

CNL(05)31

Draft Report of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council Palais des Congrès, Vichy, France 6-10 June, 2005

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The President, Dr Ken Whelan, opened the meeting. M. Pascal Berteaud, Directeur de l'Eau du Ministère de l'Écologie et du Développement Durable, welcomed delegates to Vichy. The President thanked M. Berteaud for his welcoming address and then made an opening statement on the work of the Organization (Annex 1).
- 1.2 The representatives of Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America made opening statements (Annex 2).
- 1.3 Opening statements were made by the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission (IBSFC), the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) (Annex 3).
- 1.4 Opening statements were made on behalf of all the 15 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting and jointly by Fondation Saumon, WWF (France), the European Anglers Alliance (France) and AIDSA (Annex 4).
- 1.5 The President expressed appreciation to the Parties and to the observer organizations for their statements and closed the Opening Session.
- 1.6 A list of participants is given in Annex 5.

2. Adoption of Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its agenda, CNL(05)36 (Annex 6).

3. Administrative Issues

3.1 Secretary's Report

The Secretary made a report to the Council, CNL(05)5, on: the status of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention; membership of the regional Commissions; observers at NASCO's meetings; a meeting of Regional Fishery Bodies held at FAO Headquarters in Rome; the Liaison Group Workshop entitled "Wild and Farmed Salmon – Working Together" to be held in Trondheim, Norway on 9 August; the ICES/NASCO Symposium entitled 'Interactions between aquaculture and wild stocks of Atlantic salmon and other diadromous fish species: Science and Management, Challenges and Solutions' to be held in Bergen, Norway during 18-21 October 2005; fishing for salmon in international waters; the Tag Return Incentive Scheme; a review of international salmon-related literature published in 2004; the Organization's financial affairs and the Headquarters Property.

In accordance with Financial Rule 5.5, the Secretary reported on the receipt of contributions for 2005. All contributions had been received and there were no arrears.

3.2 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(05)6. He indicated that elections had been held and Mr Andrew Thomson (European Union) had been appointed as Chairman and Dr Boris Prischepa (Russian Federation) was appointed as Vice-Chairman. On the recommendation of the Committee the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to accept the audited 2004 annual financial statement, FAC(05)2;
- (ii) to adopt a budget for 2006 and to note a forecast budget for 2007;
- (iii) to increase the ceiling level of the Working Capital Fund to £200,000 and to amend Financial Rule 6.3 to reflect this change;
- (iv) to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) of Edinburgh as auditors for the 2005 accounts, or such other company as may be agreed by the Secretary following consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee;
- (v) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

The President thanked Mr Hermansen for his valuable work and for that of the Committee.

3.3 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2004

[In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention, the Council adopted a report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2004, CNL(05)7.

The Council agreed to publish a report on its activities over the last twenty years. The Secretary was asked to prepare the report which would be agreed by correspondence with Heads of Delegations.]

3.4 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

The President announced that the winner of the \$2,500 Grand Prize was Mr Ilya Scherbovich, Moscow, Russia. The Council offered its congratulations to the winner.

4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

4.1 Scientific Advice from ICES

The representative of ICES presented the report of the Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) to the Council, CNL(05)8 (Annex 7).

A presentation was made by Mr Vincent Vauclin of the Conseil Supérieure de la Pêche, France, on the restoration and management of Atlantic salmon in France, CNL(05)37.

4.2 Catch Statistics and their Analysis

The Secretary tabled a statistical paper presenting the official catch returns by the Parties for 2004, CNL(05)9 (Annex 8), and historical data for the period 1960-2004, CNL(04)10. Additional information on catch statistics for the European Union (Germany) are presented in documents CNL(05)29 and CNL(05)33. The statistics for 2004 are provisional.

4.3 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

Reports on scientific research fishing conducted since the last Annual Meeting were made by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), EU (UK – Scotland) and Norway. A report on gear trials of a novel pelagic trawl for use in Atlantic salmon post-smolt surveys was tabled by the European Union, CNL(05)38 (Annex 9).

4.4 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

The report of the Fourth Meeting of the Board, CNL(05)11 (Annex 10), was presented by the Chairman of the Board, Mr Jacques Robichaud. He reported that the Board had updated its inventory of research related to salmon mortality in the sea and had received advice from its Scientific Advisory Group. Expenditure on the 54 on-going projects in the inventory amounts to approximately £5.7 million (an increase of 24% compared to expenditure in 2004).

In October 2004, the Board had organised a Workshop in Dublin to develop a major proposal for a programme of research on salmon at sea, the SALSEA programme. He indicated that SALSEA contains a comprehensive mix of freshwater, estuarine, coastal and offshore elements ensuring a comprehensive overview of factors which may affect the marine mortality of Atlantic salmon. It is an ambitious programme that will take many years to complete but it encompasses all of the key areas where additional scientific knowledge is required. It is structured into four work packages to address key hypotheses and it differentiates between those tasks which can be achieved through enhanced coordination of existing on-going research and those where funding will be required. A major fund-raising exercise would be necessary to support the proposed research on oceanic distribution and migration and the further development of supporting technologies for the proposed research cruises (genetic stock identification, evolution of sampling equipment and scale analysis of marine growth). The total cost of this research programme is estimated to be approximately £7.8 million assuming two years of marine surveys. The Board had, therefore, employed a firm of fund-raising consultants, Brakeley Consultants, to develop a strategy for raising these very substantial sums from the private sector. They had indicated to the Board that they believed it had a good case but that there would need to be a significant commitment from Board funds if an effective fund-raising campaign was to be conducted as it would normally take at least 2 years (and possibly up to 5 years) before significant funds might be found. They had also suggested increasing the partnership with NGOs. The Board fully endorsed the SALSEA

programme and agreed on the next steps for its implementation. The Chairman indicated that the Board had noted that funds could either be raised from the NASCO Parties or through fund-raising but either way it will need a substantial commitment by the Parties. The Board noted that some of its present funds could only be spent on research work while others could be spent on fund-raising activities. The Board agreed on its next steps with regard to fund-raising.

The Council supported the SALSEA initiative and recognised the importance of moving forward with the programme in cooperation with stakeholders. The Council responded that it would be important to publicise the SALSEA programme and one effective way to raise its profile would be through presentations on the programme to fisheries ministers.

4.5 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

[The Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee presented a draft request to ICES for scientific advice. Upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES, CNL(05)12 (Annex 11).]

5. Next Steps for NASCO

- 5.1 Last year, in order to mark NASCO's Twentieth Anniversary, the Heads of Delegations had asked the Secretary to produce a review with ideas on NASCO's Working Methods and Structures. The United States had tabled a report entitled NASCO – the Past, Present and Future. A Vision Statement for NASCO which had been written by four authors, including the Chairman of NASCO's accredited NGOs, had also been presented. In the light of the many valuable suggestions made, the Council had decided to establish a Working Group on the Next Steps for NASCO with the aim of developing and strengthening the Organization to ensure that it continues to be a world-class regional fisheries organization over the next twenty years. As part of the Working Group's deliberations the Council had asked that it undertake consultation meetings with stakeholders. Two such consultation meetings had been held, one in London, England, UK on 19 January 2005 and another in Portland, Maine, USA on 26 January 2005. The report of the consultation meetings is presented in document CNL(05)13 (Annex 12) and the feedback received had been fully taken into account by the Working Group in developing its recommendations.

(a) Discussion on the Report of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Working Group

In order to allow participation in the discussion of the Working Group's report the Council held an Open Session to which all who had participated in the consultation meetings had been invited, so as to allow for further feedback on the Working Group's recommendation on the Next Steps for NASCO.

Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway), Chairman of the Next Steps for NASCO Working Group, introduced the Group's report, CNL(05)14 (Annex 13). He indicated that the Working Group had held two productive meetings and two consultation meetings and had received valuable input from the NGOs at both the Working Group and Consultations meetings. He thanked all who had contributed to the Working Group's deliberations. He asked the co-chairs of the consultation meetings to briefly report to the Open Session on the outcome of the meetings.

Mr Andrew Thomson (EU) and Mr Bjornulf Kristiansen (Norges Bondelag) who Co-Chaired the London consultation meeting, and Ms Pat Kurkul (USA) and Mr Scott Burns (WWF-US) who Co-Chaired the Portland consultation meeting, presented a brief overview of these meetings. In short, the main messages arising from the consultation meetings were:

- there is considerable goodwill and support among stakeholders for what NASCO has achieved;
- NASCO is not well known to its stakeholders and needs to better promote and publicise its work since many stakeholders were unaware of what had been achieved;
- the Parties have developed good agreements in NASCO but there needs to be more urgency on implementation and improved reporting;
- NASCO's NGOs wish to be more involved in the Organization's work;
- the options developed by the Working Group at its first meeting for consolidating the progress made by NASCO to date, and to better ensure NASCO can meet its objectives in the future, were well received;
- there was considerable support for the work of NASCO's International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and widespread support for the focus areas for future NASCO work identified by the Working Group.

The Secretary then presented an overview of the Group's recommendations. The Working Group had identified a number of challenges for international cooperation on Atlantic salmon conservation and management. While the Group had recognised the progress made by NASCO in the past 20 years it felt that the Organization's objectives and achievements could be more strategically organised and presented so as to better achieve NASCO's mandate. The Group had recommended the adoption of a vision for NASCO which will more clearly demonstrate its overall goal and had suggested that the future activities of NASCO should be framed in the form of a Strategic Approach highlighting the actions required for realising the vision under the headings of:

- Commitments;
- Effectiveness and Efficiency;
- Transparency and Inclusivity;
- Raising NASCO's Profile.

During the Open Session a paper was tabled by WWF (US) reviewing compliance and accountability measures in international trawls, CNL(05)35.

(b) Decisions by the Council

The Council recognised that the Strategic Approach contains an extensive range of possible activities for NASCO and agreed that it wished to move quickly to

implement these, some of which could be adopted immediately while others required additional consideration. The Council adopted document CNL(05)XX.

The President invited the representative of the accredited NGOs to comment on the decisions taken by the Council. Mr Poupard, Chairman of NASCO's NGOs, expressed the NGOs' support for the Next Steps process and applauded its outcome so far. He stressed the need for continuing transparency and inclusiveness and emphasised the comments of the NGO's to working in partnership with NASCO to create a more effective Organization.

The President read out the following statement for the Atlantic Salmon Federation at the World Wildlife Fund:

'ASF and WWF thank NASCO and all Parties for the transparent and inclusive manner in which this year's Annual Meeting has been conducted. We also note that NASCO's Next Steps Working Group has proposed a number of new measures that would further enhance transparency and provide new opportunities for stakeholder participation in NASCO's work. ASF and WWF strongly support these proposed changes, which the Parties have committed to further develop intersessionally. We also applaud NASCO for its serious treatment of the recommendations contained in 'NASCO's future: A Vision Statement', commissioned by ASF and WWF in 2004. In recognition of these steps by NASCO, and in keeping with the spirit and cooperation that they reflect, WWF and ASF intend to apply for accredited NGO status in advance of next year's Annual Meeting.'

6. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Salmon Stocks

The President invited the Parties to present brief reports highlighting the key areas of their returns under agenda items 6.2, 6.3(a), 6.4(c), 6.7 and 6.8(a). The European Union tabled a summary of actions taken in relation to the conservation and management of salmon stocks and the application of the Precautionary Approach CNL(05)43 (Annex 14). The Council noted that reporting in future on these items would be in accordance with the decisions on the Next Steps (see paragraph 5.3).

6.1 Measures Taken in Accordance with Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention

The Secretary presented a report on the returns made under Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention, CNL(05)15 (Annex 15). Additional returns were made by the European Union, CNL(05)29 (Annex 16) and CNL(05)33 (Annex 17). These returns also included information in relation to catch statistics and unreported catches.

6.2 Application of the Decision Structure for Management of North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries Returns by the Parties

To assist NASCO, its Contracting Parties and their relevant jurisdictions in applying the Precautionary Approach to the management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries, a Decision Structure was adopted in 2000 and after further development and evaluation it was revised in 2002. The Decision Structure provides a basis for more consistent approaches to the management of exploitation of salmon throughout the North Atlantic region. A reporting format had been developed and amended in 2003.

A report prepared by the Secretariat on the returns made by the Parties on progress in applying the Decision Structure CNL(05)16 (Annex 18) had been circulated. Additional returns in relation to application of the Decision Structure by the European Union are contained in documents CNL(05)29 and CNL(05)33 and by the Russian Federation in documents CNL(05)32 and CNL(05)42.

At its last Annual Meeting the Council had held a Special Session on the Management of Homewater Fisheries in which there had been presentations by two EU Member States (Ireland and the UK) and by Norway. The presentations from this Special Session were made available to the Council on CD and a report, CNL(04)53, will be distributed to all delegates.

6.3 **Development and Implementation of Habitat Protection and Restoration Plans**

(a) Returns by the Parties

The NASCO Plan of Action for Application of the Precaution Approach to the Protection and Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat, adopted by the Council in 2001, aims to maintain and where possible increase the current productive capacity of Atlantic salmon through the establishment and implementation by the Parties and their relevant jurisdictions of comprehensive salmon habitat protection and restoration plans. In order to measure and improve progress in meeting this objective the Plan of Action proposes the establishment of inventories of salmon rivers.

A report prepared by the Secretariat on the returns made by the Parties on the development and implementation of habitat protection and restoration plans and inventories, CNL(05)17 (Annex 19) had been circulated. Additional notes were made by the European Union, CNL(05)33 and the Russian Federation, CNL(05)32.

(b) Database of Salmon Rivers

Last year the Council was advised that US scientists had developed a database drawing on the existing rivers listing held by the Secretariat but based on the more detailed inventory format proposed in the Plan of Action. This database had been made available through a website www.wildAtlanticSalmon.com. The Council had agreed that the Parties should:

- update the original salmon rivers database annually;
- consider using the database to report basic salmon habitat and habitat impacts information so as to establish the baseline level of salmon production potential against which changes may be assessed;
- enter generalised juvenile and adult salmon production data as data and resources permit.

The Council had also agreed that the database should be transferred to the Secretariat. A progress report on the database, CNL(05)18, was presented. During the year each Party had appointed a coordinator(s) responsible for updating the database and Mr Ed Baum (US), who had steered the initiative since its inception, had agreed to host and maintain the database until the end of June so as to deal with any technical issues that might arise as the Parties start to work with it. Thereafter, the database will be

transferred to the NASCO Secretariat. The Council thanked Mr Baum for his excellent work for the Organization and the US for facilitating the development of the database and recognised the importance of moving forward on the tasks identified above with regard to data input by the Parties.

A report on development of the database with regard to Irish rivers was presented by the European Union, CNL(05)45.

6.4 **Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics**

(a) Report of the Workshop on Mass Marking of Farmed Salmon

Under the Williamsburg Resolution it is stated that tagging or marking could be used in order to facilitate the identification of farmed salmon in the wild and their separation from wild fish, to determine the source of escapes and to assess the interactions of escaped farmed salmon with the wild stocks. The need to evaluate the effectiveness of marking methods, their feasibility for large-scale marking and their costs was recognized. Last year the Council accepted an invitation from the European Union on behalf of the Scottish Executive to host a Workshop to assess the current and developing methods of marking farmed Atlantic salmon. This Workshop was held in Edinburgh during 6-8 December 2004. In the absence of the Workshop Chairman, Mr Gordon Brown, Mr David Dunkley (EU) presented the report of the Workshop, CNL(05)19, (Annex 20).

In short, the Workshop came to the view that while many possible methods are available for marking fish, some methods are not suitable for mass marking, some require further development and others can provide very limited discriminating power. Of the methods evaluated, CWTs and otolith marking are most suitable for mass marking while, at their present costs, PIT tags are more suitable for smaller-scale trials. Genetic identification methods have potential for marking farmed salmon but further development is needed. All methods involve significant costs and the greater the discrimination power that is required the higher the cost. The Workshop recommended that further investigations should be carried out to improve the accuracy of estimates of the number of fish in cages and the extent of trickle losses during routine operations, and that the NASCO Parties cooperate so as to plan and undertake such assessments. The Workshop suggests that progress in relation to these further assessments should be reviewed through the reporting procedures under the Williamsburg Resolution at NASCO's Annual Meetings and at the Liaison Group meetings. The report of the Workshop had been presented to the Liaison Group at its meeting in April (see paragraph 6.4(d)) and the comments from the industry with regard to marking or tagging farmed salmon are contained in section 7 of the Liaison Group's report, CNL(05)21.

The Council was advised that with regard to the AutoFish system described in paragraph 5.2 of the report, Northwest Marine Technology had advised that while this system is capable of sorting, tagging and vaccinating fish they have not manufactured a machine that can do this nor do they have any plans to do so unless a major market is assured.

The representative of Canada indicated that Canada will not support actions that lead to increased costs to its salmon farming industry and noted a requirement to tag

farmed salmon would lead to prohibitive costs for the industry although genetic marking might be feasible.

The representative of Iceland indicated that 10% of all salmon placed in sea cages are microtagged and this measure was considered useful although it had initially been opposed in Iceland by the industry.

(b) The Williamsburg Resolution

At its 2003 Annual Meeting the Council adopted the Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks, the Williamsburg Resolution, CNL(03)57. In adopting the Williamsburg Resolution the Council had recognized that it was a “living document” that could evolve in future in the light of experience with its implementation, consultations, improved scientific understanding of the impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics on the wild stocks and developments in measures to minimise them. In 2004 the Council had adopted a new definition of “transgenic” and had amended the Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmon. The Council had also adopted Guidelines for Stocking Atlantic Salmon. The Williamsburg Resolution, amended to reflect these changes, is contained in document CNL(04)54.

Following adoption of the Williamsburg Resolution concerns had been raised by the salmon farming industry that due process had not been followed in its development. In accordance with a Statement of Commitment agreed last year and intended to put the Liaison Group (see paragraph 6.4(d)) back on a firmer footing with a higher level of commitment, the industry had agreed to provide comments on the Williamsburg Resolution. At the Liaison Group meeting the industry agreed to provide proposals for changes to the Resolution with an explanation of the reason for the proposed change prior to the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO. The comments received from the International Salmon Farmers’ Association (ISFA) were tabled, CNL(05)30 (Annex 21). No response had been received from the salmon farming industry in Scotland or Russia which are not members of ISFA. The Council asked that the Secretary develop a response to these comments in consultation with the Parties and transmit it to the President of ISFA.

(c) Returns made in accordance with the Williamsburg Resolution

The Parties made reports on their returns made in accordance with the Williamsburg Resolution, CNL(05)20 (Annex 22).

(d) Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry

The Chairman of the Liaison Group, Ms Mary Colligan (US), introduced the report of the meeting of the Liaison Group with the North Atlantic salmon farming industry, CNL(05)21 (Annex 23), which had been held in Leuven, Belgium on 26 April. At the meeting the industry had agreed to provide comments on the Williamsburg Resolution (see paragraph 6.4(b)). Reports on progress in developing and implementing action plans on containment of farmed salmon were presented. While some reports still lacked some of the detail requested in the reporting format previously agreed by the

Liaison Group, the reports for 2004 were seen as a considerable step forward compared to previous years. A report had also been made on arrangements for the Liaison Group's Workshop "Wild and Farmed Salmon – Working Together" to be held in Trondheim on 9 August 2005, which was welcomed by the Liaison Group. The industry also provided comments on the report of the Workshop on Marking of Farmed Salmon (see paragraph 6.4(a)). She indicated that the industry remains opposed to NGO participation in the Liaison Group. The Council expressed its disappointment at the salmon farming industry's continuing unwillingness to admit NGOs to the Liaison Group. The President agreed to write to the President of ISFA drawing attention to the Next Steps for NASCO and encouraging the industry to reconsider its position with regard to NGO participation. One possibility might be for the NGOs to attend part of the Liaison Group designated as a Special Session.

6.5 Unreported Catches

The Secretary introduced document CNL(05)22 (Annex 24) summarising the returns by the Parties. These returns indicate that in 2004 unreported catches were estimated to be between 593 and 761 tonnes. The Council welcomed the information contained in this document which presented data on unreported catches in a transparent manner and the measures being taken by the Parties to further reduce the level of unreported catches. The representative of Norway made a proposal to hold a Working Group meeting or Special Session on unreported catches at the Council's next Annual Meeting, CNL(05)39. The Council asked that the Secretary liaise with Norway on this issue since in the event that a Special Session is held on application of the Decision Structure for Management of Salmon Fisheries this might be an opportunity for a more detailed consideration of the approaches used to assess unreported catches, the source of the problems and the measures being taken to minimise them.

6.6 By-Catch of Atlantic Salmon

Concern had previously been raised within the Council about the possible by-catch of salmon post-smolts in fisheries for pelagic species of fish, particularly mackerel, in the North-East Atlantic. In 2003, the Council had decided that, consistent with the Precautionary Approach, it would encourage and seek appropriate funding for research on the distribution of salmon at sea, and the overlap between salmon at sea and pelagic fisheries; encourage pilot studies on technical adjustments to the deployment of gear in pelagic fisheries so as to minimise by-catch of salmon; review the results of this research at its 2005 Annual Meeting or at a Special Session; in the light of the findings of this research, request that the Parties, non-Parties and other Fisheries Commissions make adjustments (if appropriate) to fishing methods so as to minimise the by-catch of salmon; continue to ask ICES to provide information on by-catch.

The Russian Federation reported that studies into the by-catch of salmon in pelagic fisheries had continued in 2004 but that compared to previous years there had been no surveys and only 5 observers had been placed on pelagic trawls during weeks 22-36. There had been no reports of post-smolts in the catch of pelagic fish.

6.7 Guidelines on Stock Rebuilding Programmes – Returns by the Parties

A stock rebuilding programme has been defined by the Council as an array of management measures, including habitat improvement, exploitation control and

stocking, designed to restore a stock to above its conservation limit. These management measures are being addressed by the Council in application of the Precautionary Approach. A report on the returns made by the Parties in accordance with the agreed reporting format was provided, CNL(05)23 (Annex 25). A supplementary return was made by the Russian Federation, CNL(05)32.

6.8 **Social and Economic Values of Atlantic salmon**

(a) Reporting by the Parties on Application of the Guidelines

Last year the Council had adopted Guidelines for Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Decisions under the Precautionary Approach, CNL(04)57, for use on a trial basis. These guidelines provide a logical framework to support and inform decision making and are intended to be used by those with responsibility for managing the wild Atlantic salmon and its environments and for communicating concerns to other sectors whose proposals could impact on the wild salmon and its environments. The President had asked that the Parties select one area of the application of the Precautionary Approach (management of fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics; by-catch and stock rebuilding programmes), and report to the Council in 2005 on an example of the use of the guidelines in relation to the area chosen. A report on the use of the guidelines by the Parties was presented, CNL(05)24 (Annex 26). A supplementary return was made by the Russian Federation, CNL(05)32.

(b) Report of the Working Group on Bio-economic Modelling.

Last year the Council had decided to set up a small Technical Working Group led by the USA, to develop a bio-economic modelling approach that would allow social and economic factors to be integrated into a management model for Atlantic salmon. The representative of the US indicated that the meeting was originally scheduled to take place in early February 2005 but has been re-scheduled for the late summer or early fall. The results of the meeting will be presented to the Council at its 2006 Annual Meeting. She referred to the recommendations of the Next Steps for NASCO Working Group which stated that the Council should continue and expand as necessary existing efforts to incorporate social and economic factors into its work. She indicated that the bioeconomic modelling work to be undertaken represents a first step in implementing this recommendation and that the Council should consider the appropriate next steps in relation to social and economic values of Atlantic salmon at that stage.

6.9 **Future Actions in Relation to Application of the Precautionary Approach**

The Council considered possible future actions in relation to application of the Precautionary Approach, CNL(05)25. After a period of sustained activity in developing agreements on application of the Precautionary Approach, the emphasis should now be on implementation of the agreements by the Contracting Parties with detailed and transparent reporting and amendment of the agreements as necessary in the light of experience gained with their implementation. In this regard the recommendations in relation to the next steps for NASCO are relevant (see paragraph 5).

7. Predator-related Mortality

In 2003 the Council had agreed that it would seek to gather together all available information on predator-related mortality of Atlantic salmon so that a compendium of information could be prepared. Each Party had been requested to appoint a coordinator for this work and the coordinators had been requested by the Secretary to provide the following: information on the impact on salmon populations of predation by piscivorous birds, fish and mammals; details of measures implemented in relation to management of these predators of salmon and any assessment of the effectiveness of these measures; details of on-going research in relation to predator-related mortality.

The information provided by the Parties had been presented to the Council at its Twenty-First Annual Meeting, but no decision had been taken on the role for NASCO with regard to this issue. It is clear from the feedback from the Consultation meetings that NASCO's stakeholders believe that the Organization should be giving greater focus to this issue. A paper describing possible options for NASCO with regard to predator-related mortality was presented, CNL(05)26. New information was provided by the Russian Federation, CNL(05)32. The issue of predator related mortality had not been identified as one of the challenges in the Strategic Approach and the view was expressed that it might be removed from the Council agenda but could be reinstated at the request of a Party. The President noted that assessment of the impacts of predation on salmon was a major element of the SALSEA programme and that the Next Steps process could lead to improved reporting on this issue.

8. St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

A report of the sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon in 2004 was made available to the Council, CNL(05)28 (Annex 27) together with information on the regulatory framework for managing the fishery and details of licences issued and catches. The French authorities have indicated a willingness to continue gathering scientific information at St Pierre and Miquelon and that they seek to contribute to sustainable management of the fishery which it considers a traditional activity with a strong cultural dimension. The Council welcomed the continuing cooperation from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) and asked that the Secretary convey appreciation to the French authorities for their continuing cooperation and continue to invite them to participate in future NASCO meetings.

9. Impacts of Acid Rain on Atlantic Salmon

- 9.1 Last year the North American Commission had requested this item be included on the Council's agenda for its Twenty-Second Annual Meeting given the general interest on this issue and the wide-ranging expertise among NASCO Parties.
- 9.2 The representative of the US noted that over the past 3 years, an international relationship has been established between the US, Canada and Scandinavia in an effort to work together on liming projects. Norway and Sweden have over 25 years of experience of liming to mitigate the effects of acid rain on rivers and streams and have been a very important resource in the development of the proposed liming project in Eastern Maine and the West River Liming Project in Nova Scotia. Since the 2004 NASCO meeting, the United States has continued with ongoing assessments

to determine the magnitude that acidity may be impacting salmon survival in eastern Maine. Streamside studies have been conducted to further assess the extent that river water is impacting smolt health and survival. Ongoing sampling of water chemistry is being conducted to determine the magnitude, and duration of episodic events of low pH and high aluminium as well as to make correlations to rainfall, streamflow, seasonal variations, etc. Assessments of invertebrate and plant communities are being conducted to determine species richness, an indicator of watershed health. Migration studies using rotary screw traps, telemetry arrays and post smolt trawls are continuing to assess population, migration and behaviour patterns. The administrative issues associated with implementing this liming project, including environmental impact review and permitting, are being considered.

- 9.3 Reports on these in relation to acid rain were also tabled by Canada CNL(05)47 (Annex 28), the European Union CNL(05)43 and Norway, CNL(05)34 (Annex 29).

10. Reports on the Work of the Three Regional Commissions

- [10.1 The Chairman of each of the three regional Commissions reported to the Council on the activities of their Commission.]

11. Other Business

- [11.1 There was no other business.]

12. Date and Place of Next Meeting

- 12.1 The Council accepted an invitation from the European Union on behalf of Finland to hold its Twenty-Third Annual Meeting in Ivalo, Finland during 5 – 9 June 2006.
- 12.2 The Council decided to hold its Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting during 4 – 8 June 2007 in Edinburgh or elsewhere at the invitation of a Party.

13. Report of the Meeting

- 13.1 The Council agreed the report of the meeting, CNL(05)XX.

14. Press Release

- 14.1 The Council adopted a press release, CNL(05)XX (Annex 30).