



Agenda item 5  
For decision

**Council**

**CNL(13)16**

*NASCO's Meeting Structure, Frequency and Location*



## CNL(13)16

### *NASCO's Meeting Structure, Frequency and Location*

1. At the Inter-session Meeting of the Parties on a Future Vision for NASCO (see CNL(13)11) it was agreed that the Parties should be invited to submit proposals concerning the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings to the Secretariat. The Secretariat was asked to prepare a paper based on these submissions for consideration by the Council. The Parties had agreed that the intention of this exercise was to explore changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings with a view to ensuring the most effective use of the time available and expertise present. We have received four discussion papers from Canada, Norway, the Russian Federation and the USA (attached) concerning the structure and frequency of the Annual Meeting.

#### *Annual Meeting – Structure and Frequency*

2. Canada has suggested that, commencing in 2014, NASCO might move away from an Annual Meeting to a biennial meeting schedule (or possibly triennial) and that video conferencing might be used in the alternating years for finance and administration issues and meetings of the Commissions. The Russian Federation considers that the Annual Meeting provides a valuable forum for exchange of information that needs to be preserved given the challenges facing the resource and to maintain the unique spirit of cooperation that exists in NASCO. Norway and the US have proposed that the Organization should continue to meet annually but that there should be restructuring to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Norway has suggested a three year cycle with a 'traditional meeting' in year 1 and 'shortened' Council meetings in years 2 and 3, with greater focus on exchange of management experiences, common challenges and scientific issues. Similarly, the US has suggested a three-year cycle with a meeting structure similar to that currently used in years when regulatory measures need to be negotiated, new Implementation Plans reviewed or new budgets prepared and a more flexible structure in other years so as to improve information sharing. The US has suggested that a trial restructuring of the Annual Meeting be introduced in 2014 and that there be two days allocated to Special Sessions.

#### *Annual Meeting – Location*

3. None of the discussion papers submitted to the Secretariat consider the issue of the location of NASCO meetings. The Council's policy has been to meet at venues near the salmon. The perceived advantages of this include: delegates can learn about the situation facing salmon in a diverse range of situations; the NASCO meeting may be used by the host government to publicise its salmon conservation measures; it raises NASCO's profile in the communities visited; and costs of accommodation away from capital cities are usually (but not always) lower. However, there is normally an extra flight from the hub airport to get to the area of the meeting, adding to travel costs, and there may sometimes be an additional overnight stay en route.

*Inter-sessional Meetings*

4. As noted by the External Performance Review Panel, until recently NASCO ‘had a heavy meeting schedule, including the statutory meeting, activity of the Council and three Commissions, as well as activity in the ‘Next Steps’ process, including stakeholder meetings on several levels’. Changes have already been made to reduce the number of inter-sessional meetings, e.g. by agreeing to conduct reviews of the Annual Progress Reports by correspondence rather than through meetings of the Review Groups (two meetings were held for each of four Review Groups in the first cycle of reporting and evaluation). At the inter-sessional meeting of the Parties (see CNL(13)11), recommendations were developed that, if adopted by the Council, may further reduce the number of inter-sessional meetings.
5. The Council is asked to consider these discussion papers with a view to deciding on any changes to be made to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings.

Interim Secretary  
Edinburgh  
13 May 2013

## **Canada's proposal to revisit the traditional schedule of NASCO meetings**

### **Context**

Almost 30 years ago, at the time commercial fisheries were still decimating Atlantic salmon populations, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) was established with the primary mandate of attempting to reach international agreement on rational management of salmon fisheries in the North Atlantic. Many years of intensive international negotiations later, the work of the Organization led to the termination of directed commercial fisheries for Atlantic salmon of coastal States jurisdiction, and allowed the Organization to refocus its work more toward conservation, restoration and enhancement of salmon populations in the North Atlantic. Today, while there are still some active commercial, subsistence, aboriginal and recreational salmon fisheries in member States coastal or inland waters, remaining non-commercial offshore salmon fisheries are managed under international agreements reached at the NASCO table.

In more recent years, the Organisation worked steadily toward maintaining the gains achieved in fisheries management while consolidating an approach for continued improvement in the conservation, restoration and enhancement of Atlantic salmon through a Strategic Approach, which translated into the Next Steps process. Good reporting mechanisms, such as the Reports on Implementation Plans and the IASRB Inventory updates have been put in place and an Action Plan defining the way forward for the Organisation has been agreed upon in London earlier this year. Considering all this, the question today is no longer 'where do we want to take the Organization' but rather 'how do we want to do it'. In the context of the momentum of introspection created by the External Performance Review, Canada believes that it would be appropriate for the Parties to look at the way the Organization has been operating and discuss opportunities to make it more effective, operationally and financially, to better ensure its continuity.

### **Proposal for discussion**

While recognizing the benefits of timely face to face meetings, revisiting the traditional schedule of meetings is one of these opportunities to make the Organization more effective. On the financial side, the current fiscal context makes it very difficult to rationalize the need for resource intensive annual meetings when most of the reporting and exchanges can be done via modern electronic means.

On the operational side, the decision to move from an annual scientific advice (via the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) process to a three year process (with use of the Framework of Indicators in the intervening second and third year of the advice) was a move in the right direction. Accordingly, Canada proposes that the following options to move to a multi-year meeting schedule be discussed at the 2013 annual meeting in Ireland. The Organization would need to meet face to face for the year the multi-year advice is provided (as it was the case in June 2012). This would mean an annual meeting would take place every three years. While this option deserves to be discussed, a two year schedule would likely be preferable to properly adapt reporting processes to the change. The ICES advice schedule could also be adjusted to a two year meeting schedule.

## Options

Option 1: NASCO meets every two years, starting in 2014, and ICES provides two years of advice rather than three. As the current Convention calls for the election of a President and Vice-President every two years, a semi-annual meeting would enable this recommendation.

Option 2: NASCO meets every third year, coinciding with the renewal of the multi-year forecast and advice, unless the framework of indicators identifies the need for new assessment and new advice in which case a NASCO “Special Meeting” would be called to review the new status and advice.

For both options, certain annual activities of NASCO would continue such as the tag return incentive program, the IASRB inventory updates, Party’s report on catches, etc.

As NASCO current Convention states “*The President shall convene a regular annual meeting of the Council and the Commissions at a time and place determined by the Council*” it is also proposed that web-services such as video-conferencing be used in the alternating years, to discuss NASCO’s finance and administration issues as well as for meetings of NASCO’s three Commissions.

## **Norway's proposal to revisit the traditional schedule of NASCO meetings and standard agendas for those meetings**

### **Context**

Referring to the discussions in London and the discussion paper prepared by Canada we would like to propose for further discussion some amendments to the current schedule of NASCO meetings and standard agendas for those meetings with the aim of ensuring the most effective use of the time available and expertise present. The intention is to improve the effectiveness of NASCO and to facilitate information exchange on challenges to the resource and solutions to them, as envisaged under the "Next Steps" process.

### **Proposal**

We suggest a three year cycle of meetings.

Year one (annex 1) would be a more traditional Annual Meeting. The agenda and allocated time for Council meetings are reduced by making more reporting 'written only' and some other items 'optional', depending on whether they are necessary. This would make more time available for a theme-based Special Session, e.g. reporting on certain issues. Full ICES advice would be given and regulatory measures decided for three years. More or less normal Commission meetings would take place.

Year two and three (Annex 2) would consist of a 'shortened' meeting of the Council, as in year one concentrating on formal business like the budget for the coming year. ICES advice is only given if there are changes. Commission meetings would be optional depending on whether there is revised ICES advice and the need to revisit regulatory measures. Day two and three of the meeting would be dedicated to 'symposia' facilitating exchange of management experiences and discussions on common management challenges, scientific issues etc. It might be possible to conclude the meeting on Thursday evening.

### **Proposal regarding the IASRB and SAG**

In our opinion there may not be a need for the IASRB and SAG unless there is a concrete ambition to launch a Salsea 2 (or similar) programme. In this regard, the SAG Sub-Group has developed some recommendations and these will need to be considered carefully in evaluating the future roles of the IASRB and SAG. In the event that the IASRB and SAG are not continued, we suggest that the important functions of the SAG (e.g. the inventory of ongoing research, coordination etc.) consideration be given to including these in the tasks of the SSC. The composition of the SSC could be changed accordingly and more time allocated – see annex. Necessary follow up decision could be made by the Council.

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**Annual Meeting of the Council**

**YEAR 1**

*Provisional Agenda*

1. **Opening Session**
2. **Adoption of Agenda**
3. **Financial and Administrative Issues**
  - 3.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee
4. **Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information**
  - 4.1 Secretary's Report (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 4.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in ---- (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 4.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize
  - 4.4 Scientific Advice from ICES (*The whole report including Commission areas*)
  - 4.5 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 4.6 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (*resolve future of IASRB/SAG*)
  - 4.7 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee
5. **Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach**
  - 5.1 Annual Reports on Progress in Implementing NASCO's Agreements
  - 5.2 Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (*OPTIONAL – covered in Special Session*)
  - 5.3 New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 5.4 Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management (*OPTIONAL – covered in Special Session*)
  - 5.5 Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery
  - 5.6 Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
6. **Elections** (AS REQUIRED – *usually every second year*)
7. **Other Business**
8. **Date and Place of Next Meeting**
9. **Report of the Meeting**
10. **Press Release**



## **Annual Meeting of NASCO**

**Year 1**

### *Draft Schedule of Meetings*

#### **Monday**

<b>08.30 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board/Scientific Advisory Group or of the Standing Scientific Committee</b>
<b>15.00 - 17.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee</b>
<b>18.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of Heads of Delegations</b>

#### **Tuesday**

<b>09.00 - 10.30 hrs</b>	<b>Opening Session (open to the Public)</b>
<b>11.00 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the Council</b>
<b>14.30 - 17.30 hrs</b>	<b>Special Session</b>
<b>18.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of Heads of Delegations</b>

#### **Wednesday**

<b>09.00 - 10.30 hrs</b>	<b>Special Session</b>
<b>11.00 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the West Greenland Commission</b>
<b>14.30 - 16.30 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission</b>
<b>16.30 - 17.30 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the North American Commission</b>
<b>18.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of Heads of Delegations</b>

**Thursday**

<b>09.00 - 10.30 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the Council</b>
<b>11.00 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission</b>
<b>14.30 - 16.30 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the West Greenland Commission</b>
<b>16.30 - 17.30 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the North American Commission</b>

**Friday 7 June**

<b>09.00 - 12.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the Council</b>
<b>12.00 hrs</b>	<b>Close of the Annual Meeting</b>

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**Annual Meeting of the Council**

**YEAR 2+3**

***Provisional Agenda***

- 1. Opening Session**
- 2. Adoption of Agenda**
- 3. Financial and Administrative Issues**
  - 3.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee
- 4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information**
  - 4.1 Secretary's Report (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 4.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in ---- (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 4.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize
  - 4.4 Scientific Advice from ICES (*OPTIONAL*)
  - 4.5 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 4.6 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (*resolve future of IASRB/SAG*)
  - 4.7 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee
- 5. Symposium**
- 6. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach**
  - 6.1 Annual Reports on Progress in Implementing NASCO's Agreements
  - 6.2 Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (*OPTIONAL – covered in Special Session*)
  - 6.3 New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
  - 6.4 Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management (*OPTIONAL – covered in Special Session*)
  - 6.5 Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery
  - 6.6 Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions (*WRITTEN ONLY*)
- 7. Elections** (*AS REQUIRED – usually every second year*)
- 8. Other Business**
- 9. Date and Place of Next Meeting**
- 10. Report of the Meeting**
- 11. Press Release**

## Annual Meeting of NASCO

**Year 2+3**

### *Draft Schedule of Meetings*

#### **Monday**

<b>08.30 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board/Scientific Advisory Group or of the Standing Scientific Committee</b>
<b>15.00 - 17.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee</b>
<b>18.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of Heads of Delegations</b>

#### **Tuesday**

<b>09.00 - 10.30 hrs</b>	<b>Opening Session (open to the Public)</b>
<b>11.00 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of the Council</b>
<b>14.30 - 17.30 hrs</b>	<b>Special Session</b>
<b>18.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of Heads of Delegations</b>

#### **Wednesday**

<b>09.00 - 13.00 hrs</b>	<b>Symposium</b>
<b>14.30 - 16.30 hrs</b>	<b>Symposium</b>
<b>16.30 - 17.30 hrs</b>	<i>Optional Commission Meetings</i>
<b>18.00 hrs</b>	<b>Meeting of Heads of Delegations</b>

## **Thursday**

**09.00 - 13.00 hrs**

**Symposium**

**14.30 - 16.30 hrs**

**Symposium**

**16.30 - 17.30 hrs**

**Optional Commission Meetings**

**18.00 hrs**

**Meeting of Heads of Delegations**

## **Friday**

**09.00 - 12.00 hrs**

**Meeting of the Council**

**12.00 hrs**

**Close of the Annual Meeting**



### **NASCO Annual Meetings: Russia's view**

NASCO as an intergovernmental organization was formed to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean through consultation and cooperation and taking into account the best scientific evidence available to it. This is set out in Article 3 of its Convention.

NASCO is, in the first place, about cooperation as well as dissemination of best knowledge and practices in conservation, restoration and rational management of salmon stocks. Throughout its whole history NASCO has been taking successful steps towards this end helping nations on both sides of the North Atlantic to learn and exchange experiences to make their approaches to conservation and management more effective.

NASCO is also a platform for exchange of views with stakeholders - accredited NGOs, aquaculture industry and others. Their input has always been extremely valuable to the Parties and urged to have further progress with the conservation measures to be taken domestically by each jurisdiction.

Over the years NASCO has developed into an organisation with good relations between the Parties and the NGO's. This has become possible due to people being able to meet each other, to talk to each other and develop personal relations and trust. All this helped nations speaking different languages and having different views on and legal systems for management of salmon to work together much more effectively. NASCO was very fortunate to evolve into a forum with such a spirit of cooperation that we have now. It will definitely need to be preserved for the challenges ahead.

In Russia's view we need to continue to meet together and to talk to each other to discuss such challenges and approaches to address them, both the Parties and NGOs, and on an annual basis, if we do not want to lose that unique spirit of cooperation NASCO has developed over the last three decades, if we do not want to fall into mistrust and misunderstanding and eventually end up in a lack of will to work together to conserve Atlantic salmon.

Annual meeting for an international organisation is a way of working effectively together. Article 5, paragraph 4, of the Convention says that the President of the Organization shall convene a regular annual meeting of the Council and the Commissions at a time and place determined by the Council.

In the North-East Atlantic Commission the Russian Federation, Norway and EU have discussions on the mix-stock fisheries intercepting salmon originating from Russian and Finnish rivers. The discussions became regular and important part of the process between the Parties and take place every year. Article 8 of the Convention stipulates that the functions of the North-East Atlantic Commission are (a) to provide a forum for consultation and co-operation among the members concerning the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks and (b) to propose regulatory measures for fishing in the area of fisheries jurisdiction of a member of salmon originating in the rivers of other Parties.

Therefore, in the light of arguments presented above the Russian Federation does not welcome the ideas of changing the frequency of regular meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO, particularly that this would require changing of the Convention. However the Russian Federation is open to discuss a format of the Annual Meetings.



## Meeting Structure & Frequency – US Proposal

NASCO has conducted an internal and an external process to review what it does and how it does it with a goal of identifying changes that could increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. One area that has been identified for exploration is the frequency and structure of meetings. The United States is also aware of the need to reduce costs where possible in order to conduct our work in the most efficient manner possible. We propose possible changes that could be implemented to improve the effectiveness of NASCO meetings in utilizing international cooperation to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean.

### The Convention

**Annual Meeting:** The Convention contains language regarding the frequency of meetings but does not speak to how meetings shall be structured:

Article 5.4:

*“The President shall convene a regular annual meeting of the Council and the Commissions at a time and place determined by the Council”*

Although the United States does not believe that a strict reading of the Convention would allow for altering the frequency of the annual meeting, we do believe the Convention does not preclude the ability to change the format of these meetings.

**Reporting Requirements:** The Convention specifies reporting obligations, some of which are associated with the annual meeting but those reporting obligations do not preclude the ability for the Parties to change the annual meeting structure.

- The Council shall submit to the Parties an annual report of the activities of the Organization (Article 5.6);
- Each Party shall provide to the Council available catch statistics for salmon stocks subject to the Convention taken in its rivers and area of fisheries jurisdiction at such intervals as the Council may determine (Article 15.1);
- Each Party shall notify the Secretary, no later than 60 days before the annual meeting, of the adoption or repeal since its last notification of laws, regulations, and programs relating to the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks subject to the Convention in its rivers and area of fisheries jurisdiction (Article 15.5(a)); and
- The Council shall adopt an annual budget for the Organization. The Secretary shall transmit a draft budget to the Parties, together with a schedule of contributions, not later than 60 days before the meeting of the Council (Article 16.1).

1. Regulatory Measures: The Commissions are responsible for agreeing to regulatory measures for the fisheries under their respective purviews. Consistent with the scientific advice, the WGC and the NEAC have adopted multi-annual regulatory measures in the past for the fishery at West Greenland and the Faroe Islands, respectively. Thus, negotiation of regulatory measures need not take place annually. We note that a change in the Framework of Indicators (FWI) may result in a reassessment of the status of the stocks and the potential need to reconsider regulatory measures.

To explain this last point, in 2007, ICES developed a FWI for the Greenland fishery to be used in interim years to determine if there is an expectation that the previously provided multi-year management advice is likely to change in subsequent years. A significant change in management advice would be triggered by an unforeseen increase in stock abundance to a level that would allow a fishery where previous scientific advice was for no catch, or a concerning decrease in stock abundance in a case where scientific advice had previously provided for harvest possibilities. The application of the FWI in the WGC has not yet resulted in the triggering of a reassessment.

The NEAC FWI was applied for the first time in January 2013, and it indicated a significant change in the indicators in that the forecast of PFA was an over-estimate for one of the stock complexes (Southern NEAC MSW). Given this, the Working Group was required to conduct a full reassessment of the stocks and new ICES management advice will be provided at the 2013 annual meeting. At its 2013 annual meeting, the NEAC will consider the new ICES advice and determine if there is a need for a new regulatory measure. So, while there is an attempt to establish a schedule to predict in what years there will be a need to negotiate multi-annual regulatory measures, the application of the FWI introduces the potential to upset that schedule in any given year for either or both the WGC and the NEAC.

2. Reports on the Fisheries and other Activities: Informative written and verbal reports are provided within the Commissions annually describing fishery activities from the previous year as well as ongoing management and monitoring activities of the Parties. Official discussion by the Commissions of the information in the reports and any decisions that may be associated with such discussion should occur annually.
3. Catch Statistics: Submission of catch statistics is required annually. Statistics are submitted electronically, compiled by the Secretariat, and circulated to the Parties and ICES in accordance with agreed procedures.
4. Budget: Although adoption of an annual budget is required, there is no requirement that this must be done annually. Therefore, the Council could adopt a multi-year budget. Annual reports would still need to be provided on the expenditures of the previous year and contributions would have to be calculated each year. Currently, a one-year budget is adopted by NASCO along with a forecast budget for the subsequent year, and a five-year spending plan is provided for information.
5. Implementation Plans & Annual Review Reports: As agreed at the 2012 Annual Meeting, the Parties have prepared and submitted new Implementation Plans that cover the years 2013 through 2018. Annual Progress Reports are to be submitted documenting activities in the previous year, and these are to be submitted to a review group. The intention is to include a Council agenda item each year to allow discussion of the Annual Progress Reports, including consideration of the comments provided by the review group. Additional time is required on the Council agenda in years when new five-year implementation plans are submitted by the Parties as these are very key documents with respect to the work of the organization. Care must be taken to ensure a full and complete review of these Plans and a challenging and robust

discussion so that these Plans can lay a solid foundation for the subsequent five-year reporting cycle.

### **Discussion**

We recognize that concern has been raised over the costs associated with travel of delegations to the annual meeting as well as the cost to the organization to run the meetings. We do not believe the Convention allows for flexibility not to hold the meeting of the Parties on an annual basis and, therefore, could not, at this time, agree to a meeting schedule that skips years. However, within the Convention, there is flexibility as to how such reporting requirements can be met and how an annual meeting is convened and structured. We strongly believe that at this time the international cooperation needed to accomplish the critical work of the organization, most notably, to address the very poor status of the stocks, is most effectively conducted through in-person meetings. We also believe that changes in the structure/format and focus of annual meetings could significantly enhance information exchange among the Parties, in particular by better utilizing the expertise on the Contracting Party delegations.

The Council and Commissions have full agendas in the years when budgets must be agreed, regulatory measures adopted, and new Implementation Plans reviewed. As part of the Next Steps process, the Parties made the decision to set aside at least one half-day in the meeting week as a special session to allow for a more open and free exchange of information and views. During these years when there is a full load of business issues, there is less flexibility in scheduling.

On the other hand, in those years when we do not anticipate that regulatory measures, five-year implementation plans, and the budget will be up for reconsideration, there could be more flexibility in scheduling. We consider that the effectiveness of the Organization would be enhanced in these years through changing the structure of the NASCO meeting to allow for more open exchanges of information among the Parties to make better use of their experience and knowledge and help advance Atlantic salmon conservation and management. Implementing a symposium-type format within NASCO in such years, for example, could be considered to allow for greater discussion among Atlantic salmon biologists and managers. One of the key observations during the Next Steps process was that both the NASCO Parties and wild Atlantic salmon would benefit from a greater exchange of information and experience as this would enhance opportunities for Parties to learn from each other about what is working and what is not.

### **Recommendations**

The United States has critically endangered Atlantic salmon stocks. With considerable urgency and emphasis, we must insist that as long as there are conservation gains to be had, we should continue to meet in-person to afford every opportunity to achieve our conservation objectives.

We recognize that another alternative is to alternate in-person NASCO annual meetings with a virtual meeting format, which could reduce costs in both travel for the organization and its members. We are also aware that there is precedent for virtual meetings at other RFMOs. That said, we support continuing annual meetings for NASCO and believe in-person meetings represent the most effective format to accomplish our organizational objectives. In the case of NASCO, there are dimensions of an in-person meeting that would be difficult if

not impossible to replicate in virtual meetings. In light of this, we would like to focus the discussion on meeting structure and format with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of annual meetings.

As noted above, for years when we know that regulatory measures need to be negotiated (e.g., every three years under the existing arrangement or if indicated by the FWI), new Implementation Plans need to be reviewed (every five years), and/or a new budgets need to be prepared and agreed, a meeting schedule similar to that used in recent years would be most appropriate. In alternate years, a more flexible schedule could be developed which would increase the opportunity for meaningful information sharing among the Parties. While the regulatory business of the Organization cannot be completely planned, we do have flexibility to plan many of the other activities and discussions. These matters do not need to be comprehensively addressed each year through an in-person meeting.

With that in mind, the 2014 Annual Meeting provides us with an opportunity to consider and test a new meeting structure and format. Depending on the application of the FWI in the WGC and NEAC and/or any other regulatory considerations of the Commissions, there may or may not be a need to negotiate regulatory measures during the 2014 NASCO meeting. A proposed schedule for the 2014 Meeting could, therefore, be as follows:

Monday: IASRB & SAG  
FAC

- Agree process and structure for 3-year budget to be implemented in 2015 to coincide with new multi-annual regulatory mechanisms

Tuesday Morning: Council – a streamlined session as follows:

- No formal oral opening statements from the Parties; written submissions encouraged
- IASRB report
- Scientific Advice from ICES
- St. Pierre and Miquelon
- Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry
- Annual Reports on Progress in Implementing NASCO's Agreements

Tuesday Afternoon: Commission meetings: The intent would be to significantly limit the agenda for each of the Commission meetings to focus on a report from ICES and presentation and discussion of the fisheries prosecuted in the previous season. If indicated necessary by the FWI, regulatory measures may need to be discussed in the WGC and/or the NEAC.

Wednesday: Special Session/Symposium on Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management

Thursday: Special Session/Symposium on Mixed Stock Fisheries

Friday morning:

Council

- FAC Report
- Report of the SSC
- Report on the Work of the Three Commissions
- Elections

The 2015 Annual Meeting would then revert back to the more standard format to allow sufficient time for adoption of a multi-annual budget and multi-annual regulatory agreements for the WGC and NEAC, among other things.