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

PUBLISHED BY THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION WINTER 2007

IPN Found at Federal Salmon Station

By Robert Jones, President, CRSA

Infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN) is a viral disease that can be transmitted from fish to fish. Infected adult fish are life-long carriers and can spread the virus to other fish and to their progeny. Young salmon are susceptible to this contagious disease and can experience very high mortality once infected. They can also spread the disease to other fish. The virus exists in nature in both fresh and marine waters. IPN cannot be transmitted to humans.

The virus was detected during the spawning of wild (sea-run) salmon this fall at the Cronin National Salmon Station in Massachusetts. The routine examination of tissue samples of all spawned fish detected the virus in two females. The samples were sent to the US Geological Service laboratory in Seattle, Washington, for confirmation. Based on the strong recommendation of the scientists, all fish at the station, including sea-run fish and all eggs taken from them this year, were destroyed and the station will be disinfected in order to prevent any spread of the disease. In addition, efforts will be underway to improve quarantine and isolation capabilities of the station to protect from future losses. If it had been possible to isolate the eggs taken from the infected fish, the loss would have been minimized.

Although not a disaster to the restoration program since the destroyed eggs amounted to a small percentage of the eggs to be reared this year, there will be an impact on the attempt to develop a true Connecticut River stain of Atlantic salmon. It is unfortunate that the Whittemore Salmon Station in Connecticut had been mothballed in December 2003, since that facility had the capability to isolate and quarantine eggs of individual fish. We now have a situation of having all our eggs in one "basket." Under the circumstances, it may be time to review the value of an operating Whittemore Station.

[See page 3 for a reprint of the official news release issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service with the details of the problem.]

NASCO Announces €5.5 Million for Salmon Research

By Jim Carroll, Secretary, CRSA

Dr. Malcolm Windsor, Secretary of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), announced on October 10 that the European Union (EU) had approved, under the EU FP7 Programme, coordinated individual Atlantic salmon research grant applications from a 20 member European salmon research consortium that will total about €3.5 million or US$5.0 million. The EU funds will not go to any NASCO entity, but to the various research institutes and organizations which are partners in the NASCO organized consortium called SALSEA-Merge.

(See NASCO, page 9)

JOIN US for the

32nd Annual

CRSA DINNER & RAFFLE/AUCTION!

Saturday
January 26, 2008

The Hawthorne Inn
2421 Wilbur Cross Highway
Berlin, CT

$39 per person

Guest Speaker:

Fred Whoriskey

Vice President for Research & Environment, Atlantic Salmon Federation

Diversified Silent Auction • Select Bucket Raffle • Live Auction • Door Prizes • Special Grand Prize

Raffle and Auction items include fresh and saltwater tackle and equipment, limited edition and original art work, guided trips and other items which provide excitement and enjoyment throughout an evening of good fellowship.

For Reservations, contact:

Ed Ruestow (860) 521-1426
or
Jim Carroll (860) 236-5181

Summary Report from November 2007 ASF Board Meeting

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

The ASF held their annual Board of Directors meeting as well as various Committee meetings in New York November 6-8, 2007. Even though returns were down for most rivers in 2007, there was a positive note as progress is being achieved in many of the Federation's ongoing programs.

The main items discussed along with comments were:

2007 RETURNS. There are over 600 rivers in Canada that are known to support Atlantic salmon returns. Of these, only 72 have counting facilities. The 2007 counted returns were about 50/60% of 2006. This is a dip in the upward trend which has been going on for over 5 years. On the long term, 2005 Canadian Atlantic salmon production was only 4% of the 1606 production when Canada was first founded.

THE ATLANTIC SALMON ENDOWMENT FUND. The Fund is going through normal growing pains. The $30 million is in the bank but was not invested until June. Because of this delay, funds (Can$ 800,000) will not be available for projects until May/June 2008. There are questions about the proposed administration costs as well as the make up of the Board. The big question is how the funds will be allocated. For example will PEI get the same amount as say Quebec or will they use some other formula to distribute the funds?

PENOBSCOT RIVER RESTORATION TRUST. It was announced that the Fund's $10 million private funding was just met. $5 million of Federal and State funding has been raised and a further $10 million is in the pending 2008 budget. They plan to exercise their option to buy two dams on June 1, 2008 for $25 million. They will then file for the regulatory permits and close within 12 months. They hope to operate the dams for three to four years and have the dams out by 2012. They will need an additional $25 million for dam removal.

BILL C-45 to REVISE CANADIAN FISHERIES ACT. The Bill died in September but it is expected that it will be re-introduced with modifications. ASF is working with Trout Unlimited to compile a series of questions regarding the Bill's impact on wild Atlantic salmon and their habitat and are seeking legal advice. If the bill is enacted it will contain the most sweeping changes to the Fisheries Act since it was first made into law in 1868.

COUNTERING THE IMPACTS OF AQUACULTURE. The ASF joined 32 other conservation groups from six countries to call on the salmon farming industry to follow the advice of John Fredrickson, a major shareholder of Marine Harvest, to move open net cage salmon farms from the vicinity of wild salmon rivers. Even though in 1994 NASCO agreed by resolution that salmon farms should be located at least 30 km away from wild Atlantic salmon rivers, member countries such as Canada, the USA, Norway and Scotland allow salmon farms to be established near wild salmon rivers wreaking havoc on wild populations.

GREENLAND BUYOUT. It was pointed out that prior to the agreement in 2002, during the period from 1996-2002, 2-6% of the Greenland commercial catch was from USA origin fish. In 2000 the commercial catch under the NASCO quota was 50 tons or about 70,000 fish. The importance of this agreement is further illustrated by the prediction from ICES that the population of North Atlantic salmon in Greenland's waters has declined 89% from 917,000 in 1975 to a predicted 113,000 in 2007.

Since 2002 the commercial catch has been eliminated and there has only been a quota for recreation and local consumption. The new agreement will run through 2013. ASF has agreed to finance the buyout at $200,000 per year through 2013. These funds will come from ASF's operating budget.

The so called Buyout funds will be used to help the Greenland fishermen find other income sources. They have been successful in developing lumpfish and crab fisheries as an alternative to fishing for Atlantic salmon.

There will be continuing efforts to lower the Greenland take for local consumption and recreation. Even after a 5 minute explanation by Orri Vigfusson I find it difficult to see how the Greenlanders enjoy "recreational" fishing for Atlantic salmon with nets.

(See ASF, page 5)

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.

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:

CRSA
76 Deming Street
South Windsor, CT 06074
(860) 644-0159
email: info@ctriversalmon.org
www.ctriversalmon.org

CRASC *(continued from page 8)*

Sea-Run Milt Cryopreservation

The Northeast Fishery Center and Cryogenetics, a Norwegian Company, which has large scale cryopreservation capability, conducted a demonstration project at the White River NFH from November 6-8, 2007. They froze milt from 16 males on November 6. The following day, they thawed the milt and fertilized salmon eggs using non-frozen milt as a control with the same females. Eye-up will be used as a measure of success. If this works and is desired, the CRASC member agencies will have to consider purchase of license, needed equipment, and technology transfer/training to establish a cryo program here since the company has proprietary rights over the technology. This capability could be used to address chronic shortage of male sea-run salmon.

Broodstock Management Plan

Issues like sperm cryopreservation and kelt retention call for a plan to help guide broodstock management decisions. The Tech Committee has obtained a copy of the Maine plan. This was used as a template to develop a rough outline with some completed details. The outline will be provided to the Genetics Subcommittee as a starting point for a CRASC document. The draft will then be provided to the Technical Committee for future consideration/action.

Fish Culture Subcommittee Update

Egg Projection

Egg production is projected at 11.8 million eggs this year (well below incubation capacity) and includes a projection of 740,000 sea-run eggs, 960,000 kelt eggs, and 10.1 million domestic eggs. Spawning is complete at the Kensington SSH, the Roger Reed SFH, and at the Richard Cronin NSS, spawning continues at the North Attleboro NFH, and the White River NFH.

Sea-run Spawning Summary

The MDFW collected 239 mature parr of sea-run origin from Sawmill River for spawning with sea-runs. Survivors were stocked back into the river in November.

The RCNSS was holding 57 male and 20 female 2005 and 2006 kelts in Pool 1. On October 5, 2007, staff injected hormones in ten 2005 or 2006 year-class male kelts. Spawning took place on October 10 and October 15. On October 10, 14 male kelts provided milt, including five ripe kelts (without hormone implants) and nine kelts with hormone implants. Eventually, a total of 20 kelts gave milt and 8-10 female kelts (out of 20 in captivity) are expected to produce eggs.

The NANFH injected hormones in 10 male kelts on October 10, including 5 kelts from the 2004 year class and 5 kelts from the 2005 year class. Seven kelts gave milt on October 15. The milt was used to fertilize sea-run eggs at RCNSS on that date. Spawning is ongoing at the hatchery.

Salmon Studies Update

Deerfield River Passage Study Results

Ten sea-run Atlantic salmon were captured at the Holyoke fishlift, radiotagged, and released above Holyoke by Normandeau Associates as part of the TransCanada Northeast Hydro Region fish passage study on the Deerfield River. One salmon made it to Turners Falls then turned around and went back downstream, final whereabouts unknown. Four salmon were counted in the Deerfield River. Five salmon passed the Vernon dam. Two salmon were trapped at Townshend and trucked upstream in the West River. Three salmon passed Bellows Falls with one documented in the White River and two in the Williams River. Mr. McMenemy noted that he would be checking for redds in the West and Williams Rivers.

Index Site Assessments

In general, conditions were hot and flows were low this summer. Results from index site assessments tended to be highly variable. In Vermont, the young-of-year (YOY) salmon were smaller than usual and survival was poor for parr in the Williams River (usual source of mature sea-run origin parr). Wild trout were very abundant in VT waters this year. Variable results were also reported in NH though good growth and survival was observed in the Minnewawa where survival last year had been poor. Variable results were reported in CT with large variation among mainstem Farmington River presmolts. Results from MA streams were also highly variable. ◆

NASCO *(continued from page 1)*

The EU funding will be matched by over €2.0 million (US$2.8m) in funds from participating State agencies, universities and the private sector. Malcolm said, “Now there is the daunting task of delivering the project which is, as far as I know, the largest international cooperative research effort ever made on Atlantic salmon.”

NASCO and its research arm, the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board, or IASRB, were key to the success of the project through their funding of the working group, SALSEA-Merge, which coordinated and supported the applications that came from the various contracting parties. The coordination through NASCO’s consortium made possible a presentation to the European Union of a whole, coordinated research project. The individual applications fit into this larger scheme, outlined by NASCO in the second of its seven-step research program (see Summer 2007 CRSA Newsletter). Under the SALSEA Work Package #2, crucial marine surveys and trawls are to be conducted for the first time on a broad basis in the North-East Atlantic.

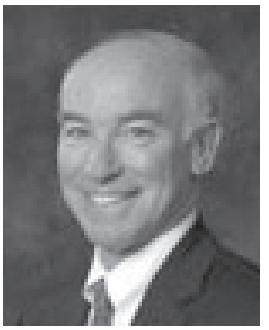
This new, large funding is in part aimed at eventually finding out which marine factor(s) in the North-East Atlantic are the ones responsible for the significant decline in Atlantic salmon returns to rivers in Europe. The same or similar factors may be affecting the return of Atlantic salmon to North America. ◆

ON CAPITOL HILL:

Legislators in Washington Win Eightmile River Designation, Conte Lab Funds

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

Eightmile, Tributaries Would Gain "Wild and Scenic" Status Under Courtney's Bill



As his first historic act of initiating legislation, freshman Congressman Joe Courtney handed a copy of proposed bill H.R. 986 to the clerk in the well of the US House of Representatives that would amend the current Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by designating segments of the Eightmile River and its tributaries as components of the US Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Eightmile River had salmon runs until the construction of dams in the 1700's. As part of the Connecticut River Atlantic salmon restoration program, it is stocked with Atlantic salmon fry by the CT DEP. Thirteen CRSA "Salmon in Schools Program" participating schools stocked fry in the river this Spring.

The bill proposed 25.3 miles of Eightmile and its tributaries to be managed in accordance with an Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan with the Secretary of the previously formed Eightmile River Coordinating Committee. This new bill would authorize the locally elected Secretary to enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Connecticut, the towns of Lyme, East Haddam and Salem, CT and appropriate local planning and environmental organizations. The designation makes the river eligible for federal funding and grant opportunities in future preservation efforts.

P. L. 107-65, the Eightmile Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2001 authorized the first official step: a study of the river for potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The committee of the stakeholders formed out of P. L. 107-65 included the towns of East Haddam, Lyme, and Salem; the East Haddam Land Trust, the Lyme Land Trust, the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, the Salem Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the CT DEP and the US Dept of the Interior, National Park Service. Courtney's bill was the culmination of hundreds of hours of donated community service and professional time by the committee members and others.

On July 31, 2007, H.R. 986 passed in the US House of Representatives with a bipartisan majority.

"The passage of this bill is the culmination of years of advocacy by the local communities surrounding the Eightmile River," said Courtney. "Environmental conservation is a crucial component to protecting the quality of life of eastern Connecticut and this sends a signal that the environment will be a top priority of my agenda. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to ensure passage of this bill that has garnered such widespread support."

At the same time, Senator Christopher Dodd has offered a companion Senate bill, S.553, to which Senator Joseph Lieberman is an original cosponsor. As of December 2007, the Senate bill has had two readings, been reported out of committee and is on the Senate legislative calendar.

Support came from the other members of the Connecticut Congressional delegation and from the Governor. The Nature Conservancy and the American River's Association also played roles in this success on the House side of Congress. Great credit also goes to them.

CRSA president Robert Jones said, "The Eightmile River held Atlantic salmon and brook trout in Colonial times. It is a national treasure and Representative Courtney and Senators Dodd and Lieberman are to be congratulated for their commitment to the environment in our state. Congratulations too to the whole Connecticut advocacy team that has gotten us to this point."

Olver Again Supports Conte Lab

Representative John Olver (MA - 1st District) announced that the US House of Representatives had approved a funding bill that includes $150,000 for equipment and research at the important and unique Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Lab in Turners Falls, MA.

The Conte Lab has done many studies, including fish passage and fish ladder design; wild salmon smolt physiology, behavior and olfaction; downstream migrating anadromous fish at hydropower facilities; dam removal criteria; the assessment of shad and blue back herring behavior, to name just a few. Their expertise in fish ladder design is unique in the United States and they have acted as consultants on fish ladder projects all over the country.

The Conte Lab staff is of particular value to CRASC, and especially the Technical Committee, as its personnel offer on-the-spot technical expertise on a wide range of subjects for the CRASC meetings regularly held at the Conte Lab. CRASC Technical Committee member Steve Gephard of the CT DEP said, "It is an unusual opportunity to have this national facility and its expert personnel so available for our meetings."

The Conte Lab is a Department of Interior US Geological Survey facility. The federal budgets proposed to Congress by the Administration for the past few years have included significant and crippling cuts for the Conte facility. This is the second year that Olver has brought about added critical funding for the Conte Lab, for which he deserves credit for his environmental commitment. ◆

New Atlantic Salmon Conservation Pact Ensures Safer Ocean Migration

By Sue Scott, Vice President, Communications, Atlantic Salmon Federation

New England wild Atlantic salmon migrate to the Davis Strait off Greenland to feed for two years before returning to their natal rivers. Until 2002, commercial fishing for salmon of both North American and European origin in the waters of Greenland killed many of these potential spawners and threatened the health of salmon populations from many rivers. A new Greenland Conservation Agreement announced on June 20, 2007 will suspend commercial salmon fisheries in Greenland's territorial waters for seven years, beginning with the 2007 season. The fishermen of Greenland have agreed to continue a moratorium which began in 2002 under an earlier agreement.

The new agreement signed by the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) of North America, the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF) of Iceland, and the Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland (KNAPK), three non-governmental organizations, has been endorsed by the Greenland Home Rule Government which will help enforce it. "This is an outstanding achievement that should ensure the return of many more wild salmon to spawn in the rivers of North America and Southern Europe," said Bill Taylor, president of the ASF, and "we are indebted to Orri Vigfusson of Reykjavik, Chairman of NASF, and Buff Bohlen of Washington DC for their leadership in negotiating this agreement." Both conservationists are members of ASF's Board of Directors.

The agreement allows the continuation of salmon fishing for recreation and local consumption, but calls for a sustained effort to reduce the number of salmon being killed thereby. "I am grateful to the leaders of KNAPK," said Mr. Bohlen, "for their commitment to keep this fishery at a minimal level and for their overall cooperation in helping us restore salmon populations in Maine and Eastern Canada."

Scientists of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) have recommended that there be no kill of wild salmon off West Greenland for at least the next four years. They estimate that the population there has declined 89% from 917,000 in 1975 to a predicted 113,000 in 2007. Salmon that make the long Greenland migration are particularly susceptible to mortality at sea. Fewer than 74,000 large salmon are believed to have made it back to North American rivers last year, while 152,548 salmon are needed to meet the overall basic conservation target. Unfortunately, ICES predicts no improvement in 2008 and 2009.

The new agreement is contingent upon the Greenland Government continuing to abide by the scientific recommendations of ICES and adhering to a zero commercial quota under the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean, 1982.

ASF and NASF will provide annual contributions in hundreds of thousand of dollars to a "Salmon Fund" in Greenland which will be used to finance projects that redirect salmon fishermen into alternative sustainable fisheries, reduce bycatch of salmon in those fisheries, purchase and destroy salmon nets, and provide employment in coastal communities. ◆

Richard Shelton Named New CRASC Commissioner

Richard Shelton

New Hampshire Governor John Lynch has appointed Richard C. Shelton of Newmarket, NH, as the new public sector commissioner representing the state on the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission. He replaces the late Charles Thoits, a long-time commissioner.

The Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC) was created first by state laws passed in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont and then by a federal act in 1983. The objective of this program is to realize the full potential of the fishery resources of the River, including both anadromous and resident species and manage jointly those matters pertaining to the welfare of the fishery. Each of the four basin states has two commissioners: the senior state fish and game officer and a public sector individual selected by the respective states' governor. These eight commissioners are joined by one commissioner from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and one from the National Marine Fishery Service.

Shelton was a New Hampshire state representative in 1999, serving on the Agriculture and Environment Committee. He has served on Newmarket's Conservation Commission for 11 years, the Planning Board, the Budget Committee, and currently on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. In 1989, he organized the first Newmarket Youth Fishing Derby and has ensured its continued success for the last 18 years. A lifelong resident of Newmarket, Shelton is the owner of the Seacoast Appraisal Service in Newmarket.

He began fishing for Atlantic salmon in Canada in 1948, and has tried his luck on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, the Gaspe rivers, the Mirimachi River, the Margaree and others. "Richard Shelton will represent New Hampshire extremely well on the Commission," noted Scott Decker, NH Fish and Game Inland Fisheries Program Supervisor. "He has a keen interest in Atlantic salmon, cultivated through a lifelong pursuit of fishing for them in the rivers of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec." ◆

The CRSA Salmon in Schools Program

Northeast Utilities Hosts 2007-2008 Teachers Orientation

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

The 11th annual CRSA Teachers Orientation was held November 8th at the headquarters of the Northeast Utilities (NU) in Berlin, CT, in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Fisheries Department and teachers Mike Dietter and Denise Congdon of Northwest Village School in Plainville. NU's generosity again made it possible for over a dozen new teachers to learn how the incubation of Atlantic salmon eggs can further science education for their students.

Patricia McCullough, Director of Environmental & Property Management for NU, hosted the meeting for her company. She told the teachers that NU is dedicated to good environmental practices as well environmental science education for students. Dick Bell, CRSA vice president, praised NU for making this facility available for the meeting, saying "It was a perfect marriage of objectives for the two environmentally focused organizations and very much appreciated by the CRSA." ◆

Top: Northeast Utilities' Pat McCullough, center, with CRSA's Dick Bell, left, and Bob Jones, right, at the 2007 Orientation.

Bottom: CRSA Director Bill Hankinson gives the orientation module on chiller/filter/tank assembly and operation.

ASF *(continued from page 2)*

CATCH AND RELEASE. This again took up considerable time in discussions. So far only 29 of the 300 camps that ASF is in communication with have signed for a catch and release program. Ten of these camps are private and they have to practice catch and release for all salmon and grilse in order to qualify. The Board of Directors was asked to put pressure on the private camps they belong to and to practice catch and release as an example to others. Recreational fishermen in Canada kill 35,000 grilse per year and 2000 large salmon. This must stop.

SALMON ANGLERS. Like their prey, Atlantic salmon anglers are diminishing at an alarming rate. Atlantic salmon fishing licenses in Canada have dropped from about 92,000 in the late 1980's to 49,000 in 2006. Taking into consideration that some anglers fish in more than one Province, it is estimated that there are only about 40,000 Atlantic salmon anglers. From a financial and a conservation standpoint, this is not good. The ASF is considering ways to change this trend.

SALSEA (SALMON at SEA). ASF is supporting the SALSEA programs, mainly by sharing the results of their Smolt Tracking Program. Fred Whoriskey gave an excellent presentation outlining their 2007 efforts and results. I won't go into depth on this as he will be giving the same presentation at our 2008 Dinner. A few asides though: Smolts and salmon travel in the first 50 meters of the ecosystem in the ocean; they found that smolts from four different river systems passed through the Belle Isle Straits at the same time even though they left the rivers of origin at different dates; egg production: grilse about 600 eggs, 2sw salmon 3000/5000 eggs, and 7sw salmon up to 50,000 eggs; the Gulf of St. Lawrence is used as a nursery for some grilse; ASF spent $250,000 on the smolt tracking program in 2007 and have budgeted a like amount for 2008.

ASF was instrumental in helping Dalhousie University obtain a grant for an Ocean Tracking Network (OTN). It will amount to Can$ 35 million plus $10 million for start up. Part of these funds will go for receivers to be used in ASF's present network in Belle Isle. They hope to be able to put in a line of receivers in the Cabot Strait to cover the southern exit of the Gulf of St. Lawrence by 2009. ◆

The CRSA Salmon in Schools Program

11 New Schools Join Program

By Dick Bell, Chair, CRSA Education Committee

Eleven new schools joined our program this year. This brings our total of schools to a record 78. As usual, they came in through many doors.

The teachers of three of our new schools have transferred from former CRSA schools: Rich Rossi of the Ashland School was at Robertson Elementary in New Britain last year; Paul Duva of Washington Elementary in Manchester was at Noah Webster Magnet in Hartford; and making the shortest move of all, Jennifer Overstreet of Nayang Elementary in South Glastonbury was at Buttonball Lane School in Glastonbury.

Kathy Greene at Rham High School in Hebron brought this school back into the program after a two-year, self-imposed leave of absence. Tom Condon at Windsor Locks Middle School is simply continuing what he had done for several years in the Vermont schools salmon program.

Katie Ellison at Colebrook Consolidated School is the 4th Connecticut school to be sponsored by the Farmington River Anglers Association ("FRAA"). This is courtesy of Richard Reynolds, CRSA Liaison and former FRAA President.

Annie Paquette of Bethany Community School brought her own Liaison. This will be Alan Concilio, a member of Trout Unlimited. Alan is a retired science teacher from Beecher Road Middle School in Woodbridge, long a CRSA member. Alan will also serve Beecher Road in a Liaison capacity.
Two other new Liaisons, Tom Knight and Stuart Cragin, will serve the new school, Greenwich Country Day, where Austin Lehn teaches science. This school may be as far from the Connecticut River as you can get, and still be in Connecticut!
Another new Fairfield County School is Suellan Birchard's Connecticut Friends School in Wilton. Vickie Climie at Branford High School and Bill McDougal at Keeney Street Elementary in Manchester round out our list of new schools. ◆

New Schools for 2007-2008

School	Town
Ashford School	Ashford
Bethany Community School	Bethany
Branford High School	Branford
Colebrook Consolidated School	Colebrook
Greenwich Country Day School	Greenwich
RHAM High School	Hebron
Keeney School	Manchester
Washington School	Manchester
Nayaug Elementary School	South Glastonbury
Friends School	Wilton
Windsor Locks Middle School	Windsor Locks

New Stocking Signup Rules

By Dick Bell, Chair, CRSA Education Committee

Last year was the first under our new stocking rules. They were made necessary because of the growth of our program from one school in 1995-96 to 78 in 2007-08. A total of 21 schools in 49 buses stocked last year at the Salmon River Recreation Area alone! You can easily see the problems if they all wanted to come during the same week! Our rules for setting limits for our sites of both schools and buses and for pre-scheduling, are intended to spread out the stocking traffic, avoid congestion, and assure that everyone has a full and rewarding experience.

A revised Stocking Guide will be out shortly. In the meantime, its Executive Summary is reproduced below:

1. All stocking shall take place at a CRSA-approved site on a tributary of the Connecticut River.

2. The following sites require scheduling in advance through Dick Bell. All are subject to daily limits of schools and buses, as set forth in the Guide: Salmon River Rec Area, Salmon River Comstock Bridge, Devil's Hopyard State Park, Blackledge River-Moose Lodge, McLean Game Refuge. Once dates are confirmed, they will be posted on the CRSA website stocking pages, which can be found at www.ctriversalmon.org.

3. Three Salmon Brook sites in the Granby area, Granbrook Park, Salmon Brook Park and Holcomb Farm, also require scheduling in advance, but in these cases, it is the owner who should be contacted. All are subject to daily limits. See the Guide for details. Please advise Dick Bell of your site and scheduled date.

4. Schools using previously approved special sites not included above may continue to do so without advance scheduling through CRSA.

5. Veteran schools are expected to use the sites used last year, unless other arrangements are made through Dick Bell; new schools will be contacted to work out assignments.

6. Bring plastic bags for trash and take out what you bring in.

7. New teachers should visit stocking sites in advance in order to best plan your field trip. ◆

Extracts from November 2007 Report of the CRASC Technical Committee

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

Status of the Run & Stocking

Returns

Migratory fish counts have not changed much since the last meeting (July) with the exception of salmon and sturgeon numbers. There were six late returning Atlantic salmon: 1 at Leesville, 1 at Rainbow, and 4 at Holyoke, and there were two shortnose sturgeon caught at Holyoke.

Current Counts:

Atlantic salmon 140 (11 released) vs. 214 last year
American shad – 163, 466 vs. 156,352 last year
Blueback herring – 74 vs. 21 last year
Sea lamprey – 42,434 vs. 19,117 last year
Striped bass – 241 vs. 144 last year
American eel – 286 vs. 2,228 last year
Gizzard shad – 67 vs. 134 last year
Shortnose sturgeon – 3 vs. 2 last year

One hundred seven Atlantic salmon were captured at the Holyoke fishlift, seven salmon were captured at the Rainbow fishway on the Farmington River, four salmon were captured at the Leesville fishway on the Salmon River plus one more was seined from the river, and twenty one salmon were captured at the West Springfield Project on the Westfield River.

One salmon eluded capture and escaped the Holyoke fishlift while ten more salmon were radiotagged and released from the Holyoke fishlift — part of a TransCanada Northeast Hydro Region fish passage study on the Deerfield River.

The Connecticut River sea-run Atlantic salmon returns were comprised of: 19 fish of smolt origin (aged 2:2) (14%); 86% fry origin (including 1 multi-sea winter fish (aged 2:3); (0.7%); and, 1 grilse (aged 1:1) (0.7%).

One hundred twenty-nine sea-run Atlantic salmon were retained at the Richard Cronin NSS for spawning, including 100 females and 29 males. Five unvaccinated fish were kept isolated as controls (four have died (1 positive for furunculous) and 1 grilse remains alive). Two vaccinated fish have died (1 in summer and 1 late return).

Since our Technical Committee meeting on 13 November, the disease Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis (IPN) has been isolated from ovarian fluid samples of 2 sea-run salmon from Cronin. *[Editor's Note: all sea-run salmon at Cronin were destroyed because of the IPN outbreak -- See IPN, page 1 of this newsletter.]*

The Merrimack River Program has collected 75 salmon as of this date, including a number of fall returns.

Maine: Penobscot River count was 916 sea-run Atlantic salmon as of 11/6/2007; Kennebec-6; Dennys-3; Androscoggin-21; Narraguagus-10; and, Saco-24.

Stocking

Nearly 6.5 million Atlantic salmon were stocked in 2007 (compared to 5.9M in 2006). The total includes 5.5 million unfed fry, 855,000 fed fry, and a total of 97,959 two-year smolts (53,454 to the Farmington River and 44,505 to the mainstem Connecticut River above the Holyoke Dam). As usual, hundreds of volunteers donated many hours of their time to stock fry throughout the basin.

Genetics Subcommittee Update

Broodstock Management

The USGS Conte Lab has been genotyping sea-run Atlantic salmon since 1996. The lab has assisted CRASC member agencies in determining the effective population size and recommending parr numbers for inclusion in the spawning program. The information is entered into a database that identifies potential matings that minimize loss of genetic variability. This research has gradually evolved into a management tool as well as the foundation for the genetic marking program. The lab staff has supported the Richard Cronin NSS staff during spawning. Because funding has been limited at the lab, the USFWS Northeast Fishery Center has agreed to assume this task as an annual priority (assuming funding in FY08 does not preclude expansion of effort). The transition between agencies is likely to take a couple of years followed by a long-term relationship between the agencies since the monitoring research requires the broodstock screening data.

Genetic Marking

In 1997, the USGS-Conte Lab first used the information obtained from the genotyped sea-runs to create "genetically marked" families of salmon. The fry, with known family genetic marks, are stocked into the watershed in known locations. Two years later, some of the emigrating smolts are captured at bypass facilities in Turners Falls and/or Holyoke. Fins are clipped to provide samples for genetic assessment. The assessment/monitoring has the potential to inform management choices and priorities with respect to nursery habitat and stocking regimes. And, it has the potential to point out other landscape limiting factors that may provide opportunities for hatchery and habitat management. The Conte Lab has been collecting samples and hopes to have results analyzed for the 2004 smolts by April 2008. Completion of monitoring, assessment and interpretation has been hampered by lack of dedicated funding. Total cost to complete the project with samples on hand is estimated at $147,000 and would likely require 1-2 years. This project is a high priority and the Tech Committee would like the CRASC to discuss possible funding alternatives.

(See CRASC, page 9)

.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NEWS RELEASE

Northeast Region, External Affairs Office
300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035

Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission
103 East Plumtree Road
Sunderland, Massachusetts 01375

For Immediate Release
December 4, 2007

For more information, contact:
John Coll (570) 726-6611, ext 1, Edward Parker (860) 424-3010, or Jaime Geiger (413) 253-8304

Test results prompt steps to protect salmon program

Tests by the U.S. Geological Survey in Seattle have confirmed that Atlantic salmon broodstock used in the Connecticut Migratory Fish Restoration Program have tested positive for a viral disease that was detected in Massachusetts earlier this month.

Dr. Jaime Geiger announced that 718,000 eggs were destroyed at the White River National Fish Hatchery, in Bethel, Vt. The eggs were collected in the past month from wild salmon, known as "sea-run" salmon, at the Cronin National Salmon Station in Sunderland, Mass., where infectious pancreatic necrosis was discovered in two fish on Nov. 16.

Scientists believe the salmon tested at the Cronin station may have picked up the virus in the Atlantic Ocean.

The eggs represent less than seven percent of the fish to be stocked in the Connecticut River drainage in the coming year, according to Geiger, Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries Resources for the Northeast Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Confirmation of the viral disease has also resulted in the loss of broodstock and other fish at the Cronin station because facilities must be disinfected to enable egg production next year.

No other eggs or fish at the White River hatchery were affected by the incident, Geiger said.

The eggs were to be raised at the White River hatchery and released as young salmon, known as fry, in the river and its tributaries in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

The decision to act in response to the virus was made earlier by the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission.

"The commission took these steps to meet our responsibilities to protect the Atlantic salmon of the Connecticut River and other New England streams," Geiger said. The commission, of which the Fish and Wildlife Service is a member, oversees the salmon restoration program in the Connecticut River drainage.

Geiger stressed that the program's overall restoration goals will not be compromised by the loss of a portion of egg production this year. He did, however, caution that the appearance of IPN reiterates the importance of continued improvements to quarantine and isolation capabilities to safeguard the overall Atlantic salmon program.

Salmon and trout can contract the virus through contact in the wild. IPN is not dangerous to humans.

"IPN is difficult to detect in salmon and trout and is highly contagious," said Geiger. "Once it infects young fish it can spread quickly. Fish and Wildlife Service pathologists were able to find it thanks to a comprehensive monitoring program used at the Service's Atlantic salmon production facilities, including the Cronin station. As a result, we've halted its spread before the collected eggs were hatched."

The incident is the first time that IPN has been detected at the Cronin station. The station was built in 1982 and the restoration program began operation in that year.

"We regret that these fish have been lost," said Eric Palmer, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Director of Fisheries, "but it's essential that we halt spread of the virus to other facilities, both within and outside the Connecticut River drainage. Had we not caught this incident in time, the disease could have spread to other salmon that are critical to a successful restoration effort."

"Scientists plan to conduct additional tests of the broodstock that will help managers put measures in place to further minimize the impacts of the virus in fish returning to the Connecticut River from the ocean," Geiger said.

"The commission has set up procedures that proved successful in identifying and isolating such viruses once detected," said Ed Parker, Chief, Bureau of Natural Resources, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and chairman of the commission. "While this event has been a short-term setback to the restoration program, we are pleased that the virus was contained at the station. We remain committed to bringing the Atlantic salmon back to the river and its tributaries."

The Connecticut River Migratory Fish Restoration Program is a cooperative effort guided by the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission. Members include the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Forest Service. For information on the restoration program, go to http://www.fws.gov/r5crc.

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!

Application for CRSA Membership

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

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

CRSA
76 DEMING STREET
SOUTH WINDSOR, CT 06074

PATRON: $500 ❑

LIFE: $250 ❑

SUSTAINING: $100 ❑

SPONSORING: $50 ❑

CONTRIBUTING: $25 ❑

FAMILY: $25 ❑

REGULAR: $20 ❑

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION
76 Deming Street
South Windsor, CT 06074

Visit us at www.ctriversalmon.org