

## NAC(14)5

### **Draft Report of the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the North American Commission**

**Le Nouveau Monde Hotel, Saint-Malo, France**

**3 - 6 June, 2014**

#### **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 Chairman noted that in as in the commission, in the interest of time, there would not be verbal opening statements. Opening statements from the parties and NGO's were welcome; however, they would be submitted as written statements and appended to the report of the meeting.
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Thirty first Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions is included on page XXX of this document.

#### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, NAC(14)XX (Annex X).

#### **3. Nomination of a Rapporteur**

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

#### **4. Election of Officers**

- 4.1 Mr Tony Blanchard (Canada) was elected as the new Chairman and Mr Patrick Keliher (United States) was elected Vice-Chairman of the North American Commission, the term to begin at the 2015 annual meeting.

#### **5. Review of the 2013 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area**

- 5.1 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(14)X. The Advisory Committee (ACOM) report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page XXX of this document.
- 5.2 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.

- 5.3 The representative of the United States indicated that while the increased catch in St. Pierre and Miquelon 2013 has been termed anomalous, the graph shows an increasing trend in catches since 1995, and while the total catch maybe considered relatively small, returns to rivers in Canada and United States can be affected by small harvests.
- 5.4 A representative of Canada questioned that if the number of released fish by anglers is not included in the catch statistics, are there implications for the stock estimates from the catch and release effort. The ICES chair indicated that estimates of returns are based on a number of factors including total catch, and the catch and release effort is considered in the assessment. Canada also questions if ICES is doing anything to identify smolt production. The chairman indicated that there are 12 rivers in North America where smolt production assessed.
- 5.5 The NGO representative questioned the representativeness of the sampling in Labrador. The ICES Chair responded that he could not comment on the detail of the sampling but did indicate that the Labrador area is large and it is important that the sampling be representative.

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

- 6.1 The chairman reminded the commission that the United States had previously tabled a paper on this matter and asked if there was any follow up discussion or statement from the parties required.
- 6.2 The representative from the United States advised that the United States had tabled the draft management objectives at Council in 2013 and based on the advice of the Council, the United States subsequently requested that ICES review the draft management objectives and provide advice. The advice from ICES was received and the United States indicated that as there were no objections to the approach ICES should use the management objectives in the future. There is no requirement for council to adopt these management objectives and the United States feels there was sufficient rigor around the process to proceed with implementation.
- 6.3 The representative from Canada thanked the United States for its work and providing the update. Canada also advised that recovery objectives are currently being developed the approach of the United States in this matter is being considered for implementation; however, the government of Canada has to involve the Province of Nova Scotia in these discussions and it will continue to work on this issue.

## **7. The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

- 7.1 The Chairman referenced Council document CNL(14)XX (Annex X) and indicated that a very good overview of the paper, which provided an update on the fishery in 2013, was provided in Council and invited an open discussion on the report.
- 7.2 The representative of the United States thanked France in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon for the report and noted that the level of information provided is better at informing the commission and this is appreciated. The United States invites France France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to continue to provide such information and to further engage NASCO. As it is not a member of NASCO, we can't discuss regulatory measures; however, the United States asks that management measures be

adopted by France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) that are consistent with the goals of NASCO.

- 7.3 The United States noted that the catch in SPM has increased and there seems to be no limit on the annual catch or number of permits issued. Without management controls the catch could increase significantly and hopes that France (in respect of SPM) will join the members to talk further and adopt management measures that control and limit catch.
- 7.4 The representative of Canada thanked France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) for the report. Canada also indicated full support for the statement by the United States and added that recommendations from COSEWIC regarding stocks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence being downgraded from threatened to endangered are the same stocks being fished by SPM and that it is difficult to deal with stakeholders on the COSEWIC recommendations while the SPM fishery continues. A country that is not member of NASCO catching fish from stocks listed as endangered is a problem. SPM should join NASCO so that it would have to abide by the same rules as other parties.

## **8. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers**

- 8.1 The chairman asked if the parties had anything to present.
- 8.2 The United States presented NAC 14(3) and indicated that this document had been previously circulated and shared with Canada and that it was willing to entertain any questions at this time. The United States did highlight page 1 related to releases and indicated that low level releases from aquaculture facilities are reported to other government agencies and NGO's.
- 8.3 Canada tabled NAC 14(4). Canada also indicated that some parties had stated they are not happy with the manner in which Canada reports on disease; however, this data is the property of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and its website is updated on a real time basis. Canada has provided the link to the website and feels that this is more appropriate than providing outdated data in a report to the commission. Regarding introductions and transfers, Canada confirms that the Saga strain was imported from Iceland for use in a land based production.
- 8.4 The United States thanked Canada for the additional information and ongoing dialogue on this issue and anticipates further cooperation in the future.
- 8.5 The NGO indicated that it appreciates the United States reporting small escapes and asked if Canada could do the same.
- 8.6 The representative of Canada indicated that the existing Regulatory regimes to report Canadian escapes are currently under review by Canada and its stakeholders. Though the thresholds to report the number of escapes vary per province, as aquaculture reporting is a responsibility of our provincial partners, we can note that the province of New Brunswick currently is required to report on escapes of 100 fish or more. Canada also notes that this existing New Brunswick Regulation is currently under review, and we anticipate a reduced threshold for reporting, potentially to be introduced at some point over the next year. For other Atlantic Canadian provinces, we also note that these provinces are reviewing existing regulations with the goal of further defining the necessary regulations to reduce the threshold to reduce and report escapes. In addition to changing the regulatory reporting obligations, and to ensure our stakeholders are consulted and involved, a Containment Liaison Committee has

been established in the Newfoundland region and one is scheduled to be developed in the Maritime region that will include regulators, the salmon farming industry and other stakeholders. These committees meet to review the escapement data and review Codes of Containment on an annual basis. Canada would be happy to Report to NASCO, and its North American Commission partners, on any changes to the existing Regulations, when these changes take place.

## **9. Sampling in the Labrador Fishery**

- 9.1 The representative of the United States that Gerald Chaput for the presentation on the results of the genetic studies in the special session. In relation to this work, the United States has recommended a couple of questions to ICES concerning to source of the fish taken in the Labrador fishery, through the Standing Scientific Committee.
- 9.2 The representative of Canada also thanks Mr. Chaput and the entire team involved in the project on genetic analysis.
- 9.3 The United States asked if Canada plans to continue sampling in index rivers in Labrador and, given the number of rivers currently being sampled out of the large number of rivers in Labrador, does Canada have plans to expand the sampling in future years.
- 9.3 The representative of Canada indicated that the sampling is funded by several departments and work will continue between to departments to maintain the current sampling programs. Expanded funding in the short term is unlikely; however it is Canada's intention to work with its partners to expand sampling in the future if the funding is available.

## **10. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize**

- 10.1 The draw for the North American Commission prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the auditor on 6 May. The winning tag was of Canadian origin. The tag was applied to a 1SW male salmon caught in the "Millerton" estuary index trapnet operated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the Southwest Miramachi River on 10 September 2013. It was recaptured on 14 September 2013 at Forks Pool on the Renous River (a tributary of the Southwest Miramachi), an upstream migration of about 50km from the tagging location which it completed in about four days.

## **11. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice**

- 11.1 The Chair of the Standing Scientific Committee thanks the members of committee for their participation in the process and presented its report of recommended questions for ICES advice.
- 11.2 The representative of Canada suggested an amendment to the North American Commission area question 3.4. The United States agreed with the change. Canada also indicated that it had some concern with question 3.6 and would require some time to discuss with members of the delegation to suggest alternative wording.
- 11.3 The parties agreed to refer the finalization of these questions to Council and the chair closed this agenda item.

## **12. Other Business**

12.1 None other business was raised.

## **13. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**

13.1 The next meeting of the commission will be at the same time and place of the Thirty Second meeting of NASCO.

## **14. Report of the Meeting**

14.1

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 **XX**.