



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

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SUMMER 2011

## CRSA Honored with National Wildlife Federation's Prestigious Conservation Achievement Award

By James Carroll, CRSA Secretary

The National Wildlife Federation awarded their 2010-2011 Conservation Achievement Award in the Education category to the Connecticut River Salmon Association at the NWF 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. CRSA Vice President and Education Chair Richard Bell received the April 16th award on behalf of the association. It recognized the success of the Salmon-in-Schools program in Connecticut and the association's contributions to similar programs in other New England states.

"The guidance and teachings from groups like the Connecticut River Salmon Association are helping all generations learn how to help ensure a wildlife heritage for our future," said National Wildlife Federation President Larry Schweiger. "The Association's enthusiasm for preserving the Atlantic salmon is making a difference in the Connecticut River basin and is inspiring others to join the effort."

In accepting the award, Bell said: "This award will be shared with our teachers, their students and the volunteers that have made the program such a success. Our partner in Connecticut, the Inland Fisheries Division of the DEEP, deserves great credit too. Our objectives have been to provide science education tools not only about Atlantic salmon but also our freshwater and marine environments. Our thanks to the NWF for this national award."



Pictured from left to right: NWF Chairman Craig Thompson, Richard Bell, Jim Carroll and NWF President & CEO Larry Schweiger at the presentation in Washington, DC, on April 16.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Saturday, January 21, 2012**  
**36<sup>th</sup> Annual CRSA Dinner & Raffle/Auction**  
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See what all the fun's about on page 4!

# Where Do We Go From Here?

By Robert Jones, CRSA President

The present monetary crisis involving both state and federal budgets causes the future of Atlantic salmon restoration difficult to predict. It is clear that there will be extensive cuts in federal expenditures in the near future and over time. Natural resources programs may be among the first to go. In Connecticut the Kensington State Salmon Hatchery is scheduled to be phased out pending the results of ongoing voting on union/state negotiations.

## 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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Issues other than financial also have impacts on the future of Atlantic salmon. On the international level Greenland fishers are talking about reopening the commercial fishery off their west coast. (See NASCO report page 3.) Such an action would have serious impacts on North American salmon returns.

On the positive side salmon returns have apparently increased significantly throughout the North Atlantic. There may be reason to believe that factors in the marine environment that effect Atlantic salmon have begun to correct themselves. Known returns to the Connecticut River, although still low, are more than double last year's run: 108 this year compared to 51 last year. It is also significant that three radio tagged salmon negotiated all Connecticut River fish passage facilities and moved upstream through the Wilder Dam, 217 miles from Long Island Sound.

Aside from salmon returns, American shad made resurgence this year in the Connecticut River. Last year's counts numbered 168,430 while this year 249,329 shad were counted. Also of significance was the count of shad at the Turners Falls Gatehouse: 16,798, continuing the increase observed last year at this site and a substantial increase over previous years of less than 4000.

It is interesting to consider the life history of the three radio tagged salmon

## NWF from page 1)

Bell noted that last school year, Salmon-in-Schools involved 6,100 students in 73 schools with only 13 volunteers. Each new teacher was required to attend a one-day teacher orientation given jointly by the the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) and the CRSA.

Education manuals about Atlantic salmon, posters and vinyl maps are given to the new schools. In-room education presentations are offered by the CRSA, along with troubleshooting for any problems

that made the 217 mile trip up the Connecticut River. Released in the upper river as one inch fry, they survived the hazards of growing up as bite sized food for most everything that swims. As two year old and six inch smolts they made their way down stream 217 miles to the fresh/salt water interface. After encountering an array of fresh water predators including wall-eyes, northern pike, and largemouth bass, they now moved quickly to avoid the influx of striped bass, bluefish and other salt water predators of the early spring. Instinct now told them to move north and east, a route through legions of seals and porpoises and other major predators. Finally, having survived these rigors, they reached their ancestral feeding grounds off the west coast of Greenland. They have escaped the Greenland gill net fishermen for up to two years, now weighing eight or more pounds, their instincts caused them to retrace their route back to the place of their origin.

So what does this little story have to do with the future of salmon restoration? It is likely that the fiscal situation involving both the states and federal governments will have an impact on the program. The facts make it clear that there is a measure of success in the program that should not be foregone. It will be necessary to assure that the progress that has been made not be lost in the name of fiscal austerity. ♦

during the salmon incubation process. Two hundred salmon eggs are delivered to the schools all across Connecticut in January. The schools then pick spring stock out sites for the small fry from a list of locations approved by CT DEEP. The dates and locations are scheduled through Bell.

Bell noted that well over a hundred teachers and tens of thousands of students have benefited from Salmon-in-Schools since the program began in North Haven in 1996. ♦

# NASCO Holds Annual Meeting in Greenland

By Stephen Gephard, US Commissioner to NASCO

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) was held June 4-6, 2011 in Illulissat, Greenland. The travel arrangements to fly from the United States to Greenland are already challenging at best but when erupting volcanoes in Iceland are added, the trip becomes very difficult. Attendance was low and some Parties did not attend. I, myself, was unable to attend due to personal reasons, missing my first meeting in 11 years. This article was written after reviewing meeting documents and discussions with members of the US delegation.

A key concern at NASCO (particularly for North American conservationists) is always the fishery at West Greenland. The commercial fishery for export is closed but a small harvest for internal consumption of around 20 tons is allowed. NASCO Parties perform scientific sampling on this small catch to help support science-based management decisions. However, the level of harvest in that fishery has been creeping upward and this past year it was estimated at 50 tons. The United States and other Parties have expressed strong concern about this trend and have called on Greenland to abide by its past agreement. Greenland is claiming that the higher catch is not due to increased effort but increased abundance of salmon in local waters. Scientific data does not support that claim. Meanwhile, the fishers in Greenland are pressuring the Greenland Home Rule Government to re-open the commercial fishery. It is not clear if they really wish to pursue an expanded salmon fishery or if they wish to influence negotiations with the North Atlantic Salmon Fund and the Atlantic Salmon Federation in respect to those organizations' "buy-out" of the fishery. NASCO's regulatory measures for West Greenland (currently limited to that 20 ton internal fishery) are up for reconsideration in 2012 so next year's meeting promises to be interesting.

Another concern about salmon harvest centers on the French territory of St. Pierre & Miquelon, which are islands between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. This small fishery typically harvests less than 4 tons of exclusively North American salmon. While the catch in 2010 was down slightly, biological sampling from the catch indicated that 6% were of US origin. Given the status of US Atlantic salmon, any harvest is cause for concern. Discussions between NASCO, Canada, the United States, and France have been friendly but glacial in their progress and we will continue to encourage France to provide additional information so that the impact of this fishery can be better assessed.

In 2011, nearly 39 tons of salmon were harvested commercially in Labrador by aboriginal fishers (86%), residents fishing for food (8%) and recreational fishers (6%). All of this harvest occurs within the headlands of estuaries and is believed to target the fish homing to the individual rivers. As such, these are not mixed stock fisheries and not subject to NASCO regulation.

There is still no regulatory measure in place for the Faroe

Islands, even though the fishers have agreed voluntarily not to fish during recent years. While this fishery impacts mostly European stocks of salmon, the area is where fish from many nations converge and so this is a mixed stock fishery. No regulatory measures were put into place during the annual meeting but some progress appears to have been made by the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES) in developing a forecast model and risk framework that could be used to generate multi-year catch advice such as that being provided for the West Greenland fishery. There is hope that this could be the basis for considering regulatory measures in 2012.

Other issues addressed during the 2011 annual meeting included: a final report from the "Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenic Focus Area Review Group"; implementing an external performance review (to comply with U.N. resolutions on regional fisheries management organizations); implementing a public relations strategy, and an interim agreement on a process to replace the existing Secretary of NASCO. Dr. Malcolm Windsor has served at the Secretary of NASCO since its inception and now wishes to retire. His term was been extended to August 2012, which means that next year's meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland will be his last as Secretary. Upon his departure, Assistant Secretary Peter Hutchinson will temporarily assume the duties of Secretary until September of 2013, when NASCO hopes to have hired a permanent replacement. The details of the recruiting process will be decided at the 2012 meeting.

Finally, I would like to note that after the 2011 annual meeting, the head of the US Delegation, Patricia (Pat) Kurkul announced her retirement in December of 2011. This means that this past meeting will have been her last NASCO meeting. Pat, who is the Director of the Northeast Region of NOAA-Fisheries in Gloucester, has served as the leader of the US Delegation since 2002 and has done a superb job. She has promoted the interest of Atlantic salmon in the United States and elsewhere well and provided critical leadership to the team. She will be missed.

Next year's meeting promises to be busy. So far, runs to North American rivers have shown significant increases and it will be interesting to hear ICES stock assessment. Increased returns may also encourage Greenland fishers to press for restoring a commercial fishery. A new multi-year regulatory measure for West Greenland, possibly the first regulatory agreement for the Faroe Islands in many years, an external peer review, a transition at the Secretariat, and a new head for the US delegation—lots to anticipate in the campaign to conserve Atlantic salmon at the international level. ♦

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New Dinner Chair Tom Chrosniak

## Tom Chrosniak Named New Dinner Chairman

By James Carroll, CRSA Secretary

Bob Jones has announced the appointment of CRSA director Thomas Chrosniak as the new CRSA dinner chairman. He succeeds Ed Ruestow, who successfully managed CRSA dinners for many years.

Tom and his wife Roxanne live in West Hartford with their two daughters. He is a Major Account Representative for Eastern Bag & Paper Company of Milford, CT. Tom started fishing in Minnesota at age three and has done both fresh and salt water fishing all his life. He is currently a member of CRSA, Trout Unlimited, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Connecticut Fly Fishing Association, Farmington River Anglers Association, and the Farmington River Watershed Association. ♦

## CRSA Gives Education, Service Awards

By Dr. Vincent Ringrose, Awards Committee Chairman

The Board of Directors of the Connecticut River Salmon Association awarded the 2011 CRSA **Education Award** to Northeast Utilities (NU).

The CRSA Education Program requires first year teachers to attend a fall Teachers Orientation. Each year teachers attend the orientation from both new schools and existing schools who have changed teaching assignments. The 2011 program has 73 participating schools. Recent orientations have involved as many as 65 participants. Teachers from over 90 Connecticut towns and cities have been guests at NU. Over 6,100 students participated in 2011.

The award read in part: “The orientation would not be as effective, and would not offer the excellent teaching environment to the CRSA and the teachers in Connecticut without the availability of Northeast Utilities facilities. The office of Shri Madhusudan has been most generous in assisting the Salmon-in-Schools program.”

In making the presentation of the CRSA **Service Award**, President Robert Jones quoted from the citation: “The Board of Directors of the Connecticut River Salmon Association has awarded the 2011 CRSA Service Award to Martha R. Sherman of Sherman Communications. The design and operation of the CRSA web site and the current layout and design of the CRSA newsletter are the products of the broad experience and extraordinary creative talents of Martha Sherman. Her knowledge of publishing standards and guidelines, ability to manage page and publication composition and skill in using images has made the newsletter outstanding for a small non-profit organization. An excellent partner and a pleasure to work with, Martha’s expertise in web site design, Internet protocols and her training of CRSA directors has brought a whole new field to the Board.” ♦



Top, NEU’s Brian Benito accepts the award from CRSA President Bob Jones.  
Bottom, Martha Sherman and Bob Jones

## VT’s McMenemy Retires

James Carroll, CRSA Secretary

On September 30, 2011, Jay McMenemy of Vermont Fish & Wildlife will retire. His career involved a number of assignments at various management levels as a fishery biologist in Vermont. Jay, among his many contributions, was chair of the Technical Committee of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission from 1998-2005. He served on the Salmon Studies, Shad Studies, Fish Passage, Genetics, and Smolt Evaluation workgroups of the Technical Committee.

Fellow committee member Steve Gephard of the CT DEEP wrote in part: “It is with regret that we bid Jay McMenemy of Vermont Fish and Wildlife goodbye and wish him well in his retirement. Jay’s contribution to the Technical Committee of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission cannot be overstated. He was the main force coordinating the annual fry stocking effort basin wide (quite a challenge) and was the guy who chased the radio-tagged adult salmon released from Holyoke around the upper watershed, verifying their movements. Most importantly, perhaps, was his keen mastery of data and sharp mind that help guide the program with sound science. He will be greatly missed.”

Eric Plummer, Director of Fisheries for Vermont Fish & Wildlife, has written: “Jay is an extremely competent fish biologist, and has been our go-to person for the CRASC program to restore diadromous fish to the Connecticut River. He has a comprehensive grasp of this very complex program, and the wonderful ability to cut through the complexity and explain what the key needs and next steps are in plain English. Jay had many other duties as a fish biologist, and he does them all well, but I believe his heart has always been with the salmon program.” ♦

# CRSA's Annual Dinner & Auction - Don't Miss It!



Above, Tom Chrosniak on a rainy Sunday in May 2011 enjoying his winning trip with Jack Smola on the Deerfield River (11 Rainbows and 2 Browns!) Photo: J. Smola

Win the rods, the reels and some terrific memories at the 36th Annual CRSA Dinner Auction!



Above, just one of the stripers from another successful Dan Wood trip on Long Island Sound!  
Left, the Deerfield River beckons

## THANK YOU to our 2011 Individual & Business Donors

Without the support of the following businesses and individuals, our fundraising dinner and many of our activities would not be possible. Our thanks to each for their contribution and their support of Atlantic salmon restoration efforts.

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## ... and to the following organizations for their support!

Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association (CFFA)  
Eastern Fly Fishing Magazine  
Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA)

Farmington Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited (FVTU)  
Federation of Flyfishers (FFF)  
Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA)

Please visit the businesses and organizations who have supported the CRSA Dinner Auction!  
You'll find a complete list with links to their websites on our website at [www.ctiversalsalmon.org/dinner.html](http://www.ctiversalsalmon.org/dinner.html)

# Report of the Atlantic Salmon Federation (Meetings of April 26-28, 2011)

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

Various ASF committees held their meetings at the Intercontinental Hotel and the Bank of Montreal Offices, Montreal on Tuesday and Wednesday April 26 and 27. On Thursday, the 28th, there was a full Board of Directors Meeting of the ASF. As usual, the meetings were interesting, well attended and the speakers were very well prepared. Items of particular concern that were discussed were:

## 1.) *Regional Council Presidents meeting and the Regional Council Committee Meeting.*

Most of the discussions concerned individual problems such as First Nation harvesting of salmon, Aquaculture, Poaching etc.

The banning of barbless hooks for Atlantic salmon angling and the banning of gill nets for fishing for Atlantic salmon in fresh water and estuaries was proposed and passed.

There was a discussion regarding the future of FISH FRIENDS in the various Councils. Aside from the Maine Council and the Western New England Councils, which have been self supporting in the past, the other Councils have received assistance from ASF. In accordance with the revised Strategic Plan this assistance will stop this autumn.

All of the Councils are studying the situation to see how the change will affect them. Some Councils will have to reduce or stop their participation in FISH FRIENDS due to lack of volunteers and finances. Others might have to stop due to lack of hatchery-reared eyed eggs.

## 2.) *Greenland Mixed Stock Fishery for Wild Atlantic Salmon*

The agreement between ASF, NASF and the Greenland Assn. of Hunters and Fisherman (KNAPAK) has been in place since 2002. Even though there is no commercial quota, the amount of fish being taken for recreation and local consumption has been increasing every year and is up to 39 tons. ASF and NASF are putting pressure on the Greenlanders to lower this and are withholding payments. The Greenlanders are reporting an abundance of fish in their waters and are suggesting a possible return to commercial fishing. The problem is that this is a mixed stock fishery with about 70% of the captured fish coming from North American waters. The situation is being watched closely.

## 3.) *Aquaculture - Wild Salmon need Safe Aquaculture*

The problems remain: escapes, sea lice infestation, increased consumption and production putting pressure on fish food, and chemical pollution caused by trying to control sea lice. The majority of these problems are caused by the farming of salmon at sea in pens. ASF feels the answer to many of the problems is to use land-based, fully contained pens for salmon farming rather than the sea pens. ASF is investigating land-based fully contained operations on the West Coast with a view to testing the feasibility of an east coast pilot project.

In order to elevate the wild Atlantic salmon's stature with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), ASF has com-

missioned an independent analysis to help determine the socio-economic value of wild Atlantic salmon in Canada.

## 4.) *Labrador Mixed - Stock Fishery for Wild Atlantic Salmon.*

Labrador is the only region in Canada where DFO allows marine fisheries for mixed stocks of wild Atlantic salmon. This harvest runs between 34-36 tons per year. ASF wants to know how and where the mixed stocks are from and have offered to absorb \$25,000 of a DFO \$75,000 study. They are awaiting DFO's answer.

ASF has proposed that regulations be put in place to stop gill netting and require the use of trap nets. Also, they propose that the fishing take place late in the season after the big fish have passed. The allocation of 22 tons per year should be enforced.

## 5.) *Penobscot Restoration.*

In December of 2010 the Penobscot Trust closed on the three dams it is purchasing. It has raised the \$25 million needed to buy the dams and a further \$17 million of the \$25 million needed to take the dams out. The Trust expects to receive about \$1 million per year from running the dams prior to their removal. This is a multi-species project and will open about 800 square miles of spawning area for the various anadromous species such as alewives, American shad, striped bass and Atlantic salmon.

The first dam to be removed will be the Great Works dam. They will then build a fish lift at the Milford dam, then take out the Veazie dam. Goal for the Veazie removal is 2012-13.

## 6.) *Catch and Release.*

Every year it becomes more apparent that North American fisherman must practice increased catch and release to help support our conservation efforts. In 2010 anglers in North America retained 45,000 Atlantic salmon weighing about 122 tons. This compares with about 39 tons taken by the Greenland subsistence catch, 34 tons by the Labrador Mixed Fishery and about 24 tons taken by the First Nation Tribes for ceremonial purposes. It is difficult to convince these elements to lower their take when our sport fishing endeavors continue to surpass their take.

During the three days we were together many other items concerning Atlantic salmon conservation were discussed and plans were made for future meetings. The regional Presidents meeting will be held at Upper Oxbow Adventures on the Miramachi September 16 and 17 and the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors and Committee Meetings will be held in New York City November 8, 9 and 10.

At the Directors dinner in Montreal, the Happy Frasier Award was presented to Yvone Cote, ASF Regional President from Quebec. This is the highest award presented to a Canadian member for conservation efforts. The Lee Wulff Award is presented in November to a deserving USA member. ♦

# The “Reel Chance Program” & River to the Sea

## Commissioner Esty and Hartford’s Breakthrough Magnet School

By James Carroll, CRSA Secretary

Hartford’s Breakthrough Magnet School 6th Grade class made a presentation to CT DEEP Commissioner Dan Esty about their “Reel Chance Program” at Charter Oak Landing this spring. These outstanding students talked about Atlantic salmon and their journey from Connecticut to Greenland and back, the Connecticut River and its environmental importance.



Commissioner Esty and the Breakthrough Magnet students

Teacher Dan Seagull’s class was introduced to rearing Atlantic salmon as a science and environmental learning experience thanks to Craig Mergins of River Front Recapture. Craig found the sponsor, Citizens Bank of Hartford, arranged for teacher training and salmon knowledge from the CRSA, and—thanks to school founder and principal, Norma Neumann Johnson—met an enthusiastic teacher in Dan Seagull.

In 2090 and again in 2010, Breakthrough Magnet School was recognized nationally as an outstanding magnet school. The magnet school was founded by principal Norma Neumann Johnson for K through 8th grade students to provide a single, secure learning environment for children from pre-school to high school. ♦

## River to the Sea Returns for 2011-2012!

By James Carroll, CRSA Secretary

River to the Sea—or R2Sea—is back thanks to a new, two-year grant! Long-time Salmon-in-Schools teachers may remember the program that was started at the Harris AgriScience Center in Bloomfield. It was a valuable Interdistrict program funded by the State Department of Education (SDE) and successfully managed in recent years by long-time educator and CRSA director, Elizabeth Kendall. However, this year the program, funded by the SDE, will be managed by Kendall through the Capital Region Education Council. CRSA Education Chair Dick Bell worked closely to renew the program and is excited that CRSA, CREC and River to the Sea will work together to help restore salmon to the watershed.

The goal of R2Sea is to bring students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds together to engage in science-based projects that focus on the restoration of salmon to the Connecticut River watershed. The grant calls for forming an inland ‘hub’ at the Harris AgriScience Center in Bloomfield to provide activities, field trips, salmon support and student interns to the cooperating schools (and their tanks). R2Sea will host two school-day field trips, Saturday/vacation half-day activities (possibly a winter conference in Hartford) and an evening open house celebration for all salmon students and their families. R2Sea will provide transportation and substitute teacher pay as well as technical assistance. CRSA is asking that teachers join the CRSA to receive the benefits of membership. If you’d like to learn more about the program or help put this together for your students, please contact Elizabeth Kendall by email at [ekendall@crec.org](mailto:ekendall@crec.org) or 860-205-1673. ♦

## Teacher Orientation October 26

The 2011 Teacher Orientation will take place **October 26, 2011** at the headquarters of Northeast Utilities in Berlin, CT. This one-day session is required of teachers who are new to the program and offered as a refresher to teachers with prior program experience. It is jointly presented by the CRSA and CT DEEP Fisheries personnel.

The program will start at 8:30 AM and includes a subsidized lunch. Teacher and student manuals, posters, a USFWL CT River Basin map, and a list of program materials requirements are given to new teachers. Orientation lectures about the life cycle of Atlantic salmon, examples of how to use the program in today’s challenging curriculum environment and how to manage the salmon egg rearing tank program are offered. Experienced program teachers will offer examples of how the instructional materials have helped their students.

Teachers who have questions about the program may get more information at [ctriversalmon.org](http://ctriversalmon.org) or by contacting me at [bellawrg@cs.com](mailto:bellawrg@cs.com).

The CRSA Salmon-in-Schools Teachers Orientation is available by invitation only. Interested educators must contact me before the session. Directions and other materials will be sent to all registrants before the event.—*Dick Bell*

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