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

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First, the Good News …

by Robert A. Jones, President, CRSA

First, the good news — at this writing, this year's adult salmon returns have increased over last year by 60%, from 43 to 69. Not what we would have hoped but nonetheless good news. The rest of this message is the bad news!

In these pages of our Fall 2001 issue, I wrote a response to critical editorials in local newspapers. I pointed out that "Fisheries scientists, managers and administrators, conservationists, and knowledgeable citizens are satisfied that, with the proper attention, salmon can and will be restored." "With the proper attention" is the operative phrase. Now it appears that such attention from a major partner in the program may be lost.

The Connecticut River Atlantic salmon restoration program is managed by a partnership of the four Connecticut River Basin states and the federal government through the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service. This cooperative effort was mandated by state and federal legislation in 1983 which created the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC). The federal legislation was reauthorized in 2003. From the beginning, the Interior Department's USFWS has had a critically important role in the restoration effort. The Service's White River National Fish Hatchery was authorized and constructed to serve the program. Other federal hatcheries in the region also have supported the work on the Connecticut River. In addition to the Connecticut River program, the USFWS regional fisheries activities include hatchery support for salmon restoration programs on the Penobscot River, other southern Maine rivers, the endangered species rivers of downeast Maine, the Merrimack River and the Pawcatuck River.

As previously reported in this Newsletter, inadequate funding has had a significant adverse impact on the restoration effort in the Connecticut River. Although CRASC received a Congressional appropriation for the first time last year (in the amount of $250,000 to meet a defined need for $770,000), funding continues to be a major problem. It now appears that the USFWS 2005 regional fisheries budget allocation will create an operational crisis for the program.

(See First, the Good News, page 2)

Getting a Firsthand Look …

Steve Gephard, Supervising Biologist for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (left) talks with Shauna Hewes and Jeff Nelson, members of Congressman Rob Simmons' staff, at the Tyl Middle School stock out at the Salmon River Forest Recreation Area in East Haddam on May 7. See article, page 3. (Photo: J. Carroll)

MEET THE SCIENTISTS

In this and future issues of this Newsletter, we will profile the fisheries scientists and managers who constitute the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission Technical Committee. Members of the Technical Committee are assigned by their respective state and federal agencies that make up the Commission. The Committee's charge is to provide sound scientific and management advice to the Commission and to develop, update and implement a management plan for the restoration effort as approved by the Commission. Each member of the Technical Committee conducts work on the Committee in addition to regular duties assigned by his or her own agency.

DR. CALEB SLATER, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Caleb Slater has been Anadromous Fish Project Leader for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife since 1998. He lives in Northbridge, MA, with his wife Chris, daughter Celia and English springer spaniels Reggae and Zydeco.

Caleb received a BS in Biology from the University of New Hampshire in 1988. In 1991 he received a Master of

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First, the Good News ... *(continued from page 1)*

In order to meet shortfalls based on the anticipated 2005 Presidential budget request, the USFWS regional office has prioritized its fish production in a way which leaves the Connecticut River (and the Merrimack and Pawcatuck Rivers) at the bottom of the list. The designated highest priority is endangered Atlantic salmon and freshwater mussels; next is Penobscot River salmon; then lake trout, rainbow trout broodstock, landlocked Atlantic salmon, lake sturgeon, and American shad; and finally Merrimack and Connecticut River Atlantic salmon.

As a consequence of this prioritization, salmon egg production for distribution within the Connecticut River Basin from federal hatcheries will be reduced from approximately 3.4 million to 465 thousand. Fry production will be reduced from 4.8 million to 1.0 million. Other impacts will include the reduction of domestic brood stock production from 15,700 to 180, the reduction of smolt production from 87,700 to 50,000, and the end of genetic marking and related stocking evaluations. It is not clear at this time what effect these cuts will have on the availability of eggs for the School Programs in Connecticut and the other Basin states. There is concern, however, that eggs for this program may become unavailable in the future.

While critics continue to question the expenditure of public funds on a program with low returns, there is reason to question the basis for the USFWS placing the Connecticut River program as its lowest priority. It is understood that funding levels are such that all USFWS programs must be scrutinized to determine the best use of available funds. It is also understood the Service has established five criteria for selecting priorities: (1) the strength of federal authority and responsibility; (2) the extent to which efforts will compliment others in the fisheries and aquatic resources conservation community; (3) the likelihood that efforts will produce measurable results; (4) the likelihood that efforts will produce significant economic or social benefits; and (5) the extent of partner support.

The Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Compact clearly provides the basis for federal authority and responsibility. This act appears especially significant in this regard since Congress recently saw fit to reauthorize it for an additional thirty years. Given that the Basin state fisheries agencies have committed considerable resources to the restoration and management of the fisheries resources of the Connecticut River, the USFWS effort certainly complements that commitment.

"Measurable results" can be shown by the return of once extirpated Atlantic salmon, the restoration of American shad to their historical spawning grounds, and the broad public interest in Connecticut River fisheries programs. The extents of economic and social benefits are difficult to quantify. No recent studies have been undertaken in this regard on the Connecticut River program. However, in comparison to studies in other areas, it is clear that benefits of a restored salmon and shad population are significant. Partner support is evident by the sharing of effort throughout the more than 20-year life of the program. Although this is a simplistic response to the USFWS use of their criteria for placing the Connecticut River program as their lowest priority, for these reasons we question the Service's judgment in the matter of the allocation of scarce funds. ◆

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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the National Marine Fisheries Service, pursuant to an act of Congress in 1983.

Funding for The Connecticut River Salmon Association is received from membership dues, donations, grants, and special events. Membership dues, comments, and letters to the editor may be mailed to:

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Carroll Honored With President's Award

Jim Carroll, left, receives award from Bob Jones

CRSA Secretary James Carroll, Jr. was honored at the 2004 Annual Dinner with the receipt of the CRSA President's Award. The award was presented by President Bob Jones and read "In recognition of your outstanding contribution to the effort to acquire adequate funding for the Connecticut River salmon restoration program and in appreciation for your tireless work in promoting Atlantic salmon, the Connecticut River Salmon Association, and the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission in the Congressional offices of the Connecticut River Basin states." The award is given periodi-

The CRSA School Program

One for the Record Books!

by Dick Bell, CRSA Vice President, Education Committee Chair

Suppose you had planned a stocking event to help inform a Congressman of the CRSA program, and enlist his aid in keeping the Connecticut River restoration effort funded and flourishing? What kind of day would you want for it? What site would you choose? Remember, it has to be a site in the Congressman's district. What school would you choose? Again, it has to be a school in the Congressman's district.

These were not theoretical questions this spring, because CRSA director Jim Carroll, so active in helping the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC) line up needed Congressional budget support, decided to do just that: invite Congressman Robert Simmons of the 2nd Congressional District in Eastern Connecticut to attend and participate in a CRSA stocking event. What school should we utilize for these purposes? Well, we have many excellent and accomplished schools, any one of which would have done us proud. However, we only have one school which supports more egg-rearing tanks than any other school in our program, maybe more than any other school in North America: that's the Tyl Middle School of Oakdale, CT. Tyl supports six tanks. Because of the size of this program, Tyl goes to its stocking in two sessions: four busloads of children and teachers and aides, on each of two separate days. The only site that we have that can possibly accommodate such a crowd is the Salmon River Forest Recreation Area in East Haddam. It's an absolutely beautiful site. But wait: it was not in the Congressman's 2nd District, at least not when he was first elected. But — wonder of wonders! — it was added to his district just a couple of years ago. And Tyl, happily, is also in the 2nd Congressional District.

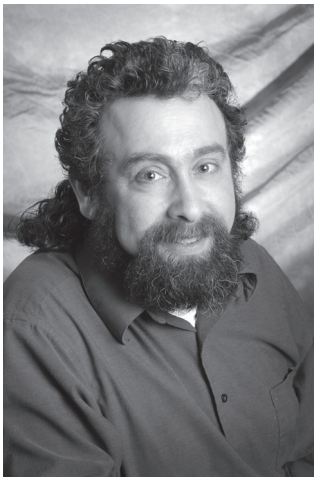
So, a date was set with head teacher Stefanie Hall at the Tyl Middle School. But wait: that date didn't fit the Congressman's schedule. He had to make a change and accordingly, we moved things to May 7.

The weather on May 7 not only cooperated, it was a full participant. It was not just excellent, it was a gorgeous spring day: just warm enough; clean, crisp air; bright blue sky. The other guests invited and who came were Ed Parker of the CT DEP; Jan Rowan of the US Fish and Wildlife Service; and Steve Gephard, Supervising Biologist of the CT DEP and head of Connecticut's salmon program. They arrived early, before the 10:15 am expected arrival of the Tyl busses. They were somewhat surprised to find five other buses already there. These turned out to be three buses from Catherine McGee Middle School of Berlin, with the guidance of lead teacher Doug Gagne, and two buses from Jonathan Wallace Middle School of Newington, led by their liaison, Richard Reynolds. Nothing could be better! This is a big site and can accommodate this traffic. Imagine the combined impact of — when Tyl arrived — nine school buses and full loads of kids and teachers! To cap it all off, the Tyl students when they came gave an excellent presentation of their work during the year.

It could not have turned out better in any single way — it was the most impressive stocking performance ever. Alas, the Congressman did not come. At the last minute he was called away to special hearings of the House Armed Services Committee on the Iraqi prisoner scandal, a sad story which had just broken in the news. But, his staff was there, and were most appreciative. So, too, were CRSA directors Jim Carroll, Dick Bell and Bob Wolter. Thanks to the Tyl School! Thanks to Catherine McGee and to Jonathan Wallace! Thanks, also, to all the schools who participated in our program this year. ◆

Illing Teacher Gets National Award

by Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary



Illing science teacher Rick Rossi

In January of this year, Illing Middle School teacher, Alberico "Rick" Rossi won a 2004 CIBA Specialty Chemicals sponsored National Middle Level Science Teaching Award. The award included a check for $1,000 and travel expenses to the April National Science Teachers Convention in Atlanta.

The national award was given to Rick for his multidisciplinary CRSA School Program. The project includes about 60 students at Illing who receive instruction in microbiology, electricity, weather, geology, Connecticut history and the biology of salmonids. The students keep a rubric-defined lab report that develops skills needed for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (or CAPT), which is administered to tenth-grade students statewide. They also are required to maintain an observational journal, again defined by a rubric, which Rick uses as an assessment tool.

In early January, salmon eggs were delivered to Illing by retired teacher and CRSA volunteer, Tom Halligan. The students and Rick managed the development of the eggs and then alevin so that they were ready to be stocked out in late April. On that day, the students also did streamside environmental assessments.

The tank, chiller and filter system used by teachers typically costs about $800. Rick's engineering talent enabled him to design a heat exchanger or chiller, temperature controls and a filter system from purchased parts that cost about $150.

Illing Principal Bohdan Cuprak says he is glad Rossi's teaching has finally gotten the attention it deserves. "Over and over, every year, Rick sort of goes unnoticed with some of the work he does. He's never shy about trying something new and presenting something to the students," he said, adding that Rick is particularly good at sharing ideas with other teachers. ◆

NASCO 2004: No Commercial Fishery at West Greenland; Looking Ahead

by Stephen Gephard, United States Commissioner, North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

The 21st annual meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) occurred June 7–11, 2004 in Reykjavik, Iceland. Serving with me as US Commissioners were Head-of-Delegation Pat Kurkel of NOAA-Fisheries (Gloucester) and George Lapointe, Commissioner of Maine's Department of Marine Resources. Eleven other people from various federal and state agencies as well as Non-Governmental Organizations rounded out the US delegation.

One of the most important responsibilities of NASCO is to set catch quotas for mixed stock oceanic fisheries for Atlantic salmon. It relies on scientific advice from the Advisory Committee on Fishery Management from ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea). The report ICES provided to NASCO was mixed: The pre-fishery abundance for North America for 2002 (the most recent available) is up slightly to 118,400, which is 47% higher than that for 2001. However, it is still the fifth lowest on record. The recreational catch of large salmon in North America for 2003 was 5% higher than the five-year average, but the combined catch of large and small salmon was 5% below that average. For 2004, ICES forecasted a total return to North American rivers of 62,988 two sea-winter salmon, which is less than the previously determined Conservation Limit for two sea-winter salmon of 152,548. ICES stated that there are no harvest possibilities consistent with the guidelines established by NASCO. Similar advice was received for the Faroe Islands fishery in the Northeast Atlantic Commission (Europe).

Therefore, the West Greenland Commission of NASCO adopted a regulatory measure for West Greenland that prohibits the commercial export of salmon and limits the fishery to that amount used for internal subsistence consumption in Greenland. In the past, that has been estimated at 20 tons but in 2003 (when the regulatory measure was the same as that adopted this year) it amounted to only 8.7 tons. The Northeast Atlantic Commission of NASCO once again decided not to set a quota for the Faroe Islands Fishery. (One might also characterize that action as the inability of the Commission to agree upon a quota for the fishery.) The Faroese have chosen not to fish during the past several years, consistent with ICES catch advice, but nothing in this regulatory measure prevents them from fishing.

> ***"These are both tense and promising times for Atlantic salmon. While I cannot feel comfortable about the status of Atlantic salmon and the beleaguered US restoration programs, I feel good about the effort expended by NASCO, talk about future possibilities, and the leadership and hard work on behalf of Atlantic salmon provided by the United States."***

The recently discovered existence of an interceptor fishery by the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon has been a major topic of discussion at NASCO, which has been frustrated by the past responses from France. A representative of France (in respect to St. Pierre and Miquelon) attended this year's NASCO meeting, provided some limited data from the 2003 fishery, and pledged increased cooperation in sampling future fisheries and reporting the results to NASCO. This development was gratefully received by NASCO as a positive development and we look forward to learning more about this fishery when NASCO meets in June of 2005 in Vichy, France.

There were many other topics discussed at the meeting, including an update on the development of an electronic database for all of the world's Atlantic salmon rivers (spearheaded by the United States), a report on control measures for the parasite Gyrodactlalus salaris, which has been harming salmon runs in Scandinavia, progress on acid rain research and mitigation in the United States and Canada, feedback from an intersessional meeting that focused on applying the Precautionary Approach to socio-economic issues regarding Atlantic salmon, and the details of the scientific sampling efforts at West Greenland in 2003 (spearheaded by the United States).

There has been considerable discussion about the future of NASCO in light of declining stocks of salmon, zero catch quotas, and fishery buy-outs. (The buy-out of the West Greenland fishery by the North Atlantic Salmon Fund was renewed for 2004.) Many have suggested NASCO should broaden its scope of activities dealing with the conservation of Atlantic salmon. This is a complex topic since there are limitations to NASCO's authority in the treaty convention as well as disparate political sensibilities in the member nations. However, NASCO was intrigued by papers presented by the US delegation and the Atlantic Salmon Federation/ World Wildlife Fund concerning the future of NASCO and authorized a working group to develop ideas for consideration by NASCO at its 2005 meeting.

The end of the meeting represented the end of President Jacque Robichaud's term. The group thanked the Canadian for his hard work and leadership and elected Ken Whalen, a prominent Irish salmon researcher, as the incoming president of NASCO. Arni Isaksson, a longtime delegate from Iceland, was elected vice-president.

These are both tense and promising times for Atlantic salmon. While I cannot feel comfortable about the status of Atlantic salmon and the beleaguered US restoration programs, I feel good about the effort expended by NASCO, talk about future possibilities, and the leadership and hard work on behalf of Atlantic salmon provided by the United States. ◆

Dick Reynolds: A Unique Contribution to Environmental Education in CT

by Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

Dick Reynolds, president of the Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA), has played a special role in starting the CRSA School Program at the Elizabeth Green Middle School and the John Wallace Middle School in Newington, the Barkhamsted Elementary School in Barkhamsted, the Lake Garda Elementary School in Burlington, and the Kingswood-Oxford School in West Hartford. He and the FRAA have made a unique contribution to environmental education in Connecticut.

By the spring of 2002, Dick developed a consensus on the board of the Farmington River Anglers Association to use the CRSA education program in schools as an outreach method to introduce conservation, stream and river ecology and the life of salmonids to students in the Connecticut River watershed. That spring, the FRAA board approved two grants of $800 each and selected two schools: the Barkhamsted Elementary School and then, through past FRAA board president Steve Lewis' contacts, the John Wallace Middle School in Newington.

Donald LaCroix and Steven Kidd at Barkhamsted had a perfect school for the program, since it is just several hundred yards from the famous church pool on the Farmington River. It was a first year success. Kathee Phelps and Donna Lamoureux, two very enthusiastic science teachers, pioneered the program at John Wallace. In the summer of 2002, the two teachers used federal grants to attend a summer Project Oceanology teachers' marine science course at Avery Point in Groton. They wrote a paper about salmon movements in and out of an estuary which they used that fall and winter in their classrooms. Separately, Phelps wrote a successful grant application to televise images of developing eggs and fry from inside a tank.

Virginia Atkins, a science teacher at Elizabeth Green Elementary School in Newington, wanted to utilize the program in her science classes but needed funding. She was put in contact with Dick and the FRAA, and her tank installation was funded for the 2002-2003 school year.

In 2003, Dick made the program a family affair. Through his daughter Kathryn Dunn, a teacher at private Kingswood-Oxford School in West Hartford, he arranged an introduction to Travis Woodward, Jim Allerton and Judy Bailey of their middle school. They attended the November teacher's orientation and successfully stocked out their fry this spring. Also in 2003, Dick's son, Richard Reynolds, Jr., received funding and started a program at Lake Garda Elementary School. Again, it was a great fit, since the Lake Garda School is in the Farmington River watershed.

Dick has worked as the liaison to the five schools, delivering the salmon eggs, coordinating the fry stock outs and doing in-school talks about salmonids. ◆

Dick Reynolds, right, and Donna Lamoureux, left, with students at the John Wallace stock out at the Salmon River Forest Recreation Area in East Haddam in May, 2004. (Photo: J. Carroll)

Meet the Scientists *(continued from page 1)*

Science in Fishery Science degree from Oregon State University. His thesis title was *Sexual Maturation Of Spring Chinook Salmon: Profiles Of The Sex Steroids And Gonadotropins In The Plasma, And Their Effects On The Immune Response*. In 1996 Caleb received a PhD in Fishery Science, also from Oregon State University. His dissertation was titled *Sex Hormone-Immune System Interactions In Salmonid Fish.*

During 1996-1997, he served as a Research Assistant in the Oregon Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University. His activities included supervision of undergraduate students in the laboratory and in the field and the design and conduct of laboratory and field experiments to determine differences in the physiological stress response between hatchery and wild juvenile salmon.

Prior to his appointment to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Caleb served as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Biochemistry, University of New Hampshire during 1997-1998. Among other responsibilities, he designed experiments to determine the feasibility of using gonadotropin-releasing hormones as sterilants to control populations of sea lamprey in the Great Lakes.

Caleb enjoys membership in the American Fisheries Society and the Gilbert Ichthyological Society. He has been a peer reviewer for the National Science Foundation, *General and Comparative Endocrinology*, the Hudson River Foundation, and *The Auk (A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology).*

He is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys bird hunting, big game hunting, and fresh and salt water fishing. ◆

2004 Annual Dinner A Great Success! 2005 Event Set for January 29

The CRSA Annual Dinner was held on January 24, 2004 at the Hawthorne Inn in Berlin, CT. Dinner Chairman Ed Ruestow said, "It was one of our most interesting dinners with many fine items in our auctions and raffles for those who fish and those who don't. The offerings we have seem to be better each year thanks to our generous donors and good attendance. There were 30 Live Auction and 50 Silent Auction items plus 29 buckets and the Grand Prize, a $1,150.00 fishing outfit. Mike Tomasiewicz and CRSA vice president Dick Bell again were an energetic and entertaining live auction team."

The featured speaker was Stephen Sloan, noted author, radio host and conservationist. He is the author of *OCEAN BANKRUPTCY, World Fisheries on the Brink of Disaster*, an excellent book on ocean resource mismanagement, and hosts a weekly conservation radio program. He brought his wide experience to an interesting and especially informative talk about Atlantic salmon and current trends in fishery management.

The 29th Annual Dinner & Auction/Raffle will be held on January 29, 2005 at The Hawthorne Inn beginning at 5:00 PM. Details will again be sent with the invitation and will appear in the next issue of this Newsletter.

CRSA Needs YOU!

If you are receiving this Newsletter and are not a member of CRSA, please consider joining our organization. In this way you will be supporting our School Program, our web site and this Newsletter. 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.

Application for CRSA Membership

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

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