

NAC(01)10

Report of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization 4-8 June 2001, Mondariz, Galicia, Spain

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Pierre Tremblay (Canada), opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to Mondariz.
- 1.2 A list of participants at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Council and the Commissions of NASCO is included on page [] of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The agenda, NAC(01)11 (Annex 1), was adopted without amendment.

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Ms Kimberly Blankenbeker (United States) served as Rapporteur.

4. Review of the 2000 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 4.1 The Chairman of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM), Mr Tore Jakobsen, reviewed the 2000 fisheries in the North American Commission (NAC) area and presented the scientific advice relevant to the Commission (CNL(01)11). The ACFM Report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page [] of this document.
- 4.2 The representatives of the United States and Canada complimented Mr Jakobsen on his summary and neither Party asked for additional information on the scientific issues presented.

5. Review and Discussion of the 2001 Canadian and US Salmon Management Measures as they relate to the Mandate of the Commission and to the Findings of the ACFM Report from ICES

- 5.1 The representative of the United States presented a report on U.S. Atlantic salmon management and research activities in 2000, NAC(01)9 (Annex 2). She highlighted the recent listing of the Gulf of Maine distinct population segment as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) and noted that it is now illegal in the United States to “take” a listed Atlantic salmon. “Take” is broadly defined and includes harass, harm,

pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect, or attempt to engage in such conduct.

- 5.2 The representative of Canada asked if the ESA listing would impact the trade of salmon in the United States. The representative of the United States noted that there would be no direct impact on salmon trade. She stated that it would be possible under the ESA to list other salmon species based on similarity of appearance, which would affect trade, but that such action was not taken in this case.
- 5.3 The representative of Canada tabled a document reviewing Canada's Atlantic salmon management measures for 2001, NAC(01)7 (Annex 3). No questions concerning this presentation were raised.

6. Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Work of the Commission

- 6.1 The representative of Canada presented a document on the application of the Precautionary Approach to the management of Atlantic salmon fisheries, NAC(01)6. NASCO's provisional Precautionary Approach decision structure was applied to a selection of rivers (five in total) with different stock strategies and management policies. Canada plans to assess the usefulness of the decision structure in time for the review of this structure in 2002.
- 6.2 The representative of the United States also presented a document containing a trial application of the Precautionary Approach decision structure, NAC(01)8. The United States has no recreational or commercial fisheries for sea-run Atlantic salmon; therefore, the decision structure was applied to the Gulf of Maine distinct population segment and confirmed that listing this segment under the ESA was appropriate.

7. The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

- 7.1 The Secretary introduced document NAC(01)4 (Annex 4), which provides catch data and other information on St. Pierre and Miquelon's mixed stock Atlantic salmon fishery. St. Pierre and Miquelon reported harvesting 2.267 t of Atlantic salmon in 2000. This harvest level is a very slight decrease from 1998 and 1999 levels, but is still significantly higher than catch levels reported in the mid 1990s. In addition, the catch level is above the fourteen-year mean catch level of approximately 2 t.
- 7.2 The Commission took note of document CNL(01)30 (Annex 5), which contains background information on NASCO's efforts to engage France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) on Atlantic salmon issues. The Commission also took note of the recently received letter from France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon), CNL(01)37 (Annex 6), responding to NASCO's Resolution by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean Concerning St. Pierre and Miquelon (CNL(00)59), which was adopted in 2000.
- 7.3 The representative of the United States expressed his disappointment with the response letter submitted by France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) and with the fact that a representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) was not present at the

2001 NASCO Annual Meeting despite initial indications that France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) would accept NASCO's invitation to attend as an observer.

- 7.4 The Commission noted the need to continue efforts to improve cooperation with France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) on Atlantic salmon issues. In an effort to improve cooperation and to gather much needed scientific information, the representative of the United States indicated U.S. willingness to embark on a joint sampling programme of the salmon fishery in St. Pierre and Miquelon in 2002. The representative of the United States also expressed interest in collaborating with Canada on this effort.
- 7.5 The representative of Canada reminded the Commission that Canada has a bilateral fisheries arrangement with France, but he noted that it has not been particularly successful in addressing Atlantic salmon issues. He supported the suggestion by the representative of the United States to cooperate in a sampling programme in St. Pierre and Miquelon, which represented a new approach for engaging France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon), and commented on the need for the United States and Canada to coordinate on the best way to move forward with the sampling programme.
- 7.6 The Commission will inform the Council of its interest in establishing a programme to sample the fishery at St. Pierre and Miquelon in 2002 and to seek Council support for this effort. The Parties agreed that multilateral support for such an effort is important.

8. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

- 8.1 Mr Rex Porter, Co-Chair of the Scientific Working Group on Salmonid Introductions and Transfers, presented the report of the activities of the working group in 2000/2001, NAC(01)5 (Annex 7).
- 8.2 The representative of Canada noted that his country will act in respect of the NASCO guidelines concerning transgenic fish and will not permit them to be placed in marine or freshwater cages in the foreseeable future. Canada is considering approaches for introductions and transfers that are based on risk management and the Precautionary Approach. This work would take some time to complete and, following such work, there would be a need to re-visit the draft revisions to the NAC protocols. Furthermore, under a risk-based approach, and given current levels of knowledge, technology and industry policies, Canada would not permit the placement of transgenic fish into marine and freshwater cages. He pointed out that this risk-based approach to rejecting transgenics is the reason for the apparent inconsistency in the current draft NAC protocols on introductions and transfers and NASCO's guidelines on transgenic salmon. The draft protocols state that if transgenic salmon are used in marine cages, they must be sterile. The Council's guidelines on transgenic salmon state that all possible action should be taken to ensure that the use of transgenic salmon, in any part of the NASCO Convention area, be confined to secure, self-contained, land-based facilities.
- 8.3 The representative of the United States recognized the potential conflict between the protocols and the guidelines but underscored the fact that the NAC protocols were still in a formative draft stage and that they would not be finalized prior to next year's Annual Meeting. Given this procedural situation, therefore, he indicated that it would be premature to attempt to align the protocols and the guidelines at this NASCO meeting.

- 8.4 The representative of Canada concurred with the United States that this was not the meeting to address the possible conflict between the protocols and the guidelines. He expressed the view that the approach contained in the guidelines should guide the Commission.

9. Impacts of Acid Rain on Salmon

- 9.1 The Secretary recalled that, during the 2000 Commission meeting, the representative of Canada reported on the effects of acid rain on Atlantic salmon in the Southern Upland of Nova Scotia. The Commission had agreed to investigate the possibility of contacting the Committee on Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) regarding the potential for acid rain to impact salmon.
- 9.2 The Secretary noted that he had not contacted CEC about the acid rain issue. Canada had not followed up with CEC after last year's meeting but would look into doing so before the 2002 meeting and report back.
- 9.3 The representative of Canada stated that the issue of acid rain is complex and far-reaching and that he would like to retain the item on the Commission agenda.

10. Sampling in the Labrador Fishery

- 10.1 The representative of Canada briefly reviewed Canada's sampling efforts in Labrador. He noted that Canada has conducted two types of monitoring in the past: in-river sampling and sampling of the coastal fishery. He reported that, in 2001, only the English River is being monitored. In addition, Canada increased its river guardian programme in 2001, which will improve surveillance in many rivers of southern Labrador.
- 10.2 The representative of Canada reported that funding had been identified in Canada to support additional monitoring and sampling work in two Labrador rivers starting in 2002. The representative of the United States noted the critical importance adequate sampling in Labrador has for the functioning of the scientific model that predicts pre-fishery abundance for the West Greenland fishery and commended Canada on its commitment to improve monitoring and data collection in this important area.

11. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 11.1 The Chairman announced that the winner of the Commission's prize of \$1,500 (U.S.) was Mr Curtis Scott, Vanceboro, Maine. The winning tag was of U.S. origin and was applied to a smolt released from Green Lake National Fish Hatchery into the St. Croix River, a boundary water between Maine and New Brunswick, in 1983. It was found on the bank of the river in December 1999. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

12. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice

- 12.1 The Commission reviewed the relevant section of document SSC(01)3 and agreed to recommend it to the Council as part of the annual request to ICES for scientific advice. The request to ICES as agreed by the Council, CNL(01)66, is included on page [] of the report.

13. Other Business

- 13.1 There was no other business.

14. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 14.1 The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting at the time and place of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Council, 3-7 June 2002.

15. Consideration of the Report of the Meeting

- 15.1 The Commission agreed a report of the meeting, NAC(01)10.