

Council

CNL(11)7

***Report on the Activities of
the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
in 2010***

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Council**
- 3. North American Commission**
- 4. North-East Atlantic Commission**
- 5. West Greenland Commission**
- 6. Finance and Administration Matters**

Note: This Report is not intended for publication but is submitted to the Council under Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention which requires the submission of an annual report to the Parties. The report is a summary of the activities of the Organization in 2010, focusing on the actions taken. Full details of the work of the Organization are contained in the reports of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions and in the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

CNL(11)7

Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 NASCO held its Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting in Québec City, Canada, at the invitation of the Canadian Government. The Organization greatly appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the hosts.

2. Council

- 2.1 The Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Council was held during the period 1 - 4 June 2010, under the Presidency of Ms Mary Colligan (US). Representatives of all the Parties, and observers from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), two inter-government organizations and 22 non-government organizations, attended the meetings.

Next Steps for NASCO

- (a) *Report of the Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement Focus Area Review Group*

- 2.2 The final report of the Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement Focus Area Review Group was presented. The Group's assessments made it clear that while much habitat has been lost in recent years there have been some notable gains. The European Union presented a document from EU-Spain and one from EU-Germany which had not been reviewed by the Group.

- 2.3 The Council adopted 'Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Salmon Habitat'. These Guidelines are not prescriptive or mandatory but are intended to assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing the NASCO Plan of Action for the Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Protection and Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat.

- (b) *Draft report of the Aquaculture and Related Activities Focus Area Review Group*

- 2.4 The draft report of the Focus Area Review Group on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics was presented. The Group had reviewed and analysed FARs submitted by 13 jurisdictions. In 2009, the Council had adopted 'Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks', hereinafter referred to as 'BMP Guidance' intended to assist NASCO's jurisdictions in the management of salmon aquaculture, in developing future NASCO Implementation Plans and in preparing their Focus Area Reports for the 2010 review and subsequently. The Review Group had, therefore, not developed further guidance on best practice but had reviewed and offered some

comments on this BMP Guidance. The Guidance had been incorporated in the Council's guidance to the Parties and jurisdictions on the format for the FARs.

- 2.5 Comments on the Group's report from the International Atlantic Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA), (CNL(10)33), and a response to these comments was tabled by the NGOs, (CNL(10)37). In finalising its report, the Group was asked to take into account the comments on its draft report from the Parties, ISFA and the NGOs during the Special Session, and any written submissions. The Parties were asked to provide written comments to the Secretariat by 31 October 2010. The Review Group was also asked to review the FAR submitted by EU-Ireland, IP(10)23, and the relevant sections of the document provided by EU-Spain, CNL(10)36.

(c) *Progress in implementing a Public Relations Strategy*

- 2.6 A report from the PR Sub-Group was presented, including a report by the Assistant Secretary on progress with development of the NASCO and IASRB websites. The Council welcomed the excellent progress made and agreed that jurisdictions should be asked to verify the information for inclusion in the rivers database by 31 December 2010 with a view to it being made available on the website with map displays before the next Annual Meeting. The Council asked the PR Sub-Group to prepare a press release from the Annual Meeting. The Chair of the PR Sub-Group indicated that he wished to stand down.

(d) *Arrangements for a review of the 'Next Steps' process*

- 2.7 Commencing in 2004, NASCO undertook a comprehensive and critical review of its work. This review, called the 'Next Steps' for NASCO, identified the challenges facing NASCO in the management and conservation of wild Atlantic salmon and ways to address these; reviewed the management and organizational structure of NASCO; and considered the procedural aspects of NASCO and the relationship between the Organization, its Parties and stakeholders. It resulted in the adoption of a Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps' which contained recommendations for action in relation to three main challenges: Implementation, Commitment and Accountability; Transparency and Inclusivity; and Raising NASCO's profile. The Council had moved rapidly to address these challenges.

- 2.8 During the implementation of the recommendations in the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps', the United Nations' General Assembly adopted a Resolution (61/105) in December 2006 concerning sustainable fisheries. This Resolution includes recommendations concerning the performance of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). In 2007 and 2008, the Council had discussed the need for a further performance review of NASCO's work in the light of the UN General Assembly Resolution. It was recognized that the timing of any further review of NASCO's work would be critically important given that the Organization was in the midst of implementing the core elements of the 'Next Steps' process. However, the Parties had committed to set up, at the 2010 Annual Meeting, a Review Group to assess the Next Steps process and to advise on the need for, and format of, a further performance review. The Council adopted 'Terms of Reference for a Review of the

‘Next Steps’ Process, and Council Decision Concerning a Further Performance Review’.

(e) *Annual Reports on Implementation Plans*

2.9 Returns were received from 15 jurisdictions and a summary of these was presented. The Council was advised that the European Union had adopted a decision with the effect that the guarantees provided in Article 4.3 of Directive 2006/88 relating to *G.salaris* would continue to apply. This would mean that certain jurisdictions (Ireland, UK and specified river catchments in Finland) would be able to take protective measures against the parasite.

(f) *Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry*

2.10 The report of the Liaison Group was presented. The Liaison Group had reviewed the report of the Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics Focus Area Review Group and the report of the second meeting of its Task Force established to develop best practice guidelines and standards to address the impacts of aquaculture on the wild salmon stocks. The Council adopted the Explanation of Terms Used in the BMP Guidance and agreed that the Task Force be tasked with advising on reporting requirements in relation to the BMP Guidance.

(g) *New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management*

2.11 Valuable information had been provided in the ACOM report from ICES and in the annual reports by the Parties on their Implementation Plans. The US tabled a document that referred to initiatives in the US to explore, expand and implement alternative energy projects. The paper seeks information from other countries on how different near and offshore energy technologies may affect salmon survival and behaviour.

(h) *Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management*

2.12 A progress report on the work of the Sub-Group was presented. The Sub-Group had proposed tables for presenting social and economic values associated with wild Atlantic salmon, a format for presentation of socio-economic information on the website and initial proposals for a Special Session in 2011. The Council agreed that the Parties should be given an opportunity to respond to the Sub-Group’s proposals concerning the tables for presenting social and economic information and on the format for the website, and that feedback could be provided to the Secretariat by 31 October 2010. With regard to the arrangements for the Special Session in 2011, it was recognised that there was already a Special Session to allow for presentation of the final report of the aquaculture FAR Review Group and the report of the ‘Next Steps’ Review Group and that there may be limited time to hold a second Special Session. The Secretariat was asked to make appropriate arrangements to allow for consideration of social and economic issues either as a regular agenda item or if time permits a Special Session.

- 2.13 The representative of Canada made a presentation on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada's Atlantic Salmon Fisheries: Policy, Regulation and Best Practices.
- (i) *The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB)*
- 2.14 The report of the meeting of the Board was presented. The substantial progress made through SALSEA-Merge, SALSEA North America, SALSEA West Greenland and telemetry studies in eastern Canada was outlined
- (j) *The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery*
- 2.15 As requested by the Council in 2009, the Acting President of the Council had written to the French Authorities expressing disappointment that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) did not wish to accede to the Convention of NASCO, and referring to concerns about the increased catch in 2008. The Acting President also expressed the Council's support for expanding the sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon and requested that the information on the fishery and the sampling programme be made available earlier in the year in time for the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada also wrote, as did the NGOs.
- 2.16 A report was tabled containing information on management of the fishery, details of catches and of the number of licenses issued and studies in progress. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) had reiterated that it wishes to retain its observer status and to increase its collaboration with NASCO through strengthening monitoring and supervision of the fishery and continuing some scientific studies which commenced in 2008 in the 'Belle Rivière'. No sampling programme was undertaken in 2009 but it is planned to recommence this annual programme in 2010, including genetic sampling of 70 fish each year. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that for professional fishermen, the landings are all reported but it is not known if there is any unreported catch in the recreational fishery but the competent authorities in St Pierre and Miquelon would be contacted to see if information on estimated unreported catch could be obtained.
- (k) *Scientific Advice*
- 2.17 The scientific advice from ICES was presented. The Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES to be presented in 2011.
- (l) *Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area*
- 2.18 There were no applications to conduct scientific research fishing in the Convention area during 2010.
- (m) *Election of Officers*
- 2.19 Ms Mary Colligan (US) was elected President of NASCO and Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) was elected Vice-President. The Secretary was offered an extension of twelve months to his contract up to 2012 which he accepted.

(n) *Other Business*

- 2.20 At its 2008 Annual Meeting, the Council agreed to seek close cooperation on matters concerning Baltic salmon through the European Union and the Russian Federation. The European Union indicated that work is progressing on the development of a salmon management plan for the Baltic. It was suggested that there might be benefits from an exchange of reports between NASCO and the Baltic RAC.
- 2.21 The withdrawal of Iceland from the NASCO Convention with effect from 31 December 2009, as a result of the severe economic crisis in that country, was referred to. The Council was advised that Iceland has indicated that it intends to re-accede to the Convention at the earliest possible opportunity. The Council agreed that Iceland should be invited to attend future Annual Meetings as an observer so that it can be aware of developments in NASCO and to contribute information.
- 2.22 The Council received a report from each of the three regional Commissions on its activities (see sections 3, 4 and 5 below).
- 2.23 The Council adopted the report of the Finance and Administration Committee (see section 6 below).
- 2.24 The Council adopted a report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2009.
- 2.25 The winner of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize was Mr Ted Stewart, Canada.
- 2.26 The Council accepted an invitation from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to hold its Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting in Ilulissat during June 2011. The Council recognised there may be a need for flexibility regarding precise timing. The Council agreed to hold its Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting during 5 - 8 June 2012 at a place to be decided.

3. North American Commission

- 3.1 The Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the North American Commission was held in Québec City, Canada, during the period 1 - 4 June 2010 under the Chairmanship of Mr Guy Beaupré (Canada).

(a) *Review of the 2009 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES*

- 3.2 The Commission reviewed the 2009 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The Commission agreed a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2011. Canada indicated that although there was a timing problem with respect to providing estimates of unreported catch, estimates would be reported when available.

(b) *The St. Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery*

- 3.3 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) presented information on the St. Pierre and Miquelon fishery. The Commission was advised that sampling would be recommenced in 2010, including biometric, genetic and life history aspects. The re-initiation of sampling was welcomed but concern was expressed about the increased catch at St Pierre and Miquelon.

(c) *Salmonid Introductions and Transfers*

- 3.4 The recommendations arising from a review of the NAC database on Introductions and Transfers and the Scientific Working Group were adopted. In particular, it was agreed: (1) that a detailed international database was no longer necessary; (2) to provide focused annual reports to the Commission on issues of mutual concern; (3) to identify experts who could work over the coming months to identify priority mechanisms and requirements for information exchange on fish health issues; and (4) to make minor revisions to the NAC Protocols on Introductions and Transfers of Salmonids to reflect the new information exchange mechanism.

(d) *Sampling in the Labrador Fishery*

- 3.5 Canada provided an update on the sampling activity in the Labrador fishery in 2009 and reported that it aims to improve on the distribution in time and space and to increase the number and quality of samples obtained in the programme. With respect to the origin of the fish caught, DFO found that the location of the fishing has changed substantially since the days of the commercial fishery. Fishing for food, social and ceremonial purposes is done close to Aboriginal communities and fishing no longer occurs at the headlands. With respect to the current food fishery, scale analysis indicates that patterns on the scales are consistent with fish originating in the northern areas. Canada also indicated that there would be no retention of large salmon in the Labrador recreational fishery in 2011.

(e) *Election of Officers*

- 3.6 The Commission elected Mr Stephen Gephard (USA) as its Chairman and Mr Guy Beaupré as its Vice-Chairman.

(f) *Other Business*

- 3.7 The winner of the North American Commission prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Burton Ward, New Brunswick, Canada.

4. North-East Atlantic Commission

- 4.1 The Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission was held in Québec City, Canada, during the period 1 - 4 June 2010. In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, Dr Ciaran Byrne (European Union) was elected to serve as Chairman for the meeting.

(a) *Review of the 2009 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES*

- 4.2 The Commission considered the scientific advice from ICES and agreed a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2010.
- 4.3 In 2009, the Commission had noted that ICES had been unable to make progress in developing quantitative catch advice because there are no explicit management objectives for provision of advice for the Faroese fishery and no pre-agreed sharing arrangement among NASCO Parties. The Commission had agreed that there should be further discussions on this issue among Heads of Delegations following the Annual Meeting with a view to developing arrangements to commence work on developing management objectives in advance of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting. It was subsequently decided that ICES should provide an assessment of the issues that would need to be resolved before such advice could be provided in future.
- 4.4 ICES advised that a number of issues would need to be addressed by NASCO if a risk framework were to be established for the Faroese fishery, based on the principles currently used for the West Greenland fishery. ICES indicated that these are as follows: agreement on the management units to be employed; agreement on the management objectives for each unit; and determination of a sharing agreement.
- 4.5 ICES indicated that its assessments are conducted on the basis of 18 units (4 in Russia, 3 in Norway, 2 in UK-Scotland, 2 in UK-Northern Ireland, 2 in Iceland and single units for other NEAC countries). ICES also confirmed that it would be consistent with the approach used in the risk framework for West Greenland if the management objective was that there was a 75% probability of achieving the conservation limits for these units simultaneously and to base a sharing agreement on the historical share of catches in the period 1986 -1990. ICES indicated that since the Southern NEAC stock complex is exploited at both West Greenland and at Faroes it would seem appropriate to adopt the same management objectives and baseline period for a sharing agreement.
- 4.6 The Commission agreed to continue dialogue between members inter-sessionally with the intention of providing additional clarification to ICES on the scientific information required to assist the Commission in making progress before 30 November 2010. However, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that they could not commit to any such deadline.

(b) *Regulatory Measures*

- 4.7 The Commission adopted a decision concerning fishing of salmon in Faroese waters in 2011.
- 4.8 Norway tabled a document detailing the regulatory measures to apply to the salmon fishery in 2010. Under the new regulations the fishing season for nets on the coast of Finnmark has been reduced from nine to six weeks for bag nets and from six weeks to four weeks for bend nets. In the Varanger fjord, the fishing season for bag nets has been reduced from nine weeks to seven weeks and for bend nets from six weeks to four weeks. Appreciation was expressed to Norway by the EU and the Russian Federation for following the process for consultation agreed last year. The Russian Federation

expressed disappointment that the measures agreed by Norway were less restrictive than those that had been proposed by the Russian Federation for Finnmark and the Varanger Fjord. The Russian Federation tabled details of its salmon management measures for 2009.

- 4.9 The Commission was advised that discussions between the EU and Norway regarding the salmon fisheries in the Tana River would continue. The EU sought clarification from Norway on the anticipated effect of the restriction in the length of the fishing season on harvests in the fisheries. Norway indicated that this was difficult to assess and further assessment would be needed but the effectiveness of the measures in terms of spawning targets would probably be greater if any reduction was at the beginning rather than the end of the fishing season.

(c) *Risk of Transmission of Gyrodactylus salaris in the Commission Area*

- 4.10 The European Union referred to the adoption of a decision allowing the previous measures in Article 4.3 of Directive 2006/88 relating to *G.salaris* to continue to apply. This means that certain jurisdictions (Ireland, UK, and specified river catchments in Finland) would be able to continue to take protective measures against the parasite.

- 4.11 A document concerning landlocked char being a potential host for *G.salaris* was tabled by Norway. The document indicated that if the parasites on char are pathogenic to salmon, Arctic char may need to be considered on an equal basis to rainbow trout in terms of the risk of spreading the parasite. A review of existing regulations may be required.

(d) *Election of Officers*

- 4.12 Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway) was elected as Chairman of the Commission, and Dr Ciaran Byrne (EU) was elected as its Vice-Chairman.

(e) *Other Business*

- 4.13 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Ms Marianne Nauste, Norway.

5. West Greenland Commission

- 5.1 The Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission was held in Québec City, Canada during the period 1 – 4 June 2010 under the Chairmanship of Mr Guy Beaupré (Canada).

(a) *Review of the 2009 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES*

- 5.2 The Commission reviewed the 2009 fishery at West Greenland and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The Commission adopted a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2011.

5.3 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) advised the Commission that following the introduction of a new act for self government in Greenland, a new government was in place which has resulted in some changes. There was no commercial fishery in 2009. The reported catch in the subsistence fishery was 26t of which 15t were sold on the open market and 11t were for private consumption. Reporting of catches has improved mainly due to the government's outreach programme. The Commission was also advised that increased government publicity of the importance of reporting catch has led to increased reporting, and that the tag return incentive scheme is well publicized and popular in Greenland. No new regulations have been introduced since 2002 but Greenland is working to improve management and control of the fishery. The EU noted the support in principle for the introduction of log books to assist with improved reporting.

(b) *Regulatory measures*

5.4 At its Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting, the Commission had adopted a multi-annual regulatory measure for the West Greenland salmon fishery for the calendar years 2009 – 2011. The Commission had agreed that the same procedure used in 2008 for applying the Framework of Indicators (FWI) would apply to the new regulatory measure. A Group would be established to work by correspondence to coordinate the data collection and application of the FWI.

5.5 The Commission was advised that the FWI indicated that no reassessment of the management advice previously provided by ICES in 2009 was required for the 2010 fishery at West Greenland. This meant that the multi-annual regulatory measure agreed in 2009 would continue to apply to the 2010 fishery and there was not, therefore, a need for negotiations on a new measure at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting.

5.6 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that the authorities were constantly reviewing the regulation of the fishery which is small and limited in time. Over the years improvements have been made to the reporting and information is now being received for East Greenland as well.

(c) *Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery*

5.7 The West Greenland salmon fishery sampling programme provides valuable biological data to the stock assessments conducted by ICES that inform science-based management decisions for this fishery. The Parties to the West Greenland Commission have worked cooperatively over the past three decades to collect these biological data. ICES, the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and its Scientific Advisory Group, and NASCO all endorse taking additional samples from fish captured in the internal-use only fishery in Greenland. This Enhanced Sampling Program, SALSEA West Greenland, which had a two year commitment, requires whole fresh fish and is recognized as complementary to SALSEA Merge and SALSEA North America, which collectively hold promise in providing insights into the critical marine portion of the salmon's life cycle. In 2008, it had not been possible to conduct the enhanced sampling as planned but in 2009, NASCO had facilitated the purchase of these whole fish, using funds provided by the US, and the enhanced sampling programme had been successfully implemented in addition to the long-term baseline sampling. The

Commission adopted a West Greenland Fishery Sampling Agreement for 2010.

(d) Election of Officers

5.8 The Commission elected Mr Alan Gray (European Union) as its Chairman and Mr George Lapointe (US) as its Vice-Chairman.

(e) Other Business

5.9 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Per Nukaaraq Hansen, Greenland.

6. Finance and Administration Matters

6.1 The Finance and Administration Committee met prior to the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Council. In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Ms Elena Samoylova (Russian Federation) served as Chairperson.

(a) Relationship with ICES

6.2 The Committee agreed to continue the current MoU with ICES.

(b) Methods of Calculating the Contributions to NASCO

6.3 Following Iceland's withdrawal from the Convention it had been agreed that the schedule of contributions be revised to reflect this change. It had also been suggested to the Council that the method of calculating contributions to NASCO be examined. After consideration of the methods used by three other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to calculate contributions to their budgets, and subsequent discussion, it was agreed that no further action was required on this matter.

(c) 2011 Budget

6.4 The Committee recommended to the Council the adoption of the 2011 Budget and Schedule of Contributions.

(d) Audited Accounts

6.5 The Committee recommended to the Council the adoption of the 2009 audited accounts. The Committee recommended to the Council the appointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers of Queen Street, Edinburgh, as auditors for the 2010 audited accounts, or such other company as may be agreed by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee.

(e) Election of Officers

6.6 Ms. Sonja Feldthaus (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) was elected as Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee and Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway) as Vice-Chairman.

(f) *Other Business*

- 6.7 The Committee was advised that the US expected to have additional funds available for disbursement to NASCO and was considering options for making an extra contribution to the Organization.
- 6.8 The Committee was advised that a new ten year lease had been agreed with NASCO's tenants on favourable terms for the Organization.

Secretary
Edinburgh
7 April 2011