timothy F. Sheehan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biology Department and Biological Field Station, State University of New York at Oneonta, NY 13280 USA <sup>2</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Woods Hole, MA 02543 USA  Corresponding author

DOI: [10.xxxxxx/draft](https://doi.org/10.xxxxxx/draft)

## Software

- [Review](#) 
- [Repository](#) 
- [Archive](#) 

Editor: [Open Journals](#) 

## Reviewers:

- [@openjournals](#)

Submitted: 01 January 1970

Published: unpublished

## License

Authors of papers retain copyright and release the work under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License ([CC BY 4.0](#)).

## Summary

Populations of anadromous (sea-run) fishes such as Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* have experienced severe global declines as a result of pollution, overfishing, and construction of dams (Limburg & Waldman, 2009). Life-history-based simulation models are commonly used for planning and implementing fisheries recovery activities for many diadromous species (Barber et al., 2018; e.g., Nieland et al., 2013; Stich et al., 2019; Zydlewski et al., 2021). Prior to the expansion of open-source development, many institutionalized decision-support tools utilizing such models relied on closed-source or paid software. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Dam Impact Analysis (DIA) was originally created as a stochastic life cycle model for Atlantic salmon in the @RISK add-in within Microsoft Excel (Nieland et al., 2013). This tool differs from those hosted in similar R packages for non-salmonid species (e.g. Stich et al., 2019; Zydlewski et al., 2021) in that it employs homing and straying probabilities to natal streams for adult spawning and integrates results of physical modeling to inform population dynamics (Nieland et al., 2013; Nieland & Sheehan, 2020). We created the dia package (Stich et al., 2021) for the R programming language (R Core Team, 2024) as a freely accessible, open-source implementation of these tools that will promote transparency in planning and decision making and improve the availability and quality of these tools over time.

## Statement of need

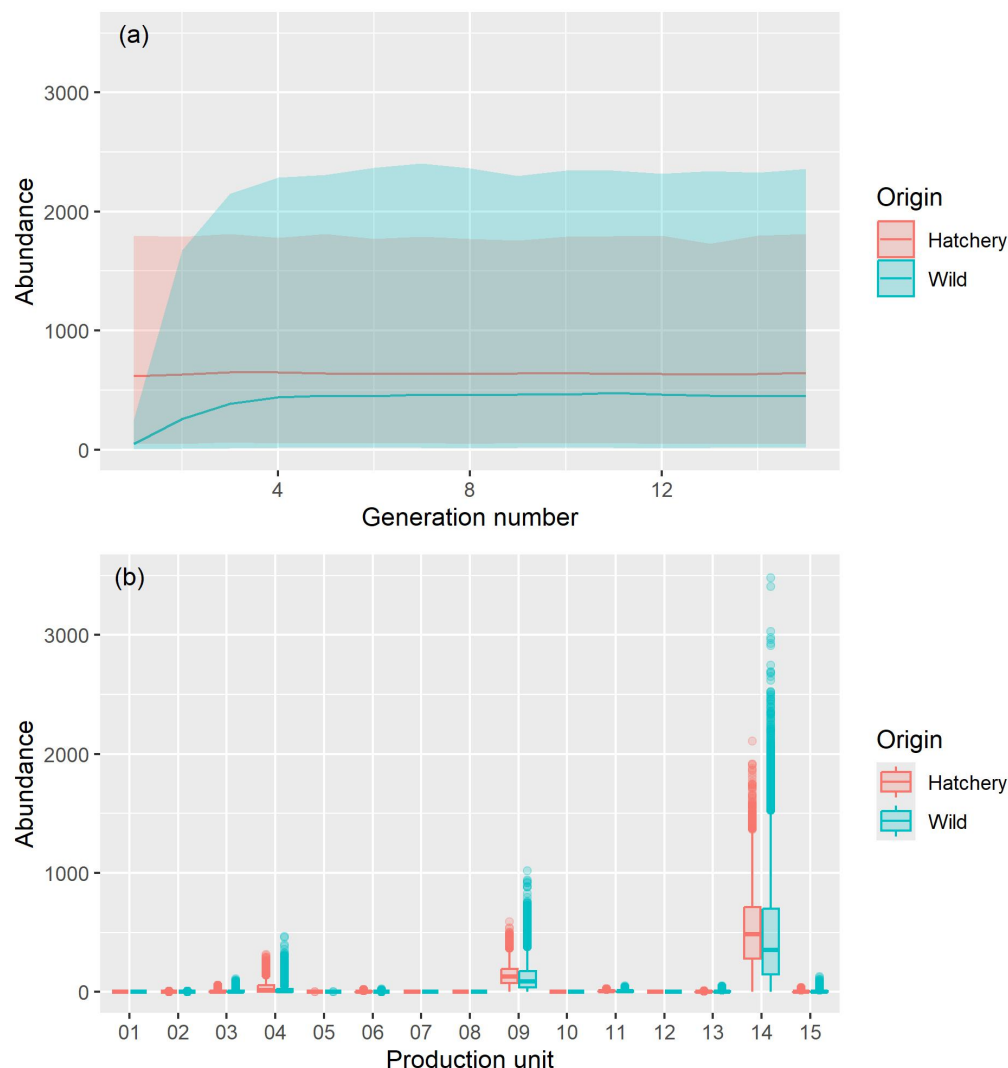
dia is an R-based implementation of a previously closed-source life cycle model of Atlantic salmon population dynamics that is used to understand the sensitivity of species recovery trajectories to natural and anthropogenic marine and freshwater influences. It was developed to assess the sensitivity of restoration outcomes to uncertainty in life-history inputs alongside the impacts of dams and restoration activities. The DIA model uses empirical life-history estimates (e.g., survival), predictive flow and resulting flow-specific dam survival modeling, and other empirical data in freshwater and marine environments to simulate consecutive generations of Atlantic salmon in the Penobscot River (Maine, USA) under varying environmental conditions or management decisions. Management decisions include fish passage rates at dams, fishery harvest rates, and numbers and locations for hatchery stocking of fish (Nieland et al., 2013). Since development, it has been used for mechanistic exploration of key life-history uncertainties within the context of species recovery (Nieland et al., 2015) and to support decision-making at federally regulated hydropower dams on the Penobscot River (e.g., National Marine Fisheries Service, 2013; Nieland & Sheehan, 2020).

We created dia for use by fisheries researchers, managers, and practitioners interested in understanding population dynamics of intensively managed endangered Atlantic salmon in the USA. The R package maintains the core routines from the original closed-source version of

43 the model by replicating spreadsheet-based calculations, and incorporates original data and  
44 parameter sets as built-in objects that serve as default values for arguments of the primary  
45 user-facing functions.

46 The two primary user-facing functions within the `dia` package are the `run_dia()` and  
47 `run_dia_shiny()`, which provide redundant interfaces for using Dam Impact Analysis models  
48 in different ways. The `run_dia()` function provides an extensible interface to DIA that can  
49 be used for long-run simulation or decision-optimization studies, and allows incorporation  
50 of user-specified data sets such as flow-correlated survival probabilities at dams and in  
51 free-flowing river reaches, marine survival and other life-history inputs, or fish-stocking data.  
52 The `run_dia_shiny()` function deploys a graphical user interface using the shiny package  
53 (Chang et al. (2022)) that is less extensible but more easily used by fishery managers and  
54 practitioners who may be less familiar with programming. `run_dia_shiny()` also includes  
55 exportable results from simulation models including .csv or other flat-file formats and default  
56 plots through the ggplot2 R package [Wickham (2016); Wickham et al. (2019); Figure 1].  
57 Both can be deployed on networked servers as any other R or shiny application to improve  
58 accessibility or facilitate use on high performance computers for large simulations. The GitHub  
59 repository (Stich et al., 2021) includes additional instructions for installation and a variety  
60 of potential uses of `run_dia()` and `run_dia_shiny()`, with shorter examples included in the  
61 package help files. While implementation is currently limited to the Penobscot River as a  
62 priority conservation water in the USA, the package could serve as a template for extending  
63 similar modeling approaches to Atlantic salmon and other sea-run fish in watersheds across  
64 the globe.

DRAFT



**Figure 1:** Example graphical outputs using the default argument values (Nieland & Sheehan, 2020) for `run_dia()` to run 10,000 simulations, showing (a) the number of two-sea-winter adult females of hatchery or wild origin returning to the watershed during each generation, and (b) the number of those fish returning to each production unit within the watershed after 15 generations.

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge contributions from Rory Saunders, Tara Trinko-Lake, Jeffrey Murphy, and Justin Stevens in the original development of the NOAA Dam Impact Analysis model. This work was funded by the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Fisheries Science Center, with additional support from the SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station. Any use of trade, firm, or product names is for descriptive purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

## References

- Barber, B. L., Gibson, A. J., O'Malley, A. J., & Zydlewski, J. (2018). Does what goes up also come down? Using a recruitment model to balance alewife nutrient import and export. *Marine and Coastal Fisheries*, 10(2), 236–254. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mcf2.10021>

- 76 Chang, W., Cheng, J., Allaire, J. J., Sievert, C., Schloerke, B., Xie, Y., Allen, J., McPherson,  
77 J., Dipert, A., & Borges, B. (2022). *Shiny: Web application framework for R*. <https://doi.org/10.32614/CRAN.package.shiny>  
78
- 79 Limburg, K. E., & Waldman, J. R. (2009). Dramatic declines in North Atlantic diadromous  
80 fishes. *BioScience*, 59(11), 955–965. <https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2009.59.11.7>
- 81 National Marine Fisheries Service. (2013). *National Marine Fisheries Service Endan-*  
82 *gered Species Act Biological Opinion Amendment of License for the Mattaceunk*  
83 *Project f/NER/2013/9640*. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.  
84 <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/55737>
- 85 Nieland, J. L., & Sheehan, T. F. (2020). Quantifying the effects of dams on Atlantic salmon in  
86 the Penobscot River watershed, with a focus on Weldon Dam. In *Northeast Fisheries Science*  
87 *Center Reference Document 19-16*. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.  
88 <https://doi.org/10.25923/v67x-kk62>
- 89 Nieland, J. L., Sheehan, T. F., & Saunders, R. (2015). Assessing demographic effects of  
90 dams on diadromous fish: a case study for Atlantic salmon in the Penobscot River, Maine.  
91 *International Council for the Exploration of the Sea Journal of Marine Science*, 72(8),  
92 2423–2437. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsv083>
- 93 Nieland, J. L., Sheehan, T. F., Saunders, R., Murphy, J. S., Trinko Lake, T., & Stevens, J. R.  
94 (2013). Dam impact analysis model for Atlantic salmon in the Penobscot River, Maine.  
95 In *Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document 13-09*. National Oceanic;  
96 Atmospheric Administration. <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/4559>
- 97 R Core Team. (2024). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation  
98 for Statistical Computing. <https://www.R-project.org/>
- 99 Stich, D. S., Nieland, J. L., & Sheehan, T. F. (2021). dia: Atlantic salmon dam impact analysis  
100 (DIA) for R. In *GitHub repository*. GitHub. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13376045>
- 101 Stich, D. S., Sheehan, T. F., & Zydlewski, J. D. (2019). A dam passage performance standard  
102 model for American shad. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, 76(5),  
103 762–779. <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2018-0008>
- 104 Wickham, H. (2016). *ggplot2: Elegant graphics for data analysis*. Springer-Verlag New York.  
105 <https://doi.org/10.32614/CRAN.package.ggplot2>
- 106 Wickham, H., Averick, M., Bryan, J., Chang, W., D'Agostino McGowan, L., François, R.,  
107 Grolemund, G., Haye, A., Henry, L., Hester, J., Kuhn, M., Lin Pedersen, T., Mille, E., Bach, S.  
108 M., Müller, K., Jeroen Oo, D., Seidel, D. P., V., ... Yutani, H. (2019). Welcome to the tidyverse.  
109 *Journal of Open Source Software*, 4(43), 1686. <https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.01686>
- 110 Zydlewski, J., Stich, D. S., Roy, S., Bailey, M., Sheehan, T., & Sprankle, K. (2021). What  
111 have we lost? Modeling dam impacts on American shad populations through their native  
112 range. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.734213>