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|  | <p>Council</p> <p><i>Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery</i></p> | <p>CNL(24)22</p> <p>Agenda item 7e)</p> |
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Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide information about correspondence between France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) and the President of NASCO since the 2023 Annual Meeting and the report on the 2023 salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon.

Decision

No decision is required.

Background

In recent years, the Council and the North American Commission have been concerned about catches of salmon at St Pierre and Miquelon which, although low, occur at a time when there are serious concerns about the abundance of North American stocks and when strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North American Commission area. An item ‘Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery’ is therefore included on the agendas of both the Council and the North American Commission.

Invitation to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to join NASCO

At its [2022 Annual Meeting](#), Council agreed to write to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to invite them to join NASCO. This [letter](#), dated 16 December 2022, is available on the NASCO website.

During its [2023 Annual Meeting](#), Council noted that a response to the letter had not yet been received and agreed that NASCO should continue to encourage France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to join. Therefore, the President was asked to write to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) again.

A response to the 16 December 2022 letter, dated 29 August 2023, was received before the President had the opportunity to write once again, as requested by Council. A translation of the 29 August letter is contained in Annex 1 of this paper. The President responded to that letter on 20 March 2024 (Annex 2 of this paper).

Report on the 2023 Atlantic Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon

France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) has submitted a report to NASCO on the 2023 salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon. A translation of this report and the accompanying letter is included in Annex 3 of this paper.

In summary, the total weight of the 2023 catch was 1,452 kg, compared to 1,242 kg in 2022. The increased catch was taken in the recreational fishery, while the professional fishery reported a lower catch. The 2023 catch can be broken down as follows:

- Professional catch: 28 kg (13 salmon) was harvested by six vessels (compared to 100 kg / 47 salmon in 2022).
- Recreational catch: 1,424 kg (545 salmon) was harvested by 80 vessels (compared to 1,142 kg / 431 salmon in 2022).

Secretariat
Edinburgh
22 April 2024



Le Secrétaire d'État

Référence à rappeler :
SE / 2023D J0802 - NS

Paris, le **29 AOUT 2023**

Mr President,

In your letter of 16 December 2022 you invited France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to join the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) in order to enhance co-operation and dialogue relating to the conservation of salmon.

I share your concerns about the situation facing salmon and the declining stock status and I am also deeply committed to maintaining the sustainability of this cultural and traditional fishery on the archipelago of St Pierre and Miquelon.

In recent years, the management of the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery has again been strengthened to ensure the sustainable and rational management of the resource. To this end, in line with the measures introduced in 2017 to reduce the fishing season, further local measures have now been introduced. These have resulted in a limit in the number of fishing permits issued each year, a voluntary reduction in the recreational fishery season from 1 May – 21 July each year, greater involvement in the French and Canadian scientific programmes and increasing awareness among fishers of the need to manage the stock well.

The recreational fishers and the authorities in St Pierre and Miquelon are also actively working towards the creation of a fishing charter, through which the recreational fishers would commit to adhering strictly to the regulations to ensure the longevity of the Atlantic salmon resource and the marine ecosystem around the archipelago.

As stated in the annual report submitted to NASCO in advance of the 2023 Annual Meeting, the catch taken (exclusively in the French EEZ) continued to decline in 2022. There was almost a 54% reduction in the professional fishery and a 17.5% in the recreational fishery when compared to 2021.

In addition to the measures mentioned above, we would, of course, like to continue the regular collaboration between France and NASCO to ensure the sustainability of the resource. On this subject, I would like to thank you for highlighting the active collaboration of France for the past 20 years in the 2023 NASCO Report.

In light of the above, I would like to assure you that the preservation of the salmon stock is a crucial issue for St Pierre and Miquelon and that France wishes to retain its observer status and continue the close exchange with NASCO on all potential improvements to increase the sustainability of the fishery.

Yours sincerely,



Hervé BERVILLE

Monsieur Arnaud Peyronnet
Président de l'OCSAN
NASCO 11 Rutland Square
EDINBURG
EH1 2AS Scotland
United Kingdom

NASCO 11 Rutland Square Edinburgh EH1 2AS Scotland UK
 Telephone: (Int +44) 131 228 2551 Fax (Int +44) 131 228 4384
 e-mail: hq@nasco.int website: www.nasco.int



CNL39.142

20 March 2024

M. Hervé Berville
 Secrétaire d'État chargé de la Mer et de la Biodiversité
 Ministère de la Transition écologique et de la Cohésion des territoires
 246, boulevard Saint-Germain
 75007 Paris
 France

Dear Mr Berville,

As the incumbent President of NASCO, I write on behalf of the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) in response to your letter to my predecessor, Arnaud Peyronnet, dated 29 August 2023. The letter (ref. SE/2023D/0802-NS) confirmed that the French Government wishes to maintain its observer status to NASCO and wishes to continue the close exchange with NASCO on all potential improvements to increase the sustainability of the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery.

While the Council of NASCO welcomes the exchanges between St Pierre and Miquelon and NASCO, we are disappointed in this decision and would like to press France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to strengthen its relationship with NASCO by joining in 2024.

As you may know, Iceland has rejoined NASCO in 2024, following its withdrawal from the Organization in 2009 due to economic reasons at that time. In her [letter](#) to the previous NASCO President advising of Iceland's intention to rejoin the Organization, the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Svandís Svavarsdóttir, recognised 'the responsibility we [Iceland] bear in safeguarding this remarkable species for future generations' and stated that:

'We firmly believe that cooperation among nations is vital in addressing the challenges faced by our shared environment and we acknowledge the invaluable role played by NASCO in promoting the preservation and sustainable use of salmon populations [...] Rejoining NASCO will allow us to collaborate with like-minded nations and pool our expertise and resources to further the cause of salmon conservation.'

We believe that 2024 would be an excellent time for France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to join Iceland in strengthening the international co-operation in restoring and conserving wild Atlantic salmon across the North Atlantic Ocean by joining NASCO.

In addition, information presented during a Special Session held on climate change during our 2023 Annual Meeting showed that the warming environment will be devastating for wild Atlantic salmon, and its effects are already becoming evident. Already many Atlantic salmon stocks are threatened with extinction; the climate crisis is increasing the urgency to take meaningful action to ensure the future of this iconic species. The Special Session highlighted actions that NASCO Parties are taking in their own waters to mitigate those effects. However,

more work is needed urgently at the national and international level to address this existential threat.


To address this, and other threats to wild Atlantic salmon, the Parties agreed to relaunch NASCO, in 2024, with a renewed focus on restoring and conserving wild Atlantic salmon in the face of the climate crisis. A Working Group comprising representatives from the Parties and NGOs is currently developing a NASCO Strategy, with an accompanying Action Plan. This Strategy and Action Plan will set the future direction of the Organization and is designed to articulate clearly the actions NASCO intends to take meet its objective to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through international co-operation, taking account of best available scientific information. Joining NASCO in 2024 would allow France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to be involved in this process of shaping the future of NASCO and enjoy the same benefits as our other Contracting Parties, such as:

- meeting its obligations under Article 66 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, as described in the President's letter of 31 January 2022 (ref [CNL39.138](#));
- influencing the future of NASCO and being involved in NASCO's decision-making process; and
- joining NASCO's renewed effort to restore and conserve wild Atlantic salmon in the context of the climate emergency to ensure that populations across the North Atlantic are as resilient as possible.

I strongly urge France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), therefore, to join NASCO in 2024 and look forward to your response.

If you would like further information on NASCO's work, please do not hesitate to contact our Secretary, Dr Emma Hatfield, who will be very pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kimberly B R', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kimberly Damon-Randall
President

CC: Mme Marie Guévenoux – Deputy Minister responsible for Overseas Territories, for onward transmission to the Prefect of St Pierre and Miquelon



**Direction générale des affaires
maritimes, de la pêche et de
l'aquaculture**

26 March 2024, Paris

Service pêche maritime et aquaculture durables
Sous-direction ressources halieutiques
Bureau des affaires européennes et internationales

Ref: 24-057

Ms Kim Damon-Randall
President of NASCO
NASCO
11 Rutland Square
Edinburgh
EH1 2AS Scotland
UK

Dear Madam President,

Please find enclosed the Annual Report on the 2023 salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon.

I can confirm that a delegation representing St Pierre and Miquelon will participate in the Annual Meeting to be held in Westport, Ireland from 3 – 7 June 2024 in an observer capacity.

France will continue to co-operate with NASCO, its Parties and the scientific community.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Maritime Fisheries and Sustainable Aquaculture Department

Aurélie Darpeix van Tongeren

CC: The Director General of Overseas Territories

ecologie.gouv.fr

Tour Séquoia– Place Carpeaux
92005 La Défense cedex – Tel: 33(0)1 40 81



**PRÉFET
DE SAINT-PIERRE
ET MIQUELON**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

**Direction des Territoires,
de l'Alimentation et de la Mer**

Saint Pierre, 1 February 2024

Reference: D2024/SAMP/021

The Director of Territories, Food and the Sea

To

The Director General of Maritime Affairs,

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Maritime and Port Affairs Service

Contact: Constance Couston / Gwenaëk Le Priol

Tel: 05 08 41 15 30

Constance.couston@equipement-agriculture.gouv.fr

Annual Report on the Atlantic Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon 2023 Season

Introduction

The archipelago of St Pierre and Miquelon (France) is one of the territories in North America which continues to authorise an interceptory mixed-stock sea fishery using gill nets to target Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

Only one river in the archipelago (the Belle Rivière) has a resident salmon population but fishing is only permitted on brook trout and eels. The latest genetic analyses, carried out in 2017, show that almost 90 % of fish caught in the archipelago's waters originate from the Gaspé Peninsula, the southern part of the Gulf of St Lawrence and Newfoundland (Bradbury *et al.* 2016).

Substantial work has been undertaken to increase awareness among fishers in order to improve the quality of the available data. The legislation that applies to this fishery is subject to dedicated inspection programmes, carried out by the Department for Territories, Food and the Sea's Maritime and Port Affairs Service.

1. Regulatory Framework

Salmon fishing at Saint Pierre and Miquelon is governed by:

- the Rural and Maritime Fishery Code (CRPM), in particular Book IX;

- the Order of 20 March 1987 which establishes a number of conservation and management measures for marine resources in the French territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone around the coasts of St Pierre and Miquelon;
- the Order of 24 March 2015 which establishes a number of technical measures and catch sizes for the professional fishery in the French territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone around the coasts of St Pierre and Miquelon;
- the Order of the Prefect no. 304 of 8 June 2021 which limits the number of Atlantic salmon fishing permits that may be issued to recreational fishers in St Pierre and Miquelon to 80; and
- the Order of the Prefect no. 313 of 25 April 2023 for the allocation of fishing permits to professional and recreational fishers (including management measures, gear, catch size, location of nets and reporting obligations).

These texts establish the following measures:

- the fishery is subject to authorisation and an Annual Fishery Plan;
- the minimum catch size is 48 cm;
- nets must be declared and marked;
- the minimum mesh size is 125 mm;
- the fishery season is restricted to 1 May – 21 July;
- fishing gear must not be placed within 300 m of a river mouth;
- all catch must be declared (through fishing log-books and annual declarations / log-books for recreational fishers)
- fishing effort is restricted by limiting the number of nets in the water.

2. Permit Allocation

Fishing permits are allocated to professional fishers (who may sell their catch) and recreational fishers (who are not authorised to sell their catch and fish only for personal consumption).

The allocation procedure is based on fishery precedence and on the applicant's compliance with catch declaration obligations throughout the previous year.

The Maritime and Port Affairs Service deals with permit requests and allocates each permit holder with a specific site to fish for the season. The overall fishery site plan is mapped and published annually by Order of the Prefect (recreational and professional Atlantic salmon fishing permits for the 2023 season were allocated under Order of the Prefect no. 313 of 25 April 2023).

In 2023, 6 professional permits were issued. Since 2021, the number of recreational permits issued has been limited to 80.

3. Salmon catch

The 2023 catch was as follows:

Professional catch: 28 kg (13 salmon) was harvested by six vessels (compared to 100 kg / 47 salmon in 2022).

Recreational catch: 1,424 kg (545 salmon) were harvested by 80 vessels (compared to 1,142 kg / 431 salmon in 2022).

Fishing effort varies greatly between vessels. 23 vessels caught less than five salmon each. A number of fishers only fish for a very short period and bring their nets in well before the end of the season (on 21 July). Finally, 10 permit holders either did not place their nets in the water or reported 0 catch in 2023.

This traditional fishery allows the island’s recreational sailors to go to sea after a long winter period and, along with hunting in September, is an important traditional leisure pursuit on the islands. There are estimated to be over 600 recreational vessels in the archipelago, where there is a population of 6,000 people. The 2023 fishery did not begin in earnest until the beginning of June due to particularly unfavourable weather conditions. High winds during this period meant that it was not safe to go to sea. Further, fishing conditions were also affected by the presence of drifting seaweed, which tangled in the nets. Finally, several recreational fishers again stated that fuel costs prevented them from going to sea.

4. The Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon 2018 – 2023

| Season | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------|
| Professional Fishery | | | | | | |
| No. of licences | 9 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Weight (kg) | 155.5 | 72.21 | 90.52 | 216 | 100 | 28 |
| Recreational Fishery | | | | | | |
| No. of licences | 80 | 80 | 81 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Weight (kg) | 1,130 | 1,214 | 1,648 | 1,384 | 1,142 | 1,424 |
| Total (kg) | 1,285.5 | 1,286.21 | 1,738.52 | 1,600 | 1,242 | 1,452 |

The total weight of the 2023 catch was 1,452 kg, a slight increase when compared to the 1,242 kg catch in 2022. The increased catch was taken in the recreational fishery, while the professional fishery reported a lower catch, due to three of the six professional fishers not placing their nets in the water.

65 % of catches were less than 63 cm in length, similar to the catch in 2022.

There is no export of salmon by professional fishers and all catch is consumed by the local market. Most are retained for personal consumption, with only a few (less than 30 kg) being sold.

Since 2022, a new framework has been in place for the professional fishery. This framework allows the fishers to considerably diversify their catch (including lobster and scallop fishing and rod fishing for various species) to supply fresh produce to the archipelago’s fishmongers, supermarkets and restaurants. This has resulted in the professional fishery targeting salmon less as they turn to other species such as lobster and snow crab.

The recreational harvest has increased slightly compared to 2022.

Overall, the 2023 catch in the combined recreational and professional fisheries has increased by 17 % compared to the 2022 catch.

The professional catch fell by 72% in the same time frame.

5. Fishing Effort

The fishery locations are similar to those in 2022.





Fishing effort is mainly concentrated around the East and South-East of the island of St Pierre. Other fishing sites are located around Miquelon and Langlade. Both professional and recreational fishers are allocated an individual fishing site by the authorities.

6. 2023 Monitoring and Control Report

In total, 55 landing inspections and 80 licence inspections were carried out by the Maritime and Port Affairs Service in 2023. The inspections were carried out at random during the mornings and / or the evenings during the period 14 May – 21 July. This rigorous monitoring programme results in no unreported catch in the archipelago.

7. The Outlook for 2024

The Maritime and Port Affairs Service strengthened its monitoring team by recruiting two new staff members, increasing the number of fishery inspectors to three and improving the quality of the inspections. Further, the Unit obtained a new monitoring vessel (the KILDA) in October 2023. This vessel will be in operation from 1 May 2024 and will enable inspections to take place at sea in addition to those taking place on land.

It was deemed necessary to discuss the comments made by the Members of NASCO's North American Commission, during its 2023 Annual Meeting, with the professional and recreational fishers.

Professional Fishers

A report was presented to the professional fishers advising them of the discussions held at NASCO's 2023 Annual Meeting. The professional fishers (six in 2023) understood the issues raised by the Parties, but again asked that they be considered in the context of the very low level of catch that is sold to fishmongers or the local market in St Pierre. They wish to contribute to scientific knowledge by assisting the French National Institute for Ocean Science (IFREMER), or any other body as part of regional scientific co-operation. Furthermore, the professional catch this year was low.

Recreational Fishers

The President of the St Pierre and Miquelon Recreational Fishers Association, which represents the majority of the archipelago's recreational fishers, was open to the proposals put forward to improve the management of the salmon fishery. He also indicated that several measures have already been taken on their own initiative such as:

- voluntarily restricting the fishing season to 1 May – 21 July each year, despite the regulations allowing the fishery to be open from 1 May – 31 July;
- being involved in the management and assessment of the resource: implementing a fishing log-book scheme which records the size, location and estimated weight of all salmon caught. The recreational fishers commit to providing this information to the administration and scientists. This is one of the most important measures in improving scientific knowledge. It should be noted that while it is obligatory for professional fishers to declare their catch in France, it is not obligatory for recreational fishers to do the same. This participation in the scientific process is, therefore, voluntarily undertaken by the recreational fishers of St Pierre and Miquelon;
- contributing to scientific knowledge through taking salmon scale and adipose fin samples and providing these samples to the scientists;
- diversifying their fishing methods so that net fishing will gradually be replaced by trolling. A voluntary trial of this fishing method is being undertaken by a number of recreational fishers.
- fixing the number of permits allocated each year at 80 (since 2021).
- Finally, by signing a charter in 2024, the recreational fishers commit to complying with both the legal and voluntary measures in order to guarantee the sustainability of Atlantic salmon and the archipelago's marine ecosystems. The members of the recreational fishers' association also commit to continue to be actively involved in scientific programmes carried out by IFREMER and through regional co-operation with the Canadian scientists. For their part, the maritime administration and IFREMER commit to promoting good Atlantic salmon fishing and safety at sea practices and to remind fishers of the catch declaration obligations included on the fishing permits. The signatories to the Charter also commit to consider and implement, within a reasonable timeframe, new measures which aim to limit annual Atlantic salmon catches by the archipelago's recreational fishers. This limit should be consistent and agreed by all recreational Atlantic salmon fishers.
- Four recreational fishers voluntarily took part in the sampling programme in 2023. In advance of the fishing season, IFREMER distributed sampling kits to fishers and provided training on how to use them. In total, 39 samples were taken (adipose fin, scales, length and weight) and sent to Dr Martha Robertson (DFO St John's, NL) for further analysis. The sampling rate was 7 %, and 61 % of those fish sampled measured <63 cm (65 % of the total caught being smaller than 63 cm in 2023, the sampling rate is to be considered significative). In 2024, sampling efforts should be strengthened through the participation of staff from the Maritime and Port Affairs Service, who will have a new vessel available to them from March 2024. There will also be a number of additional recreational volunteers. The new Maritime and Port Affairs Service staff will receive specialised training from the IFREMER representative in St Pierre and Miquelon. As a result, there will be a higher sampling rate.

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Glossary

Mixed-Stock Fishery Atlantic salmon from many different rivers are found in the ocean, coastal areas and in a number of estuaries. Some of these are from at-risk populations and are harvested along with salmon from healthy populations. This kind of fishery operates in Greenland, on the Labrador coast and at St Pierre and Miquelon.

The Director

La directrice des territoires, de
l'alimentation et de la mer



Patricia Bourgeois