

NAC(04)10

Report of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the North American Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization 7-11 June 2004, Reykjavik, Iceland

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 Commission members. No statements were made. The Chairman opened the floor for comments by the NGO observers. Mr Chris Poupard (NGO Chairman) expressed regret that no North American NGOs could attend NASCO under the circumstances. He stated that NGOs could be an important asset to NASCO in developing a media campaign to raise public awareness about NASCO's activities.
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included on page XXX of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The agenda, NAC(04)11 (Annex 1), was adopted without modification.

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Ms Kimberly Blankenbeker (USA) served as rapporteur.

4. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The current Vice-Chairman, Mr George Lapointe (USA), was unanimously elected Chairman of the North American Commission for the next biennial period. Mr Guy Beaupré (Canada) was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman.

5. Review of the 2003 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 5.1 The representative of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM), Dr Walter Crozier, reviewed the 2003 fisheries in the NAC area and presented scientific advice relevant to the Commission, CNL(04)9. The ACFM report, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page XXX of this document. The presentation overheads are contained in document CNL(04)40.
- 5.2 The NAC members had no questions on the scientific advice. The Secretary asked why the status of eastern and western Atlantic salmon stocks originating from similar latitudes was so different. Dr Crozier explained that these fish exist in different marine

environments in most cases. The exception is non-maturing 1SW fish off West Greenland, which are showing severe declines on both sides of the ocean.

6. Review and Discussion of the 2004 Canadian and US Salmon Management Measures as they relate to the Mandate of the Commission and to the Findings of the ACFM Report from ICES

6.1 A representative of the United States presented a report on US Atlantic salmon management and research activities in 2003, NAC(04)7 (Annex 2).

6.2 Representatives of Canada reviewed Canadian Atlantic salmon management measures for 2004, NAC(04)8 (Annex 3).

7. The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

7.1 The Chairman and the Parties welcomed the participation of the representative from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon). The Chairman referred to two documents available concerning the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon, CNL(04)26 and NAC(04)5. He noted that a comprehensive discussion of the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery had occurred during the first Council session. He recalled that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) had indicated its intent to continue its scientific study of the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery, including beginning a genetics study in 2004 with assistance from Canada. The representative of Canada confirmed that Canadian scientists had already been in contact with their counterparts in St Pierre and Miquelon to move ahead with the proposed genetics work.

7.2 The Chairman and the representatives of Canada and the United States expressed appreciation to the representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for the increased collaboration with NASCO.

8. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

8.1 The representative of Canada presented a report on the 2003/2004 activities of the NAC Scientific Working Group on Salmonid Introductions and Transfers, NAC(04)6 (Annex 4).

8.2 It was noted that revisions to the NAC Protocols had been pending for a number of years. To address this situation, the Parties agreed to include in the NAC Protocols an acknowledgement that the United States and Canada utilize different methods within their countries for the authorization of introductions and transfers. In Canada, the National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms is the mechanism for the approval of introductions and transfers.

8.3 The NAC members noted that there is a requirement for the Parties to report to the NAC annually on any decision made under their respective jurisdictions that has impact on the other jurisdiction. The Parties agreed to consult each other if they receive a proposal for an introduction or transfer that may have such an impact.

8.4 The NAC Working Group shall be convened in 2004 to prepare a revised version of the NAC Protocols to reflect these changes and review the Protocols in light of the Williamsburg Resolution and the latest developments in other areas such as fish health and stocking guidelines. The revision will be distributed to both Parties for review and comment. The United States and Canada will hold a bilateral meeting prior to the 2005 NASCO Annual Meeting to finalize the Protocols.

9. Impacts of Acid Rain on Salmon

9.1 Representatives of the United States and Canada presented a report on cooperative work between the two countries on acid rain, including the results of a workshop, jointly sponsored with the Atlantic Salmon Federation, held in April 2004, NAC(04)9 (Annex 5).

9.2 The Secretary questioned why it could take 50 years or longer to re-establish natural buffering capacities in some rivers. A representative of Canada explained that some watersheds have no buffering capacity left. When this is the case, it takes many years to recover that buffering capacity and for pH to be improved sufficiently. He explained that acid rain has a chronic impact in rivers of Southwest Nova Scotia where the geology does not provide sufficient buffering.

9.3 The Chairman asked how often pH levels in North American rivers are monitored. A representative of Canada replied that Canada used to have an acid rain programme that actively monitored Canadian rivers. This programme gave a good indication of impacted rivers. He noted that funding ended several years ago and, consequently, pH levels of Canadian rivers are no longer checked regularly.

9.4 A representative of the United States commented that, unlike in Southwest Nova Scotia, high acidity is not a chronic problem in the United States. The problem in Maine is more episodic following snow melt and heavy rains. Salmon rivers in the United States still maintain some natural buffering capacity. He also noted that the United States is making an effort to improve its water quality monitoring programme on rivers in Maine with Atlantic salmon populations.

9.5 The Parties welcomed the report and noted the value of the workshop. The representative of the United States stated that NASCO provides an excellent forum for information exchange on issues such as this one. Given the general interest in this matter and the wide-ranging expertise among members of NASCO, she endorsed the recommendation in NAC(04)9 to include acid rain on the Council agenda next year and into the future. The representative of Canada concurred. As recommended in NAC(04)9, the Parties also agreed to continue their cooperative work on acid rain issues and to report back to the NAC in 2005 on the progress of this cooperation, including the status of their pilot liming projects.

10. Sampling in the Labrador Fishery

10.1 The representative of Canada reported that the sampling programme in Labrador would continue in 2004. The representative of the United States noted the importance of this sampling programme and expressed appreciation to Canada for its continuance.

11. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 11.1 The draw for the NAC prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditor on 24 May 2004. The winning tag was of Canadian origin. The tag was applied on 31 August 2003, in the estuary of the Southwest Miramichi River at Millerton as part of a programme to estimate the number of adult salmon returning to the Miramichi River. It was recaptured in September or October 2003. The winner of the Commission's prize of \$1500 was Mr Harry McSheffery of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. 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(04)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(04)13 (Annex 6).

13. Other Business

- 13.1 The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the members of the Commission for another efficient and productive meeting. He also thanked the NASCO Secretariat and the Rapporteur for their hard work.
- 13.2 The Parties expressed their appreciation to Mr Tremblay for his excellent leadership of the Commission over the past four years. The Chairman noted that it had been his pleasure to serve.
- 13.3 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-Second Annual Meeting of the Council, 6-10 June 2005, in Vichy, France.

15. Report of the Meeting

- 15.1 The Commission agreed a report of the meeting, NAC(04)10.

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page XXX, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of North American Commission papers is included in Annex 7 on page XXX of this document.