

## *Opening Statement made on behalf of Canada*

Madame President, Heads of Delegations, Commissioners, Observers, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Richard Nadeau. I am in my 4<sup>th</sup> year as the Head of the Canadian Delegation to NASCO, and my day job is Regional Director General for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, for Quebec Region.

Members of the Canadian Delegation and I are pleased to be here in Saint-Malo, France to attend the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization. I would be remiss if I did not thank the European Union, and specifically, our French hosts for their warm welcome, and the wonderful venue. As is the case year after year, the Secretariat has once again done a wonderful job in preparation for this meeting, and I wish to thank Peter, Louise, and Mairi for their excellent work in setting up this Annual Meeting.

Joining me at the Council table this year are Canada's Commissioners to NASCO, Mr Bud Bird, and Canada's newest Commissioner, attending not his first NASCO meeting, but his first meeting as Commissioner, Mr Carl McLean. Carl is currently a Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources within the Nunatsiavut Government in Labrador. Canada looks forward to Commissioner McLean's continuing contributions to NASCO.

### Moving Forward

Canada is quite pleased that NASCO has modernized through the process of an External Performance Review, and that the Organization can move forward to tackle the wide variety of challenges facing wild Atlantic salmon.

Of recent note is the ongoing collaborative international work to ensure that shared stocks are not threatened when leaving home rivers. Canada recognizes that this issue is very complex and that many of those who harvest salmon do so for subsistence needs. For many who live in Northern areas, access to a reliable supply of food can be a challenge and harvesting from the land and the waters often mean that their families can continue to feed themselves. Harvesting salmon can sometimes mean that families without other options do not go without a necessary source of protein or Omega 3's.

However, Canada recognizes that all wild salmon populations are not currently at levels of abundance to allow for harvests on all rivers. In Canada, resource management decisions are made based upon the best available scientific information, and also from traditional knowledge. In Northern communities, where harvests are protected by Canada's *Constitution Act*, there are strict and enforced laws which dictate how many salmon can be retained, how they can be fished, and which prohibit the sale of the salmon. When rivers show returns above their conservation requirements, harvests can take place. When rivers do not meet their conservation requirements, limitations are placed upon harvests.

Canada's management regime is diverse and reflects the varying conditions of stocks throughout its range. Fisheries and Oceans Canada work with the Provinces and Aboriginal governments and communities to ensure subsistence needs are met, while working to limit harvests on rivers with differing conservation requirements.

### Work of the West Greenland Commission

Within the West Greenland Commission we look forward to continuing the work started during last year's Annual Meeting, and continued upon in London at the recent inter-sessional meeting, and continued here in Saint-Malo, to address Greenland's harvests. This work will be important to achieve our mutually agreed upon goals within NASCO, to work together to improve the overall abundance of wild Atlantic salmon stocks.

### Continuing Contributions to Implementation Plans

Canada is also pleased to continue to contribute via annual updates on its Implementation Plan. Canada's latest annual update provides information on the way Canada is modernizing its regulatory framework to allow for the enhancement of wild Atlantic salmon populations, and we look forward to continuing to report to NASCO through these annual updates. We also hope that these updates will continue to be effective for our consultations with our many domestic stakeholders and international partners, many of whom are with us here in Saint-Malo. As committed in previous years, Canada will continue to engage you for the benefit of the wild Atlantic salmon, and for those who rely upon this resource.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, we are looking forward to a fruitful meeting here in Saint-Malo, and to the progress we hope to achieve for the good of wild Atlantic salmon.

Thank you.

## ***Opening Statement made on behalf of Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland***

Madame President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf the Faroe Islands and Greenland, I would like to begin by thanking the European Union and our French hosts for arranging this meeting and making us feel so welcome here in Saint-Malo.

Many years ago, the Faroes and Greenland took the decision to stop all commercial fisheries of wild salmon in our waters. This was done in order to protect and rebuild the stocks. This decision came with a high price to our fishing industry, as they could no longer conduct commercial fisheries for wild salmon. In the interest of preserving the salmon stocks, we have maintained this policy for more than two decades.

We have kept our side of the bargain.

Despite these measures, the state of the stocks has not improved over the past two decades.

Therefore, it is clear that it is also necessary to look at fisheries elsewhere in order to achieve sustainable management of the wild salmon.

We are of the view that the best and fairest solution would be if NASCO could regulate fisheries for wild salmon in the homewaters of all Parties and jurisdictions of NASCO.

Nevertheless, the Faroe Islands and Greenland are pleased that over the last few years there has been more emphasis on fisheries below their Conservation Limits, and particularly mixed-stock fisheries, within NASCO.

We are very much looking forward to this year's Theme-based Special Session, focusing as it does on fisheries on stocks below their Conservation Limits.

It was also an important step in the right direction when, in 2013, the Parties submitted the new Implementation Plans for the period up to 2018.

We are very pleased that it has been agreed that the Parties will also submit an Annual Progress Report, and that these reports are thoroughly reviewed before being discussed at the Annual Meeting.

We come here in good spirit and in the hope that, through a positive dialogue and joint efforts, we can come closer to achieving our vision for the wild salmon.

Finally, Madame President, I would like yet again like to thank our hosts and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.



## *Opening Statement submitted on behalf of the European Union*

Madame President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the second consecutive year that the European Union has the honour and pleasure to host the Annual Meeting of NASCO. I would like to acknowledge the hospitality and generosity of the French authorities, as well as the wonderful work of our French colleagues for the excellent organisation of this meeting in this fabulous venue of Saint-Malo.

We all share our concern for Atlantic salmon, not just for its pretty unique biological cycle, but also for the cultural implications that are associated with its fishery. There are several challenges that this species continues to face despite the invaluable efforts of NASCO and its individual members in the course of the last 30 years. The situation of several stocks is still critical. However, some positive signs of recovery in a number of jurisdictions encourage a moderate level of optimism and call for further robust efforts in order to overcome the existing knowledge gaps and the increasing pressure of the socio-economic environment.

The European Union is strongly committed to support NASCO's objectives. This commitment is not limited to a mere endorsement of principles and shared vision.

In fact, major efforts and sacrifices have been and are being made across several EU jurisdictions to conserve, protect and rebuild salmon stocks, despite the growing pressures to sometimes undo progresses and achievements by favouring more attractive short-term interests. We keep on thinking that those sacrifices will be repaid by much greater rewards. Patience and a commitment for the long-term are therefore essential, as seeing the rewards will take time.

We believe it is important to take advantage of any valuable learning opportunity for crafting effective best practices, reviewing our achievements but also acknowledging our failures. This is why we attach a great importance and hope to the agenda that the meeting features this year, in response to the 'Next Steps' process. I refer in particular to the evaluation of the Annual Progress Reports and to the Theme-based Special Session, in which several EU experts have been actively involved in the conception, planning and implementation phase. We are confident that the new structure will further help all Parties to learn from each other, by sharing best practices and by guiding them towards new and ambitious targets.

However, NASCO is not just sharing best practices. NASCO means also finding and mutually agreeing on ways to move forward. This is only possible through open dialogue, consultation and mutual understanding, as we recently proved at the inter-sessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission. The EU wants to continue such a dialogue with a view to foster cooperation, as we are convinced that only by working together can we ensure that NASCO's objectives are fully met.

Finally, one fundamental area where we should all recognise the critical importance of cooperation is science. We need to pursue our efforts to ensure that the international scientific collaborations continue. The EU will continue supporting the scientific community, to shed light into the black boxes of salmon mortality. The European Commission has recently contributed with 5.6M€ to NASCO's SALSEA initiative. In addition, two large on-going EU-funded projects, namely Aquatrace and Ecoknows, are tackling issues that are key to NASCO. The EU Member States are also funding and carrying out national projects on

Atlantic salmon. We hope that at least some of the outputs of all these research initiatives will be applicable and useful for the work and objectives of NASCO.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the Secretariat for their diligence and dedication in organising this meeting and personally I want to thank Peter for the constant, valuable and wise support he has given me in the past months. Finally, I cannot conclude without expressing on behalf of all my colleagues our gratitude and heartfelt thanks to Mary for the excellent work she has done as NASCO's President. We wish her all the best in her personal "Next Steps" process.

I am looking forward to a fruitful cooperation with all of you during this meeting and beyond, to collectively pave the way to the achievement of the long-term objectives of NASCO and ensure that Atlantic salmon remains an integral part of our ecological legacy to the future generations.

## *Opening Statement submitted on behalf of Norway*

On behalf of Norway, I would like to thank France for hosting the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO.

NASCO has gone through an important but also demanding four-year period. Following up the results of the 'Next Steps' process and the findings of the External Performance Review, last year we agreed on an array of changes in how we 'conduct our business' in order to further improve the effectiveness and relevance of the organisation to Atlantic salmon management for coming years. This year, of course, is the first time we implement those changes and I am both excited and looking forward to see how these changes will work in practice.

In recent years, Pre-Fishery Abundance in Norway has continued to be at historically low levels, and in 2013 it was particularly low, only about 50% of what it was in 1983. Despite that fact, spawning targets have been met for an increasing number of stocks in recent years, although there are some indications that this trend was reversed in 2013. Implementing more strict fisheries regulations in recent years has been important to those developments.

There are, of course, some local and regional differences, in fact after liming and re-establishing new salmon stocks in a number of rivers in the southern parts of Norway, salmon is again much more abundant and stocks are still building up. This is also the case for rivers where the parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* has been successfully eradicated and is promising not only for the affected rivers, but also for the total number of salmon returning to the Norwegian coast. In northern Norway many stocks in the River Teno have especially poor status, with no other known impacts than overharvesting.

As last year, we still have severe concerns about the future of our stocks. The grilse component continues to decline at a disturbing rate and sea survival seems not to have improved in general. Adverse human impacts remain high and increasing in some areas. All this combined with climate change underlines the necessity for our continued common effort, and the need for NASCO to strengthen its role as a forum contributing to common understanding of challenges and management approaches.

Norway would like to thank France and the Secretariat for excellent preparations for this meeting. The Norwegian delegation looks forward to a productive and successful meeting. Finally we like to take the opportunity to thank our President Mary Colligan for her excellent guidance and work and would like to wish her the very best for the future.





## *Opening Statement submitted on behalf of the Russian Federation*

Madame President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am pleased on behalf of the Russian Delegation and the Federal Agency for Fisheries, representing the Russian Government in NASCO, to greet all participants of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of NASCO. First of all I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation of the cordial welcome and excellent arrangements for this meeting provided by our French hosts, and the magnificent beauty of the place. We are honoured to be here!

To enhance implementation of existing NASCO Agreements, Parties have prepared Implementation Plans for the period 2013-2018, key documents in their work in the coming years. We are looking forward to hearing the evaluation by the Review Group of the first Annual Progress Reports (APRs) under the new Implementation Plans.

The extensive salmon migrations between open sea and home rivers pose a major problem for managers regulating salmon fisheries. While the river fisheries mainly exploit river-specific stocks, the coastal fisheries inevitably exploit a mixture of stocks from widely different areas, including fish originating from rivers in neighboring countries. This is a problem. Moreover, the coastal mixed-stock fishery can exploit salmon stocks below their Conservation Limits. We believe that sharing of knowledge in management of salmon fisheries in the Theme-based Special Session is a very good and useful initiative of NASCO, which, we are sure, will contribute to better understanding of management approaches used in different jurisdictions and assist them in further improving management regimes for their salmon fisheries, both mixed-stock and single. We also believe that this Session will be a forum to further exchange views and continue dialogue between the Parties and NGOs.

In 2011-2013 the Kolarctic salmon project was implemented under Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation – Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme, with three participating countries: Norway, the Russian Federation and Finland. The Kolarctic salmon project has generated one of the most comprehensive and detailed genetic datasets for any fish species. Results of genetic stock identification provide a first and comprehensive overview of spatial and temporal variation in stock compositions in coastal fisheries of Northern Norway and in the White Sea. We are confident, that data from the project will provide managers with tools for regulating mixed-stock fisheries in the northern NEAC area on a more informed basis.

Concluding this statement, I would like to thank France for hosting this Annual Meeting once again for hospitality and commend the splendid arrangements for this meeting.

Madame President, the delegation of the Russian Federation is looking forward to a very productive meeting and to working closely with you and all the Parties during this week and I wish all of us success in working together.

Thank you for attention!



## *Opening Statement submitted on behalf of the United States of America*

Madame President, Mr Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to be here today with colleagues and friends who share a common purpose – to provide for the conservation, restoration, and rational management of Atlantic salmon throughout its range.

On behalf of the United States, I offer my sincere thanks to our French hosts for their hospitality and for the excellent accommodations. I expect this grand and beautiful setting will inspire us to redouble our commitment to NASCO as the best forum in which to collaborate towards fulfilling that profound shared responsibility and purpose. I also wish to express our sincere appreciation for our Secretary and his staff, whose hard work has prepared the stage for our deliberations this week. Well done, and thank you for your tireless efforts in support of this body.

Just six weeks ago, many of us here today were in London for an inter-sessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission. I extend the appreciation of the United States to the Parties of the West Greenland Commission, the Chairman, Ted Potter, the Non-Governmental Organizations who attended the meeting, and, especially (again), to the NASCO Secretariat, who so expertly prepared for and supported the inter-sessional meeting. No doubt, that meeting came at a challenging time, as we all were in the midst of preparations for this Annual Meeting. Still, I would characterize the proceedings as profoundly important and thoroughly informative, setting the stage for further discussions and collaborative work this week. The business of the Commission regards a fishery off the west coast of Greenland that involves mixed stocks, some of which are below their Conservation Limits. So our proceedings in the West Greenland Commission are certain to be advanced not only by our work in London, but also by the Theme-based Special Session the Council will hold on Wednesday to examine and discuss mixed-stock fisheries.

We strongly believe that the work of NASCO should be conducted in a fair, balanced, and transparent way. From our perspective, the implementation of robust conservation measures in homewaters is as important for ensuring the recovery and long-term sustainability of salmon populations as is the implementation of effective management actions for interceptory fisheries. For many salmon populations throughout the North Atlantic region, we are a long way from achieving the Parties' shared goal. Right now, US-origin stocks remain critically endangered. We are fighting to protect and restore them and to expand and enhance their habitat. To demonstrate that commitment, I offer two photographs for your consideration: (a) Veazie Dam on the Penobscot River in May of 2013 and (b) the site of the former dam a year later. We are not here to take sole credit for this momentous project in our biggest river. Indeed, the dam removal could never have executed without a diverse array of committed government and non-governmental partners primarily the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, working closely with its members: Atlantic Salmon Federation, American Rivers, Maine Audubon, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy and Penobscot Indian Nation. Rather, our purpose in sharing these photos is to offer evidence of a dogged commitment to working in homewaters with the same energy and singular focus as in this international forum.

Of course, NASCO's consideration of work in homewaters and our accountability relative to NASCO agreements are driven primarily through the Implementation Plan process. We, the Parties, must work to make the Implementation Plan process more robust and effective. The United States continues to support the process. We believe the Implementation Plans and the requirement to submit annual reports, marking accomplishments against those plans, have shed important light on the actions taken by each jurisdiction to improve the conservation of wild salmon in line with NASCO agreements. We note and congratulate the substantial progress made by several jurisdictions on management and control of domestic fisheries, in particular. We are looking forward to a rigorous discussion of the first Annual Progress Reports during the Special Session slated for Thursday morning. We ask that all of the Parties take full advantage of the Implementation Plan process and this Special Session, as critical tools for enhancing the transparency of our process, our accountability relative to our management commitments and the effectiveness of our NASCO agreements.

We stress again our continued commitment to NASCO and to science-based management that takes appropriate account of uncertainties. We would also like to reiterate our serious concern about critically endangered US populations of Atlantic salmon. The risk of extinction of these populations is real, and our responsibility, individually and collectively, to avoid such an outcome cannot be overstated. We humbly ask for your help to ensure that this iconic species does not die out from its range in the United States.

In closing, I note that Madame President, Mary Colligan, is serving as chair over our proceedings for the final time. The members of the United States' delegation have been extremely proud to see our colleague and friend in that esteemed role. We offer our sincere thanks for her assiduous leadership and for her tireless efforts ensuring NASCO remains an effective and vital forum. Thank you, Madame President. You have fulfilled your duties with exceptional poise, élan, integrity, and intelligence. You have challenged us all to be better in our support of NASCO and, especially, for the sake of the fish.

Thanks once again to our hosts and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this meeting. The United States looks forward to working with you all this week to ensure a successful meeting.

Thank you.

