

Council

CNL(05)51

Summary of Actions taken by Canada in relation to Conservation and Management of Salmon Stocks and the Application of the Precautionary Approach

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Under Canada's report on Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention, Canada has announced a national policy framework for the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon with a focus on the restoration and sustainable management of diverse Atlantic salmon populations and their habitat. The Wild Atlantic Salmon Policy will provide guidance on major elements of salmon management and help in the planning and coordination of research on wild Atlantic salmon.

A CAN\$30 million Atlantic Salmon Endowment Fund has also been established and will be held in trust. The interest earned on the fund will be used to help community groups on improving habitat and strengthening watershed planning.

In the past year; there were major enforcement actions against salmon poaching in Newfoundland and Labrador. This resulted in fines of several thousand dollars, forfeiture of fishing gear and, in some cases, jail terms for more serious offenders.

The NASCO Decision Structure is very similar to the process that Canadian fisheries managers already use when making their decisions. Atlantic salmon fishing in Canada is regulated under management plans that are developed for each area, in consultation with stakeholders. Conservation limits are established for each river, management targets are set for many rivers, and in-season monitoring indicates whether conservation limits will be met. This triggers pre-agreed rules for actions to be taken if conservation limits are not being met. Managers' decisions are well documented in the management plans.

Canada continues to implement and expand a community stewardship approach to management of salmon rivers, led by local stakeholders and Aboriginal communities, with the support of all levels of government. A good example of this collaboration is on the Restigouche River where governments and the communities are moving towards the harmonization of management measures to allow for a more orderly management of the fishery.

On habitat, community stewardship is an integral part of Canada's program for habitat protection and restoration. This is a cost-effective program which encourages involvement of the public, NGOs, governments and the private sector in habitat issues.

Some recent examples of these types of initiatives include the Miramichi River, where a complete river inventory on habitat has been conducted to identify sensitive areas where improvements can be made on a priority basis for salmon conservation, and projects undertaken by le Fondation de la faune du Québec with more than \$ 3 million Canadian spent to support various groups working on habitat improvements and restoration, documenting threats to habitat and enhancing knowledge of salmon habitat.

In regards to Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics, we are currently implementing a number of important programs that I referred to in my opening statement. In particular, we have a National Aquatic Animal Health Program. The program provides

overall direction concerning aquatic diseases on surveillance, monitoring and disease response, as well as quarantine and movement controls, and eradication.

We are currently developing a third-party audited certification program for salmon farms. This internationally recognized program called 'Safe Quality Food' and the Canadian Aquaculture Industry's National Code System for Responsible Aquaculture is a fully integrated system. It addresses food safety, product quality, environmental stewardship, animal care, and health and safety issues.

Canada has also initiated a scientific review of the potential environmental effects of aquaculture under three main themes: impacts of wastes; chemicals used by the industry; and interactions between farmed fish and wild species. The review will identify knowledge gaps and research needs. As well a review of scientific knowledge is being done in the area of the habitat effects of salmon aquaculture. This will add to the growing body of knowledge that enables the appropriate siting of aquaculture facilities and regulation of aquaculture operations to minimize effects on fish habitat. (The initial reports are available on our website - www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

Canada and the United States have reached agreement on the issue of introductions and transfers, and next year Canada will report under the Williamsburg Resolution.

Our report on the Guidelines on Stock Rebuilding Programs includes the following:

In Canada, management decisions on stocks that are below conservation limits are deemed to be stock rebuilding measures. For example in Quebec, a catch and release policy for MSW is mandatory for all the rivers under their conservation limits. It is the first step to rebuild the stock.

For other rivers such as Jacques-Cartier and Malbaie Rivers, there is a five-year stocking program to accelerate rebuilding. In addition, Atlantic salmon were reintroduced to the Jacques-Cartier River where they had disappeared 100 years ago, by constructing fish passages on small-scale hydro developments and trucking adult salmon to a conservation area with high quality habitat. This resulted in a count of more than 1,000 salmon on two occasions.

The salmon populations in 32 Inner Bay of Fundy rivers have been listed as "endangered" under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*. Under a Recovery Strategy for these populations, stock rebuilding efforts are currently underway for priority rivers. Finally, live gene banking and individual fish pedigree techniques are used to maintain the genetic integrity of the stocks in each of those rivers.