



Agenda item 6.6
For decision

Council

CNL(00)22

Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

1. In 1996 the Council unanimously adopted the Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean concerning Scientific Research Fishing (CNL(96)60). There have been no requests by the Parties since the Seventeenth Annual Meeting to conduct scientific research fishing although during 1998 the Council had unanimously approved a request from Norway to carry out research fishing in the period April to October in each year from 1998-2002. Under paragraph 2 of the Annex to the Resolution, the results of scientific research fishing "shall be made available to the Council of NASCO and to ICES as soon as practicable, including details of any catches." The President will invite Norway to make a brief presentation on the results of their research fishing.
2. I have received a letter (copy attached) from two of our Norwegian Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), on behalf of the NGOs attending the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, concerning scientific research fishing. In this letter the NGOs refer to the problem of low marine survival and to the high costs of the research required for a clearer understanding of the factors affecting salmon at sea. They stress the need for international cooperation in order to fund such research and request that the Council considers this issue so as to try "to find solutions."
3. Since the Council adopted the Resolution on Scientific Research Fishing, studies of salmon at sea through research fishing have been conducted by Norway, Canada and the EU (Scotland). This research has been funded nationally although there has been international cooperation between, for example, Scottish and Norwegian scientists in research fishing for salmon post-smolts. These studies have certainly increased our knowledge of post-smolt biology and distribution at sea and have been very valuable initiatives. However, last year ICES advised that:
 - in the North-East Atlantic Commission area, more research into the biology of salmon in the early marine phase is required and extension of recent research on the biology of post-smolts is recommended. Competitive interactions with other marine species should be explored. Additionally, by-catches of post-smolts in marine fisheries for other species should be monitored and estimates of mortality from this source should be derived. There is a continuing requirement to monitor trends in marine mortality for a wider range of stocks than at present, and to identify causes for current low values of marine survival;
 - in the North American Commission area, further basic research is needed on the spatial and temporal distribution of salmon and their predators at sea and on predators' diets to assist in explaining variability in survival rates.

4. Clearly ICES sees a need for further research into factors affecting salmon at sea in order to provide managers with the best possible scientific advice. At the ICES Annual Science Conference to be held in Bruges, Belgium, from 27-30 September, there will be a theme session on the downturn in North Atlantic salmon abundance. One objective of this Session will be to identify the scientific research needed to enhance our understanding of the factors responsible for the decline.
5. The Council is asked to consider whether it wishes to encourage further scientific research fishing for salmon at sea and the objectives for such research. The Council is also asked to consider whether there is a role for improved international cooperation in such research and, if so, what form this cooperation might take.

Secretary
Edinburgh
17 April 2000



NORWEGIAN SALMON RIVERS

Federation of river owners

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
11 Rutland Square
Edinburgh
EH1 2AS
Scotland UK

Your ref;

Our ref; 990997

Date; 10 September 1999

Research concerning salmon biology and abundance in the Atlantic

Dear Mr Malcolm Windsor,

On behalf of the NGOs attending the Annual Meeting of NASCO in Westport Ireland, June 1999, we wish to address one particular issue: the need for more research on wild Atlantic salmon in the high seas. The decline in the abundance of wild salmon in the Atlantic region is not fully understood, but appears to be linked to conditions in the marine environment. In this context we are concerned about the lack of knowledge of wild salmon in the marine phase.

In particular, we suggest that salmon researchers should have enough resources to plan their own scientific expeditions. Furthermore, there is a need for more extensive tagging studies to find the origin of the postsmolt in the hauls, and the extension of by-catches in the high seas fisheries needs to be estimated.

All countries housing wild atlantic salmon in their rivers have a common responsibility to do research concerning salmon biology and abundance in the high seas.

Because of technical equipments, boats and assistance necessary for this research, the costs will be high. Therefore, co-operation between countries involved is needed in order to obtain adequate financing for such research.

We do hope that NASCO will consider this question and try to find solutions.

On behalf of the NGOs attending the Annual Meeting of NASCO in Ireland 1999,

Norwegian Salmon Rivers

Finn Erlend Ødegård
Finn Erlend Ødegård

The Norwegian Farmers Union

Bjørnulf Kristiansen
Bjørnulf Kristiansen

