



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

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SUMMER 2008

USFWS Renovates Cronin Hatchery to Benefit Atlantic Salmon

By Janice N. Rowan, Connecticut River Coordinator

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Editor's Note: In the last CRSA newsletter, we reported that infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN) had been discovered at the Cronin National Salmon Station in Massachusetts. This article describes measures taken by USFWS to address the problem.

In 2007, a Canadian strain of the infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN) virus was detected in wild Atlantic salmon adults held at the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Richard Cronin National Salmon Station in Sunderland, MA. The virus was detected through routine fish health screening of adults. Though few fish were infected with a low incidence of the virus, and though there was no adult loss to the disease, all were destroyed and the facility was disinfected to prevent spread of the disease, as dictated by the existing Fish Health Policy. This action was deemed necessary by the USFWS and the plan was approved by the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission because the virus is known to be very lethal in juvenile Atlantic salmon.

With the hatchery clean, staff at the facility has already accepted 127 wild salmon in 2008 with hopes of a few more in the fall.

The USFWS has committed further effort to minimize risk to the program of future detections because no one can control the health and disease status of wild returning salmon. While the salmon were first trickling in this spring, eight-foot high Plexiglass partitions were installed on four of the holding tanks to minimize splash and cross-contamination between tanks.

Meanwhile, the Freshwater Institute and C&S Engineering were hired to recommend changes to the facility infrastructure and to design an egg incubation system that will prevent spread of infected eggs to other sites via egg transfers. This will include installation of a 60-ton water chiller, a heat exchanger, booster pump, changing to three-phase power, and installation of an emergency power generator. The USFWS had to use emergency procurement authority to expedite the purchase of these items in order to have installation complete by spawning season. To date, the expenses total \$367,000, and this total is expected to reach \$440,000 when the project is finally completed.

Jaime Geiger, the Assistant Regional Director for the USFWS Fisheries Program, said "funding for this project has come at the expense of other important and previously funded projects in the Northeast. Both this redirection of funding and emergency priority status for the project are largely due to the importance of the Connecticut River Migratory Fish Restoration Program and to the huge level of support that the program has engendered among its many partners and supporters. This will protect fish throughout the basin for years to come." ♦



2008 Grand Prize winner Edward Ahern, left, with Bob Jones

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Spain Hosts 2008 NASCO Meeting

By Stephen Gephard, US Commissioner to NASCO

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) meets annually during the first week of June in various locations in member nations around the North Atlantic Ocean. Its mission is the sound management and conservation of wild Atlantic salmon stocks in the North Atlantic region and it seeks to accomplish this through regulatory measures for inter-ceptory fisheries and promoting best management practices for all aspects of

Atlantic salmon activities including re-stocking, habitat protection, aquaculture, research into salmon in the sea, etc.

This year's meeting was held in Gijon, Spain, which is in the province of Asturias and is approximately in the middle of Spain's northern coastline abutting the Bay of Biscay (or the Cantabrian Sea, as the Spaniards prefer to call it). While occasional salmon nose into a handful of streams in northern Portugal, for practical purposes, this northern Spanish coast is the southern extent of the species' range in Europe and close to the same latitude as the mouth of the Connecticut River. The salmon rivers of Spain (e.g. Eos, Narcea, Esva, Cara, Sella, Deva, Bidasoa) flow out of the coastal mountains north to the sea. Many of them are similar in size to the Farmington, Westfield, West, or even Salmon rivers. Northern Spain is more like Ireland than Madrid—lush and green—and with snow melt from the mountains, the waters stay cool all summer long. The size of the run varies but the largest river (Rio Narcea) typically has a rod catch of hundreds of salmon.

NASCO relies on the scientific advice provided to it by ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Seas) when setting its regulatory measures. For the past several years, ICES has determined that the pre-fishery abundance in the sea was too low to meet NASCO's objective of achieving Conservation Limits in home rivers. At the 2006 annual meeting in Finland, NASCO for the first time adopted a "multi-annual" regulatory measure—extending the "no fishing" measure at West Greenland through 2008. There were two conditions: (1) a nominal fishery for internal consumption only (no export) would be again allowed (estimated at 20 tons) and (2) a so-called Framework of Indicators, previously approved by all parties, would be applied to confirm that there had been no significant changes in the ocean or salmon stocks that might raise some doubt that salmon stocks have improved in the interim. The results of the application of the Framework of Indicators at the meeting confirmed no such significant

changes had occurred and therefore the multi-annual agreement remained in place. Therefore, the internal consumption fishery (i.e. subsistence fishery) of August is occurring as I write this report.

However, without many nets in the ocean, scientists have a hard time collecting data from fish on which to base future forecasts and catch advice. For example, scale samples (for age), tissue samples (for genetic analysis), blood samples (for disease screening) and length/weight data are needed to develop a picture of what is happening to salmon in the sea. While the subsistence fishery in West Greenland is quite small, it is the only multi-stock fishery left in the Northwest Atlantic and therefore a valuable source of data. Furthermore, the cooperative, international sampling program for Atlantic salmon (SALSEA) is being launched and additional data are planned to be collected at West Greenland this year. NASCO and SALSEA representatives have underscored that the extra data will not require the killing of any extra salmon. Instead, more data will be collected from the same number of fish. However, the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF) and the hunters and fishers organization of Greenland (KNAPK) have not accepted that assurance and have withheld their cooperation from the government scientist in Greenland to sample the catch. This has been one of those situations in which one moment things are OK, the next moment there is a problem, the next moment the problem is solved, etc. Communication is limited from Greenland, so we'll have to wait until samplers return to see how well the sampling program did. It is unfortunate to have these misunderstandings linger so close to the beginning of the fishery.

The multi-annual regulatory measure for West Greenland ends with the 2008 fishery so for next year, ICES will provide NASCO with catch advice once again. There will be a desire on the part of many Parties for NASCO to adopt multi-annual measures again (e.g. 2009 – 2011) but that may depend upon what is in the ICES catch advice. The advantage

(See NASCO, page 3)

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION

The Connecticut River Salmon Association (CRSA) is a nonstock, nonprofit Connecticut corporation. Our mission is to support the effort to restore Atlantic salmon in the Connecticut River basin, a joint undertaking by the states of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut, together with the US Fish and Wildlife Service of the National Marine Fisheries Service, pursuant to an act of Congress in 1983.

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More Interesting Numbers ...

By Robert Jones, President, CRSA

In the Summer 2006 issue, we presented some numbers that defined the restoration program. Following are more numbers that offer some insight into the status of the Connecticut River Restoration Program and similar efforts in other systems.

140 Atlantic salmon are known to have returned to the Connecticut River in 2008 as of July 14.

Ten of the 2008 returns were fitted with radio tags at Holyoke and released. In addition, one untagged fish, apparently missed at Holyoke, was seen passing through upstream fishways. Following are the tracking results of the 10 tagged fish. (Courtesy of Jay McMenemy, VT Fish and Wildlife).

One made it to the Cabot station at Turners Falls but turned around and went back downstream. Subsequent whereabouts unknown.

Ten passed through the Turners Falls Fishways.

Eight passed through the Vernon Fishway. Of the two that did not, one is known to have entered the Millers River. The other approached Vernon Dam but did not pass and is believed to have died.

Eight went through the Bellows Falls Fishway.

Four passed through the Wilder Fishway. The whereabouts of the four fish that passed Bellows Falls but not Wilder is unknown. One is believed to have moved up the White River.

One of the fish that passed Wilder was the untagged fish.

One of the fish that passed Wilder is known to have moved up the Ammoonosuc River—225 miles upstream of Long Island Sound. This fish is the longest migrating sea-run Connecticut River Atlantic salmon since colonial times.

141 salmon were known to return to the Connecticut River in 2007.

123 salmon were returned to Essex Dam on the Merrimack River by June 22, 2008.

2020 salmon were counted at the Veazie fishway on the Penobscot River by August 11, 2008.

Eight salmon were taken in the Dennys River weir by August 11, 2008.

21 salmon taken in the Cherryfield trap on the Narraguagus River by August 11, 2008.

13.5 million juvenile salmon were stocked in 15 river systems in New England in 2007.

153,110 American shad were counted at Holyoke by July 14, 2008.

3293 American shad were counted on the Westfield River at West Springfield by July 14, 2008.

25,116 shad were counted at the Essex Dam on the Merrimack River by June 27, 2008.

These numbers are presented for general interest. Connecticut River salmon returns this spring about equal the 2007 returns. Additional fish returned in the fall of 2007 and similar activity may occur this fall. This is the first year so many tagged fish traveled so far up river. This is an interesting observation, but the reason is unknown. Clearly the Penobscot is experiencing a great year and word from the Atlantic Salmon Federation indicates that certain Canadian rivers are also having good returns. ♦

NASCO (continued from page 2)

of multi-annual regulatory measures is that it frees time at the NASCO annual meeting to focus on other matters, including SALSEA and what factors are driving down salmon stocks.

There were no changes in how the Faroe Island fishery is managed. The Northeast Atlantic Commission agreed once again not to set a quota for the Faroe Islands fishery for 2009. However, in light of the ICES catch advice, no harvest is anticipated.

As I reported last year, NASCO agreed to the use of an Implementation Plan that would be submitted by all nations. The standardized format of the Plans would allow clear understanding of how each nation has complied with NASCO agreements/guidelines and where more work is needed. It was agreed that each year, all Parties would present a Focus Area Report (FAR) on one aspect of the Implementation Plan. For 2008, the FAR was on “fisheries” (i.e. how we manage commercial or recreational fisheries). This was rather easy for the United States since the only fishery for Atlantic salmon in the United States was the experimental fall catch & release fishery below the Veazie Dam on the Penobscot River (catch = 1 salmon). However, explanation was provided about the broodstock fisheries (not wild salmon) on the Shetucket, Naugatuck, Pemmigewasset Rivers and numerous lakes and ponds in Massachusetts. For 2009, the FAR will cover Habitat—how we protect, restore, or enhance Atlantic salmon habitat in our nations. The United States will have a lot more to report on that and work has already begun on this FAR, to be presented in June of 2009.

Other items on the agenda included an update on the NASCO Salmon Rivers Database on its website, the salmon fishery at St. Pierre et Miquelon (France attended the meeting and we felt new important communication was established), and reports from various Working Groups, such as the Liaison Group with the Salmon Farming Industry and Bio-economic Modeling. Finally, Mary Colligan from the United States (NOAA-Fisheries, Gloucester) was elected as vice-president of NASCO. Next year's meeting will be held in Norway. NASCO's website is www.nasco.int. ♦

The CRSA “Salmon in Schools” Program

Congressmen Joe Courtney, Chris Murphy Take Part in Spring Stockouts

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary



Congressman Joe Courtney (D-2nd) with students from Lyme Consolidated School in May 2008. (Photo: Jim Carroll)

Courtney Joins Stockout at Eightmile River

2nd District Congressman Courtney attended his first CRSA Salmon in Schools stockout May 13 on the Eightmile River when the Lyme Consolidated School had their annual outing. All students and grades in the K-6 school participated in the release of the Lyme salmon fry. The young salmon began two years of growth in Eightmile River, which will be followed by a long summer's ocean journey to the Davis Strait off the west coast of Greenland and finally, by their return as adults to Eightmile two years later.

All of the students in the school have one or more academic assignments during the school year related to salmon. It may involve writing, science, mathematics, or art. However, it is the 6th grade which has the special duty of actually maintaining the tank of 200 fry from January to May.

Several years ago, one class designed and made the large, stuffed salmon shown in the picture. Sixth grade teacher Rebecca Pote said it was appropriate that Congressman Courtney should “catch” their returning adult salmon this year given his outstanding success in introducing legislation to have the Eightmile River designated by Congress as “Wild & Scenic.”

Murphy Attends Farmington River Stockout with Students from Cheshire Schools

5th District Congressman Chris Murphy joined classes from the Doolittle Elementary School from his hometown of Cheshire as they stocked out their Atlantic salmon fry the second week in May. Cheshire High School, Chapman Elementary School and Doolittle Elementary participate in CRSA's Salmon in Schools program, so Cheshire has as many public schools using this special science tool as any city or town in Connecticut.

The early May stockout took place on the Farmington River in Peoples Forest. CRSA liaison and volunteer Ed Albrecht, working with teacher Debra Thomas, developed a science exercise to supplement the stocking. The students were provided with work sheets showing the various insects found in or above the water on the Farmington River which serve as the food base for the growing Atlantic salmon. They then looked for actual insect specimens and had to identify the life stage of the captured samples.



A Doolittle Elementary school student proudly displays salmon fry as Congressman Chris Murphy (D-5th) looks on. (Photo: Jim Carroll)

The CRSA “Salmon in Schools” Program

2008 CRSA Orientation Set for November 8 at Northeast Utilities

By Dick Bell, Education Chair and Vice President, CRSA

The CRSA Orientation, a day-long training and education event, will take place this year on Thursday, November 8, 2008. It will be held at the Headquarters of Northeast Utilities on the Berlin Turnpike, Route 15, on the Berlin - Newington line. This is the same excellent venue, with its high-tech presentation capacities, that we've enjoyed for the past few years, courtesy of this fine Company. Directions, an Agenda, and a Registration form will be sent to all new and veteran teachers and liaisons, as well as other persons expressing an interest, later this fall. We would welcome interested CRSA members; simply let me know. Admission and parking are free; we have access to the splendid Company cafeteria, but our price subsidy is available only to teachers and new liaisons.

Attendance at the Orientation is purely voluntary for teachers and liaisons who have previously attended. It is mandatory for new liaisons, and for new teachers “overseeing” a program in a new school. It is also mandatory for teachers assuming that role in a veteran school. By “overseeing,” I mean the teacher with ultimate responsibility for the program in a particular school. We generally refer to this teacher as the “Lead” teacher. What often happens is that one or more teachers will help or participate in the program. That's fine with us, and we recognize that attendance at our Orientation is an imposition, so we are willing to settle for one qualified teacher per school, assuming that this person, our “Lead” teacher, is available for technical assistance to the entire program in the school. That works well where there is only one tank in the school.

Where there are multiple tanks in separate classrooms, the situation can become a little more complicated. This is especially true if there is no genuine extension of oversight by the Lead teacher. The best solution by far is that each classroom with a tank be under the oversight of a teacher who has attended an Orientation. That results in more than one Lead teacher, but so be it if we are in effect dealing with more than one program in a school. That is the rule with multiple tanks, unless we are persuaded by the circumstances that the single Lead teacher arrangement is sufficient.

What's the big deal? CRSA puts out reams of materials, including a detailed “How To” Operating Manual which explains in detail every step in the process. Why make more teachers come to yet another class?? In our view, there is no substitute for the face-to-face presentations and question opportunities that are available at the Orientation. This program is not for all schools nor all teachers. You need to make an investment in learning, and if your program is to be successful, you simply must have a firm grasp of four essential areas: (1) the life cycle of the Atlantic Salmon; (2) the significance and use of the Development Index; (3) how to construct a safe and reliable tank system; and (4) what to expect during the program cycle. It is also important to understand that you will become part of

a four-state effort created by an Act of Congress to restore this magnificent creature to the Connecticut River basin.

We at CRSA don't pretend to know everything, but we do have over 10 years experience in operating this program in Connecticut, and we've been instrumental in spreading to Massachusetts, Vermont and Rhode Island. You will hear directly from us and from Steve Gephard, Supervising Fisheries Biologist of the Connecticut DEP. Connecticut, as the state of entry, plays a key role in the restoration, and Steve is our primary technical resource. In past years, we have also enjoyed the presentations of CRSA classroom teachers. We look forward to seeing you on November 8! ♦

Put a feather in your cap and eggs in your tank ... become a CRSA liaison!



Left to right: CRSA president Bob Jones with liaisons Allan Concilio (Beacon Falls), Elizabeth Kendall (N. Granby), Edward Albrecht (Cheshire) and Gary Bogli (Manchester). [Photo: James Carroll]

By Elizabeth Kendall

How is that possible? Simple! With a few spare hours and a little bit of easy training from the CRSA and CT DEP Fisheries, you can help us increase the Atlantic salmon population in our Connecticut rivers—and environmental education in your town's schools. Classrooms all over the state raise and release salmon fry, and each class needs a liaison, someone who can answer questions, and deliver eggs (helping with the release is optional but the most fun). All it takes is one day of first-time training in November, a flexible schedule for egg delivery during part of a few days in January and a nice day in May to help your school release their Atlantic salmon fry. Anyone can do it. You will be taught about salmon and don't have to be a fisherman. It's great fun! ♦

For information, contact Richard Bell, CRSA Education Chairman at 203-288-2386 or bellwrg@cs.com

The CRSA “Salmon in Schools” Program

Growing by Leaps and Bounds: Atlantic Salmon in the Classroom

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

The science program to hatch Atlantic salmon eggs as an interdisciplinary teaching tool started in the United States about 1993 in Maine and then migrated south to Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, Rhode Island and then New Hampshire. The program is now broadly accepted in New England. This is a progress report.

A 2008 Connecticut River Salmon Association (CRSA) survey of participating Connecticut teachers indicated there were some 5,600 students academically involved. For example, Lyme Consolidated Elementary School has one tank but every student in the school has “salmon assignments” at some point in the year, and they all participate in the fry stockout. The program in Connecticut was started by the CRSA in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Fisheries Department (CT DEP) and is strongly supported by a cadre of liaisons.

Western Massachusetts had 42 participating locations in 2008. This included one college and one senior center plus 40 secondary schools. Jan Rowan of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife Service and the Trout Unlimited–Deerfield Falls Chapter ably manage the program. It had an estimated 1,200 participants.

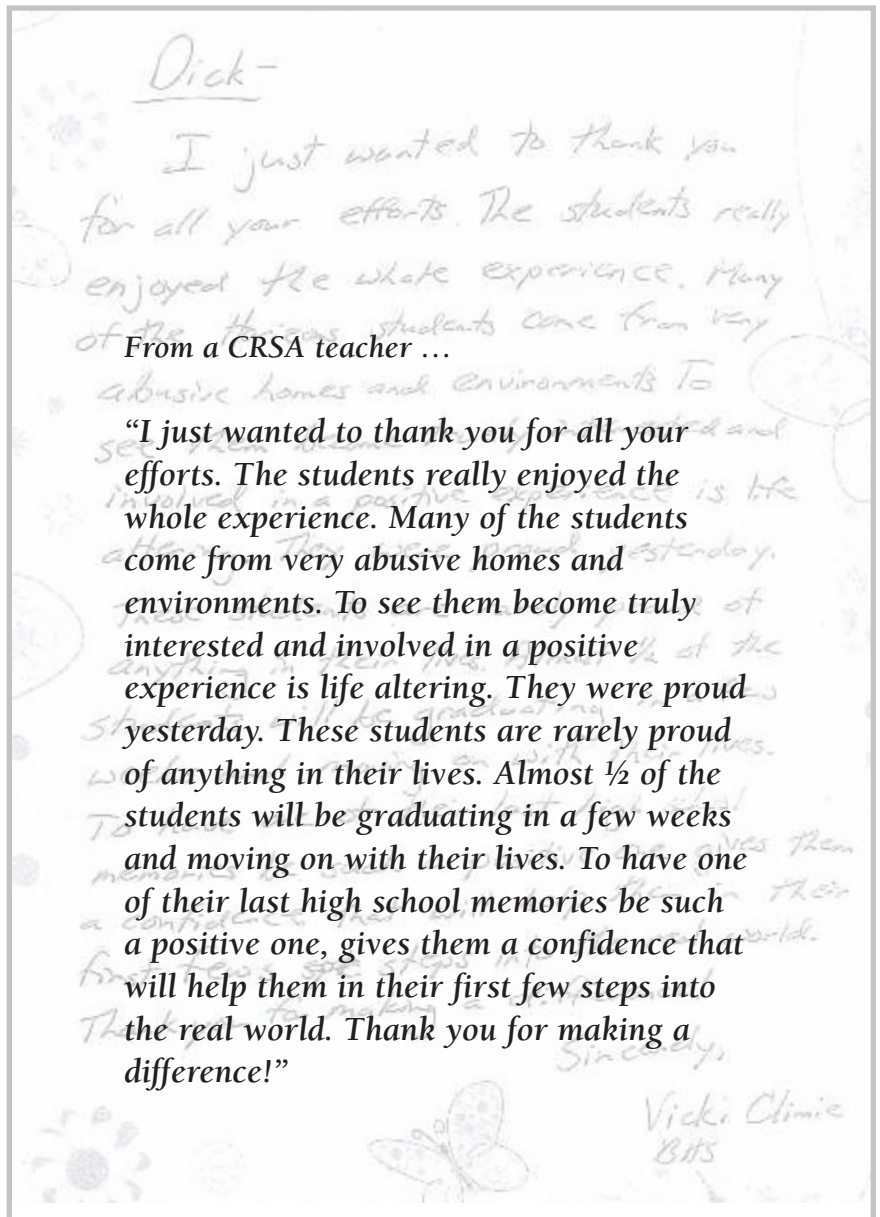
In the Merrimac Valley, Doug Smithwood of the USFWS manages a Fish Friend Program, which numbers some 40 participating schools with about 1,040 students.

Vermont’s program is managed by two environmental organizations: the Vermont Southern Natural History Museum and the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. The USFWS White River National Fish Hatchery has also supported it from the beginning. This past academic year, there were 36 participating schools in Vermont and an estimated participating student population of over 1,000.

Western New Hampshire had 10 participating schools in 2008 and an estimated 300 students. Judy Tumosa of the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department along with Trout Unlimited have organized and energized it.

Kimberly Sullivan of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Fish & Wildlife Division ably manages Rhode Island’s Fish Friends Program. With 30 schools, Sullivan estimates the number of student participants at 700.

In the 2007–2008 school year, an estimated 9,840 students in Southern New England were taught environmental science, biology, geography, English composition and mathematics using this program. And it will grow in the 2008–2009 academic year. Get contact information for your state at the CRSA website at www.ctriversalsalmon.org. ♦



Didymo: What YOU Can Do To Prevent The Spread of This Alarming New Visitor!

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

For the first time this spring, didymosphenia geminata or didymo, a large freshwater diatom, was found in the Batten Kill, White and Connecticut Rivers in the states of New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Also called "rock snot," it thrives in cold, low-nutrient waters with a stable flow. It is an aquatic nuisance species, a type of algae, which forms thick brownish mats that feel like wooly cotton and are not at all slimy. One of its main impacts on streams is aesthetic but it also changes the profile of stream insects by blanketing the bottom and inhibiting or interrupting the life cycle of some important invertebrates as well as smothering some aquatic plants. It is believed to be native to the far northern regions of Europe and Asia but recently has been found in New Zealand.

Angela Shambaugh, an algae expert at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, said in June, "Spread prevention is our best and really only defense against the harmful effects of this species" and she added that there are no known methods for controlling or eradicating didymo once it infests a water body.

According to the Vermont agency, the microscopic algae cling to fishing gear, waders, boots and boats, and remain viable for several weeks under even slightly moist conditions. Decontamination requires soaking clothing and equipment in hot water containing detergent, or a 2% bleach solution. Thoroughly drying clothing and equipment for a minimum of 48 hours can also be effective, but only if absolutely complete dryness is maintained. Shambaugh also cautioned that even if didymo isn't visible, it could still cling to clothes and equipment.

In November, the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel (NEANS) met in Providence, RI, under the sponsorship of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service. Scientists and fisheries managers from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and New Brunswick, Quebec and Montreal discussed the development a consistent and effective outreach strategy to alert river and water users about how to prevent the spread of didymo. Connecticut and Rhode Island fishery scientists have also been part of the discussions about an outreach program and also how to protect their hatchery operations.

The Connecticut River Salmon Association urges all its newsletter readers, members and friends to support efforts to contain this nuisance species. You can expect a wide outreach effort to boaters, fishermen, swimmers and others educating everyone how to control the spread of didymo.

Support that effort! ♦

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Extracts from the April 2008 Report of the CRASC Technical Committee

from the report prepared by Caleb Slater, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and CRASC Technical Committee Chair

Fish Culture Subcommittee Update (and Fish Health Management at RCNSS)

The total egg production for 2007 was about 9.5 million Atlantic salmon eggs. This total does not include 899,000 sea-run eggs and 100,000 kelt eggs taken at the Richard Cronin National Salmon Station (RCNSS) and later destroyed at the White River National Fish hatchery (WRNFH) after Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis (IPN) was detected.

The Kensington Salmon Station shipped 340,000 eggs to the Roger Reed State Fish Hatchery (RRSFH) because of low water conditions. The eggs will be hatched at the RRSFH from which they will be trucked back to Connecticut for release in the spring.

A fry allocation meeting was held on March 7. 5.9 million fry are available for 2008 stocking. This is down from 6.4 million last year. Stocking densities will be adjusted downward but all habitat will be stocked.

Ovarian samples from salmon held in the outside raceways at Cronin were clean—no IPN was detected. The nearly 200 sea-run and kelt Atlantic salmon held at the RCNSS were necropsied on January 15, 2008 by fish biologists from the Lamar Fish Health Unit. Results of disease testing of all fish on station determined that only one fish was positive for IPN. The facility was depopulated and disinfected this winter.

There is ongoing discussion about how the facility, including the outdoor raceways, might be used in the future. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be installing an egg incubation system and instituting partial isolation of the holding pools at the RCNSS as part of a plan for improving biosecurity at the facility and within the Program.

Milt cryopreservation study results—eye up was 71% vs. 85% for non-frozen milt. This is acceptable but the estimated cost to implement a production level is about \$120K for the first year, \$60K/

yr for next four years and then about \$10K/yr thereafter depending on quantities. USFWS has no funds in 2008 or 2009 for this.

Salmon smolt fin assessment and the third calcein marking at the Pittsford NFH and Berkshire took place over the week of February 4. Mr. Bouchard noted that there would be about 8,000 6" smolts available for distribution from the Berkshire hatchery this spring. Smolts are being stocked now. Mr. Gephard will coordinate with Mr. Bill Fletcher from the Northeast Fishery Center to ensure that data will be collected from outmigrating smolts at the Rainbow dam bypass. Migration is expected to begin around April 20. Sampling will take place Monday and Thursday evenings through the end of the run, or about the end of May. Mr. Gephard will also coordinate physiological smolt sampling with Mr. Steve McCormick.

White River National Fish Hatchery (WRNFH) Operations

WRNFH will produce about 3.9 million fry this spring, down 11% from 2007. The hatchery installed a new chiller system in late December. The first of the early egg takes will be available for stocking around April 27.

Genetics Subcommittee Update

The subcommittee met on January 29. Decisions were made with respect to which kelt eggs should be used to produce this year class of domestic broodstock in an attempt to minimize program impacts due to the loss of the sea-run eggs. Work continues on the development of a broodstock management plan.

Mr. Darren Desmarais will be providing weekly assistance to the Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center until sea runs start returning in spring. The objective is to speed up genotyping for the backlog of Connecticut River Atlantic salmon genetic samples. Ms. Kitty Griswold reported that if the Lamar Fish Health Unit can identify any

individual IPN positive sea-run salmon by PIT tag, she can assess existing samples for continent of origin.

Fish Passage Subcommittee Update

Turners Falls Dam (Connecticut R.): The new gatehouse fishway entrance has been installed and will be ready for spring migration period. Evaluation studies by Conte Lab are planned.

Vernon Dam (Connecticut R.): New power production turbines have been installed at this site. These have changed the station's flow field. Negotiations are underway with TransCanada to describe the type of downstream passage studies required.

Gilman Dam (Connecticut R.): The owner has hired consultants and engineers to develop design plans for downstream fish passage. These facilities will be installed in time for smolt migration in 2009.

Fiske Mill Dam (Ashuelot R.): Upstream fish passage facilities are under construction, but the completion date is uncertain. At best it will be late in the migration season. The owner is responsible for operating and monitoring the facility. The details of trap or window are being finalized. The owner will likely use manual counts and video to monitor the passage results.

Woronoco (Westfield R.): After trying to delay smolt testing at Woronoco for yet another year, the project owner has agreed to conduct the smolt passage study this spring.

Chicopee River Dams: There was some discussion about the need for fish passage at the first few dams on the river. There was some question about water quality that needs to be investigated. Some consideration on the value of passage to the overall program should also be made before any action is taken. It was noted that herring transplants did not take in the Westfield River. However, clupeid production potential could be tested by dropping a load of shad upstream of the Dwight Stream Dam and monitoring for juveniles later in the season. ♦

Atlantic Salmon Federation Report

By Robert Wolter, President, Western New England Council and Director, CRSA

The Atlantic Salmon Federation celebrated its 60th anniversary with meetings and a Gala Dinner in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada on May 12-15, 2008. There were meetings of the Regional Presidents Council, various Committees and the members of both the US and the Canadian Boards. The meetings were well attended and lots of ground was covered.

Many Atlantic salmon conservation subjects were raised for discussion. Listed below is a brief recap of the more important items:

PENOBSCOT RIVER RESTORATION

On April 29, 2008 the Penobscot Trust exercised the option to buy two dams for US\$25 million as of 6/22/08. They then have 30 days to file regulatory permits and one year to implement the permits. They now have to raise another US\$25 million to take out the dams and to put in a fishway at Howland. They have potential government funding lined up for US\$7 million and will be able to earn some funds by running the dams until they are taken out. The goals are to have the fishway at Howland by 2010, Great Works removed by 2011 and Veazie out by 2012. The Atlantic Salmon Federation does not plan to be financially involved in the second phase (dam removal and fishways) of the project. The goal of the Trust is to increase the returns of Atlantic salmon to the Penobscot River to 12,000 per year.

GREENLAND AGREEMENT

The agreement has been extended through 2013 by ASF and NASF with the fishermen of Greenland. There is a clause whereby either party can negate the agreement with one year's notice. Next notice date is 4/15/09. ASF is committed for CAN \$800,000 over the term of the agreement, CAN\$170,000 for 2008. No commercial fishing allowed. There is a quota of about 22 tons for local subsistence. ASF feels this is too high and is negotiating to further define and reduce this quota.

OCEAN SURVIVAL-SMOLT TRACKING

The ASF "Adopt a Smolt" program run by Dr. Fred Whoriskey was extended from the estuaries of selected Canadian rivers to the Straits of Belle Island in 2007, which covers a distance of over 1000 kilometers of the smolts' journey to the feeding grounds off of Greenland. Work is being done with Dalhousie University to extend the range of the receiver arrays. A new line will be added in 2008 that extends 125 miles out from Halifax. This could possibly pick up smolts from the US rivers. In 2009 there will be two new arrays on the Labrador coast.

ASF's contribution of the "Adopt a Smolt" results along with Canada's contribution of CAN\$800,000 worth of ship and scientist time is a major contribution to SALSEA's efforts to determine why the death rate of Atlantic salmon on the high seas is so devastating.

ATLANTIC SALMON ENDOWMENT FUND

The Canadian Government provided CAN\$30 million. The funds are invested. The interest is to be spent on Atlantic salmon conservation. The directors and members have been appointed and staff and offices are in place. There will be CAN\$300,000 available for 2008 which will be divided six ways, CAN\$50,000 each for the Maritime provinces and Quebec and an equal share for other purposes.

PROVIDING SAFE RIVER PASSAGE TO SPAWNING BEDS

Even though ASF and the various Regional Councils have vigorously promoted "catch and release" and the use of barbless hooks, more than 35,000 large salmon and grilse are killed each year in Canada by anglers. Statistics show that a further 10,000 fish are taken each year by First Nations peoples but it is felt that this figure is low. Through efforts by ASF and affiliates, live release licenses are now available in some Provinces, number of tags are being reduced and 43 Atlantic salmon fishing camps have signed up to be "catch and release" only. The high number of fish being killed by anglers diminishes the efforts being made to negotiate lower kill quotas for the First Nations Tribes. It also hampers efforts to lower the subsistence quotas for Greenland and the harvest from the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

ST. CROIX RIVER USA

At the instigation of several Native American tribes and some guides associations who are involved in fishing for small-mouth bass, dams in the lower St. Croix that have fishways are compelled by the Maine government to close them during the alewife migration in the spring. Because of this, the alewife migration has crashed from in the millions down to 1000. As the alewives run interference for the smolts, the Atlantic salmon migration is down to less than 10. ASF-USA and the various Maine River Associations have tried very hard to get this restriction dropped, but their fight has turned out to be "coated in politics." As the river is shared by both Canada and the United States, and it is a Canadian Heritage River, it was decided to try to get the Canadian Government involved to see if the restrictions that Maine has put on the alewife migrations in the St. Croix cannot be removed. ♦

CRSA Needs YOU!

By becoming a member, you not only help support this Newsletter, our School Program, and our web site, but you will also be adding your name to the list of individuals dedicated to the health and welfare of the Connecticut River and the restoration of Atlantic salmon and other fisheries resources.

See back page for membership information.

Not a Member Yet?

If you are not a member of CRSA, you are receiving this complimentary copy of our Newsletter, in the hopes that you find it informative and that you will consider joining our organization. Publishing this Newsletter is not inexpensive and our income is limited to membership dues and receipts from our Annual Dinner. By becoming a member, you not only help support this Newsletter, our School Program, and our web site, but you will also be adding your name to the list of individuals dedicated to the health and welfare of the Connecticut River and the restoration of Atlantic salmon and other fisheries resources. We need you help. Please use the membership application below and send your check today!

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