



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

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FALL 2012

Where Do We Go From Here? ... Revisited

A Summary of the Serious Issues Facing the Salmon Restoration Program Today

By Robert Jones, President, CRSA

In our Summer 2011 Newsletter I wrote a piece about the future of Connecticut River salmon restoration. Much of what I wrote has come to pass but for somewhat different reasons. Following is a reprint of a letter I sent to CRSA members explaining where we are today. It is reprinted below so that our readers will be aware of the issues.

Many of you have already heard the news that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will no longer produce Atlantic salmon for the Connecticut River restoration program. At a recent meeting of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC) the USFWS Regional Director, Wendi Weber, stated that the USFWS will no longer produce any salmon in their culture facilities for the Connecticut River restoration program. She said that the salmon program has been performing poorly for over two decades in terms of adult returns. This factor coupled with fiscal challenges and shifting priorities, caused the USFWS to make this change. This means that federal hatcheries will no longer culture salmon for the Connecticut River Program.

Federal Hatcheries:

The White River National Fish Hatchery, Bethel, VT: virtually destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene, when rebuilt will supply lake trout for Great Lakes Compact with Canada and perhaps other species.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower National Fish Hatchery, which targeted 300,000 fry and 100,000 smolts for the Connecticut River, currently holds pre-smolts for stocking, 40 – 60,000 smolts, in 2013. Thereafter the facility will raise trout or lake trout.

The Richard Cronin National Salmon Station: in the long term will address other priorities. In the short term it will support the states: 2012 returning adults will be spawned there this fall. 2013 sea run salmon will be retained there. We believe there is a two-year commitment from the USFWS to continue to operate Cronin (including picking up salmon at

(See Where, page 7)

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, January 19, 2013

37th Annual CRSA Dinner & Raffle/Auction

**USS Chowder Pot IV Restaurant
Prizes, Awards and Raffles plus
Rods, Reels, Trips and More!**

**For more information, contact Dinner Chairman
Tom Chrosniak at tchrosniak@comcast.net**

See what all the fun's about on page 7!

You Can Help Your Schools!

The next CRSA dinner is set for January 19, 2013, at the Chowder Pot IV restaurant. It will help fund the Salmon-in-Schools Program, which has contributed national award-winning environmental education to some 80 school districts in Connecticut since 1996.

You can help your school district with donations to the CRSA of unused and lightly used equipment, flies, excess artwork and books and the like as well as gift certificates from favorite restaurants, clothiers, and local merchants. Your donations will go to work in your community.

Contact Tom Chrosniak at 16 Forest Road, West Hartford, CT 06119 or (860) 729-5064 or tchrosniak@comcast.net.

Review of the 2012 Annual NASCO Meeting (June 5–8, 2012)

By Stephen Gephard, Supervising Fisheries Biologist, DEEP/Inland Fisheries Division; US Commissioner to NASCO

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is a regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) that manages mixed stock fisheries for Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean. The organization is guided by an international treaty that all contracting Parties signed. It meets during the first week of June each year but considerable work is done between annual meetings. It receives technical

guidance and catch advice on fisheries from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The 29th Annual Meeting was held June 5–8, 2012, in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Head of the US Delegation was Mary Colligan (NOAA-Fisheries, Gloucester) and George Lapointe (Maine) and I (CTDEEP) served as the two non-federal commissioners.

Significant activities of the annual meeting include:

- The adoption of a multi-annual regulatory measure that limits the West Greenland fishery (where US salmon are most likely to be caught) to a minimal, internal consumption fishery, with no export. This is essentially unchanged from the previous measure that expired in 2012. There was some concern that the Greenland Home Rule Government would not support another such restrictive regulatory measure, so it was good to achieve this agreement.
- The adoption of a multi-annual regulatory measure for the Faroe Island fishery (where US salmon are rarely caught). This is the first regulatory measure to be adopted for this fishery and, in accordance with ICES advice, there will be no fishery in 2012.
- Adoption of improved reporting requirements concerning the implementation of key NASCO agreements on stock management, habitat protection, aquaculture, and related activities.
- Receipt and discussion of a report from an External Performance Review Panel—a step that the UN is urging all RFMOs to undertake. Overall, the panel gave NASCO good marks but made many recommendations on how NASCO could update its treaty and broaden its scope. Many Parties appear to be reluctant to re-open the treaty and it will take another year of consideration before NASCO may

decide how to respond to the report.

- Agreed to send another letter to France urging it to join NASCO (in respect to St. Pierre and Miquelon) to better engage in a dialogue about the mixed stock, interception fishery off these two small islands between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. While existing genetic data are limited, the current evidence suggests that most of the salmon caught in this small fishery (~3 tons) are of Canadian origin, but some US salmon are caught. France participates in NASCO through the representation of the EU but since St. Pierre and Miquelon are not part of the EU, France would need to join NASCO to represent the islands. It has resisted this move in the past.
- There has been some concern that the net fisheries in Labrador may be mixed stock fisheries. Canada believes that the nets are set far enough inland in respect to headlands to avoid catching mixed stocks but at the meeting Canada announced a new genetics study that will be able to characterize the origin of fish caught in these fisheries and resolve this issue.
- This was the last meeting for NASCO's Secretary, Dr. Malcolm Windsor, the only Secretary the organization has had in its 29 years. He will be retiring in September and Assistant Secretary Peter Hutchinson will serve as Acting Secretary as a search gets underway to replace Malcolm. A great deal of time in the meeting was spent developing a process with which to recruit and hire a replacement, as well as dealing with related budget issues. ♦

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 2003.

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Two Honored with CRSA Awards



Longtime dinner chair and CRSA director Ed Ruestow receives the 2012 President's Award from Bob Jones, left. [Photo: J. Carroll]

Ruestow Receives President's Award

In awarding Ed Ruestow the President's Award, an engraved crystal bowl, at the January 2012 dinner, President Bob Jones said, "Ed provided the Association with a professionally managed and successful annual event for thirteen years." The award is "...for his exemplary service to the Association."

Ed Ruestow has been a CRSA director for more than two decades. He brought to the board, and especially the Dinner Committee, great salmon fishing experience as a result of his many international trips, a long list of fellow international salmon enthusiasts and contacts, and a wide knowledge of companies making tackle and fishing products and their personnel through his ownership of the successful store group, Clapp & Treat.

Wolter Honored with Service Award

Although Bob Wolter was unable to attend the 2012 dinner, he was saluted by all who were present after he was awarded the CRSA Service Award. The citation reads

"The Board of Directors of the Connecticut River Salmon Association hereby present the 2012 CRSA Service Award to fellow director Robert Wolter for his dedication and contribution as the President of the Western New England Council of the Atlantic Salmon Federation.

During his tenure, Bob has represented the CRSA and organizations and individuals interested in wild Atlantic salmon in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont on the USA board of directors of the Atlantic Salmon Federation. He has brought hard work and dedication to his duties along with a keen knowledge of salmon and broad understanding of the issues from the states he has represented.

He is to be especially commended for the communication skills he provided both to his constituents and to the Atlantic Salmon Federation board."

— Jim Carroll, CRSA Director and Secretary

THANK YOU to our donors!

The following organizations and individuals contributed goods or services to the 2012 CRSA Dinner Auction.

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The CRSA "Salmon-in-Schools" Program

Two Teacher Orientations Scheduled for October 2012

October 3 Session is Designed for New Teachers, October 16 Session is Geared for Veteran Instructors

By Richard Bell, CRSA Vice President and Education Chair

Our annual Orientation sessions are intended to train and prepare both new teachers in new schools, and, as required, new teachers in veteran schools. Those new teachers in veteran schools required to attend the Orientation are those who will be responsible for the conduct of the program for the benefit of a defined class or section of students. For example, a new teacher assisting or working under the direction of a qualified veteran teacher in a classroom with a single tank, is not required to attend the Orientation. However, if that new teacher is the sole teacher responsible for another class operating a tank, he or she is required to attend. All teachers, regardless of status, are welcome to attend. It is our view that junior or assisting teachers will get more out of the program, and be able to give more to it, if they have attended.

We plan two Orientations this year. The first is for new teachers, including new teachers as required in veteran schools, and new teachers in new schools. It is scheduled for October 3. It will be held at the Northeast Utility Headquarters on the Berlin Turnpike, Berlin, Connecticut at 9:00 a.m. This is the same place where we have been for several years. The agenda will include the assembly and operation of a tank and chiller, which will be all the more important this year because of the elongated schedule. This date for the new teacher orientation is, however, subject to change as described below.

The second Orientation session, for veteran teachers, will be on October 16 at the same time and place as above. We strongly encourage, and will expect, each participating veteran school to be represented unless excused. All veteran teachers are invited. The agenda will include a presentation of a world view of Atlantic salmon, a discussion of the new scheduling, illustration of the necessary DI discipline required, and a discussion of the future of the restoration program.

We will cancel the October 3 date for the new teacher session and run this on October 16, concurrently with and in a separate room from the veteran session, if it appears that the scheduled new teacher attendance does not warrant a separate session. ♦

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➔ IMPORTANT REMINDER for Connecticut Teachers:

Eggs Are Coming Mid-December!

Eyed Atlantic salmon eggs for Connecticut schools will be delivered in mid-December this year. Tanks will have to be cleaned, new filter elements installed, chillers tested and tanks filled no later than **December 7**. The present schedule is for eggs to be delivered during the weeks of **December 10** and **December 17**.

— Dick Bell

Operating Notes: Eggs and Chillers

By Richard Bell, CRSA Vice President and Education Chair

We have been allocated 20,000 eggs for the Schools Program this year. That is the same total allowed last year. With 97 tanks in operation last year, we are just about at full capacity. Accordingly, no school should plan on increasing the number of tanks in operation without my express permission. (Bennet Academy is the exception here: it is cleared for the expansion we discussed some time ago.)

There may be some drop-out schools, as there almost always are, so some degree of flexibility may develop. That may allow for some new schools. Also, I would observe that, if we need to expand within the fixed limit, we could do so by shaving the 200 egg per tank allocation, probably at multi-tank schools. We do not anticipate the need for this.

The extended Schools Program schedule this year, beginning before Christmas and still holding stockings in late April and May, is a month longer than usual. It will require strict temperature control and discipline. Your chiller is the key component here and our recommendation is that you have it checked out and serviced by a qualified air conditioning or other technician before putting it back into use again. This is especially true of those chillers which are more than five years old, or which have shown any signs of erratic or unreliable performance in the past. ♦

Salmon-in-Schools Part of Groundbreaking Class at St. Joseph University

By James Carroll, CRSA Secretary and Director

A new undergraduate course, “Natural History of the Farmington River,” was created for St. Joseph University in West Hartford in Spring 2012 by Eileen Fielding, executive director of the Farmington River Watershed Association. It is a first in Connecticut!

Eileen said, “Take eleven people swapping information online, going on road trips together, learning to fly cast with Trout Unlimited, getting behind-the-scenes tours of fish ladders and hatcheries with CT DEEP, learning the inside story of flood control and forest management from the MDC, peeking into culverts and under bridges, and raising their own Atlantic salmon fry to release in the Farmington River with the Connecticut River Salmon Association, and what do you get? College credit.

Both students and partner organizations enjoyed working with one another and sharing one another’s perspectives on what it takes to care for a watershed. Overall, it was more a ‘real-life’ than textbook experience.”

Funding to create the course and course materials came from the Camp Fire Foundation. The creativity, expertise and enthusiasm came from Eileen Fielding. The Connecticut River Salmon Association provided training for this first-ever course at a college or university level in Connecticut about Atlantic salmon and their culture. Integration of Salmon-in-Schools into the university’s curriculum was made possible by biology department chair Carol Millard.

A first! ♦



Course Instructor Eileen Fielding (kneeling, front left) with Professor Millard, second from right in second row, and Lab Manager Megan McGonagle, second row, right. These students stocked out the fry. [Photo: J. Carroll]

CRSA Teachers To Be Offered CEUs for Salmon-in-Schools Workshops

By James Carroll, CRSA Secretary and Director



Kathy Randall, left, Grants Coordinator for CREC, and CRSA Director Elizabeth Kendall. [Photo: J. Carroll]

While meeting with CRSA director Elizabeth Kendall, CREC Grants Coordinator Kathy Randall said, “The Capitol Region Educational Council has been pleased to cooperate with the Connecticut River Salmon Association on an Interdistrict Cooperative Grant, River to the Sea. This grant has multiple advantages for students and teachers. Teachers have earned CEUs through the training provided, and Hartford County students are provided with educational opportunities such as field studies and fisheries work, not generally available in the regular classroom.”

Also thanks to Kathy Randall, CREC and the River to the Sea Program (R2S), all CRSA teachers will have the opportunity to earn CEUs when attending CRSAs October 2012 Teachers Orientations or workshops on October 3 and October 16. Fifteen teachers from school districts across Connecticut earned CEUs at the October 2011 event. ♦

Extracts from the July 2012 Report of the CRASC Technical Committee

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

Salmon Subcommittee

There was discussion about the radio tracking of tagged salmon released at Holyoke given Jay McMenemy's retirement, as he used to coordinate the tracking of these fish.

Mr. Cox [of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife] (VTDFW) stated that monitoring will be reduced from the past but Melissa Belcher will be conducting some tracking. The upper main stem ladders will identify passage of these fish by digital monitoring. Mr. Gerardi noted there are two salmon upstream of Bellow Falls Dam, and VTDFW would track them as time permitted.

Mr. Gephard gave a report on the 2012 US Atlantic Salmon Assessment Committee Meeting which was held at the Conte Lab in Turners Falls, March 5-8. This working meeting is held each year to produce a report that summarizes activities undertaken the previous year in the United States relative to Atlantic salmon restoration and recovery. It covers descriptions of adult returns, fisheries, stock assessments, program summaries (e.g., the Connecticut program, the Merrimack program, etc.), fish health updates, etc. Report No. 24 covering 2011 activities is now posted at: www.nefsc.noaa.gov/USASAC/

SALSEA (Salmon at Sea) research findings: Mr. Gephard stated that results have shown shifts in distributions of salmon, prey and predators in a northern direction; however no smoking gun has been identified to explain the 20+ years of reduced marine survival rates.

Fish Culture Subcommittee

Mr. Dan Marchant provided a handout on fish culture activities. Highlights of the report include the best current data on fry stocked in the basin this spring, which was a total of 2.2 million fry from 4.94 million eggs taken in fall 2011.

RCNSS [Richard Cronin National Salmon Station]
Stocked approximately 82,000 feeding fry.

DDENFH [Dwight D. Eisenhower National Fish Hatchery]
Released 82,400 smolts this spring and 11,900 parr last fall. For 2013 release there are over 95,000 salmon, some of which will be available for fall release.

BNTH [Berkshire National Trout Hatchery]
Released 4,200 parr last fall and 3,800 smolts this spring For 2013 release there are approximately 9,000 salmon.

KSFH [Kensington State Fish Hatchery]
Released 416,600 fry during spring distribution. Survival from egg to fry was again less than historic average. An investigation to improve survival through the eyed egg stage is ongoing. As part of this process, pipelines have been disinfected and a treatment regime is planned to improve egg eye-up. Brood fish on site are expected to produce 2.5 to 3.0 million eggs in fall 2012.

RRSH [Roger Reed Salmon Station]

Released approximately 1.57 million fry basin-wide. These fry originated from eggs produced at RRSB and WRNFH. Brood fish on site are expected to produce 1.5 million eggs in 2012.

RXFCS [Roxbury Fish Culture Station]

Released approximately 162,000 fry to VT waters. These fish originated from eggs provided by Kensington SFH. The facility is in the process of engineering for re-building after the damage from flooding 2011. The outdoor rearing area will be re-built. The indoor rearing and incubation area is intact and capable of supporting egg incubation in the fall, provided construction activities don't interfere.

WRNFH [White River National Fish Hatchery]

WRNFH staff transported fry from RXFCS and RRSB to VT waters.

Mr. Novak reported that Cronin National Salmon Station has 40 adult returns on station, all of which are multi-sea winter fish. There have been no grilse captured or observed. Only one of the adult fish has an adipose clip (smolt origin).

Fish Passage Subcommittee

Mr. John Warner provided a handout and described two meetings held by the CRASC affiliated Fish and Wildlife agencies last winter to address the pending relicensing of five large CT river hydroelectric projects (Turners Falls Dam, Northfield Mtn Pump Storage, Vernon Dam, Bellows Falls Dam, and Wilder Dam). The meetings were centered on 1) fish passage (up and downstream issues), 2) fish population impacts (e.g., shortnose sturgeon), and 3) environmental conditions (spill flows, operational flows, bypassed river reaches). This fall the Preliminary Application Documents will be due and time lines for actions by FERC [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] will begin as the relicensing process takes five and a half years.

Connecticut River Relicensing (Turners Falls, Northfield Mountain, Vernon, Bellows Falls and Wilder projects — Licenses expire in 2018)

- Preliminary Application Document (PAD) for each project will be prepared and distributed in October 2013.
- Public meetings to follow PAD - opportunity to raise issues/ identify study needs.
- Potential for meetings with owners prior to PAD but not required.
- Preliminary data collection on mussels, flows, river temperatures etc ongoing.

Mr. Gephard gave updates on non-FERC jurisdiction projects in CT which included plans to build a fishway on the dam at Rogers Lake (a lower main stem trib), the Eightmile River, the Ed Bills Pond Dam removal, Mattabasset River fishway (will

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Where (reprint continued from page 1)

Holyoke and West Springfield). This commitment will be confirmed at a meeting of CRSAC this fall.

State Hatcheries:

VT Roxbury Fish Culture Station, Grand Isle, VT: can receive eggs but no facilities to raise fry or salmon. Eggs for VT school program in January 2012 came from Roxbury Station.

Roger Reed Hatchery, Palmer, MA: salmon brood stock & incubate eggs; 1.5 million eggs on station in 2012. This was source of eggs for CRSAC Salmon-in-Schools Program in January 2012. Massachusetts has not decided definitely if it will continue salmon work at this facility. It plans to expand its brook trout and landlocked salmon production. It is considering continuing a limited Atlantic salmon production program to help support VT's Roxbury Hatchery.

Connecticut State Fish Hatchery, Kensington, CT: facilities to incubate eggs and raise fry and adult salmon. Kensington presently has salmon brood stock on station. At the July 10 CRASC meeting Bill Hyatt, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Natural Resources Bureau Chief, stated that CT will keep Kensington State Fish Hatchery in operation and will continue its primary purpose to raise broodstock Atlantic salmon which have become popular fisheries in designated riv-

CRASC (from page 6)

open 60 miles of habitat), and movement on getting a design for a replacement of the Rainbow Dam fish ladder; in addition the breached Spoonville Dam, which is believed to present a fish passage barrier, will be fully removed.

River Herring

Mr. Gephard started by noting that NOAA is holding three meetings on river herring associated with their review of the potential listing of these species under the ESA. He attended the first meeting which focused on stock structure; the others will cover risk of extinction and potential impacts of climate change. There has been progress made with the NE Fish Management Council and Mid Atlantic

ers outside of CT River Basin. As a by-product of this program, eggs can be produced, ~400,000 fry per year, which would be stocked into target habitat reaches. This would also serve as a potential genetic bank, keeping the strain now in hand alive. It is unclear if this activity would be able to maintain a genetically viable strain, as intended. That question will need to be examined more closely. He also stated an intention to continue to provide salmon eggs for classroom programs.

The Connecticut River Salmon Association will continue its primary mission of supporting Atlantic salmon restoration in the Connecticut River. We will support CRASC in its efforts to manage other anadromous species in the River. We endorse CT DEEP for its efforts to maintain the genetic base of Connecticut River salmon. We welcome the commitment to continue to provide salmon eggs for our Salmon-in-Schools program and to rear and release salmon fry to the extent possible. We support the use of surplus brood stock to continue a popular fishery in selected areas.

Anyone interested in learning more of the proposed USFWS activities in lieu of rearing Atlantic salmon for the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration program may wish to contact Wendi Weber, Director, Region 5, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035.

Fish Management Council on the monitoring of bycatch which may impact river herring and shad. The bycatch may occur in the Atlantic Herring fishery and other small mesh mid-water trawl fisheries (squid, butterfish). Data are lacking. The meeting just attended included genetic classification work to identify differences in genetics, which was apparent and permitted some stock aggregating by area; northern New England (Canada border to NH/MA line), southern New England (NH/MA line to Hudson) with the Connecticut River standing out as unique, perhaps in synch with other Long Island Sound pops. This work was focused on alewife. In the case of blueback herring, the Connecticut River stock matches up with the middle Atlantic groups genetics. ♦

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