

NAC(13)9

Report of the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

Westcourt Hotel, Drogheda, Ireland

4 - 7 June, 2013

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Stephen Gephard (US), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission.
- 1.2 The representative of the NGOs made an Opening Statement and expressed significant concern regarding the mixed-stock fishery at West Greenland, in particular after the discussions in the West Greenland Commission (Annex 1).

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, NAC(13)10 (Annex 2).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Mr Tony Blanchard (Canada) was appointed as Rapporteur.

4. Review of the 2012 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 4.1 The representative of ICES, Mr Ian Russell, presented the report from ICES on the status of salmon stocks in the Commission Area. The review of the Framework of Indicators concluded that there were no significant changes and no requirement for new advice. His presentation is available as document NAC(13)6. The Advisory Committee (ACOM) report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page **XX** of this document.
- 4.2 The representatives of Canada and the United States thanked the representative of ICES and the Chairman of the North American Sub-Group of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon for their work.
- 4.3 The representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) questioned what the reference to seasonal coverage of sampling meant. The ICES representative indicated that the samples should be representative of the catch, spatially and temporally.

5. Management Objectives for Salmon Stocks in the US and Scotia-Fundy Region of Canada.

5.1 The Chairman reminded the Commission that at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting the United States had tabled a paper NAC(12)4, on management objectives for stocks in the United States and the Scotia-Fundy Region of Canada, and that the Parties agreed to discuss this issue at an intersessional meeting that resulted in development of US paper NAC(13)4 (Annex 3). Mr Tim Sheehan (US) provided an overview of the paper that suggests new management targets and qualified that the United States retained the right to revisit these objectives in case of changes in the US management process and/or significant changes in stock status.

5.2 The representative of Canada noted that recovery objectives have been defined for the three Designatable Units of Atlantic salmon (Outer Bay of Fundy, Southern Uplands of Nova Scotia, and Eastern Cape Breton, Nova Scotia) that comprise the Scotia-Fundy region. Canada is not in a position at this time to revise objectives and expressed a willingness to participate in a process to review this issue.

6. The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

6.1 The Chairman referenced Council document CNL(13)15 (Annex 4) and invited the representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to provide an overview of the paper and of the fishery in 2012. The representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) advised the Commission that the number of inspections in 2012 was 310, up from 60 in 2011. France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) had worked to improve management before the start of the 2013 season with information meetings being held in St. Pierre and Miquelon both for the professional and recreational fishermen:

- the permanent scientist in St. Pierre and Miquelon had given presentations on the biology and migrations of salmon and the work objectives of NASCO;
- the Maritime Affairs administration had presented the new 'carnet de peche'. This carnet includes reminders of the regulations and it is to be used to collect mandatory data on a daily basis: catch size, time of day and place of catching.

6.2 With regard to research and sampling, there is not enough scientific data to update the report; only two fish were sampled in 2012 while the objective was to sample 20 - 25 fish around Miquelon. The objective remains to sample at least 20 - 25 fish in 2013 and identify the origin of the sampled fish against a Northwest Atlantic baseline data. A France/Canada workshop was held in St. Pierre and Miquelon in 2012 (financed by the Territorial Council and Ministry). Scientists from Quebec and France met to carry out analysis of salmon scales. The workshop outlined the importance of the inter-lab collaboration exercise, and ended with common annotation of some scale images to start a reference collection of Northwest Atlantic salmon (report available online).

6.3 The representative of Canada asked if France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) intends to join NASCO in the foreseeable future. The representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that a letter from NASCO on this issue had been received and that a response would be forthcoming. However, it was noted

that at this time France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) would likely elect to remain as an observer but committed to provide catch and sampling data in a transparent manner.

- 6.4 The representative of the United States echoed Canada's interest in France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) joining NASCO. The United States has concern for every fish harvested given the low numbers returning to rivers in the United States. The United States believes that France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) should join NASCO to assist with data collection and the management of the fishery in the broader NASCO context. The United States appreciates the commitment of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to data collection and the meetings with the fishermen referred to earlier. The United States offered to accept and process scale samples from the fishery.
- 6.5 The representative of Canada indicated that the response from France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) was expected and that Canada will continue to press this matter bilaterally. Canada does not consider that the effort put into sampling is enough, and while it has offered to assist in the genetic analysis, no progress has been made on this issue. Canada continues to extend the offer to assist the scientist in St. Pierre and Miquelon with data collection and analysis.
- 6.6 The representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) thanked both Canada and the United States for the offer of assistance and advised that, in the past, samples had to be sent to a laboratory in France. However, they may be ready to have sample analysis completed in North America.
- 6.7 The NGO representative asked for clarification on the reason why the catch by the professional fishermen had decreased in 2012. The representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) was unaware of any specific reason for this. The NGO representative also asked if the reduction in fish caught by the professional fishermen was related to aquaculture fish from neighboring Newfoundland entering the market. Neither Canada nor France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) are aware that Canadian aquaculture fish are being shipped to St. Pierre and Miquelon. The NGO representative also asked if there are management measures for the fisheries including quotas and/or tags. The representative of France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that there are reporting requirements; however, there is no quota and tags are not required.

7. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

- 7.1 The representative of the United States presented its annual NAC report, NAC(13)3 (Annex 5) and summarized the number of: (1) disease incidences, (2) number of breaches of containment, and (3) summary of introductions of salmonids from outside the Commission area. The United States provided an overview of an existing application to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to sell genetically modified salmon raised in facilities outside of the United States. Egg production would be from a facility in Prince Edward Island, Canada and grow-out would occur in Panama. The proposal was for processed, table-ready salmon to enter the United States. The FDA is considering the proposal but has found no significant impact.

- 7.2 The representative of Canada presented its annual NAC report, NAC(13)5 (Annex 6) and summarized the number of: (1) disease incidences, (2) number of breaches of containment, and (3) summary of introductions of salmonids from outside the Commission area. Canada also informed the Commission that there had been applications from two companies on the East coast to import small numbers of Norwegian-origin Atlantic salmon eggs from an Icelandic facility for the purpose of conducting performance trials in net cages at sea. All these requests were denied, due in part to the uncertainty surrounding growth, survival, and reproduction of potential farm escapes.
- 7.3 The NGO representative asked for clarification to be provided on the incidence of disease in Canada and that Canada's paper NAC(13)5 be updated to provide this information. Canada agreed to do this and stated that the template should be changed to include this data for all parties.

8. Sampling in the Labrador Fishery

- 8.1 Canada had earlier provided an update on this issue during the Council meeting. A representative from Canada provided an overview of the sampling program to date, expected results and plans to carry on. A summary, NAC(13)11, is attached (Annex 7).
- 8.2 The United States representative thanked Canada for the update and indicated it is looking forward to the results of the sampling data.

9. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 9.1 The Chairman announced that the draw for the North American Commission prize in the NASCO Tag Incentive Scheme was made by the auditor on 9 May 2013. The winning tag was of Canadian origin and had been applied to a 1-sea-winter male salmon captured in the 'Cassilius' estuary index trapnet operated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. It was released into the river on 18 October 2011. It was recaptured as a kelt on 20 April 2012 during the spring kelt fishery in the Little Southwest Miramichi. The winner of the \$1,500 prize is Jody Middleton of Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. On behalf of the Commission the Chairman offered congratulations to the winner.

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

- 10.1 Mr Tim Sheehan (US), Acting Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC), provided an overview of the composition of the SSC and a summary of the Committee's questions for scientific advice to ICES. The questions specific to the North American Commission are very similar to those in 2012. The Commission agreed the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee in relation to the North American Commission area. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(13)10 (Annex 8).
- 10.2 The representative of the United States thanked the Committee for its work under the leadership of Tim Sheehan.

11. Other Business

- 11.1 Canada and the United States worked collaboratively to develop a sampling plan resulting in a proposal tabled by Canada, NAC(13)8 (Annex 9), that provides an example of a range of options to consider. Canada and the United States both offered assistance to support sampling in St. Pierre and Miquelon through increased coordination, sample processing and/or data analysis.
- 11.2 The NGO representative indicated that it may be difficult for the recreational fishermen to accurately determine the sex of the fish. The Chairman suggested that the paper remain as it is for this year and that the NGO comments could be considered for future versions.

12. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 12.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting at the same time and place as the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the Council in 2014.

13. Report of the Meeting

- 13.1 The Commission agreed on a report of the meeting.

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page **XX**, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of North American Commission papers is included in Annex 10.