

*Draft Report of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Council
Tryp Rey Pelayo Hotel Melia, Gijón, Spain
3-6 June, 2008*

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The President, Dr Ken Whelan, opened the meeting. Welcoming addresses were made by Mr Fernando Curcio (General Director for Research and Aquaculture, Spanish Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Environment), Mr Jose Felix Garcia Gaona (Government of the Principado de Asturias), and Mr Jose Manuel Sariego (Deputy Mayor of Gijon). The President thanked the Spanish hosts for their welcoming addresses 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 An Opening Statement was made by the representative of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) (Annex 3).
- 1.4 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of all the 13 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (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(08)xx (Annex 6).

3. Election of Officers

- 3.1 The Council unanimously elected [] as its President and [] as its Vice-President.
- 3.2 The Council

4. Financial and Administrative Issues

4.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Dr Boris Prischepa (Russian Federation), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(08)5. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to accept the audited 2007 annual financial statement, FAC(08)2;
- (ii) to adopt a budget for 2009 and to note a forecast budget for 2010, CNL(08)27 (Annex 7);
- (iii) to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) of Edinburgh as auditors for the 2008 accounts, or such other company as may be agreed by the Secretary following consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee. The Council also agreed to review the desirability of changing auditors in the light of information to be provided by the Secretary at the next Annual Meeting on the cost and other implications of such a change;
- (iv) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

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

5. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

5.1 Secretary's Report

The Secretary made a report to the Council on: inter-sessional activities; observers at NASCO's meetings; fishing for salmon in international waters; relations with other inter-governmental organizations including information on a meeting of the North Atlantic Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (NARFMOs) and the planned 2011 'Salmon Summit' with NPAFC and ICES. He referred to the fact that Margaret Nicolson had left the organization after seventeen years excellent service for NASCO. He also indicated that the refurbishment of the Headquarters Property was almost complete. The income from the property had been the third biggest contributor to the organization's budget in recent years.

In accordance with Financial Rule 5.5, the Secretary reported on the receipt of contributions for 2008. The US contribution had been delayed but arrangements for payment had been made.

The Secretary reported (CNL(08)21) that since the last Annual Meeting of the Council, one new non-government organization, the Irish Seal Sanctuary, had applied for observer status. The Council agreed that it needed more information in order to make an assessment of whether the Irish Seal Sanctuary should be accredited as an observer to NASCO. This information related to how the Irish Seal Sanctuary might be seen as having compatible objectives with NASCO and how it might contribute to the work of the Organization. It was further agreed that when the President and Secretary had completed their consultations, a recommendation would be made to the Council.

In total, NASCO currently has 33 accredited NGOs.

5.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2007

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 2007, CNL(08)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 Henning Øverås, Eresfjord, 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 (ACOM) to the Council, CNL(08)7 (Annex 8). The ICES presentations to the Council and Commissions were tabled, CNL(08)25.

5.5 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

The Secretary advised the Council that there had been an application from the SALSEA-Merge project to conduct scientific research fishing. In accordance with the Resolution on Scientific Research Fishing this had been approved following consultations with the Parties.

5.6 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

The report of the meeting of the Board, CNL(08)12 (Annex 9), was presented by the Chairman of the Board, Dr Ken Whelan. He reported that the Board had: updated its inventory of research related to salmon mortality in the sea; received advice from its Scientific Advisory Group; and had received a progress report on implementing and promoting the SALSEA programme, including updates on the SALSEA-Merge, SALSEA-North America and SALSEA-Greenland initiatives. The Board had agreed a process for improving coordination of the SALSEA initiatives in the North-East and Northwest Atlantic. The Board had also agreed to fund:

- a continuation of a Canadian study funded in 2007/2008 to examine changes in trophic levels of Atlantic salmon through the marine phase of their life-cycle (approximately £20,000);
- the participation of two scientists in the proposed ICES Study Group to continue to identify and collate further information on biological characteristics of salmon from river populations and fisheries throughout the North Atlantic (up to £5,000).

The Board had appointed its Steering Group members for the 'Salmon Summit' in 2011 and had established a group to review the inventory of research, identify areas where coordination of research might be improved and identify gaps where new research might benefit the SALSEA Programme.

A report on SALSEA-North America was tabled, CNL(08)28.

5.7 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

[The Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee, Dr Peter Hutchinson, 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(08)9 (Annex 10).]

6. Next Steps for NASCO

6.1 Special Session: Progress with the Next Steps Strategy

(a) Report of the First Ad Hoc Review Group on the Parties' Implementation Plans

The final report of the First *Ad Hoc* Review Group, CNL(08)10, (Annex 11) was presented. The Review Group had previously presented the findings of its reviews of the Implementation Plans to the Council at its 2007 meeting. Following this the Parties and jurisdictions had been given an opportunity to revise their plans in the light of the Review Group's comments. At its second meeting, the Group had assessed the revised Implementation Plans and any new plans submitted had been assessed using the agreed format and criteria. Where necessary the Group had asked the President to write to jurisdictions with specific comments and invite them to make final amendments. These final Implementation Plans were then re-assessed. The final outcome of the review was that the sixteen plans reviewed could be allocated to one of three categories:

- those that had been considered to be satisfactory when reviewed initially and which had subsequently been further refined;
- those that were considered to be satisfactory following revisions;
- these for which minor issues remained to be addressed in either the focus area or annual reports.

The Group had noted that no plans had been received for EU-Portugal or EU-Spain. A compilation of the final Implementation Plans was made available, CNL(08)11. The Group had considered that the process of developing and reviewing Implementation Plans had a number of benefits including:

- improving clarity on how jurisdictions are managing their salmon stocks;
- providing a basis for demonstrating progress with implementing NASCO's Agreements;
- providing a first step in peer-reviewing management approaches and facilitating an exchange of best practice;
- providing the basis for greater clarity in reporting on management activities.

(b) Questions to the Parties from the Second Ad Hoc Review Group on the Focus Area Reports on Management of Salmon Fisheries

A compilation of Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports was tabled, CNL(08)12. These reports are intended to provide a more in-depth assessment of:

- the measures already in place that address the NASCO Agreements relating to fisheries management;

- further actions proposed within the Implementation Plans to meet these Agreements;
- progress with implementing these actions.

The report of the second *Ad Hoc* Review Group was presented, CNL(08)13, (Annex 12). The Group had been asked to: assess the extent to which the information provided in the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports indicates that NASCO's goals are being, or will be, achieved; highlight issues to be raised and questions to the Parties and jurisdictions; and prepare a short report to be submitted to the President in the course of the 2008 Annual Meeting suggesting additional actions to ensure consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements. The Group had developed a list of issues and questions for the Parties and jurisdictions and these are contained in Annex 4 of its report.

(c) Presentations by the Parties and Jurisdictions on their Focus Area Reports on Management of Salmon Fisheries and responses to Review Group questions

Presentations on the fisheries management focus area reports, were made by Canada, Denmark (Greenland), EU (Finland), EU (France), EU (Germany), EU (Ireland), EU (Sweden), EU – UK (England and Wales), EU - UK (Northern Ireland), EU – UK (Scotland), Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the USA.

During the general discussion of the focus area reports it was recognised that while valuable information had been presented in the focus area reports it would be important to take the opportunity to develop a product from the review. While the original role of the *Ad Hoc* Review Group was to report to the President on the additional actions needed to ensure consistency with NASCO's Agreements on the management of salmon fisheries, it was recognised that it would also be useful to identify common challenges and approaches to addressing them and to compile information of best practice.

6.2 Decisions by the Council in the light of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Special Session

The Council decided that it would ask that the Parties provide responses to the second *Ad Hoc* Review Group's questions in writing to the Secretariat by 31 July 2008. It would be a matter for the Parties and jurisdictions to decide if they wished to submit a revised focus area report at that time. The Group would complete its remit by providing a report on any additional actions needed by 31 October 2008. The Council encouraged jurisdictions that have not yet submitted focus area reports to do so by 31 July.

The Council decided that it would ask the *Ad Hoc* Review group to undertake an additional task in the form of a comparative overview of the focus area reports highlighting good practice, challenges and approaches to addressing these challenges in the management of salmon fisheries.

The Council decided that the next stage of the ‘Next Steps’ process would be to focus on the area of habitat protection and restoration in the Implementation Plans. An *Ad Hoc* Review Group to review this focus area was set with terms of reference, composition and a timeframe, CNL(08)xx (Annex 13).

The Council also agreed that the Terms of Reference already drafted for the next focus area, aquaculture and related activities, should be made available to the Parties with the first mailing for the next annual meeting.

6.3 Progress in implementing a Public Relations Strategy

At its Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting the Council had decided, in the light of the report of its Public Relations Group, that in the first instance it would upgrade and improve the website of NASCO and of the IASRB and that the Secretary would produce a model ‘State of the Salmon Stocks’ report using information from the Parties and from ICES. The Parties had been asked to provide details of educational programmes concerning Atlantic salmon for inclusion in a database of such programmes. The Secretary introduced a report on progress in implementing a Public Relations Strategy for NASCO, CNL(08)14 (Annex 14).

In order to progress this issue the Council established a PR Sub-Group that met during the Annual Meeting with the following objectives:

- propose a structure and contents for the ‘State of Salmon Stocks’ report on NASCO’s website taking into account the elements recommended in CNL(08)14 and any additional components recommended;
- propose the ‘Next Steps’ on a Communications Strategy.

The report of the Sub-Group was presented. CNL(08)31.

With regard to the ‘State of Salmon Stocks’ report and the website design the Council decided to proceed with the first four elements listed on page 2 of document CNL(08)31.

With regard to the appointment of a Communications Officer it was agreed in the first instance to explore the possibility of using a consultant who was accustomed to such work. The representative of Canada offered to report back to the Secretary after contacting a PR consultant known to him. The Parties could also suggest other individuals or companies that might be suitable.

It was further agreed that the Parties and jurisdictions would advise the Secretary of a contact point on PR in their jurisdictions.

The Public Relations Group would remain in existence and work at subsequent annual meetings to prepare a communications plan for the following twelve months that would highlight the events taking place over that period indicating the jurisdiction that might take responsibility for a particular outreach activity and note dates for preparation of media releases. A network of key contacts (media professionals) would be identified by the Parties and information relative to that event would be circulated to them for drafting or revision with a local flavour as appropriate.

6.4 **Performance Review of the Work of NASCO**

At its last Annual Meeting the Council had considered proposals by the European Union, CNL(07)43, in line with those requested of the various tuna RFMOs, and by the USA, CNL(07)48, for a Performance Review of NASCO. The Council had considered this matter in the light of the 'Next Steps' review process, which has been carried out in an open and public fashion over the past three years, and the detailed nature of the decisions taken by the Council to implement broad-ranging changes in the manner in which NASCO operates and its relationship with its NGOs.

The Council recognises that the timing of any further review is critically important given that the Organization is in the midst of implementing the core elements of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' process. Therefore the Parties commit to set up, at NASCO's 2010 Annual Meeting, a Review Group to assess the whole of the 'Next Steps' Process and any other NASCO-related topics that it deems relevant in accordance with the spirit of UNGA Resolution 61/105. That Group would be asked to report on what the process had delivered, where it had worked well, where it needed to be adjusted or changed and how the next cycle should operate. This Group would also advise the Council on the need for and format of a further performance review.

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

7.1 Annual Reports on Implementation Plans

A report on the returns made on the Implementation Plans was presented, CNL(08)15. The primary purpose of the annual returns is to track progress in implementing the actions contained in the Implementation Plans. The Secretary referred to the need to keep the reporting burden to appropriate levels. The US and Canada tabled reports on their Implementation Plans, CNL(08)24 and CNL(08)29 respectively. The Council agreed to ask the Secretary to develop a simple reporting structure to be used in 2009 based on the guidelines for developing Implementation Plans and reporting on progress.

7.2 **Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics**

(a) 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. It was recognized that the Williamsburg Resolution would evolve in the light of experience with its implementation, consultations, improved scientific understanding of the impacts of aquaculture and development in measures to minimise them. There had been no proposals from ISFA or the Parties for changes to the Resolution.

(b) Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry

At its last Annual Meeting the Council had considered a report from its Liaison Group with the North Atlantic salmon farming industry, CNL(07)18. Following the Liaison Group meeting a discussion document had been developed by the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA) entitled 'Incentivising the Industry', CNL(07)30. The Council had agreed to respond to ISFA indicating that there were proposals in their paper that would be acceptable, some that could be the subject of cooperation and others that would need further consideration. To advance this initiative the Council agreed to propose to ISFA that a joint Technical Task Force be set up with membership from the two Secretariats and two or three nominated experts from NASCO and ISFA.

A report on liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming industry was presented, CNL(08)16 (Annex 15). In accordance with the Council's decision, the President of NASCO had written to the President of ISFA to express NASCO's concerns and to propose the establishment of the Task Force. Subsequently the Secretary had met with the President and Secretary of ISFA and following that meeting a letter had been received from the President of ISFA in which ISFA had indicated that it is eager to continue the relationship. However, they had not commented on the proposal for a Task Force but rather had proposed that a full Liaison Group meeting be held in Boston in March 2009.

The Council decided that while it wished to continue dialogue with the industry it was not ready to reconvene the Liaison Group until it had identified and agreed on a series of best practice recommendations to address continuing impacts of salmon farms on wild salmon stocks. The outcome of the NASCO/ICES Bergen Symposium and other recent work would seem a good basis. To this end, the Council decided to proceed with a Task Force comprising representatives of the Parties and an NGO representative and to which ISFA experts would be invited to participate. The Terms of Reference for the Task Force would be to develop a series of best practice recommendations to address the continuing impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon stocks designed to achieve impact targets. The Secretary was asked to liaise with the Parties, the NGOs and ISFA on arrangements for the meeting.

The NGO representative indicated that proceeding with the Liaison Group meeting as proposed by ISFA would be a waste of time but that they agreed with the proposal for a meeting of experts. He suggested that as the industry now comprises a small number of large Norwegian companies there might also be merit in approaching them direct. The President proposed that this suggestion be considered in the light of the Expert Group meeting.

7.3 **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 Council's agenda and ICES had been requested to provide relevant information, which is contained in document CNL(08)7. The US tabled document CNL(08)23 (Annex 16). Reference was made to the detection of resistance of sea lice to treatments at farm sites in Norway (see CNL(08)15).

7.4 **Report of the Working Group on Socio-Economics**

Under the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Step', CNL(05)49, the key issues identified in relation to the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon are:

- ensuring that appropriate emphasis is given to the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon;
- strengthening the socio-economic data as a basis for managing salmon;
- integrating socio-economic aspects in decision-making processes; and
- disseminating socio-economic information to ensure due weight is given to the salmon compared to other important commercial and public interests.

To progress these aspects the Council had established a Working Group on Socio-Economics which had met in Reykjavik, Iceland during 4-6 March 2008. The interim report of the meeting, CNL(08)17 (Annex 17) was presented by the Secretary who had chaired the meeting. The Group had noted that the collection, analysis and integration of socio-economic information to aid management is far behind the collection, analysis and integration of biological information. The main task for the Group had been to develop an international collation of available social and economic information on the wild Atlantic salmon so as to allow the wild Atlantic salmon to be assessed at its rightful social, cultural and economic levels. The Group had urged those countries that had not yet provided information to contribute to this important new data resource. The Group had also reviewed progress in developing a bio-economic model which will now be tested using data from Scotland and/or Norway. He reported that a new study of the "existence" value of salmon in England and Wales indicated a willingness to pay of £350 million per year when aggregated across all households. Thus consideration only of the values associated with use of the resource greatly under-estimate the salmon's full value. A more comprehensive report of the group's work will be presented in 2009. The Council agreed to allocate some time at that meeting to a Special Session on socio-economics.

All delegations recognised the importance of developing more knowledge on socio-economic values relating to wild salmon.

The NGO representative suggested that the salmon is more only a iconic species but is also an indicator of healthy aquatic environments.

A summary of the findings of a survey of the recreational fishery in Canada was circulated, CNL(08)30.

7.5 **Progress with the Development of the Database of Salmon Rivers**

A report on progress with development of the database of salmon rivers was tabled, CNL(08)18. The progress report indicated that the Parties have updated the rivers database information and some Parties have gone further and have entered habitat and habitat impacts information and salmon production data. The Council encouraged the Parties to complete the first task of validating the basic river data at the earliest opportunity as it is now publicly available on the Organization's website. The President suggested that there had been considerable interest in the database from geneticists carrying out baseline studies for the SALSEA Programme.

7.6 **St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

At its last Annual Meeting the Council had asked the President to write to the French authorities to invite France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to accede to the Convention. A report on consultations with France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) was presented, CNL(08)19. A second report from France providing information on the management of the fishery, details of catches and of the number of licences issued, and details of the scientific sampling programme was also tabled, CNL(08)22, (Annex 18). This report was introduced by the representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon). She indicated that, a process of consultation has commenced with regard to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) acceding to the NASCO Convention. She indicated that there had been some concerns that results of any genetics sampling of the fishery could be used to support closure of the fishery. However, having participated in the NASCO meeting, she could better appreciate of the Organization's work and its approach to subsistence fisheries.

The Council welcomed the cooperation of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon).

The representative of Canada indicated that at the most recent Canada/France bilateral fisheries meeting he had described to his French counterpart the objectives of NASCO and how France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) could contribute to its work.

7.7 **Impacts of Acid Rain on Atlantic Salmon**

The Council noted that the next Focus Area Report would address habitat protection and restoration and that it would be useful if the *Ad Hoc* Review Group on this focus area could provide information on best practice with regard to mitigating impacts of acid rain.

7.8 **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 At the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting, in response to a request from the NGOs, the European Union had agreed to provide information on the stock status and management of Baltic salmon. The representative of the European Union tabled paper CNL(08)25 (Annex 19) on salmon management in the Baltic Sea.

9. **Date and Place of Next Meeting**

- 9.1 The Council had previously accepted an invitation from Norway to hold its Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting at a venue to be decided in Norway during 1 - 5 June 2009.

- [9.2 The Council agreed to hold its Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting during 1 – 4 June 2010 at a place to be decided.]

10. Report of the Meeting

[10.1 The Council agreed the report of the meeting.]

11. Press Release

[11.1 A press release was produced following the meeting, CNL(08)xx (Annex 20).]