



# THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION N·E·W·S·L·E·T·T·E·R

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## Outlook for Restoration Program Optimistic Despite Lower Returns in 1999

*Compiled from information from CT DEP Fisheries Division; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and National Marine Fisheries Services*

The adult return to the Connecticut River at the conclusion of the spring 1999 run totaled 131. The return this year thus was less than half of the 1998 overall return of 300, which was one of the better years. However, the return at the Leesville Fishway on the Salmon River in Connecticut actually increased (8 in 1999 vs. 3 in 1998), and the decline in the return at the Rainbow Fishway on the Farmington River in Connecticut (36 in 1999 vs. 50 in 1998) was less steep than at the counting stations further north in Massachusetts. The return at the Holyoke Fishlift on the Connecticut River was 70, compared with 197 in 1998; and the return at the DSI Fishway on the Westfield River was 17, compared with 47 in 1998. (Note there also were 3 salmon reported as miscellaneous in 1998; none in 1999).

The salmon run started out at a very fast pace, at a rate that would have produced a large run by the end of the season. However, about the time when our run should have

peaked, a drought hit the lower Connecticut River hard, and the water in the river "disappeared." More fish might have been out there that either didn't enter the river, or didn't fully ascend the river due to low water, but this could not be determined.

One of the more promising recent strategic developments was the resumption of a hatchery smolt program for the river in 1998. At one time, the restoration program used to stock about 400,000 hatchery smolts each year. Then the emphasis changed to fry stocking. The new plan calls for 100,000 per year, but the focus is on smolt quality rather than quantity. Most of the smolts, reared at Pittsford National Fish Hatchery in Vermont, will be 2 years old. It is important to recall that 2-year-old smolts from Pittsford released in 1979 helped create the record sea-return of more than 500 in 1981. This new group of 2-year-old smolts will depart for the

(See Adult Return, page 6)



*Auctioneer Ed Ruestow, left, and Jonathan Jones at 1999 auction.*

## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Auction/Raffle Set for January 22, 2000

by Edward H. Ruestow, CRSA Dinner Chairman

The Connecticut River Salmon Association's Annual Dinner will be held Saturday night, January 22, 2000 at The Hawthorne Inn, Berlin, CT. The dinner, which will begin with a social hour at 5 pm, is CRSA's sole fundraising event each year.

It is a welcome evening of good fellowship, and features both live and silent auctions plus a large bucket raffle. An interesting selection of fresh and salt water tackle and equipment will be featured, along with framed, limited edition prints; original art-

work; guided trips; and various items of interest to those who do not fish. Good food and drink and a targeted conclusion at a respectable hour combine for a memorable night out and, yes, numerous great bargains!

The well-known Hawthorne Inn is on the Wilbur Cross Highway (Routes 5 & 15) in Berlin. There will be a choice of three entrees, including Prime Rib of Beef, perennially voted "Best in State" by readers of *Connecticut Magazine*. The dinner is open to all, and your spouse or "significant other" is most welcome. All seats are reserved and tables are available for groups. If you have not received an invitation in the mail, call Dinner Chairman Ed Ruestow at (860) 521-1426 or Jim Carroll at (860) 236-5181. If you come from a distance, or would just like to make a complete night of it, accommodations are available at the adjacent Hawthorne Inn Lodge, (860) 828-4181. Special rates are available for CRSA dinner guests.

## CRSA Recognizes Service of Two Retiring Directors, Welcomes Two New Members to Its Board

At the CRSA Annual Meeting and Dinner on April 24, 1999, CRSA recognized the dedication and enduring efforts of Joseph Domalewski and Charles "Ted" Ferree, who retired after many years of service as members of the Board of Directors. Peter Basta of Dorset, Vermont, and Robert Wolter of Norfolk, Connecticut, were elected to fill the vacancies left by the retirements of the long-serving directors.

Ted Ferree, a resident of Manchester, Vermont, provided the CRSA Board with the benefit of his extensive knowledge about Atlantic salmon retention and restoration issues. Ted is an accomplished salmon angler, and serves as Vice President of the Miramichi Salmon Association and President of the Miramichi Salmon Association (U.S.).

Joe Domalewski, an avid fly-fisherman and outdoorsman from Southington, CT, was one of the original incorporators of CRSA in 1974. He served as CRSA's treasurer from its inception until 1991, and worked tirelessly on CRSA's annual dinners and special raffles to raise funds for salmon restoration. He retired from CRSA's Board after twenty-five years of dedicated service.

Peter Basta brings to the CRSA board a professional background as well as a



*Peter Basta, left, with one of his clients and a Lake Ontario salmon*

long-standing volunteer commitment to the Connecticut River salmon restoration effort. Born in upstate New York, Peter's experiences as a teenager catching salmon in Canada led him to attend St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, where he graduated in 1976 with honors in biology. After working as a manufacturer's representative in the ski industry, Peter began serving as a part-time fly fishing guide, which became a full-time occupation in 1990. Peter specializes in guiding fly fisherman in southwestern Vermont and upstate New York, as well as tributaries to Lake Ontario.

Peter presently is the citizen representative selected by the governor of Vermont as one of the two commissioners for his state appointed to the four-state Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC). CRASC manages salmon restoration work in the Connecticut River Basin. CRASC is comprised of two commissioners from each state, plus one member from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and one member from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Peter also is a key participant in the salmon restoration program administered by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He manages the fry stocking volunteer program for much of Vermont, recruiting and scheduling some 100 individuals from January to May each year.

Peter also served as a board member of the former White River Salmon Association, and was a board member of Trout Unlimited.

Bob Wolter was born in Evanston, Illinois, and was raised in the Midwest. He spent his entire career in the pulp and paper industry, where he began working after graduation from college. He held sales and management positions with Mead Corporation and Gotteman Central National



*Bob Wolter with a Margaree prize*

Corporation. He was president of American Cellulose, a subsidiary of a group of French mills. He then became president of SCA Pulp Sales, which is part of a large Swedish forest products company. In 1985, Bob formed his own company, RBWI. Bob moved the business and his home to Norfolk, Connecticut, in 1992. He is active in community and conservation affairs, and presently is treasurer of the Norfolk Land Trust.

Bob has fished all his life. He landed his first Atlantic salmon in Iceland in 1981, and almost every year since then, he has spent time salmon fishing in parts of eastern Canada.

### ***CRSA Celebrates 25 Years With New Web Site!***

Continuing its efforts to expand the availability of information about the Atlantic salmon restoration program in the Connecticut River basin, CRSA opened its new web site late in the fall. Visit us at [www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org)!

The launch of the web site coincided with CRSA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. CRSA was established on December 17, 1974. The site contains information about CRSA, the restoration program, links to other sites about Atlantic salmon, and special features designed to enhance CRSA's School Program.

## School Program Continues Rapid Expansion with 14 New Schools in 1999

Fourteen new schools are participating in CRSA's popular School Program this year, Richard C. Bell, chairman of CRSA's Education Committee, announced recently. A total of 44 Connecticut schools are incubating Atlantic salmon eggs in classrooms as part of the program, now in its fifth year. This represents an increase from the 30 schools that participated in the prior year. The School Program broadcasts its message about conserving Atlantic salmon and habitat to thousands of school children each year. This large audience makes it an integral part of the combined four-state effort to restore Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut River watershed.

The new schools and their locations are: Greenwich High School, Greenwich; Northeast Challenge School, Hampton; Ledyard High School, Ledyard; South Middle School, Hartford; Illing Middle School and Verplanck Elementary School, Manchester; Jonathan Law High School, Milford; Tyl Middle School, Oakdale; Amity Regional Junior High School, Orange; Portland High School, Portland; Tolland Middle School, Tolland; Hall High School, West Hartford; Windsor High School, Windsor; and Nonnewaug High School, Woodbury.

The Program began early in December with the annual Teacher Orientation Meeting, held at the Hartford Marriott



*Timothy Edwards Middle School science teacher Elaine Holcombe, left, demonstrates how to set up a classroom tank at the 1999 Teacher Orientation held on December 4 at the Farmington Marriott. CRSA president Robert Jones is at center, with CRSA secretary Jim Carroll on the far right. (Photo: Ray Hamilton)*

Hotel. More than thirty teachers and volunteers attended. Chairman Bell moderated a series of presentations about the practical aspects of classroom salmon egg incubation by veteran participating teachers, and the history of the restoration program by CRSA President Robert A. Jones.

About a month later, CRSA volunteers marked the new millennium by delivering eyed eggs supplied by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to the partic-



*Students from Timothy Edwards Middle School bid a sad farewell last April to the salmon fry they raised, as they prepare for a fry stocking trip to the Mill River. (Photo: Elaine Holcombe)*

ipating schools. Chairman Bell coordinated this nearly week-long procedure.

The School Program involves incubating Atlantic salmon eggs in a chilled aquarium tank, beginning in early January. The eggs can be expected to hatch about mid-February into alevin, a small fish of about one to one and half inches, supported by a yolk sac (the egg residual) on its stomach. The yolk sac is its sole source of food supply. By the end of April or early May, these creatures are approaching the "fry" stage, when they are ready for stocking in a tributary of the Connecticut River selected by DEP and CRSA. Many schools plan a full class field trip for the stocking.

CRSA provides all new teachers with classroom posters, an equipment list and a notebook of materials for background purposes. We introduce them to sources of educational materials, and assign a specific liaison to each school for consultation, advice, troubleshooting and to arrange classroom visits by DEP or CRSA personnel for educational purposes.

The program has been conducted in classes ranging from first and second graders to high school seniors, all with success. The Atlantic Salmon Federation provides excellent educational materials that are available through CRSA. In addition, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service also provides educational materials and conducts seminars, all adapted to incorporating this program as part of an overall watershed improvement or aquaculture-based program.

Our latest innovations include an online Bulletin Board and photo album, both dedicated to the School Program, on CRSA's new web site ([www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org)). Participating schools will be able to post messages seeking advice or describing unexpected events, as well as pictures of Program-related activities.

# NASCO Adopts 'Action Plan' for Salmon Management at 1999 Meeting

by Robert A. Jones, President, CRSA; United States Commissioner, North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is an international body established by treaty with the objective of contributing to the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of Atlantic salmon stocks. The 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. The Organization consists of a Council and three regional Commissions — the North American Commission, consisting of Canada and the United States; the North-East Atlantic Commission, consisting of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands), the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation; and the West Greenland Commission, consisting of Canada, Denmark (in respect of Greenland), the European Union and the United States.

The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO was held in Westport, Ireland June 7-11, 1999. The parties agreed to new and stronger measures designed to conserve wild stocks of Atlantic salmon. Scientific advice indicated that despite restrictive management measures introduced both nationally and internationally in recent years, salmon stocks still are at seriously low levels. The reasons for the decline in abundance are not fully understood, but appear to be linked to conditions in the marine environment. In order to enhance long-term protection to wild salmon stocks, the Council agreed on an Action Plan for implementation of a Precautionary Approach to salmon management. The Action Plan envisages the application of this approach to the management of salmon fisheries, socioeconomic factors, introductions and transfers, aquaculture, by-catch and habitat issues.

A Special Liaison Meeting was held to review the measures taken to minimize impacts of aquaculture on the wild stocks. The measures taken by Canada and Norway were highlighted this year,

and those taken by the European Union will be reviewed next year. Efforts to develop guidelines for measures to improve containment and husbandry practices between NASCO and the International Salmon Farmer's Association (ISFA) met with little success during the past year. The Council indicated a desire to cooperate more closely with the salmon aquaculture industry in the North Atlantic, as there are risks of adverse genetic, disease, parasite and other interactions with the wild salmon. The Council also decided to attempt to broaden the basis for its present cooperation with the North Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry and to initiate new efforts to develop an internationally acceptable code of containment and other provisions of mutual interest.

During its meetings, the North-East Atlantic Commission agreed to reduce the Faroes' quota from 330 metric tons to 300 metric tons and to certain effort reduction provisions. There is concern that the quota remains excessive given the status of the stocks, even though the Faroes quota has been purchased by interested third parties in recent years.

The West Greenland Commission agreed on an extension of the 1998 agreement for the years 1999 and 2000 for the West Greenland salmon fishery. This agreement restricts the catch to

## ***CRSA Board of Directors Hosts NASCO Secretariat***

In a related event, CRSA's Board of Directors hosted a meeting with Dr. Malcomb Windsor and Dr. Peter Hutchinson, the Secretariat of NASCO, at the Country Club of Farmington October 22, 1999. Drs. Windsor and Hutchinson visited the United States to tour federal and state facilities involved in Atlantic salmon research and culture. They discussed the most recent Report on the Activities of NASCO, and updated the CRSA Board on NASCO's activities since the annual meeting in June.

that amount used for internal consumption within Greenland. This amount is estimated to be no more than 20 metric tons, because the catch under the agreement totaled only 11 tons in 1998.

A report circulated earlier this year asserted that "wild Greenland salmon" were being offered for sale in Denmark and Switzerland, contrary to the 1998 agreement. Investigation by the U.S. Department of State and NASCO Secretariat found that the fish in question were actually aquaculture, reared salmon from Norway and Iceland. Apparently a marketing strategy favors labeling any salmon as "Wild Greenland Salmon," regardless of the origin, much like the appellation "Maine Lobsters."

During the North American Commission meeting, Canada described its 1999 Atlantic salmon management measures. It was reported that preliminary information indicates that the commercial license buy-back program in Labrador resulted in the reduction in commercial licenses by 98%, at a cost of six million dollars. The closure of the commercial fisheries in Labrador and Newfoundland will be continued for an additional three years.

The voluntary license retirement program on Quebec's Lower North Shore announced in 1998 resulted in an 83% reduction in the commercial harvest that year — to five metric tons from 31.5 metric tons in 1997. During the first year of the two-year program, 80% of the license holders relinquished their licenses.

Canada reported that its management plans for recreational fisheries continue to be guided by the precautionary management principle that "calls for proactive fishery management intervention in support of conservation."

NASCO's next annual meeting will be held during the week of June 5, 2000 in Miramichi City, New Brunswick, Canada.

## CRSA Receives \$6,500 Grant from Butler Family Foundation

CRSA expresses its gratitude to member Jude M. Peterson of Shutesbury, MA, for recommending that CRSA be invited to apply for and receive a \$6,500 grant from the Patrick & Aimee Butler Foundation, of Saint Paul, Minnesota. The Butler Family Foundation is a family foundation providing support to the arts, education, human services, and philanthropy. In 1998, the Foundation made contributions of more than \$1.4 million to over 100 organizations.

Mr. Peterson joined the Board of Trustees of the Foundation in June 1998. He is the sixth grandchild of Patrick and Aimee Butler to be elected a Trustee. CRSA submitted its grant application to the Foundation Initiative Fund, which allows Trustees to solicit proposals from pre-selected organizations. CRSA received its grant last June for development of our general fund. CRSA's Board intends to use the grant for educational purposes.

CRSA issued a \$500 grant to Rivers Alliance of Connecticut in June 1999. The Alliance is an umbrella organization for river groups in Connecticut. Among other activities, the Alliance is working with the state Department of Environmental Protection, local legislators, and other conservation organizations to develop new policies to better protect the state's water resources.

## Annual Meeting, Election January 22

The annual meeting to elect directors and conduct other appropriate business of the membership is scheduled for 4:30 PM on January 22, 2000 at The Hawthorne Inn, Berlin, CT. The meeting has been called by the President, Robert A. Jones and a Notice of the Meeting with a Proxy have been sent to all the members of record as of December 15 by the Secretary, James J. Carroll.

The Bylaws provide for seventeen directors and the Nominating Committee has submitted a list of fifteen individuals with two vacancies to be left. They are Robert Allaire, Bristol, CT; Peter Basta, Dorset, VT; Richard G. Bell, North Haven, CT; Rudolph Besier, Old Lyme, CT; James J. Carroll, West Hartford, CT; Myron Cohen, Guilford, CT; David Egan, Guilford, CT; Gerald Feinberg, North Haven, CT; James Glista, Enfield, CT; William Hoyt, North Haven, CT; Robert Jones, South Windsor, CT; John Kinnear, Enfield, CT; Edward Meyer, New Fairfield, CT; Edward Ruestow, West Hartford, CT; and Robert Wolter, Norfolk, CT.

Questions regarding the Annual Meeting may be addressed to the Secretary, James J. Carroll, at 23 Brenway Drive, West Hartford, CT 06117; tel (860) 236-5181; fax (860) 236-9116.

## DEP Announces Salmon Stocking

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently announced that the Fisheries Division stocked a total of 310 surplus Atlantic salmon broodstock into the Shetucket and Naugatuck Rivers in mid-October to provide recreational fishing. Nearly all of the salmon stocked were four years old and weigh 4-10 pounds. Atlantic salmon broodstock were first stocked into these two rivers to develop a fishery in 1992.

"Since these salmon are no longer needed in our hatcheries, we hope that these fish will provide superb recreational Atlantic salmon fishing for Connecticut anglers," said DEP Commissioner Arthur J. Rocque, Jr. "This is the first of our 1999 salmon stockings and we expect to release several hundred more salmon later in the fall as they become available following spawning in our hatchery. We also have plans to stock several hundred salmon reared in federal hatcheries in early December."

[According to a report in the December 19, 1999 *New Haven Register*, DEP stocked an additional 200 salmon broodstock into each river in the beginning of December.]

Broodstock salmon were stocked in the Shetucket River between Scotland Dam (Scotland) and Occum Dam (Occum) and the Naugatuck River between Route 118 and the Thomaston Flood Control Dam (Litchfield-Thomaston). Anglers can fish for salmon in the Naugatuck River from the confluence of the East and West Branches (Torrington) downstream to its confluence with the Housatonic River (Derby). Anglers fishing in the Housatonic River downstream of Derby Dam may also take Atlantic salmon. Anglers may fish for salmon in that portion of the Shetucket River extending downstream from the Scotland Dam (Windham) to Taftville Dam (Norwich-Lisbon).

"We estimate that more than 20,000 hours of recreational fishing are generated each year by stocking the surplus salmon," added Rocque.

In accordance with state regulations, Atlantic salmon currently may be taken only by fly-fishing, and the creel limit is one fish per day. Beginning November 20, 1999, DEP opened the fishery for the first time to the use of lures with single free-swinging hooks. No weight may be added above the fly or lure, and only one fly or lure may be used per line.

To accommodate the anticipated increase in salmon fishing, DEP will propose regulations that permit only Catch and Release fishing during October and November each year. "This change will allow more anglers to participate in the salmon fishery," said Edward C. Parker, chief of the DEP's Bureau of Natural Resources. "These early season Catch and Release regulations will be reviewed by the public at hearings and will not be enacted until fall 2000. Anglers fishing this fall and winter may continue to harvest one salmon per day," added Parker.

## Adult Return *(continued from page one)*

ocean this year. We look forward to the 2002 returns with renewed hope.

With increasing numbers of fry being stocked and the promise of hatchery smolts on the horizon, runs should continue to increase even if oceanic conditions continue to be poor. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the fry program is the new genetic marking and management project initiated by Dr. Ben Letcher, of the Conte Anadromous Fish Lab in Massachusetts. The goal of this project is to accelerate the development of a new strain of salmon in the Connecticut River, which in turn should result in more returns.

However, a less than rosy overall picture about wild Atlantic salmon stocks in Maine was painted in a biological report issued jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the

National Marine Fisheries Service last fall. The report, *Status Review for Anadromous Atlantic Salmon in the United States*, confirms that wild Atlantic salmon are in danger of extinction despite considerable efforts to ensure their survival. A team of federal biologists documented the changes in the status of isolated groups of wild Atlantic salmon in several rivers and tributaries in Maine, including the Kennebec River basin, and extending east to the St. Croix.

The report concludes that fewer adult salmon are returning to spawn, and young salmon in the rivers are surviving at a lower rate than expected. Additional measures are recommended, including controlling water diversion to ensure flow in the rivers; restricting recreational fishing that catches wild salmon; and aquacultural safeguards. The federal Services are working with the State of Maine to address these issues.

### *Application for Membership*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CRSA, AND MAIL THEM TO:

**CRSA**  
76 DEMING STREET  
SOUTH WINDSOR, CT 06074

NEW

PATRON: \$500

LIFE: \$250

SUSTAINING: \$100

SPONSORING: \$50

CONTRIBUTING: \$25

FAMILY: \$25

REGULAR: \$20

### THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION

76 Deming Street  
South Windsor, CT 06074

**CRSA is now online! Visit us at  
[www.ctriversalmon.org](http://www.ctriversalmon.org)**