



Agenda item 6.10
For decision

Council

CNL(02)26

St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery



St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

1. Catch data for the salmon fisheries at St Pierre and Miquelon have been requested by the Secretary and reviewed by the North American Commission of NASCO since 1987. This fishery is known to have harvested salmon of US and Canadian origin although the origin of the catch in recent years is unknown. The Commission has become increasingly concerned about catches at St Pierre and Miquelon which, although low (the fourteen-year mean catch is approximately 2 tonnes), are higher than those of the US and have been increasing. This has occurred at a time when there is increasing concern for North American stocks and when catches are being restricted all around the North Atlantic through both nationally and internationally agreed measures.
2. Initially the North American Commission agreed that efforts to address its concerns about the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon should be through the bilateral France-Canada agreement but in recent years the issue has been referred to the Council. The question of inviting France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to become a Contracting Party to NASCO has been raised in both the North American Commission and the Council since it is the only fishery in the North Atlantic under the authority of a country not represented in NASCO. In the chronology that follows we have attempted to summarise the actions taken to date by the North American Commission and the Council and the responses received. The French authorities have not replied to the latest requests for cooperation to undertake a sampling programme in 2002. A copy of a letter from the Secretary to the Ministre de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche and the Secrétaire Général de la Mer in Paris concerning this proposed sampling programme is contained in Attachment 1. The Council is asked to consider what action it now wishes to take.

Chronology of actions by NASCO and responses from France

Date	Action by NASCO/Response from France
June 1988	Catch statistics (number and weight) for the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon provided to the North American Commission (NAC). Catch data have been provided to the Commission on an annual basis since then.
June 1989	The NAC's Working Group on Introductions and Transfers expresses concern that attempts may be made to develop an aquaculture industry at St Pierre and Miquelon based on fish imported from Europe or the west coast of North America.
February 1990	Ministère de la Mer in Paris provides to NAC copies of the laws and regulations governing salmon fishing at St Pierre and Miquelon including information on the number of licences and nature of gear used. Confirmation received that while attempts had been made to farm salmon they had failed because winter conditions at St Pierre and Miquelon are too severe and that there are no further intentions to attempt to develop aquaculture. The NAC notes some discrepancies in the catch statistics for the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery as provided by ICES and the NASCO Secretariat. The Secretary is requested to obtain detailed information regarding the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery.
June 1992	The NAC asks the Secretary to seek a breakdown of the catch at St Pierre and Miquelon into recreational, commercial and by-catch components.
June 1993	Further information on the regulation of the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery is provided to the NAC (minimum retention size of salmon, details of licensing arrangements and of gear permitted).
June 1994	France provides a breakdown of catches between "recreational" and "commercial" fisheries. The Commission again asks the Secretary to seek clarification as to the reason for the discrepancy in the statistics provided by ICES and those obtained by the Secretary. The Commission notes that tag returns from previous years indicate that both Canadian and US origin salmon have been caught in the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon.
June 1995	US raises the question of encouraging France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to become a member of NASCO. Canada refers to a new 10-year France-Canada agreement under which it was agreed that there would be no increase in the catch of salmon originating in other countries' rivers without the consent of that country. Canada agrees to discuss implementation of the agreement with France.
June 1996	Canada reports that the France-Canada agreement had been signed and that this agreement should make membership of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) in NASCO unnecessary.
June 1997	Canada indicates that there had been improved monitoring at St Pierre and Miquelon and that good returns of grilse in 1996 may have been a factor in the increased catches that year. Canada agrees to explore these issues at the next bilateral meeting.
June 1998	Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche provides updated information on the regulations concerning the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery. Canada reports that the "commercial" salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon should be more appropriately described as a "subsistence" fishery, that enforcement of the fishery is thorough and that reporting procedures will be improved so as to avoid the discrepancy in the ICES and NASCO statistics.

Date	Action by NASCO/Response from France
June 1999	NAC expresses concern over the increased salmon catches at St Pierre and Miquelon in 1998 which occurred at a time when the Canadian and US salmon stocks are in "precarious health". Canada reports that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) had attributed the increase in catch to an increase in the number of licences issued and more salmon "transiting" in St Pierre and Miquelon coastal waters. The NAC refers this issue to the Council. The Council asks the Secretary to write to the French authorities expressing concern about the increased catch in 1998.
July 1999	Secretary writes to Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche on 12 July 1999 referring to the precarious condition of North American stocks, the very significant conservation measures taken by US and Canada in response to the situation and the scientific advice from ICES concerning harvests of North American origin salmon, and conveying NASCO's concern about the increased catch at St Pierre and Miquelon in 1998.
January 2000	France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) invited to attend Seventeenth Annual Meeting of NASCO.
May 2000	On 15 May 2000 Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche responds to the letter from the Secretary of 12 July 1999, indicating that the fishery is a subsistence and recreational fishery, that Atlantic salmon is an important resource to the islands because of their remoteness and the problems of economic development, that the fishery is rigorously controlled, that effort has remained stable since 1995, that catches have remained stable relative to 1998 and are only 64% of the total catch in 1994. A description of the regulation of the fishery is provided.
June 2000	France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) unable to be represented at Seventeenth Annual Meeting. Council adopts a Resolution Concerning St Pierre and Miquelon and agrees to consider the issue of whether to invite France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to be a Contracting Party to NASCO at its Eighteenth Annual Meeting.
July 2000	In accordance with the Resolution, the President writes on 17 July 2000 to the Ambassador to France in London expressing NASCO's concerns over the level of harvest in 1998 and 1999, urging that harvest limits be set for the 2000 fishery at the lowest possible level consistent with ICES advice and requesting that information on the measures taken be made available to NASCO at its 2001 Annual Meeting. On 27 July 2000 Ambassador to France acknowledges receipt of the letter and advises that it has been transmitted to the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche in Paris for response.
January 2001	France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) invited to attend Eighteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO.
June 2001	On 1 June 2001 a response to the President's letter of 17 July 2000 is received from the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche indicating that the fishery dates back 20 years or more, that recent catches have been below those in the mid-1980s, that it is a subsistence fishery and that catches are "negligible" compared to those in the western Atlantic. Reference is made to the management of the fishery and to the fact that the increased catches in 1998 and 1999 are due to improved reporting of catches and that catches have actually been stable for a number of years. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) unable to be represented at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting. In the NAC meeting, the US expresses disappointment at the response from France

Date	Action by NASCO/Response from France
	(in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) and at the absence of a representative from France at the meeting despite initial confirmation that a representative would attend in an observer capacity. The NAC notes the need to improve cooperation with France. Canada notes that its bilateral fisheries agreement with France had not been successful in addressing the Atlantic salmon issue. The NAC supports a proposal for a sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon in 2002 but agrees that multilateral support for such an effort is important. The Council agrees to a proposal from the US for a sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon to determine the origin of the wild salmon in the catch.
October 2001	President and Secretary visit St Pierre and Miquelon for meetings with the Chef du Service to describe the work of NASCO and its Contracting Parties on salmon conservation, to explain NASCO's concerns about the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon and to describe the proposal for a sampling programme and to seek a cooperative approach.
November 2001	On 22 November 2001 the Secretary writes to the Ministre de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche and the Secrétaire Général de la Mer in order to seek cooperation in establishing the sampling programme in June-July 2002 (see Attachment 1).
January 2002	France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) invited to attend Nineteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO. No response received to the Secretary's letter of 22 November 2001 to the Ministre de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche and the Secrétaire Général de la Mer. Secretary writes to the Chef du Service de St Pierre et Miquelon on 15 January 2002 seeking his assistance in obtaining a response by mid-February so that the sampling programme may proceed in 2002.
April 2002	No response nor any acknowledgement received to the proposal for a sampling programme in the Secretary's letters of 22 November 2001 or 15 January 2002.

Secretary
Edinburgh
12 April, 2002

ENGLISH VERSION OF THE LETTERS WHICH WERE SENT IN FRENCH

CNL39.014

22 November, 2001

M. le Ministre de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche
Direction des Pêches Maritimes et de l'Aquaculture
3, place de Fontenoy
75700 PARIS
France

The President of NASCO, Mr Jacque Robichaud, and I visited St Pierre and Miquelon last month and had discussions with Mr Chapalain, Chef du Service de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. We would like to thank the Ministry for agreeing to this visit, which was most useful.

We were able to explain our concerns about the status of North Atlantic salmon stocks, the role of NASCO in salmon conservation and management, and the actions taken by NASCO and its Contracting Parties towards these aims. We presented a brief background document outlining a proposal for a sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon (Annex 1). We were also able to learn about the conduct of the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon and its control and management.

We certainly agree that salmon fishing at St Pierre and Miquelon is relatively small and has been fairly stable. Nevertheless, it is a catch higher than that taken by the United States, and catches in other fisheries on North American origin salmon have been greatly reduced (Annex 2). We were also able to assure Mr Chapalain that there has never been any suggestion by any Party to NASCO that the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery should be closed. Indeed, the NASCO Convention, whilst promoting the use of best scientific advice from ICES or other bodies, makes specific provision for certain interception fisheries on the basis both of socio-economic factors and of the so-called "grazing fee".

We understand that Mr Chapalain has reported on these matters to you, as well as on the NASCO proposal to carry out a sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon so as to understand the characteristics of the salmon caught there. This seeks to provide information on the origin of the catch, its disease status and on the proportion of escapes from salmon aquaculture operations (Annex 3). We advised Mr Chapalain that NASCO is willing to fund this research and to cooperate fully with the relevant authorities and scientists in St Pierre and Miquelon and in France. The project, in our view, should be a cooperative one, led by French scientists, with results peer-reviewed and available to all parties and to ICES. This sampling proposal would go a long way toward making the issues transparent. We did point

out that a similar approach to cooperative research has been used for many years in Greenland.

We felt that this meeting was a valuable first step but, bearing in mind that the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon has been a matter on which we have corresponded for some years, we do feel that it is in our mutual interest to move now towards an understanding of the characteristics of the salmon involved. We are mandated by NASCO Council to proceed with the proposal attached. We seek your suggestions on this proposal, which we are ready to adapt to your needs.

I hope that this fully explains the NASCO position. We would be happy to meet with your staff or any French scientific experts to further explain the proposal and answer any questions on it. We look forward to hearing from you in the hope that we can have a programme in place for the coming salmon fishing season.

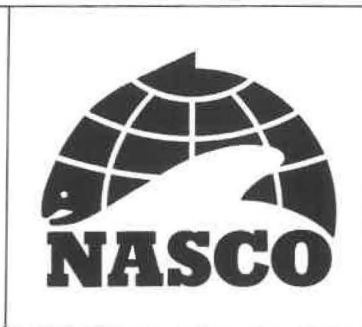
I have also sent this to M. le Secrétaire Général de la Mer and have copied it to His Excellency Mr Bernard, the Ambassador of France in London.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Windsor
Secretary

Enc.

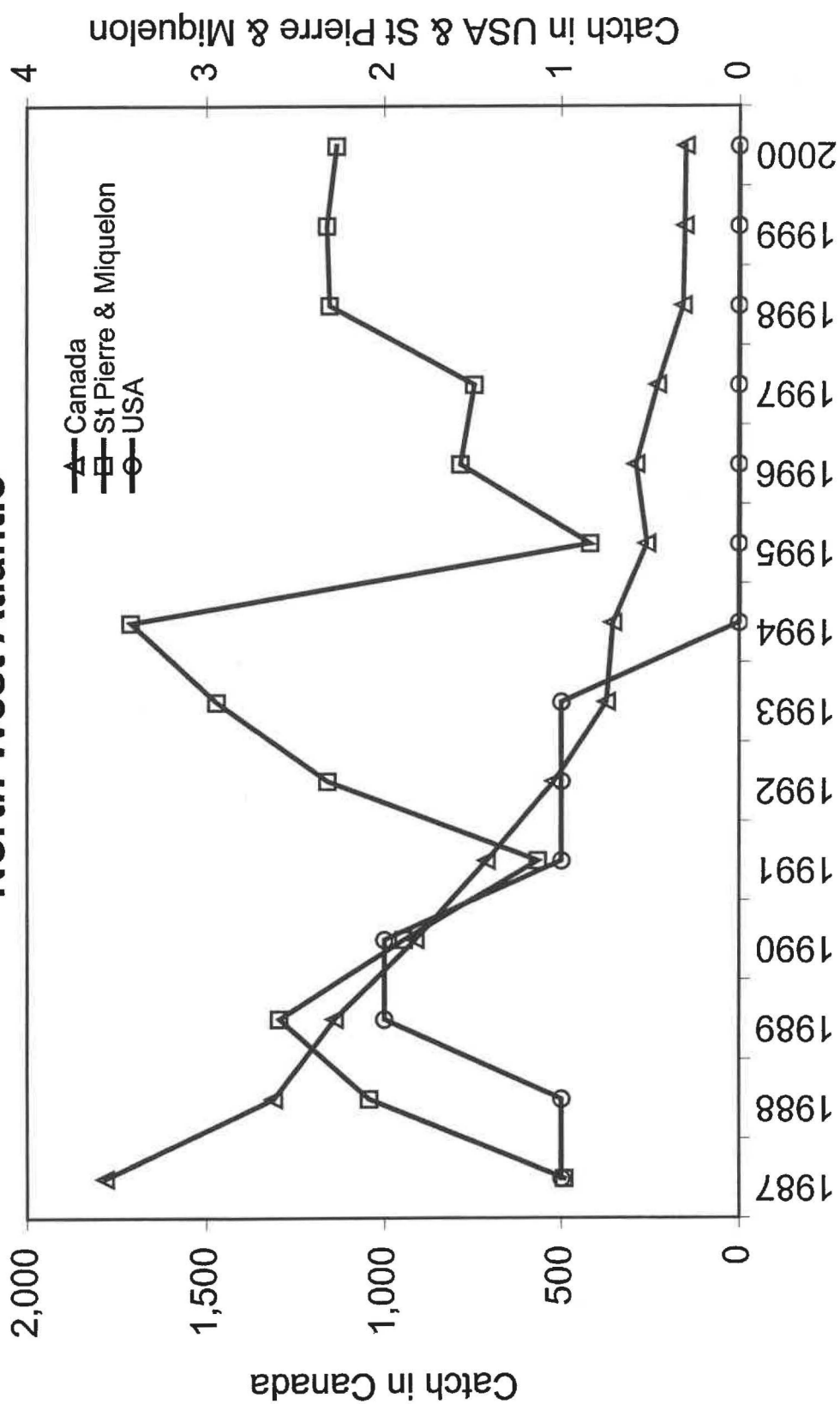
Copy: His Excellency Mr Daniel Bernard, French Embassy, London

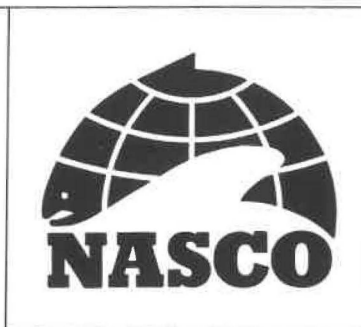


***Proposal for Cooperative Atlantic Salmon Sampling Programme
at St Pierre and Miquelon***

- The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is an inter-governmental organization established in 1984 to contribute through consultation and cooperation to the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks taking into account the best available scientific evidence.
- NASCO's Contracting Parties are: Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.
- Since 1987, the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche in Paris has cooperated with NASCO by providing catch statistics for the salmon fisheries at St Pierre and Miquelon, together with information on management of the fisheries. However, very little is known about the biological characteristics of the salmon caught at St Pierre and Miquelon.
- The Council of NASCO is now seeking cooperation from the relevant authorities in St Pierre and Miquelon for a sampling programme in June-July 2002, in order to improve understanding of the biological characteristics of the salmon harvest.
- The programme will involve weighing and measuring sampled fish and removing a small sample of scales and a small amount of fin tissue (about 1 gram) from each fish. Any tags/marks would be noted. This information will enable scientists to determine the origin of the salmon, their sea-age at maturity and other biological characteristics. Following sampling, which will take about 1 minute per fish, the fish will be returned to the fishermen or dealer. In addition, whole fish are required for disease testing and these would be purchased from the fishermen.
- It is anticipated that one Francophone scientist would be involved in the programme for a period of up to six weeks. All results would be internationally reviewed by ICES and reported to NASCO, to the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche, and to the authorities in St Pierre and Miquelon, in 2003.
- Cooperation is sought from the authorities in St Pierre and Miquelon in agreeing to the sampling programme and in providing advice on the operation of the salmon fishery, appropriate contacts involved in the fishery and in identifying suitable accommodation for the scientist. The costs of the programme will be borne by NASCO or one of its Contracting Parties.

Annex 2: Trends in catch (in tonnes) of salmon in the North West Atlantic





Annex 3

CNL39.017A

**Detailed Proposal for Sampling of Atlantic Salmon Landings at
Saint Pierre and Miquelon**

I Goal:

The primary goal of the proposed NASCO sampling programme would be to collect biological information on the Atlantic salmon landed in the St. Pierre and Miquelon fishery during the 2002 fishing season.

II Specific objectives:

1. Characterise the smolt and sea age composition of Atlantic salmon landed in the St. Pierre and Miquelon fishery.
2. Characterise to the extent possible, using genetic analysis and information from tags and marks, the origin of Atlantic salmon captured in the fishery at St. Pierre and Miquelon.
3. Characterise the disease status of Atlantic salmon captured in the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon.

III Methodology:

Normal sampling methodology:

The proposed sampling programme will employ a land-based approach at fishing docks and points of sale. Each sampled Atlantic salmon will be measured, weighed and examined for fin clips, marks and for tags. Visual assessment may also assist in identifying escapes from aquaculture. A small sample of scales will be collected to allow for age and growth analysis. A small (1 gram) tissue sample (normally comprising a small section of fin) will be collected and preserved for subsequent genetic analysis. Sampling of each fish is estimated to take approximately 1 minute. Once sampling has occurred, all fish will be re-iced and returned to the fisherman, dealer, or owner. Analysis of genetic samples will be conducted in specialist laboratories with appropriate expertise. We are aware that such expertise exists within NASCO's Parties.

Disease sampling methodology:

To secure the tissues required for analysis of diseases (e.g. bacterial kidney disease, infectious salmon anaemia and furunculosis) will require that about 100 whole salmon (non-gutted) be obtained. Salmon for disease analysis will be purchased from individual fishermen or dealers through a prearranged agreement. Disease analysis will be conducted in a specialist laboratory with appropriate expertise. We are aware that such expertise exists within NASCO's Parties.

IV Distribution of Data and reports

All collected data and resulting reports will be distributed as soon as possible to designated officials at St. Pierre and Miquelon, scientists in IFREMER, fishery assessment groups (ICES North Atlantic Salmon Working Group) and to NASCO Parties.

V Logistic details and responsibilities

NASCO will be willing to fund the sampling programme and all costs associated with analysis of the data obtained. It is anticipated that a French-speaking biologist would work in collaboration with French scientists based on the island for a period of up to six weeks in June/July 2002. All necessary equipment and materials will be provided.