

CNL(06)46

Report of the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the Council of NASCO Hotel Riekonlinna, Saariselkä, Finland 5-9 June, 2006

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The President, Dr Ken Whelan, opened the meeting. The State Secretary, of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr Pekka Pesonen, welcomed delegates to Saariselkä (Annex 1). The President thanked Mr Pesonen for his welcoming address and then made an opening statement on the work of the Organization (Annex 2).
- 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 3).
- 1.3 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of all the 17 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 4).
- 1.4 The President expressed appreciation to the Parties and to the observer organizations for their statements and closed the Opening Session.
- 1.5 A list of participants is given in Annex 5.

2. Adoption of Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its agenda, CNL(06)42 (Annex 6), but reorganised the order of the agenda items so as to allow decisions to be taken on the 'Next Steps' strategy at the start of the meeting.

3. Election of Officers

- 3.1 The Council unanimously re-elected Dr Ken Whelan (European Union) as President and Mr Arni Isaksson (Iceland) as Vice-President.

4. Financial and Administrative Issues

4.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Acting Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Dr Boris Prischepa (Russian Federation), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(06)5. On the recommendation of the Committee the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to accept the audited 2005 annual financial statement, FAC(06)2;
- (ii) to adopt a budget for 2007 and to note a forecast budget for 2008, CNL(06)43 (Annex 7);

- (iii) to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) of Edinburgh as auditors for the 2006 accounts, or such other company as may be agreed by the Secretary following consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee;
- (iv) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee (except for the MoU with ICES, which is dealt with in paragraph 4.2 below).

The President thanked Dr Prischepa for his valuable work and for that of the Committee.

- 4.2 The Council asked the Secretary to liaise with ICES regarding the new MoU. Whilst it was generally acceptable, there was one element missing which was to cover the situation where NASCO did not ask for catch advice. However, there were responses to other questions to which NASCO would need access, which were simply information brought to the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) by the Parties and integrated by the WGNAS, but which NASCO would not necessarily need to be peer-reviewed. The Council felt that ways should be explored to obtain such advice without the peer review process and without the associated costs, which could usefully release funds to the SALSEA programme. The Council reiterated its appreciation of ICES' work, particularly on the catch advice. There was no doubt that advice would always be needed but not necessarily every year.

5. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

5.1 Secretary's Report

The Secretary made a report to the Council on: observers at NASCO's meetings, CNL(06)24; fishing for salmon in international waters; the Tag Return Incentive Scheme; a review of international salmon-related literature published in 2005; and the Twenty-Year Milestones report. This report had been very well received and will be published in Russian. The Secretary indicated that it would be possible to have this report produced in other languages if a Party or jurisdiction so wished.

In accordance with Financial Rule 5.5, the Secretary reported on the receipt of contributions for 2006. All contributions had been received and there were no arrears. The Secretary thanked the Parties for their prompt responses to the call for contributions.

The Secretary indicated that since the last Annual Meeting of the Council, one new non-government organization, Stop Salmon Drift Nets Now (Ireland), had been granted observer status. In addition, the Atlantic Salmon Federation (US and Canada) and WWF (US) had been readmitted as observers. The Council welcomed these observer organizations.

5.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2005

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 2005, CNL(06)6.

5.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

The President announced that the winner of the \$2,500 Grand Prize was Mr Roald Somby, Alta, Norway. The Council offered its congratulations to the winner.

5.4 Scientific Advice from ICES

The representative of ICES presented the report of the Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) to the Council, CNL(06)7 (Annex 8) and CNL(06)41 (Annex 9).

5.5 Catch Statistics and their Analysis

The Secretary tabled a statistical paper presenting the official catch returns by the Parties for 2005, CNL(06)8 (Annex 10), and historical data for the period 1960-2005, CNL(06)9. The statistics for 2005 are provisional. A paper summarising the information provided by the Parties on unreported catches was tabled, CNL(06)10. These returns indicated that in 2005 the unreported catches were between 584-807 tonnes compared to a preliminary reported catch of 2,117 tonnes. The Council welcomed the information in this document which presented the information in a transparent manner. The Council recognised the importance of a further exchange of information among the Parties on unreported catches and agreed to hold a Special Session on this topic at its Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting. The Secretary was asked to develop a proposal for this Special Session and liaise with the Parties on the arrangements.

5.6 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

A report on scientific research fishing conducted since the last Annual Meeting was made by Canada, CNL(06)37 (Annex 11). The representative of Norway indicated that while there had been no scientific research fishing for salmon in 2005 in the Norwegian Sea, 5 post-smolts and 11 adult salmon had been caught during research fishing for pelagic fish species. He reported that in the period 1982-2004, Norwegian research cruises for salmon had resulted in the capture of more than 7,000 post-smolts in the Norwegian Sea. Much of the data have been analysed and publications will follow. Work is ongoing to develop a smolt migration model based on tag recoveries. He referred to the increasing competition for research vessel time.

5.7 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

The report of the Fifth Meeting of the Board, CNL(06)11 (Annex 12), was presented by the Chairman of the Board, Mr Jacque Robichaud. He reported that the Board had updated its inventory of research related to salmon mortality in the sea, had received advice from its Scientific Advisory Group, and had developed and adopted a proposal for the way forward to promote the SALSEA programme and its realisation. The Board had also considered a number of finance and administrative issues.

The representative of the NGOs referred to the contribution NGOs can make to the SALSEA programme. The Atlantic Salmon Federation has, through a Resolution,

pledged support for, and participation in, the SALSEA programme, including taking advocacy action and coordinating its research activities within the scope of the SALSEA programme. He noted that the Atlantic Salmon Trust has endorsed the SALSEA programme and allocated funds towards it which, to date, have been used to conduct two research cruises in the North Atlantic to test new trawl gear in conjunction with the Scottish Executive and the Institute of Marine Research, Bergen, Norway. While it had not been possible to secure ship-time in 2006, he indicated that the Trust wishes to play its full part in the SALSEA programme and hopes the Parties will be able to assist secure the ship-time required.

5.8 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

One of the recommendations in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps' (CNL(05)49) was that the Commissions of NASCO should consider whether regulatory measures for fisheries could be adopted and scientific advice from ICES sought on a biennial or multi-year basis. The Council asked that the Standing Scientific Committee develop a discussion document on the options for amending the form and nature of the request for scientific advice in the event that multi-annual regulatory measures are agreed. The Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee introduced this discussion document, CNL(06)12 (Annex 13).

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(06)13 (Annex 14). The Parties noted that the priority for ICES should be to develop the framework of indicators and to provide the catch advice but if progress can also be made in addressing question 1.4 of the request for advice, that would be welcomed.

6. Next Steps for NASCO

6.1 Special Session: Progress with the Next Steps Strategy

(a) Overview of progress with decisions taken in Vichy

At the Council's Twenty-Second Annual Meeting, a Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps' (CNL(05)49) had been adopted. The Council had wished to move quickly to implement the recommendations from the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Working Group but recognised that while some recommendations could be adopted for immediate implementation, others would require further consideration. The Secretary introduced document CNL(06)14 which provided a summary of progress with those decisions identified by the Council for immediate implementation. The Council welcomed the progress made since the last Annual Meeting. A paper outlining options for improved cooperation with other international organizations on issues of mutual interest was also presented, CNL(06)15.

(b) Report of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Task Force

The Council has recognised that the decisions concerning two central themes of the 'Next Steps' Strategy, i.e. implementation, commitment and accountability and transparency and inclusivity, would require further consideration prior to their implementation. It had, therefore, established a Task Force under the Chairmanship

of Mr Gudmundur Helgason (Iceland) to further develop recommendations in relation to these two aspects of the Strategy. The Chairman presented the report of the meeting of this Task Force, CNL(06)16 (Annex 15), which had been held in Cangas de Onis, Spain, during 31 January – 3 February 2006.

The representative of the NGOs indicated that while the NGOs greatly welcomed the Next Steps process, there is some disappointment that there has not been more progress with establishing the public relations group. The NGOs are very supportive of this initiative and willing to participate. He indicated that the need for stakeholder consultation meetings had, perhaps, diminished slightly given the NGOs greater involvement in NASCO's work but occasional meetings may still be valuable. He indicated that the NGOs supported the recommendations in the Task Force report concerning implementation.

6.2 Decisions by the Council

In the light of the information presented in documents CNL(06)14, CNL(06)15 and CNL(06)16, the Council decided:

- (1) to adopt the 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress' as contained in Annex 3 of the Task Force report, CNL(06)16;
- (2) to set up an *ad hoc* Review Group and a proposed schedule of activities for the coming year, CNL(06)39 (Annex 16).
- (3) to adopt the Task Force's recommendations in relation to NGO participation at NASCO's meetings as contained in Annex 4 of CNL(06)16. The Secretary was asked to amend the Conditions for Attendance by Observers at NASCO meetings accordingly;
- (4) to hold further stakeholder consultation meetings in 2009, but a final decision on this will be taken in the light of any advice from the Public Relations Group on this topic (see paragraph 6 below);
- (5) to support the approach for further improving cooperation with other inter-governmental organizations outlined in document CNL(06)15;
- (6) to establish a Public Relations Group to advise on implementation of the PR issues identified in the Next Steps process. It asked the Secretary to chair this group in which he and Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) would be those with the in-depth knowledge of NASCO, there would be two PR professionals nominated by the Parties (one from the EU and one from the USA), one representative from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and two representatives from NASCO's accredited NGOs. There would be consultations with Heads of Delegations when initial steps in setting up this group had been taken. The Terms of Reference are contained in document CNL(06)36 (Annex 17).

The representative of the NGOs indicated that the NGOs proposed to handle the review process by assigning a lead NGO to coordinate the responses of national

NGOs to that Party's Implementation Plan. He indicated that he believed that the representatives appointed to the *Ad Hoc* Review Group from NASCO's Parties will conduct a first-class review.

7. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach

7.1 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(06)17 (Annex 18). A supplementary return was made by the European Union (France), CNL(06)27 (Annex 19).

7.2 Special Session: Reports by the Parties or relevant jurisdictions on progress in implementing NASCO's agreements

The 'Next Steps for NASCO' Task Force had recommended that during the Council's 2006 Annual Meeting, a Special Session should be held during which the Parties and relevant jurisdictions would report on progress towards development of their draft Implementation Plans. The intention of this Special Session was to provide the Parties with an opportunity to compare experiences in development of their Implementation Plans and to receive feedback on the progress to date. During this Special Session, presentations were made by Canada, the European Union (Finland, Ireland, Sweden, United Kingdom - Scotland, England and Wales), Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the USA. There were no presentations made by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and a number of EU Member States. Draft Implementation Plans were tabled by Canada (CNL(06)35), EU (Finland) (CNL(06)44), EU (Ireland) (CNL(06)33), EU (UK – England and Wales) (CNL(06)28), EU (UK – Scotland) (CNL(06)31), Iceland (CNL(06)26), Norway (CNL(06)30), the Russian Federation (CNL(06)34) and the USA (CNL(06)29). The President welcomed the progress made by the Parties and confirmed that the intention is that these plans will be submitted by the Parties to the NASCO Secretariat by October 2006 so that they can be subject to critical review during November 2006 – March 2007.

The President thanked the participants for their very comprehensive presentations which provided a wide range of possible formats for future Implementation Plans. He noted that there are a number of challenges ahead. First, he noted that NGO input is essential and he suggested that perhaps they could find a way to contribute to the formulation of Implementation Plans based on their own experiences in catchment or watershed initiatives. Second, there may be difficulties with cross-cutting issues, particularly in areas such as water quality, forestry, hydro power, etc. He suggested that a booklet or pamphlet could be compiled outlining the need for cross-cutting initiatives in salmon management and encouraging other sectors to support the Parties' planned actions. Such a booklet could be used to raise awareness of these issues in other sister agencies and bodies responsible for the management of related sectors. Third, it was interesting that, despite the extent of the presentations, there are still many countries which have yet to formulate their Implementation Plans. He noted that in one of the presentations, it had been stated that it is not yet possible to manage a catchment on the basis of 81 tributaries, and questioned why this should be so. In addition to the five-year plans, he suggested that perhaps there should be a 10-

or even a 20-year vision. He considered that the Next Steps process encourages NASCO and its Parties to think new thoughts and to do new things.

The representative of the NGOs thanked the Parties for the preparation of Implementation Plans; the NGOs acknowledge the effort required to produce them. He indicated that the drafts presented during the Special Session appeared more like management approaches than Implementation Plans. He stated that the wording of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Working Group report spoke about action plans with commitments and timescales linked, of course, to the implementation of NASCO agreements. While the NGOs recognised that this is the first stage in the process, they would like to see some evolution when the plans are completed. In addition, the NGOs would offer the following suggestions:

- contributions from private voluntary and NGO groups such as river trusts and fishing associations should be included. These groups can also contribute resources in terms of both manpower and funding. The best way to incorporate these contributions is to ensure full consultation with such groups during the preparation of plans;
- if action is limited by a lack of resources or political constraints, these might be noted so that the NGOs can assist the Parties by lobbying governments.

He concluded by indicating that the NGOs looked forward to receiving the completed plans by the Parties and to making NASCO a more effective organization.

7.3 Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics

(a) Amendments to 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 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. In 2005, the Council had agreed that the Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and the US with regard to introductions and transfers be appended to the Resolution.

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. At the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting comments on the Williamsburg Resolution from the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) were tabled, CNL(05)30. No comments had been received from the salmon farming industries in Scotland or Russia, which are not members of ISFA. The Council had asked that the Secretary develop a response to these comments in consultation with the Parties, which had been sent to the President of ISFA on 8 November 2005. At the meeting between ISFA and the NASCO Secretariat, ISFA had indicated that it could accept the proposals from NASCO with some exceptions. Details of the proposed changes to the Williamsburg Resolution, taking into account the comments from ISFA, the responses

from NASCO, and the discussions at the meeting between ISFA and the NASCO Secretariat, were presented, CNL(06)18 (Annex 20).

The representative of the NGOs indicated that the Williamsburg Resolution was a flagship agreement and is vital for the conservation of wild salmon. The NGOs are concerned about the addition of the word “significant” since it is open to interpretation in different ways. He referred to the issue of transparency and dialogue and believed that, had the NGOs been able to attend the Liaison Group meeting, they would have been able to raise this concern with the wording at an earlier stage. The Parties recognized that the word “significant” meant different things to different people, but could accept it, given the emphasis in the Williamsburg Resolution on the burden of proof and risk assessments, and the need to move forward and make progress on measures to minimize impacts of aquaculture in cooperation with the industry.

The representative of Norway indicated that he was prepared to accept the changes in order to move forward but he did not like the use of the word “significant” and it would not be used in the Norwegian Implementation Plan. He also felt that once NASCO had developed an agreement, it was not a good principle to weaken it in order to maintain good relations with stakeholders.

The Council agreed to these changes and asked that the Secretariat issue the revised Resolution as a brochure.

The representative of the NGOs indicated that the NGOs could understand the need to move forward on measures to minimize impacts of aquaculture, but they believed that the use of the word “significant” was a mistake given the lack of a clear definition. He felt it sent the wrong signal to industry.

(b) *Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry*

In accordance with the decision of Heads of Delegations, a meeting between representatives of the International Salmon Farmers’ Association (ISFA) and the NASCO Secretariat was held in Brussels on 9 May 2006. The Secretary introduced the report of the meeting, CNL(06)19 (Annex 21). The Council agreed to the recommendation in the report to hold a full Liaison Group meeting over one and a half days immediately prior to the Boston Seafood Show (which is taking place during 11-13 March 2007). The Council also agreed to the proposals for follow-up action in the light of the Trondheim and Bergen meetings, and asked that the Secretary liaise with the President of ISFA in developing the agenda for the meeting so that it reflects the various topics identified in the report.

The representative of the NGOs indicated that there had been a long campaign to gain admission to the Liaison Group. The NGOs had only been able to make statements concerning aquaculture at NASCO’s meeting when they should have been made to the industry. He indicated that it should be for the NGOs to nominate who their representative will be. They would, therefore, decline this offer. The NGOs asked how representative of the industry ISFA was, and proposed that there might be a new dialogue with the industry, led by an NGO, which would establish a dialogue with the Scottish Producers’ Organization which represents 90% of the Scottish industry. The

Council asked the Secretary and Chairman of the Liaison Group to liaise with the Chairman of the NGOs to further clarify this proposal.

The Council noted that ISFA had proposed that a representative of WWF (US) be admitted as an NGO representative to future Liaison Group meetings. The Council also noted that, at the meeting, the NASCO representatives, while welcoming this change of attitude, had suggested that it would be appropriate for the Chairman of NASCO's NGOs to be the representative on the Liaison Group, together with a representative of WWF (US). The Council supported this approach, and asked the Secretary and Chairman of the Liaison Group to liaise with ISFA on this matter.

(c) *Report of the Trondheim Workshop 'Wild and Farmed Salmon – Working Together'*

The report of the Liaison Group's Workshop 'Wild and Farmed Salmon – Working Together' was made available to the Council. The Council welcomed this report and agreed to take a number of actions to follow up on the progress made during this Workshop (see paragraph 7.3(b) above). The Council thanked the Steering Committee of the Workshop (Drs Ken Whelan and Peter Hutchinson, and Mr James Ryan and Mr Kjell Maroni) for organising an excellent meeting and producing a high-quality report.

(d) *Report of the ICES/NASCO Bergen Symposium*

The Secretary introduced an interim report from the Co-Conveners (Drs Malcolm Windsor and Lars Petter Hansen) on the ICES/NASCO Symposium 'Interactions between aquaculture and wild stocks of Atlantic salmon and other diadromous fish species: Science and Management, Challenges and Solutions', CNL(06)22 (Annex 22). The representative of Norway indicated that the symposium had helped in providing a platform for future efforts to minimize impacts of aquaculture, and there had already been new initiatives in Norway to minimize escapes. The Council congratulated the Co-Conveners on a successful and important symposium.

7.4 New or emerging opportunities for, or threats to, salmon conservation and management

In accordance with the Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps, this item had been included on the agenda for the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting and ICES had been requested to provide relevant information.

The representative of the Russian Federation referred to a continuing programme to study by-catch of salmon post-smolts in pelagic fisheries in the Norwegian Sea, CNL(06)32 (Annex 23). This programme began in 2002 and consists of pelagic fish surveys and screening of the commercial catch on mackerel vessels. The results of this study indicated that the by-catch of post-smolts and adult salmon is low. The findings have been reported in full in the ICES advice. He indicated that the programme will continue in 2006.

The President referred to two significant concerns that came out of the Bergen symposium, i.e. the threats to wild salmon stocks from *G. salaris* and the genetic interactions of escaped farmed salmon. He indicated that there is a need to raise

public awareness of the threats from *G. salaris* and to continue to make progress through the Liaison Group on the issue of genetic impacts from farmed fish.

7.5 Report of the Working Group on Bio-economic Modelling

The representative of the US indicated that at its last meeting, the Council had agreed that a Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting should be held to consider the development of a bio-economic model. This decision was consistent with the decision in the 'Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps' to continue and expand existing efforts to incorporate social and economic factors in the Organization's work. She reported that a US economist, Dr John Ward, is leading this effort and the US has committed to holding a TWG meeting to advance this work. However, due to unavoidable circumstances (Hurricane Katrina) the TWG was unable to meet before the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting, but the intention is to schedule a TWG meeting in early 2007, perhaps in March 2007, in conjunction with another NASCO scheduled meeting. Prior to that, Dr Ward intends to circulate additional information concerning the proposed TWG to support preparations by the participants.

7.6 Progress with development of the Database of Salmon Rivers

During 2004/2005, the US had developed a web-based database based on the inventory format proposed in the NASCO Plan of Action for Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Protection and Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat. Following testing, this database had been made available for data entry by NASCO's Parties and in 2004 the Council agreed that:

- the Parties should update the original NASCO salmon rivers database information annually (via the expanded web-based database) to correct errors and inaccuracies and to ensure the specific information conformed to the new format. It was recognised that this process should not involve a significant amount of time and effort;
- the Parties should consider using the database to report basic salmon habitat and habitat impacts information;
- as data and resources permit, the Parties should enter generalised juvenile and adult salmon production data although such data entry would be optional but of benefit to the database.

Last year, the Council agreed that the database should be transferred to the NASCO website. A report on progress was presented, CNL(06)20. The transfer of the database is now complete and, after re-design of the appearance of the web pages, the database is available for data entry by the Parties. The Council encouraged the Parties to undertake the tasks identified above as resources permit.

7.7 St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

A report on the sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon in 2005, information on the regulatory framework for managing the fishery and details of licences issued and catches was made available to the Council, CNL(06)23 (Annex 24). In this document the French authorities indicated that they have continued to pursue the commitment made with regard to gathering scientific information on salmon stocks at St Pierre and Miquelon and with regard to management and conservation efforts. It is

the intention to put in place a procedure with a view to reducing the number of permits granted and hence reduce progressively the catches made on fragile North American stocks. The Council noted that there had been discussions on this matter in the North American Commission, and welcomed the continuing cooperation from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon). The Secretary was asked to convey appreciation to the French authorities for their continuing cooperation and to continue to invite them to participate in future NASCO meetings.

The representative of the NGOs indicated that given the status of North American stocks, many of which are below their conservation limits, and the ACFM advice to reduce exploitation of mixed stocks, they had serious concerns at the increase in catches at St Pierre and Miquelon. He indicated that they welcome the commitment by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to reduce catches and urged that this be carried out as soon as possible in line with the advice from ICES and NASCO.

7.8 Impacts of Acid Rain on Atlantic Salmon

A report on acid rain was tabled by Canada, CNL(06)40 (Annex 25). The representative of the US referred to a more detailed report on acid rain made to the North American Commission. In the period 2003-2005 there had been investigations into water chemistry in Maine rivers and a streamside rearing study had been conducted to assess physiological effects of river chemistry on smolts. The results from streamside studies did not show any water-chemistry-related effects on smolt physiology in the Dennys River, which is where the US has been considering conducting a liming project. However, extensive water quality monitoring showed that low pH episodes occur in Maine rivers in the spring and fall. Approximately 9% of juvenile rearing habitat in listed salmon rivers has documented low pH (below 5.6) during the spring, and this habitat is considered to be impaired. However, it would be premature to assume that river liming on a large scale would contribute significantly to recovering endangered salmon populations.

The representative of Norway referred to the significant reduction in acid rain in Europe due to the effectiveness of international agreements. While this is a very positive development, there are still serious issues in southern Norway. Annual expenditure in Norway associated with the liming of 22 acidified salmon rivers is around £4 million.

The representative of the NGOs expressed the NGOs' disappointment that there has been no progress between Canada and the US in developing and applying mitigation strategies in acid rain-impacted rivers in Nova Scotia and Maine. A liming project led by ASF volunteers in Nova Scotia is in need of government leadership to expand it to other rivers. He noted that liming in Norway has produced dramatic results in restoring Atlantic salmon.

7.9 Reports on the Work of the Three Regional Commissions

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

8. Other Business

8.1 There was no other business.

9. Date and Place of Next Meeting

9.1 The Council accepted an invitation from the United States of America to hold its Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting in Bar Harbor, Maine, during 4-8 June 2007.

9.2 The Council decided to hold its Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting during 2-6 June 2008 in Edinburgh or elsewhere at the invitation of a Party.

10. Report of the Meeting

10.1 The Council agreed the report of the meeting, CNL(06)46.

11. Press Release

11.1 The Council adopted a press release, CNL(06)47 (Annex 26).

Note: A list of all Council papers is contained in Annex 27. The annexes mentioned above begin on page [], following the French translation of the report of the meeting.