



Agenda item 6.10
For decision

Council

CNL(00)29

St Pierre et Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

St Pierre et Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

1. The islands of St Pierre et Miquelon are French dependencies close to and to the south of Newfoundland, Canada. Salmon fisheries on these islands harvest stocks of US and Canadian origin. Information on catches of salmon at St Pierre et Miquelon is provided to NASCO by the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche in Paris and is reviewed annually by the North American Commission. These statistics indicate that the catch in 1998 of 2.307 tonnes was well above the mean for the period 1987-1998 (1.96 tonnes) and was 55% higher than in 1997. Given the precarious state of North American stocks, ICES' advice for in-river exploitation only, and the measures taken by Canada and the USA to address conservation problems, the increased catch at St Pierre et Miquelon in 1998 was a serious concern for the North American Commission. This increase is thought to have been the result of an increase in the number of licences issued to fish for salmon in 1998 and to increased availability of salmon in St Pierre et Miquelon coastal waters. The provisional catch at St Pierre et Miquelon in 1999 was 2.322 tonnes.
2. Last year, at the request of the North American Commission, the Council asked that the Secretary write to the French authorities expressing NASCO's concern about the increased catches of salmon at St Pierre et Miquelon. In accordance with this request, I wrote to the French authorities on 12 July 1999 (Annex 1). At the suggestion of the Canadian Delegation I also wrote to the Head of the French Delegation to the Canada-France Advisory Committee, M. Bernard Boyer, inviting him to attend our meeting in Miramichi and to make a brief presentation on the salmon fisheries at St Pierre et Miquelon.
3. In his response, (Annex 2), M. Boyer has indicated that although he will be unable to take part in the Seventeenth Annual Meeting he wished to make available to NASCO background information on the management of the St Pierre et Miquelon salmon fishery. In summary:
 - the Atlantic salmon is an important resource because of the remoteness of the archipelago and the problems of its economic development;
 - there is a "commercial fishery" and a recreational fishery (in 1999 the catch was divided equally between the two). The "commercial fishery" is a subsistence fishery;
 - the fishery is controlled rigorously by restrictive measures limiting fishing effort and gear type;
 - St Pierre et Miquelon have respected the principles set out in an exchange of correspondence between France and Canada on 2 December 1994 to the extent that:

- since 1995 fishing effort has remained stable - the number of permits has remained less than the 54 permits issued in 1994; 47 permits were issued in 1999 compared to 51 in 1998;
 - the level of catches has remained stable compared to 1998 and is only about 67% of the catch in 1994 (the reference year under the exchange of correspondence between France and Canada);
 - no commercial development of the fishery has ever been contemplated;
- An awareness campaign aimed at encouraging recreational fishermen to declare their catch has led to increased reporting of catches since 1998.
4. In 1995, the question of membership in NASCO by France (in respect of St Pierre et Miquelon) as in some other international fisheries fora was discussed by the North American Commission. However, it was felt that the France/Canada agreement, which required France to abide by the decisions of NASCO regarding management measures, made membership by France in NASCO unnecessary. The agreement stipulates that there should be no increase in the catch of salmon originating in other countries' rivers without the consent of the other country.
5. The Council is asked to consider whether in the light of the information provided by the French authorities it wishes to take any further action on this issue.

Secretary
Edinburgh
24 May 2000

NAC14.154

Annex 1

12 July 1999



Mr Stefane Le Den
Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche
Direction des Pêches Maritimes et des Cultures Maritimes
3 Place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris
France

Dear Mr Le Den

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is an international organization established by Convention to contribute through consultation and cooperation to the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean. 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.

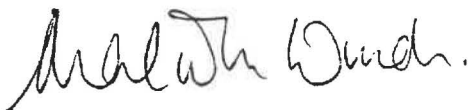
During our recent Sixteenth Annual Meeting in Ireland, information which had been provided by the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche was presented which showed that the catch of salmon at St Pierre et Miquelon in 1998 had increased by 55% compared to the previous year to a level well above the mean catch for the twelve-year period from 1987 for which statistics are available to NASCO. We are advised that this increase in catch is, in part, due to an increase in the number of licences issued to fish for salmon in 1998.

The salmon harvested at St Pierre et Miquelon are from US and Canadian stocks which are considered to be in a precarious condition, and very significant conservation measures have been taken by both these countries in response to the status of the stocks. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) had advised that there should be no exploitation of North American stocks of the 1997 smolt class as non-maturing one-sea-winter (1SW) salmon in 1998, or as mature two-sea-winter (2SW) in 1999, except for in-river harvests from stocks which are above biologically-based escapement requirements. Similar advice has been developed for exploitation of these stocks in 1999 (non-maturing 1SW salmon) and 2000 (mature 2SW salmon).

I have been asked by the Council of NASCO to convey to you this Organization's concern about the increased level of salmon catches at St Pierre et Miquelon in 1998. I understand that the Government of Canada also intends to raise this issue at the next Canada/France Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for early next year.

Given the precarious condition of North American stocks and the catch advice from ICES, your cooperation in introducing measures to reduce the level of exploitation of salmon in the St Pierre et Miquelon fisheries would be welcomed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Malcolm Windsor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Malcolm" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Windsor".

Dr Malcolm Windsor
Secretary

Copies to: Dr A Rosenberg, National Marine Fisheries Service, USA
Mr J Robichaud, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ottawa, Canada

Translation from French to English

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The Secretary
NASCO
11 Rutland Square
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Scotland
United Kingdom

Dear Secretary,

I am most grateful for your invitation to the seventeenth annual meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation. Although I will not be in a position to take part in this meeting, I would like nonetheless to express our great concern with regard to the sustainable management of this stock. This is an issue of utmost importance for the inhabitants of Saint Pierre et Miquelon. Indeed, you will no doubt be aware that, beside recreational fishing, we are dealing here with a traditional subsistence practice. This type of fishing is carried out by communities who are particularly dependent on this activity and who have no other option but to rely strongly on this resource, because of the remoteness of the archipelago and of the problems associated with its economical development.

Our concern for the conservation of the North Atlantic salmon has been known for some time. This fishery is controlled rigorously by restrictive measures limiting fishing effort and types of fishing gear, details of which were sent to you in the previous years. The decree of 20 March 1987, setting management and conservation measures for marine resources in territorial waters and the French economic zone off the coasts of Saint Pierre et Miquelon, makes provision for the following measures:

- a system of administrative authorisations;
- a restriction of the fishing season: 3 months every year (from 1st May to 31st July);
- the setting of numbers, types and conditions of use for fishing gear (nets);
- the declaration of catches.

Thanks to this framework, the fishing effort has remained stable since 1995 (in accordance with the terms of the correspondence exchanged between France and Canada on 2nd December 1994) in so far as the number of fishing permits allocated is lower than in 1994 (54 permits). Thus 47 permits were awarded in 1999 instead of 51 in 1998.

The level of catches has also remained stable in comparison with 1998 and amounts to only 67% (2322 kg instead of 3423 kg) of all the catches recorded in 1994; that year being set as reference year for the conservation measures provided for in the exchange of correspondence dated 2nd December 1994. This demonstrates our will to honour our commitment with regard to management and conservation of the stock.

.../

The increase in the catch level recorded in 1998 should not, furthermore, be equated with an increase of fishing effort on the salmon stock compared with previous years. Indeed, because of our interest for this stock and its improvement, we have initiated an awareness campaign aimed at leisure fishermen to encourage them to declare their catches. Whilst this campaign produced a positive response, it also led to a somewhat erroneous presentation of the variations in the salmon catches in St Pierre and Miquelon; indeed, the increase recorded in 1998 simply reflected a greater honesty in numbers declared than in the previous years. The levelling out of the data for 1999 compared with those of 1998 is further proof of this having taken place.

In any case, given the low level of catches, the increase recorded in 1998 and stabilised in 1999 would be of little consequence.

The stabilisation of the fishing effort (number of awarded permits) and the general trend towards lower catches since 1994 highlight furthermore the respect Saint Pierre and Miquelon has for the principles set out in the exchange of correspondence between France and Canada on 2nd December 1994 relating to salmon fishing. Further, no commercial development of this activity has ever been contemplated.

Yours faithfully,

Le Directeur Adjoint
des Pêches Maritimes et de l'Aquaculture
Bernard BOYER