

North American Commission

NAC(04)5

The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

NAC(04)5

The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

1. At its Seventh Annual Meeting the Commission requested the Secretary to pursue efforts to obtain information about the salmon fisheries at St Pierre and Miquelon. In accordance with this request we have contacted the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires rurales in Paris on an annual basis.
2. We have now received provisional catch data for 2003 and information on the regulation of the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon (see CNL(04)26). The official time series of information as provided by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation de la Pêche et des Affaires rurales is as follows:

Year	Number of Salmon	Weight (Tonnes)
1987	442	0.984
1988	813	2.084
1989	971	2.590
1990	884	1.889
1991	573	1.132
1992	1049	2.319
1993	1439	2.943
1994	1656	3.423
1995	364	0.837
1996	670	1.568
1997	644	1.491
1998	-	2.307
1999	-	2.322
2000	-	2.267
2001	-	2.155
2002	-	1.952
2003	-	2.892

3. The catch in 2003, although low, is approximately 48% higher than the catch in 2002, is above the seventeen-year mean catch of 2.068 tonnes and is the highest catch since 1994. The breakdown of the catch in 2003 was 1,620kg by "commercial" fishermen and 1,272kg by recreational fishermen. The Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires rurales has previously advised the Commission that the commercial fishing is conducted by fishermen from communities which are heavily dependent on fishing and that this fishery should more appropriately be described as a subsistence fishery. In 2003 the number of licences (54) was the same as in 2002.
4. It is clear from the scientific advice from ICES that there is still considerable concern about the status of North American origin salmon. ICES has recommended that there should be no harvest of 2SW salmon returning to North America in 2004 except in individual rivers where spawning requirements are being exceeded.

5. In 2000, the Commission adopted a Resolution Concerning the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fisheries, which was subsequently adopted by the Council. In 2001 the Commission proposed to the Council that, in an effort to improve cooperation with St Pierre and Miquelon and in order to gather much needed scientific information on the fishery, a sampling programme be undertaken at St Pierre and Miquelon in 2002. The Council supported this proposal. The President and Secretary visited the islands in October 2001 to promote the proposed sampling programme but it did not take place in 2002. In 2002 the Council, on the recommendation of the Commission, adopted a further Resolution calling on the Contracting Parties to encourage France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to cooperate with NASCO in instituting a scientific sampling programme for the fishery beginning in 2003. A proposal outlining the data sought from a sampling programme had been provided by ICES (see CNL(03)8). Prior to the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires rurales had indicated that it wished to increase its cooperation with NASCO and that it intended to implement a scientific sampling programme, undertaken by IFREMER scientists, during the 2003 fishing season in order to collect biometric data. Furthermore, it was indicated that a genetic study might be undertaken in 2004 in cooperation with Canadian scientists, and consideration would be given to a disease-sampling programme at some stage in the future. The French authorities had also indicated a willingness to cooperate with NASCO Parties in future, with regard to an exchange of information in relation to the management of "traditional fisheries".
6. We have now received confirmation from the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation de la Pêche et des Affaires rurales that a biometric sampling programme was conducted at St Pierre and Miquelon in 2003. A total of 340 salmon were weighed and measured and water temperature data was collected. Details of this programme are provided in document CNL(04)26. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) has accepted an invitation to attend the Twenty-First Annual Meeting.
7. This progress on a sampling programme is a positive step but it does not yet address the central question concerning the origin of the fish caught. However, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation de la Pêche et des Affaires rurales has indicated that a genetic sampling programme will be undertaken in 2004 (and completed in 2005). In the light of this information the Commission is asked to consider whether it wishes to take any additional actions or to make any further proposals to the Council in relation to the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fisheries.

Secretary
Edinburgh
2 June, 2004