

NAC(03)10

Report of the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization 2-6 June 2003, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Pierre Tremblay (Canada), opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.
- 1.2 The Chairman invited opening comments from the NAC members. The representative of the United States underscored the poor situation of US salmon populations, noted the importance of establishing a sampling program in St. Pierre and Miquelon, and expressed the expectation that the proposed revisions to the NAC protocols on introduction and transfers will be addressed over the course of the next year so that this issue can be resolved at the 2004 NASCO meeting.
- 1.3 The Chairman opened the floor for opening comments by NGO observers. No NGO statement was made.
- 1.4 A list of participants at the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included on page 215 of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The agenda, NAC(03)12 (Annex 1), was adopted without modification.

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

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

4. Review of the 2002 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 4.1 The representative of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM), Dr Walter Crozier, reviewed the 2002 fisheries in the NAC area and presented the scientific advice relevant to the Commission, CNL(03)8. The ACFM report, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page 127 of this document. The presentation overheads are contained in document CNL(03)44.
- 4.2 There were no questions from the Parties on the scientific advice.

5. Review and Discussion of the 2003 Canadian and U.S. Salmon Management Measures as they relate to the Mandate of the Commission and to the Findings of the ACFM Report from ICES

- 5.1 A representative of the United States presented a report on the U.S. Atlantic salmon management and research activities in 2002, NAC(03)7 (Annex 2).
- 5.2 A representative of Canada reviewed Canadian Atlantic salmon management measures for 2003, NAC(03)8 (Annex 3).

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

- 6.1 The Secretary noted that issues pertaining to the application of the Precautionary Approach to NASCO's work cut across all Commission areas and impact the work of the Council. He noted that the Council was addressing Precautionary Approach issues to ensure consistency within the Organization. He noted that it might be redundant to continue to include this item on Commission agendas and suggested that this item be deleted from the NAC agenda in the future. The members of the North American Commission recognized that the Precautionary Approach guided all of the work of the Commission and concurred that it did not need to be a separate agenda item.

7. The St. Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

- 7.1 The Secretary presented a report, NAC(03)3, on the St. Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery. In particular, he noted the significant discrepancy in the catch data provided by the French authorities to NASCO for 2002 (approximately 2 mt) and those data provided to ICES for the same period (3.6 mt). The Secretary also noted that NASCO had finally received a response from St. Pierre and Miquelon concerning a longstanding proposal to establish a cooperative sampling programme for its Atlantic salmon fishery. This response was positive toward setting up a sampling programme. He asked for direction from the Commission on how to proceed relative to these matters.
- 7.2 Concern was expressed about the discrepancy in the reported catch figures for 2002.
- 7.3 While welcoming the response from France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) with respect to a sampling programme, the Parties recalled past experience on this matter which had been quite frustrating. The North American Commission members expressed a sincere hope that a sampling programme along the lines set out by ICES would be implemented in the near term. In that regard, it was agreed that letters should be developed responding to France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) that would clearly state NASCO's view that the sampling programme be instituted in 2003 (including the genetics elements), seek clarification of elements of the French proposal (such as the meaning of "biometric study") and specify those elements of the sampling programme that appear to be missing from the French proposal, and indicate that relevant NASCO members are prepared to assist St. Pierre and Miquelon in developing and implementing the sampling programme. The letters from the President and Secretary, as agreed by the Council, are attached as Annex 4.

- 7.4 The United States and Canada agreed to consult with one another to coordinate their involvement in the sampling effort.

8. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

- 8.1 A representative of the United States presented a report on the 2002-03 activities of the NAC Scientific Working Group on Salmonid Introductions and Transfers, NAC(03)5. The Scientific Working Group raised concerns with respect to the shipments of mixed-sex diploid Gaspé strain Atlantic salmon into Newfoundland, and the continued use of mixed-sex rainbow trout in marine cage rearing in Atlantic Canada. The United States has initiated a process to eliminate European strains of Atlantic salmon from Maine cage rearing by 31 July 2004. The Scientific Working Group reported the detection of European ancestry in two juvenile Atlantic salmon in the Upper Salmon river.
- 8.2 The representative of the United States noted the uncertainties associated with the status of the protocols. The Parties took note of the internal review process ongoing in Canada. It was agreed that a bilateral working group should be set up to work on this issue intersessionally with a view to making a decision on the disposition of the revised protocols by the 2004 NASCO meeting.

9. Impacts of Acid Rain on Salmon

- 9.1 A representative of the United States presented a report on U.S. activities regarding acid rain, NAC(03)6. She noted that the focus of work in this area was on mitigation as opposed to causes and effects. She stressed the interest of the United States in reaching out to experts in other countries, such as Canada and Norway, relative to developing and implementing mitigation measures – in particular relative to a pilot liming project being planned for either 2004 or 2005.
- 9.2 The representative of Canada noted the importance of the issue. In this regard, he pointed out that Canada had ratified the Kyoto (Climate Change) accord. He noted Canada's interest in moving forward on this issue, recognizing resource limitations. He indicated Canada's intention to work with the United States to develop a work plan on this issue, which would include possible areas of cooperation. Toward this end, the representative of the United States encouraged Canada to become involved in the work of an acid rain task force created to research, coordinate, and steer the development of both the referenced pilot liming study and long-term management actions.
- 9.3 The Chairman urged the Parties to work out the details of this matter bilaterally and to report back in 2004.

10. Sampling in Labrador

- 10.1 A representative of Canada reported that a sampling programme had been initiated in Labrador based on a 2001 decision and that two major river systems and two small rivers were monitored in 2002. In 2003, Canada intends to continue to monitor these river systems. The representative noted that the work provides important information with respect to the status and trends of Labrador salmon stocks. Canada is considering

expanding its sampling programme to southern Labrador, possibly as soon as 2004 if funds are available.

- 10.2 The representative of the United States noted the importance of this sampling effort and supported its continuation in 2003.

11. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 11.1 The draw for the North American Commission prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditor at NASCO Headquarters on 21 May 2003. The winning tag was of Canadian origin. The tag was applied to a wild female salmon on 1 October 2001 at the trapnet at Millerton, New Brunswick, on the Main Southwest Miramichi River. It was recaptured by an angler on 23 April 2002 at Blissfield, New Brunswick, on the Main Southwest Miramichi River. The winner of the Commission's prize of \$1500 was Mr Colin Gilks, Storytown, New Brunswick. 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(03)2 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, is contained in document CNL(03)12 (Annex 5).

13. Other Business

- 13.1 The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the members of the Commission for another efficient and productive meeting. He thanked the NASCO Secretariat and the Rapporteur for their hard work. The Parties thanked the Chairman for his able leadership.
- 13.2 There was no other business.

14. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 14.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting at the same time and place as the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Council, 7-11 June 2004.

15. Report of the Meeting

- 15.1 The Commission agreed a report of the meeting, NAC(03)10.

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page 15, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of North American Commission papers is included in Annex 6 on page 35 of this document.