



Agenda item 5.2(b)
For information

Council

CNL(03)34

***Report by Canada on Progress with Development and Implementation of
Habitat Protection and Restoration Plans***

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| 1. Has an inventory of rivers, as envisaged in Annex 2 of the NASCO Plan of Action, been established or updated since the last notification? If "yes" please provide a brief description of the inventory or of any changes to an existing inventory. |
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A number of inventories of Canadian Atlantic salmon rivers and their physical and biological characteristic have existed for years. However, one common database for all salmon rivers including all of the physical and biological information outlined in the NASCO Plan of Action does not yet exist.

A number of inventories were carried out over the past year by the various jurisdictions involved in salmon management. These include the recent University of PEI and ASF report on the distribution and relative abundance of salmonids in PEI. The final report will analyze the watershed land-use activities in each river sampled and provide historical accounts of salmon runs and river conditions. Another example is the recent database that has been created for the entire island of Newfoundland that identifies and documents fish passage related concerns.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has recently completed the development of a Geographic Information System to access all habitat related information on streams and rivers in the province of Quebec including the salmon rivers. A similar system has recently been developed in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Further inventory development is expected in 2003/2004.

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| 2. Has a comprehensive salmon habitat protection and restoration plan been developed in accordance with the aims of the NASCO Plan of Action, or an existing plan updated, since the last notification? If "yes" please provide brief details of the plan and the extent of its implementation or of any changes to an existing plan since the last notification. |
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All fish habitat in Canada is managed according to the national Policy for the Management of Fish Habitat. A net gain in the productive capacity of fish habitat is the overall objective. Progress towards this objective is achieved through the active conservation of the current productive capacity of habitats, the restoration of damaged fish habitats and the development of new habitats.

The focus for Atlantic salmon habitat continues to be the conservation of the current productive capacity. It is important to note that of the approximately 675 Atlantic salmon rivers in Canada, close to 200 are considered relatively pristine due to remoteness and low population density. Most of the remaining rivers still have a large productive capacity, which is currently being underutilized due to low adult returns.

The focus on conservation through the application of the no net loss principle is fundamental to the habitat conservation goal. Under this principle, DFO and its partners strive to balance unavoidable habitat losses with habitat replacement on a project-by-project basis so that further reductions to Canada's Atlantic salmon resources due to habitat loss or damage is prevented.

There is currently significant amount of restoration work underway on a number of watersheds. DFO's contribution to this restoration work is focused on improving and restoring access across natural barriers such as dams and obstructions such as culverts. Many community and stewardship groups are involved in restoration works of various kinds as discussed at the previous two NASCO Special Habitat Sessions.

Although an overall conservation and restoration plan already exists, it is being further refined and developed at the watershed level. A number of new watershed management plans are being implemented and more being developed.

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| 3. If a Plan has been developed or updated since the last notification have evaluation and monitoring systems been introduced or updated to assess the effectiveness of the plan in protecting and restoring salmon habitat? If the response to question 2 was "yes" please provide details of these systems or of changes to existing systems since the last notification. |
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Some monitoring to measure the efficacy of conservation and restoration initiatives in Canada has and continues to occur; however, it is recognized that further monitoring would be beneficial. The Habitat Management program is moving towards a more results based approach and is developing a Results Based Management Accountability Framework (RMAF) which will place more emphasis on measuring and reporting on how well we are achieving the net gain of productive capacity of fish habitat objective.

An example of the monitoring that is conducted on a regular basis relates to the conservation goal. For all development projects that result in the loss of productive capacity of fish habitat, the proponent must not only propose and implement a habitat compensation plan that replaces the productive capacity that is lost but must also monitor the effectiveness of the compensation works for a period varying from 1 year to 25 or more years and make the necessary adjustments to achieve no net loss.