1	Environmental change influences the life history of salmon Salmo salar in the North				
2	Atlantic				
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Together, climate and food availability are main drivers of change in the ecology of species. 17 18 The recent changes in size and age at maturity of Atlantic salmon Salmo salar of the River Imsa appear to be an example of that. Annual mean total length  $(L_T)$  of wild one-sea-winter 19 (1SW) S. salar decreased from 63 cm to 54 cm, and there was a corresponding decrease in 20 condition factor (CF) for cohorts migrating to sea from 1976 to 2010. The reduction in  $L_{\rm T}$  is 21 associated with a 40 % decline in mean individual mass, from 2 kg to 1.2 kg. Released 22 hatchery fish reared from parental fish of the same population, exhibited similar changes from 23 1981 onwards. The decrease in  $L_{\rm T}$  correlated negatively with near-surface temperatures in the 24 Eastern Norwegian Sea, the main feeding area of the present stock. Furthermore, S. salar 25 exhibited significant variations in the proportion of cohorts attaining maturity after only one 26 winter in the ocean. The proportion of S. salar spawning as 1SW fish was lower both in the 27 1970s and after 2000 than in the 1980s and 1990s associated with a gradual decline in post-28 29 smolt growth and smaller amounts of reserve energy in the fish. In wild S. salar, there was a positive association between post-smolt growth and the sea survival back to the River Imsa 30 31 for spawning. In addition, among smolt year-classes there were significant positive 32 correlations between wild and released hatchery S. salar in  $L_T$ , CF and age at maturity. The present changes may be caused by ecosystem changes following the collapse and rebuilding 33 of the Norwegian spring spawning herring *Clupea harengus* population, a gradually decrease 34 in zooplankton abundance and climate change with increasing surface temperature in the 35 Norwegian Sea. Thus, the observed variation in life history traits of S. salar appears primarily 36 37 associated with major changes in the pelagic foodweb in the ocean.

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Keywords: climate, condition factor, environmental change, growth, sea survival,
temperature.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

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Climate is a governing variable of the biosphere, and the ongoing climate change has serious
effects on Earth's ecosystems. With a nearly 1°C rise in global warming experienced during
the past century, significant shifts in distribution, phenology, behaviour and life history of
organisms are already evident (Parmesan & Yohe, 2003). With an expected increase up to
7°C by 2100, the earth's biota will be even more seriously affected (Sheridan & Bickford,
2011).

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Increasing temperature accelerates biochemical and physiological processes of 51 52 poikilothermic organisms and affects their body size (Clarke, 2003; Pörtner & Farrell, 2008). The 'temperature – size rule' states that there is tendency for poikilotherms to grow faster, but 53 reach adulthood earlier, at a smaller body size in a warmer climate (Atkinson, 1994; Zou et 54 55 al., 2012). Consistent with this rule, several recent studies have demonstrated smaller sizes of poikilotherms associated with climate warming (e.g. Daufresne et al., 2009; Ohlberger et al., 56 2011; Sheridan & Bickford, 2011). This contrasts the effect when developmental rate is 57 stimulated by increased food quality, where organisms will mature larger, not smaller, for 58 their age (Berrigan & Charnov, 1994). This differing effect between higher temperature and 59 better food quality on body size, called 'the Berrigan & Charnov's life-history puzzle', has 60 received much attention in ecological literature (e.g. Perrin, 1995; Jonsson et al., 2013, Trip et 61 al., 2014). 62

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Growth rates of fishes fed to satiation increase with temperature up to a maximum
point denoted 'the optimal temperature for growth', after which growth-rate decreases
gradually with a further temperature increase (Brett, 1956; Elliott, 1994). Ambient

temperatures of fish living in temperate waters are often encountering water colder than their 67 optimal temperature for growth (Forseth et al., 2009). For instance, in the North Atlantic, S. 68 salar typically exploit habitats that are colder than their optimal temperature (Gudjonsson et 69 al., 2015; Minke-Martin et al., 2015), which for post-smolts is about 14 °C (Handeland et al., 70 2008). Thus, growth usually increases with increasing ambient temperature given that the fish 71 find enough high quality food. However, if resource availability is poor or temperature 72 unusually high, increased temperature can give lower growth because maintenance costs 73 74 increase with temperature. Furthermore, at temperatures above the optimum, oxygen content in the water becomes a limiting factor for growth (Pörtner, 2010). For instance, S. salar 75 exhibit negative growth at temperatures above 25°C because of this (Jonsson et al., 2001). 76

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Fast-growing individuals typically mature younger than conspecifics that grow more 78 79 slowly (Alm, 1959), except when growth is exceptionally high. In the latter case, maturity can be delayed (Jonsson et al., 1984, 1999). Early maturation is stimulated if the somatic energy 80 81 density is high, or impeded if the amount of reserved energy is critically low (Mangel & 82 Satterthwaite, 2008). In addition, the effect of increased temperature varies depending on the energy assimilation of the fish. If the energy assimilation is high, higher temperature 83 increases, not decreases size at maturity. The synergistic effect of high temperature and 84 energy food quality was demonstrated in experiments with S. salar (Jonsson et al., 2012, 85 2013). Furthermore, increased growth rate before the onset of maturation, whether this is 86 owing to enhanced lipid content in food or increased water temperature, will decrease age and 87 88 therefore potentially reduced size at maturity. Thus, within populations of poikilotherms, year-to-year variation in age at maturity can be associated with both ambient temperature and 89 90 food availability.

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The study population, S. salar of the Norwegian River Imsa, typically migrate to sea at 92 a body length between 12 and 30 cm, 1-3 years of age (Jonsson & Jonsson, 2014b). They are 93 called smolts at the time of seaward migration, and post-smolts during the first summer and 94 95 autumn at sea. Most smolts enter seawater during spring and early summer to pursue oceanic feeding. Juveniles entering seawater at other times of the year survive poorly (Hansen & 96 Jonsson, 1989), and when returning to fresh water for spawning, their homing precision is low 97 (Hansen & Jonsson, 1991). The present fish spend 1–2 (seldom 3) years in the ocean until 98 99 they attain sexual maturity (Jonsson et al., 1991, 2003). When spawning after 1 winter in the ocean, they are called one-sea-winter (1SW) fish, after two or more winters they are called 100 multi-sea-winter (MSW) fish. They return for spawning during autumn freshets between 101 August and October (Jonsson et al., 2007). The majority ascend the river during a period of 4 102 to 6 weeks. In a warmer climate, the proportion of MSW S. salar is expected to increase 103 104 because of poorer growth, or decrease if feeding opportunities are sufficiently good (Jonsson et al., 2013). 105

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107 In the present study, we assess life history data on S. salar of the River Imsa, monitored from 1976 onwards. Age at maturity is given as proportion of the cohorts that 108 attained maturity as 1SW fish. The mass-length relationship, post-smolt growth and 109 110 proportion of the seaward migrating fish that return to the home river for spawning were estimated. Based on this, regressions between life history variables and surface temperature in 111 the Eastern Norwegian Sea were tested. Sea surface temperature during the first period in the 112 ocean is important for growth and survival of S. salar (Friedland et al., 2009, 2014). 113 Furthermore, each year from 1981 onwards, groups of S. salar reared to smolts in a hatchery, 114 115 wereb released in the river. As brood stock, adults returning to the River Imsa were used. The

groups were released to test if environmental conditions influenced wild and releasedhatchery fish similarly.

119	Based on life history theory (e.g. Roff, 1992), it may be expected that fish length at			
120	maturity, mass-length relationship and survival at sea would increase with near-surface			
121	temperature during the first year the fish spent at sea. If so, a higher proportion of the cohorts			
122	would attain maturity as 1SW fish. However, a complicating factor is that availability of			
123	zooplankton has decreased and competition from planktivorous fish, e.g. the Norwegian			
124	spring spawning herring Clupea harengus, have gradually increased gradually during the			
125	study period (Beaugrand & Reid, 2012; Huse et al., 2012; Utne et al., 2012). Thus, growth			
126	may have decreased and age at maturity increased instead.			
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129	MATERIAL AND METHODS			
130	RIVER AND HATCHERY			
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132	The River Imsa, South-Western Norway empties into the Boknafjorden near the city of			
133	Stavanger (Fig. 1). The river, which is 1 km long, have a restricted spawning area, is			
134	characterized by a temperature ranging from 2 to 3 $^\circ$ C in winter and summer maxima of			
135	approximately 20 °C. The water discharge ranges from less than 2-3 m <sup>3</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> in summer to			
136	autumn maxima of about 10 m <sup>3</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> or more (Jonsson <i>et al.</i> , 1989).			

In the river, a Wolf trap (Wolf, 1951; apertures 10 mm, inclination 1:10) situated 150
m above the river outlet, catches all descending *S. salar* longer than ca. 10 cm. All ascending
fish were captured in a fixed box trap located besides the Wolf trap on top of a three steps fish
ladder (Jonsson & Jonsson, 2011). The traps were emptied twice every day during the study
period.

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The River Imsa hatchery uses river water at slightly elevated temperature that ranges 144 from 2 to 8 °C in winter to approximately 20 °C in summer. Eggs were incubated in Heath 145 vertical stack incubators with a water flow of 4 L min<sup>-1</sup> and about 1.5 L of eggs per tray. At 146 the onset of feeding, the alevins were transferred to 1-m<sup>2</sup> pools with water depth of 20 cm and 147 water flow of 5.5 L min<sup>-1</sup>. The young fish were fed EWOS food pellets every 10 minutes 148 during daylight until they reach 10 cm in length, after which they were fed every 20 minutes 149 during daylight. In early June, the hatchery fish were transferred to 4 m<sup>2</sup> pools with a water 150 depth of 50 cm and a flow of about 40 L min<sup>-1</sup> where they grew for the remainder of the first 151 year. About 50% or more of the fish smolted 1 year old. The remainder were held at the 152 hatchery in 12 m<sup>2</sup> pools with a water flow of 120 L min<sup>-1</sup> until they smolted 2 year old. 153

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## 155 THE FISH

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The wild fish originated from adults spawning naturally in the River Imsa during
November – December after having completed the entire life cycle in the wild. The embryos
incubated through the winter in gravel nests and emerged during the following April. The
young (parr) used the river as a nursery before smolting and seaward migration. On average,

the wild fish smolted at 1 (14%), 2 (78%) or  $\geq$ 3 (8%) years of age and migrated into the ocean where most of their growth occurred (Jonsson *et al.*, 1998; Jonsson & Jonsson, 2003). From 163 1976 to 2010, 36 201 wild smolts migrated from the river to the sea, and tagging studies 164 indicate that they fed in the North Norwegian Sea north of 62°N (Hansen *et al.*, 1993; Jonsson 165 *et al.*, 1993). Of these, 2.9% returned to the trap as adults.

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The hatchery fish were reared to smolts from S. salar captured in the trap of the River 167 168 Imsa. Usually more than 10 parents of each sex were used. In early May, the smolts were released at the time when the majority of the wild smolts migrated to sea (Jonsson & Jonsson, 169 2014b). The release site was located ca. 100 m above the river outlet, just beneath the fish 170 traps in the River Imsa (Jonsson & Jonsson, 2011). Thus, the hatchery fish completed the 171 remainder of their growth to adulthood naturally. During 1981 to 2010, 182 740 1- and 2-172 year-old hatchery-reared smolts were released. Of these, 1.5% returned to the trap as adults. 173 All adults had similar genetical background within year, as the parental fish were tagged 174 175 adults returning to the River Imsa, but they may have differ somewhat across years. However, 176 the river is short and the spawning area very restricted and there are therefore only one spawning population in the river. 177

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The released hatchery fish followed the same migratory route and experienced the same marine resources in the North Atlantic as wild *S. salar* (Jonsson *et al.*, 1993). On average, approximately 80% of the adults attained maturity after one winter and two summers in the ocean (1SW), the rest matured as MSW fish, *i.e.* chiefly two winters at sea (Jonsson *et al.*, 1991). As maturing adults, hatchery and wild *S. salar* returned to the Norwegian coast

184	concurrently, but the hatchery fish tended to enter the River Imsa later in the fall than the wild			
185	fish (Jonsson et al., 1990).			
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187	TREATMENT OF MATERIAL			
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189	Before leaving the river, all wild and hatchery S. salar were individually tagged with			
190	numbered Carlin tags (Carlin, 1955). Natural tip lengths (L, mm; i.e. total length of fish with			
191	naturally distended caudal fin, Ricker (1979)) and body mass $(W, g)$ were recorded. The fish			
192	were anaesthetized with chlorobutanol before being treated, and after treatment, they rested			
193	until any visual effect of the anaesthetization had disappear. Then, the fish were returned to			
194	the river.			
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196	ESTIMATIONS			
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198	Post-smolt growth ( $G$ ) was back-calculated from measurements of the first marine			
199	annulus in scales of returning adults caught in the trap ( $L_{T1}$ mm) (Jonsson & Stenseth 1976;			
200	Jonsson & Jonsson, 2011). From this estimated length we subtracted the smolt length ( $L_{T0}$			
201	mm). In total, 668 and 658 scale samples from wild and hatchery-reared fish, respectively,			
202	were used: $G = \ln L_{\text{T1}} - \ln L_{\text{T0}}$ .			
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Fulton's condition factor (CF) of the returning adults was calculated as  $CF=100 \cdot W/L^3$ , 205 where W is mass (g) and L is natural tip length (cm). This mass-length relationship was used 206 because the individuals were recaptured within a short period in the autumn, were in the same 207 208 maturity stage and originated from the same population (Wootton, 1998). Bacon at al. (2009) evaluated various mass – length relationships and found that for *S. salar*, this simple index 209 gives virtually the same biological interpretation as relationships that are more complex. 210 Furthermore, CF of adult S. salar caught in the box trap in the River Imsa correlated 211 significantly with their somatic energy density (E KJ 100 g<sup>-1</sup> wet mass): E = 8.87 + 553.0 CF, 212  $r^2 = 0.44$ , df = 1,24, P < 0.001. The energy density was measured by summing the energy in 213 proteins, lipids and carbohydrates in the somatic tissue (Craig et al., 1978). Protein was 214 determined by analysis of Kjeldahl. Total lipid content was determined by hydrolysis of a 5-g 215 sample tissue in hydrochloric acid and extraction with diethylether. The carbohydrate content 216 217 (*i.e.* the total amount of glucose in the sample) was determined according to Mason (1983). These analyses were carried out in triplicate and mean values used. The caloric coefficients 218 219 for making energy estimates from proximate composition data were 17 kJ in both protein and 220 carbohydrate and 38 kJ in lipid. For more details, see Jonsson & Jonsson (2003).

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The majority of the fish attained maturity after 1 winter in the ocean (Jonsson *et al.*, 2003), and MSW fish were excluded from the analyses because they were too few for their findings to be representative except for the last few years. In the tests, mean values of the cohorts were used. When appropriate, similar relationships of individual fish within the cohorts were also tested.

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Proportion of the tagged S. salar within cohorts that returned to the River Imsa was 229 230 used as an index of annual sea survival. This was estimated as number of returning adults divided by number of smolts forming the cohort. The figures were not adjusted for any 231 232 possible mortality effect of tags or tagging, because it was no intention of estimating the absolute survival rate of untagged fish. However, Hansen (1988) found total recapture rates of 233 adult S. salar at 7.7% for unmarked, 4.1% for adipose fin-clipped and 3.1% for Carlin tagged 234 235 smolts, indicating that the survival rate would be more than two times higher for unmarked than Carlin-tagged smolts. 236

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### 238 SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE

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240 Near-surface temperatures (0-10m depth) were retrieved from a several decade's long realization of a hydro-dynamical model resolving the entire Nordic Seas (Lien et al., 2014). A 241 transect consisting of 17 stations (ranging from 62°4' N, 5°2'E off the Norwegian west-coast 242 continuing offshore to 64°7'N, 0° E), in the feeding area of the River Imsa S. salar, was 243 applied to represent temperature means in the Norwegian Sea (Fig. 1). This transect was 244 monitored regularly 3-4 times per year by the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research, and 245 the observed temperatures were used to ensure that the model results were unbiased and 246 247 realistically resolving inter-annual variability. Mean water temperature was estimated for two 248 periods, summer (April through September) and winter (October through March). From April through September is the main growing period of the post-smolts, whereas October through 249 March is a period when growth is low and the fish typically lose weight. In both seasons, sea 250 251 surface temperature increased significantly during the study period (Fig. 2). Correlations between life history variables and temperature during three months periods were also tested, 252 but these gave no extra information and therefore omitted from the results. 253

#### 255 STATISTSICS

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The data were analyzed by use of SPSS version 22. Proportional data were not arcsine 257 square root transformed, contrasting the advised by Sokal & Rohlf (1981), because this 258 transformation may produces effects that are difficult to interpret [see Warton & Hui (2011) 259 for a comprehensive argumentation]. However, there was no difference in the general trends 260 261 and the coefficient of determination of the models were approximately the same, whether or not this transformation was used. Simple linear regression analysis were generally used 262 263 because the purpose of the study was not to elaborate formal models to explain variability in 264 S. salar life history, but to provide simple associations among vital descriptors and time trends. The linear regressions were tested for deviation from normality by use of the 265 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Relationships that were significantly correlated, are given in the 266 267 results. Differences in slopes of the linear regression lines between hatchery produced and wild S. salar were tested by use of analysis of covariance (Snedecor & Cochran, 1973). The 268 data series were differenced by one year when comparing life history variables of hatchery 269 and wild cohorts to stabilize the series, because of their monotonic trends. Furthermore, in no 270 271 case was use of a second independent predictor variable (temperature or life history character) 272 significant in a multiple regression model (P > 0.05). For the relationship between proportion of 1SW fish and year of seaward migration, the 4 parameter Weibull equation (Wahed et al., 273 2009) used, estimated by Python programming (www.Python.org). 274

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# RESULTS

The length ( $L_T$ ) of 1SW *S. salar* of the River Imsa decreased gradually during the study period. This holds for hatchery produced fish released in the river as smolts as well as wild *S. salar* from the river [Fig. 3(a,b)]. For instance, mean length of wild fish decreased from 63 cm to 54 cm, equivalent to a decrease in mass from approximately 2 kg to 1.2 kg (40%). The slopes of the lines differed significantly (comparison of slope;  $F_{1,59} = 61.9$ , P <0.001). Performing similar analyses for individual fish showed that the variability was large, but the trends were similar and highly significant (Table I).

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286 The condition factor (CF) of both released hatchery and wild S. salar decreased by 8% [Fig. 3(c,d), comparison of slopes:  $F_{1,59} = 2.08$ , P > 0.05], whereas the post-smolt growth in 287 length decreased faster for hatchery than wild fish [Fig. 3(e,f); comparison of slopes:  $F_{1,44} =$ 288 13.02, P < 0.001]. Furthermore, S. salar exhibited an increase in proportion of 1SW S. salar 289 for cohorts migrating to sea before the mid-1990s and a decrease between 2000 and 2010. 290 Similar trends were observed in both wild and hatchery produced fish [Figure 3(g,h)]. For 291 1SW fish, there was no significant temporal trend in annual survival at sea, in smolt size or 292 growth during the second summer, *i.e.* the year they returned for spawning (P > 0.05). Age at 293 maturity as illustrated by the proportion of 1SW fish, increased from the 1970s to the 1990s 294 and decreased again after 2000 to a minimum of about 30% ([Fig. 3(i)]. From the 1980s 295 onwards, the hatchery fish exhibited a similar maturity pattern [Fig. 3(j)]. Similar significant 296 297 changes in life history traits were observed when individual fish from each cohort was used 298 (Table I).

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There were some significant relationships between life history variables and ocean
temperatures (Table II), but the coefficient of determination was low exhibiting that only a

small proportion of the total variation was explained by the temperature.  $L_{\rm T}$  of 1SW fish 302 decreased with increasing ocean temperature. The slope of the regression was steeper for 303 hatchery than wild S. salar [Table II(a), Summer temperature:  $F_{1,57} = 8.8$ , P = 0.005]. The 304 305 similar regression between  $L_{\rm T}$  and winter temperature differed in that wild fish exhibited the steepest slope (Winter temperature:  $F_{1.57} = 9.1$ , P = 0.004). Furthermore, body mass relative to 306 length (CF) tended to be higher in years when near-surface water in the Norwegian Sea was 307 relatively cold. The slopes of the corresponding regressions did not differ significantly 308 between hatchery and wild fish [Table II (a): Summer temperature,  $F_{1,58} = 3.10$ , P > 0.05, 309 Winter temperature  $F_{1,59} = 3.64$ , P > 0.05]. In addition, a higher proportion of the cohorts of 310 311 hatchery S. salar attained maturity as 1SW fish when the ocean was relatively cold. This holds for both winter and summer temperature when tested separately. The corresponding 312 relationships for wild S. salar, however, were not significant (P > 0.05). There was no 313 314 significant correlation between sea survival and temperature in the Norwegian Sea.

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In both released hatchery and wild S. salar, mean  $L_{\rm T}$  increased with growth during the 316 first summer at sea with a steeper slope in wild than hatchery fish ([Table II(b),  $F_{1,44} = 7.48$ , P 317 = 0.01]. Furthermore, the proportion that attained maturity as 1SW fish increased with CF. 318 The slope of the regression was steeper in hatchery than in wild fish ( $F_{1.55} = 7.2$ , P = 0.01). In 319 released hatchery, but not in wild fish, the proportion of 1SW fish also increased with growth 320 321 during the first summer at sea. On the other hand, there was also a positive relationship 322 between the sea survival of the cohort and growth during the first year at sea in wild S. salar, but the corresponding relationship was not significant in hatchery S. salar. 323

325	Among years, there was significant positive correlation between the lengths of wild
326	1SW fish on corresponding cohorts of released hatchery S. salar [Fig. 4(a)]. However,
327	differencing the two time series by one year, gave no significant relationship ( $P > 0.05$ ).
328	Furthermore, CF of wild on hatchery S. salar were highly correlated (Fig. 4(b)], but lower for
329	hatchery than wild S. salar, particularly in years when the condition factor was low.
330	Differencing the two time series reduced the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.35$ , $P =$
331	0.001). Also, the proportion of wild on hatchery S. salar returning to the River Imsa as 1SW
332	fish were highly significant [Fig. 4(c)]. The proportion of 1SW S. salar was higher in wild S.
333	salar in years when relatively few fish attained maturity as 1SW fish, but lower in years when
334	the proportions were high. Differencing the two time series with one year reduced the
335	coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.40$ , $P = 0.002$ ). There was no significant correlation
336	between estimated growth rate or survival at sea of hatchery and wild River Imsa S. salar ( $P >$
337	0.05).
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339	DISCUSSION
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341 The time-series show that  $L_{T}$ , CF and post-smolt growth of S. salar have decreased since the 1970s. Similar trends are evident in both wild fish and artificially reared fish 342 released as smolts in the river. The consistency of the patterns indicates that the changes are 343 real, and the decrease in size appears associated with reduced post-smolt growth and not with 344 growth as parr in freshwater or during the second summer at sea. Furthermore, this appears 345 not to be an epigenetic effect of thermal conditions during embryonic development (Finstad & 346 347 Jonsson, 2012; review in Jonsson & Jonsson, 2014a). Jonsson et al. (2014) did not find any effect of increased temperature during early ontogeny on either post-smolt growth or age at 348

maturity in experimental tests with *S. salar* of the River Imsa. Selection or genetic drift was
probably not important for changes in these ecological characters, as the decrease in body
mass has been as large as 40% over only a few generations, and similar trends have been
observed elsewhere, as discussed below. Growth and size in fishes are very plastic (*cf.*Wootton, 1998), and phenotypic responses to environmental change are rapid (Jonsson &
Jonsson, 2011).

355

Many species exhibit smaller sizes because of climate change (Sheridan & Bickford, 356 2011), but the present case may not only be an effect of the rising temperature, as temperature 357 explained little of the variation in these ecological characters. Although significant, the 358 temperature increase has been only approximately 1 °C, which is little, and should not reduce 359 360 the mass of 1SW salmon by nearly as much as 40%. Instead, reduced feeding can cause such a dramatic decrease, which may be associated with lower primary and secondary production 361 362 in the pelagic foodweb as argued by Beaugrand & Reid (2012). During the first year at sea, S. 363 salar feed largely on pelagic crustaceans (Amphipoda, Euphausiacea) (Jacobsen & Hansen, 364 2001; Haugland et al., 2006). The abundance of these organisms have decreasing concurrently with an increased abundance of competing pelagic fish (Huse et al., 2012), among which the 365 366 Norwegian spring spawning C. harengus may be the keenest post-smolt competitor. This assumption is indicated by negative correlations between C. harengus abundance in the 367 368 Norwegian Sea and S. salar survival (evidence reviewed in Mills, 2003). After the collapse of the Norwegian spring spawning C. harengus in 1970, post-smolt growth was particularly 369 good in the 1970s. But as the Norwegian spring spawning C. harengus population recovered 370 gradually (Huse et al., 2012; Nøttestad et al., 2015), post-smolt growth has decreased as it has 371 in other European rivers (McCarty et al., 2008; Peyronnet et al., 2008; Friedland et al., 2009). 372

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An additional reason for the decrease in growth and *CF* with time may be the recent 374 375 increase in abundance of sea lice Lepeophtheirus salmonis Burmeister 1834, which may have affected post-smolt growth negatively (Stien et al., 2005). The increased abundance of L. 376 377 salmonis is probably a consequence of the growth of the S. salar farming industry since the 1970s (Ford & Myers, 2008). For instance, Gargan et al. (2012) reported that L. salmonis can 378 induce considerable mortality on S. salar. Moreover, Skilbrei et al. (2013) found 6 % larger 379 mass of 1SW hatchery-produced S. salar treated as smolts either with prophylactic substances 380 emamectin benzoate or EX (Pharmac), against L. salmonis prior to release in nature, 381 compared with untreated control groups. A similar effect of L. salmonis may have reduced 382 383 growth of the present S. salar. However, the reported effect of the L. salmonis treatment was much smaller than the 40% decrease in mass found in the present study, and no parallel 384 increase in mortality was observed. Thus, L. salmonis may not be a major contributor to the 385 386 decrease in fish size in the present population.

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Todd et al. (2008) reported a similar decrease in CF of 1SW S. salar from Scotland 388 towards the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. They related 389 reduced CF and lipid density of the fish to increased sea surface temperature, associated with 390 a recent climate-driven change in the eastern North Atlantic pelagic ecosystem. Furthermore, 391 they see parallels with this decrease to effects on other top consumers, such as Atlantic 392 bluefin tuna Thunnus thynnus (L. 1758) and seabirds (Todd et al., 2008). The decreased CF of 393 394 the present S. salar indicates a similar reduction in lipid deposits, as the CF correlates significantly with the lipid density of the returning adults in the River Imsa. A similar 395 396 correlation was found for S. salar spawning in the Norwegian River Drammen (Jonsson et al., 1997). Thus, the climate-driven ecosystem change may have had a similar effect on the 397

present Norwegian *S. salar* as reported from Scotland, indicating that this is a general trend inthe Northeast Atlantic.

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401 Although reduced energy assimilation of the post-smolts may be the prime reason for the decrease in growth, temperature may still have had a contributing effect because of 402 associated metabolic costs. Friedland & Todd (2012) reported that S. salar growth was 403 associated with temperature during winter and spring. Furthermore, Hokkaido chum salmon 404 Oncorhynchus keta (Walbaum 1792) have had elevated growth and survival rates since the 405 1980s (opposite to the present results). They assumed that this was a direct effect of higher 406 surface temperature because of global warming (Kaeriyama et al., 2014). In addition, the 407 408 growth of Chinook salmon Oncorhynchus tshawytscha (Walbaum 1792) in Alaska appears 409 strongly influenced by oceanic winter temperatures (Wells et al., 2008). Thus, the possibility 410 that increased temperature may have had an additional effect on the ongoing change in size and growth of S salar, cannot be rejected. 411

412

Age at maturity varied during the study period. First, the proportion of 1SW fish 413 414 increased, but after 2000, it decreased. Age at maturity is highly influenced by growth and size of the fish (Alm, 1959; Jonsson et al., 1984) and for S. salar, Friedland & Haas (1996) 415 416 indicated that late summer growth of the post-smolts was higher in S. salar maturing as 1SW than 2SW fish. Furthermore, Salminen (1997) reported that good feeding opportunities gave 417 relatively more 1SW S. salar than do poorer feeding opportunities in the Baltic Sea. For 418 released hatchery S. salar, they found a significant relationship between early maturation and 419 post-smolt growth, as also found in rearing experiments with the River Imsa salmon (Jonsson 420 et al., 2012, 2013). But in the present study, the relatinship was nonlinear. 421

423	A hypothesis that may explaining this nonlinearity is that the relatively high
424	proportion of MSW fish in the 1970s was related to the eminent S. salar growth during this
425	decade (Jonsson & Jonsson, 2004). Salmonids can delay maturation if growth is unusually
426	good. Ultimately, this may be an inherited response because of an "expected" increase in
427	reproductive success by postponing maturation (because of the increase in size), more than
428	compensating for the expected decrease in survival, as explained by Jonsson & Jonsson
429	(1993). For instance, when juvenile brown trout Salmo trutta L. 1758 switch from zoo-benthic
430	to fish feeding, growth rate increases and maturation is delayed relative to those that still feed
431	on zoobenthos (Jonsson et al., 1999). Similarly, very fast-growing S. salar can delay
432	maturation relative to conspecifics with more average growth rate (Jonsson & Jonsson, 2004).
433	This relationship between maturation and growth seems to hold across populations (Jonsson
434	et al., 1991) and in other salmonid species (Larsson et al., 2005; Forseth et al., 2009). Thus,
435	extremely high post-smolt growth may have contributed to the elevated proportion of MSW
436	fish in the 1970s.

437

However, maturation can also be delayed if growth rate is poor (Alm, 1959), which 438 may be the situation after 2000. In this period, post-smolt growth was low and a gradually 439 440 increasing proportion of the cohorts may have lacked the needed energy resources to carry out the return migration and spawn successfully as 1SW fish, relative to the requirements of their 441 genetic programme. Furthermore, maturation can be delayed if lipid densities are low (Rowe 442 443 & Thorpe, 1991; Duston & Saunders, 1999). This holds also for a number of other species, such as S. trutta L. 1758 (Bohlin et al., 1994), O. tshawytscha (Silverstein et al., 1998) and 444 North Sea Plaice Pleuronectes platessa L. 1758 (Grift et al., 2007). Hence, both extra high 445

and extra low growth in the post-smolt period may be associated with maturation as MSWfish.

448

Otero *et al.* (2012) reported a similar decrease in proportion of 1SW *S. salar* after
2000 in other Norwegian *S. salar* populations emphasizing the generality of this finding. They
suggested that the increased age at maturity may be explained by the large-scale ecological
changes in the Northeast Atlantic pelagic food web affecting post-smolt growth, which
appears reasonable, as discussed above.

454

455 Salmo salar may have moved farther north for feeding during recent years. Jensen et al. (2014) reported that considerable numbers of S. salar were observed as far north as the 456 457 Svalbard Islands, between 78° and 79° N. This is north of the earlier known area of the species. The individuals sampled did not belong to the River Imsa population, but other rivers 458 459 chiefly in Northern Norway. It is known that feeding areas of salmonids have changed because of large-scale climate-driven ecosystem shifts in the ocean (Nielsen et al., 2013), and 460 461 this may hold for many other species (cf. Pörtner & Peck, 2010). For instance, Potts et al. 462 (2014) reported that Argrosstomus coronus De la Pylaie 1835 on the African coast changed 463 their distribution area because of global warming. Thus, the possibility that the feeding area may have shifted northwards in association with climate warming cannot be ruled out, and if 464 the area has changed, this may have influenced growth opportunities of S. salar. 465

466

Marine survival of *S. salar* in the River Imsa decreased with time before 2000
(Jonsson & Jonsson, 2004), but there is no such trend in the present material. This may be
associated with fisheries regulation and reduced fishing intensity at sea, particularly on MSW

S. salar (cf. Jensen et al., 1999). But the effect of a less intensive fishing on MSW fish 470 471 probably had minor effect on the size of 1SW fish. Multi-sea-winter S. salar feed mainly on pelagic fish such as C. harengus (Jacobsen & Hansen, 2001; Haugland et al., 2006), and 472 473 should not compete keenly with post-smolts for food. So far, there is no evidence of density dependent survival among Atlantic salmon in the ocean (Jonsson et al., 1998). Thus if 474 anything, mean size should have increased with a reduced fishing pressure on relatively large 475 476 fish, opposite to the observed trend. There is no knowledge about possible genetic effects of reduced fishing in S.salar in the ocean (cf. Marty et al., 2014; Uusi-Heikkilä et al., 2015). 477

478

Survival appeared little influenced by water temperature during the post-smolt period. 479 480 For instance, there was no support for the hypothesis that mortality changed with increasing 481 temperature for either wild or hatchery produced S. salar. This seems not to agree with the general view that survival is closely associated with environmental temperature in fishes 482 (Somero, 2004; Griffiths & Harrod, 2007). In the present case, the effect may be small 483 compared to other sources of mortality, such as predation and parasitism (e.g. Hansen et al., 484 2003). In addition, variation in age at maturity may have affected their survival. On the other 485 486 hand, the retrospective growth analysis from scales exhibited a positive correlation between first year growth and survival in wild S. salar. This parallels observations in other populations 487 of S. salar (e.g. McCarty et al., 2008; Peyronnets et al., 2008; Friedland et al., 2009) and in 488 other anadromous species such as S. trutta (Jonsson & Jonsson, 2009) and Chinook salmon 489 490 (Woodson et al., 2013). Growth may mediate survival by the functional relationship between post-smolts and their predators as discussed in Jonsson & Jonsson (2009). The first period of 491 492 marine life may be particularly demanding for the fish with high mortality when slower growing individuals may be lost because of predation, disease or starvation (Wells et al., 493 2012). Particularly in years when feeding opportunities are poor, large recruits may survive 494

better than smaller conspecifics. Saloniemi *et al.* (2004) and Cross *et al.* (2008) reported that
that relatively large body size gave survival benefits for juvenile *S. salar* in years when the
mortality was high.

498

There were close correlation between wild and hatchery-produced S. salar concerning 499 500 CF and age at maturity. This indicates that environmental conditions at sea influenced these 501 life history variables similarly, and that life history variation in released hatchery S. salar at least partly reflects that of wild fish with similar genetic structure. Thus, hatchery produced S. 502 salar may be used as an ecological indicator on production conditions for wild S. salar at sea. 503 From the Pacific Northwest, it was reported that in spite of temporal and spatial variation, the 504 505 general trend in marine survival is similar for both wild and hatchery coho salmon Oncorhynchus kisutch (Walbaum 1792) (Coronado & Hilborn, 1998) indicating that this has 506 507 wider application than for this population.

508

509 In all, the present study revealed a significant change in life history of S. salar of the River Imsa strain since the 1970s. The main drivers appear to be the ecosystem change with 510 the collapse in the Norwegian spring spawning C. harengus and the subsequent rebuilding of 511 the pelagic fish abundance, together with a decrease in large zooplankton abundance and 512 increase in sea-surface temperature in the Norwegian Sea. Smaller energy stores may render 513 S. salar more susceptible to parasitism and the distribution area may move northwards where 514 515 growth opportunities are poorer. The pelagic ecosystem is highly dynamic, and as a predator, 516 the life history of *S.salar* is highly dependent on other species. With large fluctuations in primary and secondary production in the food web, bottom-up effects on S. salar and other 517 predators are expected. 518

519

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Table 1.Regression of life history variables on year of seaward migration (*Y*) for hatchery produced (H) and wild (W) one-sea-winter *S. salar* of the River Imsa, L = Length at maturity, CF = Fulton's condition factor, G = first year growth. The parameters are given with standard error (±S.E.) and were significant (*P*<0.05).  $r^2 =$  coefficient of determination, *F*-statistics, d.f. = degrees of freedom, \*\*\* = *P*<0.001.

855

Regression	$r^2$	F-statistics	Degrees of
			freedom
$L_{\rm H} = 3680.5 \ (\pm 3.14.2) - 1.55 \ ((\pm 0.16) \ Y$		96.5***	1, 2255
$L_{\rm W} = 5539.7 \ (\pm 409.1) - 2.48 \ (\pm 0.21) \ Y$		146.1***	1, 830
$CF_{\rm H} = 2.09 \ (\pm 0.50) - 0.001 \ Y$		6.93***	1, 2242
$CF_{\rm W} = 3.58 \ (\pm 0.646) - 0.001 \ Y$		18.82***	1, 830
$G_{\rm H} = 13.06 \ (\pm 1.60) - 0.006 \ (\pm 0.001) \ Y$		57.6***	1,662
$G_{\rm W} = 5.62 \ (\pm 1.34) - 0.002 \ (\pm 0.001) \ Y$		11.5***	1, 665

856

858	Table 2. Significant relationships between life history variables of released hatchery (H) and
859	wild =(W) <i>S. salar</i> of the River Imsa strain migrating to sea between 1976 and 2010 and (a)
860	Sea surface temperature, and (b) between life history variables. $PM$ = Proportion (%) of
861	annual cohort that attained maturity as one-sea-winter fish, $CF =$ Fulton's condition factor, $L$
862	= Total length at maturity (mm), $G$ = Growth during the first year at sea estimated from scale
863	measurements, $T_{Su}$ = Mean temperature at 0-10 m depth from April through September in the
864	Norwegian Sea during the first year the fish were at sea, $T_{Wi}$ = Mean temperature at 0-10 m
865	depth from October through September in the Norwegian Sea during the first year the fish
866	were at sea, $S =$ Percentage of cohort that returned to the River Imsa after feeding in the
867	ocean. The parameters are given with standard error (±S.E.) and were significant ( $P$ <0.05). $r^2$
868	= coefficient of determination, $F = F$ -statistics, d.f. = degrees of freedom, * = P < 0.05, ** = P
869	< 0.01, *** = <i>P</i> <0.001.

F	Regression	$r^2$	F - statistics	Degrees of
				freedom
	(a) With Sea Surface Temperature			
I	$L_{\rm H} = 882.0 \ (\pm 111.9) - 29.6 \ (\pm 11.6) \ T_{\rm Su}$	0.20	6.51*	1, 26
1	$L_{\rm W} = 857.5 \ (\pm 1.27.2) - 28.6 \ (\pm 13.28) \ T_{\rm Su}$	0.13	4.65*	1, 30
1	$L_{\rm H} = 902.4 \ (\pm 105.8) - 43.7 \ (\pm 15.5) \ T_{\rm Wi}$	0.18	8.21**	1, 27
1	$L_{\rm W} = 967.5 \ (\pm 102.6) - 55.6 \ (\pm 14.8) \ T_{\rm Wi}$	0.32	14.0***	1, 30
(	$CF_{\rm H} = 1.18 \ (\pm 0.18) - 0.042 \ (\pm 0.019) T_{\rm Su}$	0.16	5.02*	1, 27

$CF_{\rm W} = 1.33 \ (\pm 0.15) - 0.055 \ (\pm 0.016) T_{\rm Su}$	0.29	12.6***	1, 31	
$CF_{\rm H} = 1.27 \ (\pm 0.15) - 0.072 \ (\pm 0.021) T_{\rm Wi}$	0.29	11.5**	1, 28	
$CF_{\rm W} = 1.18 \ (\pm 0.15) - 0.054 \ (0.021)T_{\rm Wi}$	0.18	6.59*	1, 31	
$PM_{\rm H} = 272.60 \ (\pm 82.11) - 19.72 \ (\pm 8.49) \ T_{\rm Su}$	0.18	5.39*	1, 25	
$PM_{\rm H} = 278.31 \ (\pm 63.46) - 28.17 \ (\pm 9.13) \ T_{\rm Wi}$	0.27	9.52**	1, 26	
(b) Between life history variables				
$L_{\rm H} = 419.64 \ (\pm 62.06) + 188.97 \ (\pm 65.98) \ G_{\rm H}$	0.20	5.03*	1, 20	
$L_{\rm W} = 355.14 \ (\pm 90.96) + 226.85 \ (\pm 87.78)$	0.22	6.68*	1, 24	
$G_{ m W}$				
$PM_{\rm H} = -118.7 \ (\pm 51.7) + 260.4 \ (\pm 66.66)$	0.37	15.27***	1, 26	
$CF_{ m H}$				
$PM_{\rm W} = -67.3 \ (\pm 54.1) + 181.6 \ (\pm 68.0) \ CF_{\rm W}$	0.20	7.14**	1, 29	
$PM_{\rm H} = -71.02 \ (\pm 46.00) + 161.54 \ (\pm 49.07)$	0.35	10.8**	1, 20	
$G_{ m H}$				
$S_{\rm W} = -6.15 \ (\pm 4.31) + 9.61 \ (\pm 4.16) \ G_{\rm W}$	0.18	5.33*	1, 24	

#### 875 Legend to figures

876

FIG. 1. Northern North Sea and eastern Norwegian Sea with the location of the River Imsa at
the Southwest coast of Norway and the transect further north where near-surface temperature
values were retrieved.

880

FIG. 2. Mean surface temperature (0-10 m depth) at 62°N in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean (*T* °C) during (a) April-September 1976-2010 ( $Y_S$ ):  $T_S = -51.96 (\pm 13.92) + 0.03 (0.007) Y$ ;  $r^2 =$ 0.39,  $F_{1,31} = 19.5$ ; P < 0.001, (b) October-March 1976-2011( $Y_W$ ):  $T_W = 50.49 (\pm 9.70) + 0.029$ ( $\pm 0.005$ ) Y,  $r^2 = 0.52$ ,  $F_{1,32} = 35.0$ , P < 0.001.

885

FIG. 3. Regressions of wild S. salar of the River Imsa cohorts migrating to sea between 1976 886 887 and 2010, and hatchery fish produced from the same stock and released when ready for seaward migration between 1981 and 2010, on year of release (Y). (a) Total length at return of 888 1SW hatchery fish ( $L_{\rm H}$  mm):  $L_{\rm H} = 5582 (\pm 1244) - 2.5 (\pm 0.62) Y$ ;  $r^2 = 0.36$ ,  $F_{1,28} = 16.0$ , P < 100889 890 0.001. (b) Total length at return of 1SW wild fish ( $L_W$ ):  $L_W = 6104.1 (\pm 988.0) - 2.77 (\pm 0.50)$ *Y*;  $r^2 = 0.51$ ,  $F_{1,30} = 31.2$ , P < 0.001. (c) Condition factor of hatchery fish (*CF*<sub>H</sub>): *CF*<sub>H</sub> = 5.95 891  $(\pm 2.04) - 0.003 \ (\pm 0.001) \ Y; \ r^2 = 0.19, \ F_{1.28} = 6.46, \ P = 0.02.$  (d) Condition factor of wild fish 892  $(CF_{\rm W})$ :  $CF_{\rm W} = 4.67 (\pm 1.69) - 0.002 (\pm 0.001) Y$ ;  $r^2 = 0.15$ ,  $F_{1.31} = 5.27$ , P = 0.03. (e) First-year 893 growth estimated from scales of hatchery fish ( $G_{\rm H}$ ):  $G_{\rm H} = 12.43 (\pm 2.04) - 0.006 (\pm 0.001) Y$ ;  $r^2$ 894 = 0.37,  $F_{1,20}$  = 11.9, P = 0.002. (f) First-year growth estimated from scales of wild fish ( $G_W$ ): 895  $G_{\rm W} = 7.37 (\pm 2.61) - 0.003 (\pm 0.001) Y; r^2 = 0.20, F_{1,24} = 5.9, P = 0.02.$  (g) Percent 1SW 896 hatchery fish of adults returning to the River Imsa ( $PM_H$  %):  $PM_H = 1.16 (\pm 2.04)(Y - 1.16) (\pm 2.04)$ 897

898 1909.4)^1.01(±1.13) \*exp (-((Y-1909.4)\*0.01)^18.43(±1.13)),  $R_{4,24}^2 = 0.71$ , P < 0.01. (h)

Percent 1SW wild fish of adults returning to the River Imsa ( $PM_W$  %):  $PM_W = 1.93 (\pm 4.45)$ 

900 (\*(*Y*-1950.6)^1.09 (±0.57)\*exp (-((Y-1950.6)\*0.018 (±0.001))^5.84 (±3.04)),  $R_{4,27}^2 = 0.59$ , *P* 901 < 0.01.

902

FIG 4. Regression of (a) total body length of wild ( $L_W$  mm) on hatchery produced ( $L_H$  mm) 903 904 River Imsa S. salar migrating to sea from 1981 to 2010 and returning as 1SW fish:  $L_W =$ 142.4 (±115.1) + 0.73 (±0.19)  $L_{\rm H}$ ;  $r^2 = 0.37$ ,  $F_{1,25} = 14.3$ , P < 0.001. (b) Mean condition 905 factors of wild  $(CF_W)$  on hatchery produced  $(CF_H)$  River Imsa salmon migrating to sea from 906 1981 to 2010 and returning as 1SW fish ( $CF_W$ ):  $CF_W = 0.14 (\pm 0.08) + .85 (\pm 0.11) CF_W$ ;  $R^2 =$ 907 0.70,  $F_{1,27} = 62$ , P < 0.001. (c) Proportion of wild ( $P_W$ ) on hatchery produced ( $P_H$  mm) River 908 Imsa salmon migrating to sea from 1981 to 2010 and returning as 1SW fish:  $PM_W = 18.3$ 909  $(\pm 6.3) + 0.57 (\pm 0.07)78PM_{\rm H}; r^2 = 0.71, F_{1,,24} = 58.1, P < 0.001.$ 910



914 Figure 1.







931 Figure 3.



934 Figure 4.