

Agenda item 6.1 For information

Council

CNL(16)23

Annual Progress Report on Actions Taken Under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2015

United States

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Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2015

The primary purposes of the Annual Progress Reports are to provide details of:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plan;
- actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention

These reports will be reviewed by the Council. Please complete this form and return it to the Secretariat by 1 April 2016.

Party:	United States
Jurisdiction/Region:	

1: Changes to the Implementation Plan

1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan (Where changes are proposed, the revised Implementation Plans should be submitted to the Secretariat by 1 December).

None beyond those provided in December of 2014 and December of 2015.

1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.

Species in the Spotlight

In 2016, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) formally announced a new program to focus and redouble its efforts to protect some of the species that are currently among the most at risk of extinction in the near future. The effort is called the "Species in the Spotlight: Survive to Thrive" initiative, a concerted agency-wide effort to spotlight and save these highly at-risk species. Based on specific criteria, the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic Salmon was selected as one of eight "Species in the Spotlight" nationally. At the regional level, we recently developed a 5-year action plan (that builds upon the draft recovery plan) that details the focused efforts needed to reduce threats and stabilize population declines of the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic Salmon. The plan highlights four key areas: reconnecting the Gulf of Maine with headwater habitats; increasing the number of fish successfully entering the marine environment; reducing international fishery mortality; and increasing our understanding and ability to improve survival in the marine environment. We now seek to engage our partners in the public and private sectors in actions they can take to support this important effort.

2: Stock status and catches.

2.1 Provide a description of any new factors which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks and, if there has been any significant change in stock status since the development of the Implementation Plan, provide a brief (200 word max) summary of these changes.

The status of stocks in the United States remains dire. Provisionally, returns to U.S. waters in 2015 were 921.

2.2 Provide the following information on catches:(nominal catch equals reported quantity of salmon caught and retained in tonnes 'round fresh weight' (i.e. weight of whole, ungutted, unfrozen fish) or 'round fresh weight equivalent').

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(a) provisional nominal	In-river	Estuarine	Coastal	Total
catch (which may be	0	0	0	0
subject to revision) for				
2015 (tonnes)				
(b) confirmed nominal	0	0	0	0
catch of salmon for				
2014 (tonnes)				
(c) estimated unreported	0	0	0	0
catch for 2015 (tonnes)				
(d) number and	No sea-run salmon are subject to recreational fishing. There are,			
percentage of salmon	however, small fisheries for domestic broodstock in the Merrimack,			
caught and released in	Naugatuck, and Shetucket Rivers in Southern New England; these rivers			
recreational fisheries in	are outside the geographic range of endangered salmon.			
2015	and a manual me Beege at the second s			

3: Implementation Plan Actions.

3.1 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to the Management of Salmon Fisheries (Section 2.8 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

500	seeking more defaited information, this will not be evaluated by the Keview Group.		
Action	Description of Action	Continue to remain active in the West Greenland	
F1:	(as submitted in the IP):	Commission and the North American Commission	
	Expected Outcome	Continued collaborative management of the fishery at	
	(as submitted in the IP):	West Greenland, enhanced collaboration with France	
		(in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) regarding the	
		fishery at St. Pierre et Miquelon, and enhanced	
		collaboration with Canada regarding the fishery in	
		Labrador	
	Progress on Action to Date	West Greenland Commission (WGC): The United	
	(see note above):	States continues to work with the other parties to the	
		WGC. In 2015, we participated in the intersessional	
		meeting of the WGC in Greenland and the annual	
		meeting of the WGC in Canada, resulting in regulatory	
		measures for 2015, 2016, and 2017. We also supported	
		continued sampling in the West Greenland fishery. In	
		February of 2016, we participated in the Working	

	Current Status of Action	Group on the Application of the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery. We are preparing for both the intersessional WGC meeting and the annual meeting of the WGC in June 2016, and intend to consult with all the parties in advance of those meetings to help ensure their success. North American Commission (NAC): We have reviewed a considerable amount of new information pertaining to the mixed-stock fishery in Labrador. We will confer with Canada prior to the annual meeting. We will continue to support efforts to monitor and sample in the fishery that continues at St. Pierre et Miquelon.
	(e.g. 'Not started';	
	'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action	Description of Action	Work with state authorities to ensure that recreational
F2:	(as submitted in the IP):	fisheries for other species, such as brook trout, reduce bycatch of salmon to the maximum extent possible.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Closures of certain areas of rivers, gear restrictions, bag limit reductions and other means could be agreed to within the context of a conservation plan for recreational fishing permitted by the State of Maine.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	There are stringent and extensive regulations governing recreational fishing (http://www.eregulations.com/maine/fishing/salmon- information/) in salmon habitats in addition to the "take" prohibitions of the Federal Endangered Species Act. Fishing regulations explain that sea-run salmon are federally endangered and cannot be removed from the water. Anglers are also prohibited from retaining landlocked salmon and brown trout above 25 inches in over 30 specific waters to ensure that sea-run salmon are not incidentally captured and retained. Also, biologists responsible for salmon waters, consult with one another regarding local management measures in order to reduce the effects of competition and predation on Atlantic salmon. These discussions have not yet resulted in the development of a comprehensive conservation plan applicable to the entire freshwater range of endangered salmon.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ' <i>Not started</i> '; ' <i>Ongoing</i> '; ' <i>Completed</i> '):	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	

Anti-	Description of A ti	
Action E2.	Description of Action	Maintain closures for all directed fisheries for Atlantic
F3:	(as submitted in the IP):	salmon
	Expected Outcome	Reduced risk to productive capacity.
	(as submitted in the IP):	
	Progress on Action to Date	Directed fisheries for sea-run salmon are all closed.
	(see note above):	NOAA maintains a vessel landings database, a dealer sales database, and an observer database for commercial fisheries subject to federal jurisdiction. For 2015, we queried each of these databases and found no record of Atlantic salmon having been caught; the most recent summaries of the observer database are current through May of 2015. For more information, please see the following report: Wigley SE, Tholke C, Blaylock J, Rago PJ, Shield G. 2015. 2015 Discard estimation, precision, and sample size analyses for 14 federally managed species groups in the waters off the northeastern United States. US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 15-04. http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1504/c rd1504.pdf).
	Current Status of Action	Surveillance in rivers for potential poaching activity is conducted routinely by conservation law officers throughout the salmon's freshwater range. Approximately 20% of the Maine Warden Service's activities are directed at compliance with fishing regulations (including, but not limited to, Atlantic salmon surveillance activities). For more information, please see the following website: http://www.maine.gov/ifw/warden_service/pdfs/_2013 MWS%20Annual%20Report.pdf
	(e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	
	If 'Completed', has the	
	Action achieved its objective?	

3.2 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration (Section 3.4 of the Implementation Plan). Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

A	ction	Description of Action	Improve fish passage by removing dams, installing
Η	[1:	(as submitted in the IP):	fishways, removing culverts, decommission roads, and
			upgrading road-stream crossings
		Expected Outcome	Enhanced connectivity between freshwater habitats and
		(as submitted in the IP):	the Atlantic Ocean

Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Connectivity Projects in Maine In 2015, 21 additional aquatic connectivity projects were completed across the Gulf of Maine DPS, with the primary goal of restoring aquatic organism connectivity and ecological stream processes by allowing the natural flow of materials (water, wood, sediment). A total of over 77 kilometers of stream habitat were made accessible as a result of these projects. These efforts were made possible due to strong partnerships, including Natural Resource Conservation Service, Penobscot Indian Nation, Project SHARE, Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, Maine Dept. of Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), The Nature Conservancy, Downeast Lakes Land Trust, municipalities, lake associations, towns, and numerous private landowners.
	Fish Passage Improvements at the Holyoke Dam The Holyoke Hydroelectric Project is the first dam on the Connecticut River and operates a large lift for passing anadromous fish. A large percentage of emigrating smolts and returning adults in the Connecticut River basin pass this dam. Previously, downstream passage had been provided but considered inadequate. A new downstream fishway for the powerhouse was constructed in 2015. The new facility has both surface and low-level bypasses suitable for collecting different species including Atlantic salmon, shortnose sturgeon, American shad and American eel. After collection, fish are conveyed down a seasonally dedicated chute, over the upstream fishlift entrance and safely into a large receiving pool. These improvements, which also included turbine modifications, a new 12- degree intake screen, and enhancements to the upstream zone of passage, cost approximately \$12 million (USD) and will be operational by April of 2016. Effectiveness testing will begin in 2016.
	Completion of the Howland Bypass The Penobscot River Restoration Trust purchased the Howland Dam in 2010 along with the Veazie Dam (removed in 2013) and the Great Works Dam (removed in 2012). Construction of a fish bypass at the Howland Dam is a key element of the Penobscot River Restoration Project, which aims to significantly improve access to thousands of kilometers of riverine habitat while maintaining or increasing energy generation. Howland Dam is a run-of-the-river dam on

	Current Status of Action (e.g. ' <i>Not started';</i> ' <i>Ongoing'; 'Completed'</i>): If Completed, has the Action	the Piscataquis River, a major tributary which joins the Penobscot in Howland, approximately 32 river-miles from where the Veazie Dam was removed in 2013 and the head of tide. Just upstream of the Howland bypass, the Piscataquis and Pleasant rivers offer prime spawning and nursery habitat for Atlantic salmon and American shad. Successful restoration of self- sustaining runs of salmon, shad, and other migratory fish using the upper watershed depends on access to this habitat in the headwaters of the Penobscot River system. The Piscataquis River is now flowing through the bypass past the Howland Dam as initial testing of watering the Howland Bypass channel took place on September 28, 2015. Although there remains work to be done, the Bypass is well on the way to being fully operational for the spring migrations in 2016. Ongoing
Action H2:	achieved its objective? Description of Action (as submitted in the IP): Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP): Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Continue to implement Clean Water Act and other federal and state laws Continued water quality improvement The Maine Department of Environmental Protection implements water quality programs under the Clean Water Act and state law. The Department is responsible for managing, protecting and enhancing the quality of Maine's water resources through voluntary, regulatory and educational programs. The Department collaborates with local, state and federal agencies to plan and implement strategies to protect Maine's water quality. An online archive of enforcement and monitoring results over the last five years is available online at echo.epa.gov. A summary of the last five years of enforcement actions in Maine pursuant to the Clean Water Act over the last five years reveals a total of roughly 400,000 (USD) in fines.

		Total Monetary Penalties Assessed (All)
		\$240K
		\$200K
		\$160K
		\$120K
		\$80K
		\$40K
		\$0K 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016
		Fiscal Year
		Eigung U2. Total monotomy nonalting account related to
		Figure H2. Total monetary penalties assessed related to enforcement actions in Maine from 2011 to (March)
		2016.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	(e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	
	If Completed, has the Action	
	achieved its objective?	
Action H3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Conduct consultations on all federal actions in areas where Atlantic salmon Essential Fish Habitat is
		designated and issue conservation recommendations to
	Expected Outcome	avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to salmon habitat No net loss of productive capacity
	(as submitted in the IP):	
	Progress on Action to Date (<i>see note above</i>):	Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, (Essential Fish Habitat) EFH must be designated for all managed
		species. For Atlantic salmon, EFH (which equates
		roughly to the historic range of the species) has been designated by NOAA and the New England Fishery
		Management Council
		(http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/hcd/we
		bintro.html). The EFH provisions of the Act require that NOAA consult with federal agencies where their
		activities occur in or near EFH. NOAA incorporates
		EFH consultations into interagency procedures previously established under the National
		Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act,
		Clean Water Act, Fish and Wildlife Act, or other applicable statutes. If a federal or state project may have
		an adverse effect on EFH, Federal action agencies are
		required to prepare an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment which must include the following: (1) a
		description of the proposed action; (2) an analysis of the

	Current Status of Action (e.g. ' <i>Not started';</i>	effects, including cumulative effects of the actions on EFH, the managed species, and associated species by life history. NMFS is then required to develop EFH conservation recommendations for the project. These recommendations may include measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate, or otherwise offset adverse effects on EFH. Federal agencies are required to respond to EFH conservation recommendations in writing within 30 days explaining how they will incorporate them or why they will not. In 2015, approximately 40 requests for consultation were received, and 10 EFH consultations were conducted. While this is our best attempt to quantify progress under this action, we caution that it should not be used as a metric to compare progress from year to year. We respond to requests for EFH consultation as they are received and do not have control over the number of requests received in a given year. In many instances, EFH conservation recommendations are not necessary because project proponents are already proposing best management practices to reduce impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Ongoing
Action	<i>'Ongoing'; 'Completed'</i>): If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective? Description of Action	Issue conservation recommendations to avoid and
H4:	(as submitted in the IP):	minimize impacts to salmon habitat on all federal actions in areas where Atlantic salmon are listed as endangered and Critical Habitat is designated
	Expected Outcome (<i>as submitted in the IP</i>): Progress on Action to Date (<i>see note above</i>):	No net loss of productive capacity Under the Endangered Species Act, the United States has designated critical habitat for Atlantic salmon. NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) conduct consultations with other federal agencies pursuant to the Endangered Species Act which requires all federal agencies to ensure that any action they undertake or fund does not prevent the survival and recovery of endangered Atlantic salmon. The Endangered Species Act also requires NOAA and USFWS to analyse whether an action may result in destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. If it does, NOAA and USFWS must develop alternatives that the action agencies must comply with in order to receive legal coverage for that activity

	In 2015, NOAA and USFWS completed approximately 12 consultations within designated Critical Habitat. In each consultation, conservation recommendations made by NOAA or USFWS led to changes in actions that prevented degradation of designated critical habitat and reduced incidental mortality (i.e., "take" as defined by the ESA) to levels that did not prevent the survival and recovery of endangered salmon.
Current Status of Action (e.g. ' <i>Not started</i> '; ' <i>Ongoing</i> '; ' <i>Completed</i> '): If Completed, has the Action	Ongoing
achieved its objective?	

3.3 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics (Section 4.8 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

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Action A1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP): Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Continue to monitor implementation of protective measures identified in the Biological Opinion from 2003. Continue collaboration with Canadian provincial and federal agencies to inform new regulations for consistency with U.S. federal permit requirements. Zero escapes, reduced disease transfer
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	We continue to monitor compliance with protective measures in place within the U.S. salmon farming industry. The current status of active farm sites in Maine shows all sites are in full compliance with the required permit conditions. In 2015, there were no reports of farmed fish captured in Maine Rivers containing endangered Atlantic salmon. A survey of sea lice infestation rates of the wild fish
		community of Cobscook Bay (an area with active salmon farming operations) is now available. Jensen et al. (2015) sampled over 6,000 fish (no Atlantic salmon) in 2012 They observed sea lice on 10 fish species, but only <i>Caligus elongatus</i> was found with no individuals being identified as <i>Lepeophtheirus salmonis</i> . Jensen AJ, GB Zydlewski, S Barker, and M Pietrak. 2015. Sea lice infestations of a wild fish assemblage in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean, Transactions of the
		American Fisheries Society, 145:1, 7-16, DOI: 10.1080/00028487.2015.1091381 In addition, NOAA and Fisheries and Oceans (Canada) recently announced a new partnership to undertake greater cooperation in environmental management of

		the marine aquaculture sector and identify potential areas for further regulatory coordination. The partnership is part of a broader initiative known as the Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC), launched by President Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Harper in 2011 to encourage smarter and more effective approaches to regulation in the U.S. and Canada. The initiative aims to make the U.S. and Canadian economies stronger and more competitive, while meeting the fundamental responsibilities to protect safety and welfare of citizens. http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/homepage_stor ies/08_noaa_dfo.html
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ' <i>Not started</i> '; ' <i>Ongoing</i> '; ' <i>Completed</i> '):	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action A2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Implement specific regulations and guidelines for importation of baitfish described in State laws and a National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP).
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduced transmission of diseases of concern including; Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia and Bacterial Kidney Disease.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	The Northeast Fish Health Committee (NEFHC, a subcommittee of the Northeast Fisheries Administrators Association) encourages state and federal fish and wildlife agencies to develop rules, regulations, and/or protocols to manage fish importation in ways that minimize the movement of pathogens. The NEFHC annually reviews the fish health status of the Northeast states and have developed regional guidelines that enable state resource agencies to prevent the importation or transfer among member states of fish infected with the listed pathogens of concern. In 2015, the NEFHC completed revisions to the existing fish health guidelines to include fish importation, movement and transfer between all states in the Northeast United States (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia). These revisions have been unanimously accepted by the Northeast Fisheries Administrators for each of the States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS)
		The United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) has established a non-regulatory framework for the improvement and verification of farmed aquatic

	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	animals produced in the United States referred to as Commercial Aquaculture Health Program Standards (CAHPS). The principle components of the program should provide Federal, State and Tribal authorities a robust process for early disease detection, surveillance, reporting and response for the control of aquatic animal pathogens and to prevent pathogen dissemination via movement and trade of aquatic animals. Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action A3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP): Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Implement broodstock management protocols at conservation hatcheries. Slow the rate of the loss of genetic diversity.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Estimates of genetic diversity are used to monitor if genetic diversity within seven broodstock populations is being maintained over time. Maintenance of genetic diversity is a primary goal of the hatchery program: to maintain the genetic characteristics of each individual broodstock, to allow for the diversity to persist for natural selection and adaptation to occur, and to ensure that genetic diversity is not being lost inadvertently due to management practices. Estimates of heterozygosity (observed and expected) compared over time within a broodstock and between broodstocks indicate that similar levels of diversity are present in each broodstock; however, some broodstocks, such as the Dennys and Pleasant River broodstock, have slightly decreased estimates of allelic diversity relative to other broodstocks, and observed decreases in the past 10 years, likely a result of decreased broodstock number. Estimates of effective population size also vary between broodstocks from between 50 to 150 for most populations to over 400 for the Penobscot, due to the larger total broodstock number and overall population size of the Penobscot River population (see below). In addition, pedigree lines have been established for the Dennys population to more assertively reduce the rate of loss of genetic diversity and to increase estimates of effective population size. A pedigree line was also recently established for the Narraguagus River.

		450 * * • Dennys 350 * * • Dennys 300 * * * • 250 * * * • 250 * * * • 250 * * * • 150 * * * Narraguagus 150 * * • Pleasant 50 0 2005 2010 2015
	Current Status of Antion	Figure A3. Estimates of effective population size for the seven Atlantic salmon broodstocks managed through the USFWS conservation hatchery program in Maine. Note: The large increase in effective population size in the Penobscot population, starting in 2007, was due to an increase in the target number of broodstock collected for spawning.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ' <i>Not started</i> '; ' <i>Ongoing</i> '; ' <i>Completed</i> '): If Completed, has the Action	Ongoing
Action A4:	achieved its objective? Description of Action (as submitted in the IP): Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP): Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Coordination with state programs that stock salmonids to support recreational fisheries. Identification of potential areas of overlap of salmon and other stocked salmonids. Many salmon rivers are no longer stocked with exotic species such as brown trout. Discussions and decisions on such matters most often occur on a river-by-river basis. There is not yet a comprehensive conservation plan for Atlantic salmon regarding the stocking of salmonids to support recreational fisheries that has been agreed to by all relevant State government authorities and no specific date set for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to develop a comprehensive conservation plan. There is, however, progress in curtailing stocking of non- native salmonids in salmon rivers. For example, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine Department of Marine Resources have agreed that the stocking locations of non-native salmonids will be spatially segregated from areas that are actively managed for Atlantic salmon. Ongoing

(e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	
If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	

4: Additional information required under the Convention

4.1 Details of any laws, regulations and programmes that have been adopted or repealed since the last notification.

None

4.2 Details of any new commitments concerning the adoption or maintenance in force for specified periods of time of conservation, restoration and other management measures.

None

4.3 Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.

None

4.4 Details of any new actions to invite the attention of States not Party to the Convention to matters relating to the activities of its vessels which could adversely affect salmon stocks subject to the Convention.

None

4.5 Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.

None

North American Commission Members only:

4.6 Details of any new measures to minimise by-catches of salmon originating in the rivers of the other member.

None

4.7 Details of any alteration to fishing patterns that result in the initiation of fishing or increase in catches of salmon originating in the rivers of another Party except with the consent of the latter.

None