



Agenda item 6.1
For decision

CNL(14)11

Report of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2012, the Council appointed a Review Group (Paddy Gargan, Kristina Guldbaek, Niall Greene, Ted Potter, Rory Saunders and Sue Scott) to evaluate the new (2013-2018) Implementation Plans (IPs). The Review Group had met in March 2013 and its report, CNL(13)12, had been presented to the Council at its Thirtieth Annual Meeting last June. In accordance with the Council's Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO's Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(12)44, in order to provide continuity the Council had agreed that the Review Group members should normally be appointed to serve for a period of up to three years and also undertake the evaluation of the Annual Progress Reports (APRs) under the Implementation Plans. The first APRs were due to be submitted by 1 April 2014 and were to be evaluated by the Review Group by correspondence. This report describes the Review Group's work in completing its evaluations of the IPs and conducting an assessment of the first APRs.

2. Evaluation of the 2013 - 2018 Implementation Plans

Background

- 2.1 The purpose of the evaluation of the IPs was to ensure that, as far as possible, they provided a fair and equitable account of the actions that each jurisdiction intends to take to implement NASCO's Resolutions and Guidelines. The Review Group was asked to assess each response to questions in the IP template as:

1. Satisfactory answers/information;
2. Unclear or incomplete answers/information; or
3. Clear omissions or inadequacies in answers/information.

- 2.2 Where plans were considered by the Review Group to contain answers in categories 2 or 3 they were returned to the jurisdiction with guidance on the way that the Group considered the IP should be improved. Re-submitted plans were then re-evaluated to determine whether the areas highlighted had been addressed and where clear omissions or inadequacies (i.e. still scoring 3) remained, these had been highlighted in the Group's report to the Council, CNL(13)12, and discussed at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

Evaluation prior to the 2013 Annual Meeting

- 2.3 Prior to the 2013 Annual Meeting the Group had evaluated a total of 14 IPs as listed in its report. Of these, nine plans were considered to be satisfactory as follows:

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Greenland	CNL(13)40
EU - Denmark	CNL(13)41
EU - Finland	CNL(13)42
EU - Germany	CNL(13)43
EU - Ireland	CNL(13)44
EU - Sweden	CNL(13)45
EU - UK (England and Wales)	CNL(13)46
EU - UK(Northern Ireland)	CNL(13)47
Norway	CNL(13)48

- 2.4 Five of the IPs that had been reviewed were considered by the Group to contain clear omissions or inadequacies. Of these, three (Canada, the Russian Federation and the US) had been revised and re-submitted prior to the 2013 Annual Meeting following their initial evaluation, and two (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands and EU – UK (Scotland)) were resubmitted after the Annual Meeting. All five of these IPs were considered to contain clear omissions or inadequacies in the responses to one or both of the questions relating to progress towards the achievement of the international goals for sea lice (4.2) and containment (4.3), and, for some of these IPs, in the responses to other questions.
- 2.5 Prior to the 2013 Annual Meeting, no IPs had been received from EU - France, EU - Portugal or EU - Spain.
- 2.6 The Group had emphasised that a score of ‘1’ simply meant that a satisfactory answer/information had been provided and it did not mean that the Party/jurisdiction concerned was necessarily meeting NASCO guidelines or agreements. In some cases, responses were considered to be satisfactory even when the response was incomplete provided that an action had been identified to address any major shortcoming. The Group had also highlighted to the Council that, in accordance with the Guidelines, plans that still contained responses that had scored ‘2’, i.e. they contained unclear or incomplete answers/information, had not been identified in its report. The Council had noted that this could affect future reporting and had, therefore, asked that all Parties/jurisdictions address any shortcomings in the IPs by 1 September 2013, including providing further clarification in IPs assessed as satisfactory.

Evaluations since the 2013 Annual Meeting

- 2.7 Of the nine IPs considered to be satisfactory, eight Parties/jurisdictions took the opportunity to further clarify their plans, the exception being EU - Denmark. These plans were not re-evaluated by the Group but it wishes to acknowledge the efforts made by those Parties/jurisdictions to further clarify the information contained in their IPs.
- 2.8 Of the five plans that were noted as containing clear omissions or inadequacies in the Review Group’s report to the Council, four jurisdictions (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands, EU – UK (Scotland), the Russian Federation, and the US) made further revisions to their plans in the light of the Review Group’s findings. Of these, the revised IP for the US, CNL(13)49, was

considered to be satisfactory. The four remaining plans (Canada, CNL(13)51), Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Faroe Islands, CNL(13)53, EU - UK (Scotland), (CNL(13)50) and the Russian Federation (CNL(13)52)) are still considered by the Review Group to contain clear omissions or inadequacies in the responses to either or both questions 4.2 and 4.3 concerning demonstration of progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment. The Review Group notes that in the case of the Faroe Islands there are no self-sustaining wild salmon stocks to protect from aquaculture related impacts, but the IP recognises that wild stocks from other countries migrate into the Faroese zone and that there is a need for measures consistent with NASCO agreements. It also noted that the IP for the Russian Federation refers to the development of new legislation in relation to aquaculture including measures to protect the wild stocks. This legislation has since entered into force but it is not known if this will provide a mechanism for provision of such information in the future.

New Plans submitted since the 2013 Annual Meeting

- 2.9 Since the 2013 Annual Meeting, IPs have been submitted for EU – Spain (Asturias), CNL(13)62, EU – Spain (Cantabria), CNL(13)60 and EU – Spain (Galicia), CNL(13)61. The Review Group welcomed these contributions. Following their evaluation by correspondence, the revised IPs were reassessed by the Group. The Group noted that since its initial evaluation, information had been provided for inclusion in the NASCO rivers database for Galicia and Cantabria and this information has been uploaded to the website by the Secretariat. The Review Group noted, however, that there were clear omissions or inadequacies in all three of these IPs in that no information had been provided on the measures in place to prevent the introduction of *Gyrodactylus salaris* (question 4.6 in the IP template). Furthermore, no information has been provided to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice (question 4.2) and containment (question 4.3) at an experimental fish farm in Galicia or for containment (question 4.3) at freshwater hatcheries in Asturias.

Jurisdictions not submitting Implementation Plans

- 2.10 At the time of preparing this report no IPs have been received from EU – France, EU – Portugal or EU – Spain (Navarra) although a Plan from EU – France is under preparation and EU – Spain (Navarra) is developing a management plan for salmon. The lack of IPs for these jurisdictions is a concern to the Review Group.

Overview of IP evaluations

- 2.11 The Review Group had concluded that the new IP reporting template had worked well in terms of focusing the IPs on the key elements of NASCO Agreements. The IPs were more consistent and clearer than those prepared in 2007 and the amount of information was more manageable and amenable to evaluation. In most cases, they specified the actions to be taken, the timescales for these actions, the expected outcomes and the approach to monitoring and enforcement so that progress could be assessed. In some cases, the wording of the actions could have been more concise and clearer and this could affect the Group's ability to evaluate progress through the APRs. Overall, however, the Review Group considers that the new IPs are an

improvement over those provided in the first cycle. The timeliness of reporting and the lack of IPs for some jurisdictions remains a concern to the Group and it is clear that for some Parties/jurisdictions, providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment is challenging. The Review Group remains of the opinion that the IPs for all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place. It is hoped that this aspect will be addressed through the APRs or, if not, prior to the start of the next IP cycle.

3. Evaluation of the 2014 APRs

Background to the evaluation of the APRs

- 3.1 The primary purpose of Annual Progress Reports (APRs) is to provide details of:
- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the IP;
 - actions that have been taken under the IP in the previous year;
 - significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
 - actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
- 3.2 The Council had asked that the APRs be provided to the Secretariat by 1 April 2014 and that they be critically evaluated by the Review Group, working by correspondence. The aim of this evaluation was to ensure that jurisdictions had provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their IPs and had provided the information required under the Convention. As requested by the Council, the Secretariat had included the actions from the IPs into the APR template for each Party/jurisdiction before it was issued for completion. Where the Review Group considered that there were shortcomings in an APR, the Council had requested that it develop a list of questions to be sent to the Party/jurisdiction concerned by 1 May. Each Party/jurisdiction would have the opportunity to respond to these questions at a Special Session to be held during the 2014 Annual Meeting. While the Review Group had been asked to conduct its work by correspondence, the inter-sessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission in London on 14 and 15 April provided an opportunity for the Review Group to meet and it did so on 16 April.

Working methods

- 3.3 The Review Group comprised Paddy Gargan, Katrine Kaergaard, Paul Knight, Ted Potter, Rory Saunders and Sue Scott. The Secretary served as the Review Group's Coordinator but did not undertake any evaluations.
- 3.4 The Group undertook its evaluations in a similar manner to the evaluations of the IPs (see CNL(13)12) according to the following ground rules:
- (a) Initial reviewers were appointed (in the main the same initial reviewers as for the IP evaluations) and asked to lead the discussion within the Group and to produce an initial evaluation of each APR. This included an assessment of

progress against each of the actions in the IP and the reporting on new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management, on stock status and new factors affecting salmon abundance, on catch statistics and on the additional information required under the Convention;

- (b) The initial reviewers would remain anonymous in the report and in the event that one or more members of the Review Group did not agree with a particular aspect or aspects of the review then the report would indicate that there were dissenting views but not disclose which members of the Group expressed the dissenting views unless they wished to be identified;
- (c) The Group drew on information in the IPs, but commented only on the information presented in the APRs;
- (d) Because not all Parties/jurisdictions were represented on the Group, it was agreed that a member of the Review Group from a NASCO Party/jurisdiction whose APR was being reviewed would not be present during the initial review of that report. The members of the Group were aware that they were representing NASCO, and not their Parties or Organisations.

3.5 For each APR, the Review Group assessed whether satisfactory responses had been provided on:

- any changes to the IP, new initiatives and significant changes in stock status;
- the provision of complete catch data;
- progress made on each action; and
- other returns required under the Convention.

3.6 A summary of the information contained in the APRs, other than the reporting on progress with actions, is contained in document CNL(14)12.

3.7 When all evaluations were complete, a consistency check was undertaken of all the assessments. For each Party/jurisdiction, the evaluation provided a general assessment of the APR, a more detailed commentary on progress on each of the actions (relating to management of salmon fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and aquaculture and related activities) and a list of questions to be responded to at the Annual Meeting.

Parties/jurisdictions submitting APRs

3.8 Compared to the IPs, there was improved timeliness in the submission of the APRs and this was appreciated by the Group and facilitated its work. Seventeen APRs were submitted prior to, or within a few days of, the deadline of 1 April. Additionally, an APR for Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands was received after the Review Group had met and was reviewed by correspondence. An APR was received from EU - Spain (Navarra) which has not yet submitted an IP. As a consequence, this APR did not include any report on progress on actions but it did contain information on catch statistics and on the information required under the Convention. The Review Group has, therefore, evaluated eighteen APRs as follows:

Party/jurisdiction	Document No.
Canada	CNL(14)37
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands	CNL(14)38
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland	CNL(14)34
EU - Denmark	CNL(14)21
EU - Finland	CNL(14)30
EU - Germany	CNL(14)23
EU - Ireland	CNL(14)36
EU - Spain (Asturias)	CNL(14)25
EU - Spain (Cantabria)	CNL(14)26
EU - Spain (Galicia)	CNL(14)24
EU - Spain (Navarra)	CNL(14)35
EU - Sweden	CNL(14)22
EU - UK (England and Wales)	CNL(14)31*
EU - UK (Northern Ireland)	CNL(14)27
EU - UK (Scotland)	CNL(14)32*
Norway	CNL(14)28
Russian Federation	CNL(14)29
United States	CNL(14)33

* Updated APRs have subsequently been submitted by EU - UK (England and Wales) (CNL(14)39) and EU - UK (Scotland) (CNL(14)40)

Parties/jurisdictions not submitting APRs

- 3.9 No APRs were received from EU – France and EU – Portugal and this lack of complete reporting is a concern to the Group.

Outcome of the evaluation

- 3.10 The Review Group’s evaluations of the APRs are contained in document IP(14)14 (Annex 1). The Group noted that some of the wording in the APR template in relation to reporting of progress on each action may not have been clear and may have caused confusion in completing the APR template. In particular, it was intended that progress on each action would be reported under ‘Monitoring/Enforcement Results’ but in some cases only the approach to monitoring was described. The Review Group, therefore, recommends that the Secretariat be asked to modify the template to read ‘Progress on action to date’ rather than ‘Monitoring/Enforcement Results’. The Review Group also recommends that the Secretariat continues to include the actions from the IP into the APR template before it is issued. To facilitate this, the Review Group suggests that the Council requests that where a Party/jurisdiction has indicated in section 1.1 of this year’s APR that changes have been made its IP, it should resubmit the IP to the Secretariat before the 1 December of that year so that the revised actions can be included in the APR template. In the case of the EU – UK (Scotland) a revised IP, CNL(14)60, had been submitted which included an update on progress in the ‘Description of Action’, but the APR that was also submitted, CNL(14)32, contained the actions from the original IP with no update on progress. It was not, therefore, possible to review progress and the Review Group’s evaluation

reflects this. This is, of course, the first year of the reporting through the new APRs, so some teething problems are to be expected and it is anticipated that the 2015 returns will be further improved, particularly if the APR template is modified as suggested.

- 3.11 The Review Group noted that section 2.1 in the APR template seeks a description of any significant changes in the status of stocks relative to the reference points. Some jurisdictions provided very comprehensive information on current stock status but it was envisaged that this information would be provided only every five-years through the IPs. The intention in the APRs was only to briefly highlight significant changes that might have occurred. This could be clarified in the APR template.
- 3.12 The Review Group noted that it had not been intended that jurisdictions would modify the 'Description of Actions' or 'Expected Outcomes' in the APR unless changes were made to the IP. These entries to the IP are copied into the APR by the Secretariat and the Review Group suggested that this should be clarified on the APR template for future years. The Review Group recognised that the amount of information presented in terms of progress against actions varied markedly with some reports being very comprehensive and others providing so little information that it was hard to assess whether any progress had been made. In some cases, links to websites were provided but the Review Group does not have the time to review detailed reports online. This was particularly the case for the results of ongoing monitoring programmes e.g. in relation to water quality. While referring to additional material is helpful for those seeking more detailed information, a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress would facilitate the evaluation. A good example of an APR providing this information is EU - Ireland (e.g. action H1).
- 3.13 The Review Group noted that for the entry 'Ongoing/Completed' it had only expected a one word answer, potentially with a date (e.g. Ongoing, Completed for 2013; or Completed in 2015). The Review Group suggested that this should be clarified on the APR template for future years. The Review Group also noted that the intention had been that the section 'Achieved objective?' would be completed only after actions were completed. The Review Group suggested that this should be clarified on the APR template for future years.
- 3.14 A number of APRs referred to the diminishing availability of resources and it would have been useful to have had an indication in the APR of how this might be anticipated to affect the timescale for implementing the actions in the period covered by the IP (2013 – 2018).
- 3.15 It is clear from the APRs that a number of Parties/jurisdictions have concerns about the increase in applications for 'run of the river' hydro-electric installations in salmon rivers. The Review Group recommends that the Council consider this issue as a topic for a future Theme-based Special Session.
- 3.16 The Review Group prepared a summary table (below) to provide an overview of the number of actions in each IP/APR and progress with their implementation for each Party/jurisdiction. This table should be interpreted with care taking account of the explanatory footnotes.

Overview of APR evaluations

- 3.17 Overall, the Review Group considers that the reporting under the APRs worked well. It is the first year of reporting under the new IPs using a new APR template but generally the plans were submitted on time and the template ensured that the amount of information provided, particularly when compared to the previous Focus Area Reports, was amenable to review and was better focused on outcomes of actions to address particular threats/challenges identified in the IPs. Some APRs provided very limited information on which to assess progress and some information was not presented in the appropriate sections of the template. The Review Group's suggested changes to the template should further enhance reporting in the 2015 and subsequent APRs.
- 3.18 The Review Group believes that it is not reasonable to conduct a review of up to twenty APRs by correspondence in the short period of time available between the deadlines for submission of APRs and for issuing the list of questions to the Parties. The Review Group considers that, if it is to undertake a thorough, balanced assessment that is consistent among Parties/jurisdictions, it should meet for a two day period in mid-April. The Review Group also believes that the Council's decision to appoint the Review Group for a period of up to three years is appropriate since those undertaking the reviews of the APRs are familiar with the IPs and will be familiar with the progress reported in the 2014 APRs when the review of the 2015 APRs is undertaken. A case could be made for the same Review Group serving for the duration of reporting under the 2013 – 2018 IPs.

Summary overview of progress on the actions reported in the 2014 Annual Progress Reports

		Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)		European Union												
	Canada	Faroe Islands	Greenland	Denmark	Finland	Germany	Ireland	Sweden	Spain - Asturias	Spain - Cantabria	Spain - Galicia	UK - England & Wales	UK - Northern Ireland	Norway	Russian Federation	USA
Actions Related to the Management of Salmon Fisheries																
F1	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Not started	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
F2	Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Completed	Ongoing	Not started	Not started	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
F3	Ongoing						Ongoing	Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
F4	Ongoing							Not started		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Completed	
F5	Ongoing							Ongoing		Ongoing		Ongoing				
F6								Ongoing								
F7								Not started								
F8								Ongoing								
F9								Ongoing								
F10								Ongoing								
F11								Ongoing								
Actions Related to Habitat Protection and Restoration																
H1	Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Not started	Not started	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
H2	Ongoing			Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Not started	Ongoing	Not started	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
H3	Ongoing			Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Not started	Ongoing	Not started	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing		Ongoing
H4							Ongoing	Ongoing		Not started	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
H5								Ongoing					Ongoing			Ongoing
H6													Ongoing			
Actions Related to Aquaculture and Associated Activities																
A1	Ongoing	Ongoing			Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing		Not started		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
A2	Ongoing				Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Not started				Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
A3	Ongoing						Ongoing					Ongoing		Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
A4	Completed													Ongoing		Ongoing

Note: The table above is intended to show for each Party/jurisdiction which actions in the Implementation Plan have been initiated and are ongoing, which have yet to commence, and which are completed. It should be noted that the Implementation Plans specify the planned timescales for implementing the actions and these will differ, with not all scheduled to commence in 2013 and some continuing beyond 2018. The scope of the work under each action will also differ. In some cases, an action to address a particular threat/challenge might comprise a number of different elements and although the action is shown as ongoing it does not mean that all elements have commenced or conversely that some are not completed. Some actions that are shown as ongoing were reported as completed for 2013 but are scheduled to occur annually during the period of the Implementation Plan. There is also a wide range in the number of actions in each Implementation Plan.

IP(14)15

Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports

Canada, CNL(14)37

The twelve actions described in the Canadian Implementation Plan mainly describe what has already been done rather than what will be done between 2013 and 2018; it is therefore difficult to evaluate progress against the Implementation Plan. The APR describes work undertaken under most of the proposed actions, although these are presented in various sections of the report (including within the description of the action itself) and so are not as clear as they might otherwise be. Further information has been provided on work planned in the next few years which is helpful.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A study has been conducted to identify new reference points for Atlantic salmon that conform to the Precautionary Approach; retention limits are to be reduced by 50% in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 2014; and the use of catch and release is to be expanded in the Northwest Miramichi River (Action F1). A review of the control and eradication of smallmouth bass has been completed and a new programme is underway (Action A2). Liming work, in conjunction with the Atlantic Salmon Federation, is ongoing; positive early results are reported, but no details have been provided (Action A3). Efforts to improve compliance and reduce poaching are being implemented and progress is reported on: extensive monitoring and enforcement; reports of violations identified; and increases in penalties (Action A4). Work is ongoing to reduce by-catch in pelagic fisheries, and indications are reported of reduced catches and improved release of by-catch; guidelines have also been produced to improve monitoring (Action A5).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: All of the amendments to the *Fisheries Act* entered into force in November 2013, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada released its Fisheries Protection Policy Statement with the goal of providing for the sustainability and ongoing productivity of commercial, recreational and Aboriginal fisheries (Action H1); results are not yet available, but elements that are expected to be completed in the next year are listed. Three advisory reports were published which (a) describe the likely response of fisheries productivity to various common types of habitat changes, (b) provide a framework for assessing changes in fisheries productivity resulting from activities, and (c) describe methods that have been used to increase fisheries productivity (Action H2). Provinces have provided input on the updated policy and decision-making frameworks prepared by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to support the new Fisheries Protection Provisions and Program (Action H3) but no further details are provided.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Studies have been initiated on various aspects of sea lice biology, monitoring control and management, and an advisory report is expected in 2014 (Action A1). Various activities are underway to improve the regulatory framework for containment of farmed salmonids, and revised frameworks are expected in 2014 (Action A2). A new National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms was officially endorsed in 2013 and is expected to be implemented in

2014. Scientific advice was provided on the risks associated with the potential importation and use of European-origin Atlantic salmon broodlines in salmon aquaculture in Newfoundland (Action A3). Following a risk assessment, Canada approved the commercial production of growth-enhanced, transgenic Atlantic salmon in contained facilities (Action A4). It would have been helpful to have a summary of the outcome of the risk assessment in addition to the link to a website provided in the APR.

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *Since the status of MSW salmon stocks is currently of particular concern, what measures (Action F1) were introduced in 2013 or are planned to further regulate their exploitation?*
2. *What is the anticipated timescale of activities under Action H3 and how is this expected to assist salmon conservation and management?*
3. *The Implementation Plan for Canada provided no baseline information on current levels of sea lice or containment in salmon farms. How will progress towards NASCO's international goals for sea lice and containment be assessed and how will the findings be shared with the international community? The Review Group notes that Action A1 relates to new sea lice control measures.*
4. *In summary, what was the outcome of the risk assessment conducted prior to approval being granted for the commercial rearing of growth enhanced transgenic salmon and were the NASCO Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmonids, CNL(04)41 followed (Action A4)?*

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands, CNL(14)38

The Implementation Plan identifies only two proposed actions (there are no self-sustaining salmon populations in the Faroe Islands), and the APR provides a clear report on the progress made to address both of them in 2013.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Consistent with the ICES advice, there was no salmon fishery around the Faroe Islands in 2013 (F1).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: There are no self-sustaining salmon populations in the Faroe Islands and no actions in the Implementation Plan relating to habitat protection and restoration.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Monitoring and enforcement activities were conducted by the Faroese veterinary authorities in 2013. Rearing of transgenic salmon is not permitted under the Veterinary Act (Action A1).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

- 1. How do the veterinary authorities assess whether or not there is an issue in relation to sea lice and containment that would require enforcement action e.g. have thresholds been established for sea lice treatment?*
- 2. The Implementation Plan for the Faroe Islands provided no baseline information on current levels of sea lice or containment in salmon farms. How will progress towards NASCO's international goals for sea lice and containment be assessed and how will the findings be shared with the international community? The Review Group notes that Action A1 relates to new sea lice control measures.*

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Greenland, CNL(14)34

The Implementation Plan identifies only three proposed actions (there is only one salmon river in Greenland and no aquaculture), and the APR provides a clear report on the progress made to address them in 2013. Further information has been provided on work planned which is helpful.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A new reporting system was implemented in 2012 that requires that effort data is provided (number of nets, net type, hours fished). Evaluation of reporting in 2013 indicates that the data provided has improved, but the evaluation will continue until 2015 (Action F1). In July 2012, a quota for landings to fish factories was set for the internal consumption fishery. This quota is to be reviewed and revised as necessary in the light of catches and biological data. No change was made to the quota in 2013 (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: There is only one salmon river in Greenland, the Kapisillit River, and a protection plan is under development for the entire river including the estuary in order to safeguard it from pollution, development of agriculture and gill netting (Action H1). A draft Executive Order is currently being finalized and will be presented at a hearing in 2014. The APR indicates that salmon are also likely to be included in a project to develop a strategy for the protection of biodiversity in Greenland.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: There is no aquaculture in Greenland and consequently no proposed actions in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *Do the new reporting requirements that include provision of effort data apply to both licensed and unlicensed fishermen (Action F1)?*
2. *What biological data are taken into account in decisions concerning the quota to be set for factory landings and how does this influence the decision on the level of quota to be set (Action F2)?*
3. *Will baseline data on the status of salmon in the Kapisillit River be collected in support of the protection plan? Given the development of the protection plan for the Kapisillit River, what additional protection will be delivered by the possible inclusion of salmon in the broader biodiversity strategy for Greenland (Action H1)?*

European Union – Denmark, CNL(14)21

The Implementation Plan identifies only six proposed actions, but the APR provides very little information on the progress made to address them in 2013. The Review Group encourages more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2015 APR.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Denmark has a national cormorant plan to regulate recruitment of cormorants where predation on salmonids is perceived to be a problem, but it is unclear what work was undertaken in 2013 although reference is made to tracking and other studies (Action F1). Evaluation of by-catch of salmon and sea trout in the Ringkøbing Fjord is on-going, but no information has been provided on work undertaken in the past year, although reference is made to pound nets for flounder and whitefish having to lower their headropes to 30 - 50cm below the surface (Action F2). There has been no progress on the development of more reliable reference points for four wild salmon stocks (Action F3).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Actions are planned to evaluate the benefits of removing obstructions in rivers (Action H1), to conduct general habitat restoration work (Action H2), and to identify and quantify spawning and nursery habitats that can be opened (Action H3), but no progress has been reported.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: No actions were proposed in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *What work was undertaken in relation to the control of cormorants (Action F1) and evaluation of by-catch in 2013 (Action F2)?*
2. *What is the proposed timescale for developing more reliable stock reference points (Action F3)?*
3. *What progress was made in 2013 on each of the three actions related to habitat protection and restoration (Actions H1 – H3)?*

European Union – Finland, CNL(14)30

The Implementation Plan identifies only five proposed actions but the APR provides very little information on the progress made to address them in 2013. The Review Group encourages more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2015 APR. For Action F2, progress has been reported in the Description of the Action. The APR indicates that catch and release is ‘not applicable’ but it is not clear if this means it is not practised (i.e. is zero) or if statistics are not collected. Some information has been provided on planned work which is helpful.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A new regulatory regime for the River Teno is being negotiated with Norway (Action F1). Spawning targets have been established and are annually assessed for five tributaries of the Teno and in 2014 new, revised spawning targets will be set for most of the tributaries and the main stem of the Teno (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The Implementation Plan indicates that there are minor habitat issues in the Atlantic salmon rivers in Finland. The APR indicates that guidance has been issued to road constructors and that there was no noteworthy road construction in 2013 (Action H1).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: New legislation was introduced in 2010 to prevent the spread of *G. salaris*. Information highlighting the risks associated with the spread of the parasite was issued to fishermen and disinfection stations continued to be operated in 2013 (Action A1). Monitoring for the occurrence of escaped farm salmon originating in Norway continued in 2013, but no results have been provided (Action A2).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

- 1. What is the process for determining the new regulations for the river Teno with Norway and how is it anticipated that this will change the management regime to facilitate stock rebuilding (Action F1)?*
- 2. What is the current status of stocks in the five tributaries of the Teno River for which compliance with spawning targets is currently assessed and what is the timescale and approach for assessing compliance in the other tributaries and main stem for which spawning targets will be set in 2014?*
- 3. The APR indicates that catch and release is not applicable in Finland. Does this mean it is not practised even though the need to reduce fishing mortality is highlighted and, if so, are there plans to promote it as part of a stock rebuilding effort?*
- 4. The APR refers to monitoring for escaped farmed salmon. What has this monitoring shown and is there an ongoing dialogue with Norway concerning containment measures (Action A2)?*
- 5. The APR focuses on the Teno River (Actions F1 and F2). Are there similar initiatives to develop new regulations and spawning targets for the Naatamo River and, if so, what is the timescale?*

European Union – Germany, CNL(14)23

The Implementation Plan identifies seven proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013. Detailed supplementary information is provided in Appendices to the APR. A new action has been included in the Implementation Plan relating to genetic monitoring to assess the stocking programme in the Rhine, and progress is reported on this new action in the APR. Further information has been provided on planned work which is helpful. No estimate of unreported catch has been provided, but in all other respects the APR has been completed satisfactorily.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Delegates from each country through which the Rhine flows have reported on improving compliance by reducing by-catches and illegal harvest of salmon. No data are presented on the extent of the problem but the APR concludes that while there is good legislation in place control is difficult and only possible in areas where fishing is banned (Action F1). Stocking in a sub-system of the Agger River will cease in 2014 with a view to developing a self-sustaining salmon population (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Preservation and restoration of the ecological passability at 250 barrages in federal waterways is underway and includes actions in the salmon restoration rivers Rhine, Ems, Weser and Elbe. The first implementation phase encompasses 46 ‘measures’ and for more than 30 of these planning has commenced, two measures are under construction and one fishway is complete (Action H1). Since 2009, a range of measures to improve river continuity in the Rhine have been implemented, and a detailed table summarising these has been provided (Action H2). By the beginning of 2013, 29% of the measures intended to re-establish continuity of the Elbe River and its primary tributaries had been completed, 5% of the measures were under construction and 37% were scheduled for implementation (Action H3).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: The goal is to derive stocking material for the tributaries of the Rhine in North Rhine Westphalia from returning spawners, reconditioned kelts and captive breeding in order to eliminate the use of foreign ova. A Wild Salmon Centre Rhein-Sieg has been commissioned, and it is expected that the goal will be achieved by 2015 (Action A1). Following a workshop in 2013, harmonization of genetic monitoring throughout the Rhine catchment is underway with the aim of assessing the effectiveness of stocking including the different strains and strategies used and the relative importance of different tributaries (Action A2).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

- 1. No estimate of unreported catches has been provided but Action F1 refers to illegal catches. Are these illegal catches reported and included in the reported statistics and, if not, is an estimate available of the extent of such catches?*
- 2. Given that the APR indicates that control of illegal harvests and by-catch is only possible in areas where fishing has been banned, are there plans to introduce bans in other areas to safeguard salmon (Action F1)?*
- 3. Reference is made to the development of a self-sustaining salmon population in the Agger River without stocking and verification of the successful restoration of the salmon population. What criteria will be used to assess the success of the restoration programme (Action F2)?*

European Union – Ireland, CNL(14)36

The Implementation Plan identifies ten proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013. Useful quantitative data is provided to demonstrate progress on monitoring programmes etc. For Action H2, progress has been reported in the Description of the Action. A minor omission is the lack of total catches in 2012 and 2013 but in all other respects the APR has been completed satisfactorily.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: The APR indicates that protection against illegal fishing is a high priority in Ireland, and enforcement activities in 2013 are well described including man hours spent, number of nets seized, number of on-the-spot fines issued and number of prosecutions (Action F1). Action F2 relates to improving catch reporting through the use of national carcass tagging and logbooks. In 2013 reporting was 100% for professional fishermen and 73.5% for recreational fishermen and those not reporting were contacted and a proportion taken to court. An electronic licence system is now in place. A new fish counter strategy is under development. In 2013, a new fish counter website and a database were introduced, and validation is underway and will continue in 2014. Data from 29 counters were used in the 2012/13 assessment, an increase of 8 from the year before (Action F3).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Action H1 relates to agricultural enrichment and initiatives to improve water quality through improved agricultural practices. A new Nitrates Action Programme has been developed and will enter into force in 2014. The most recent monitoring indicated that 71% of river channels are at a high or good status with the virtual elimination of seriously polluted waters, and the focus is now on moderate and poor status sites. A new Forestry Bill, that aims to better protect sensitive sites, has passed stage 1 and 2 of Government and Committee hearings and will be published in 2015. There was general compliance with forestry codes of practice in 2013 (Action H2). The upgrading of inadequate sewage treatment works continued in 2013, and a new company, Irish Water, was created to take over the water investment and maintenance programme. Owners of domestic waste water treatment systems have been required since 2013 to register them, and an inspection plan has been developed (Action H3). Monitoring of lice levels on farms indicated that levels in spring 2013 were generally lower than the two previous years, and compliance with treatment targets was better than in 2011 and 2012 but varied between 53% and 100% on different life stages and in different areas (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: The APR indicates that the salmon farming industry complies with codes of practice regarding husbandry and good engineering practices and there were no reported escapes of farmed salmon in 2013 although there were large escapes in 2014 due to storms (Action A1). Monitoring of sea lice levels at farms was continued in 2013 (Action A2) - see H2 above. Early harvesting of farmed fish where gill damage has been detected can be used to prevent further outbreaks and there were no significant outbreaks of disease in 2013 (Action A3).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *The APR indicates that there were improvements in the compliance with treatment target levels sea lice for all salmon age groups, areas and months in 2013 compared to 2011 and 2012 but compliance in 2013 was not 100 % (Actions H2 and A2). What proportion of farms failed to meet targets levels and what actions are taken when targets are not met?*
2. *The APR states that there were no significant outbreaks of diseases in aquaculture facilities in 2013. What is the definition of a significant outbreak and does this relate to the prevalence or severity of the disease (Action A3)?*

European Union – Spain (Asturias), CNL(14)25

The Implementation Plan identifies only five proposed actions but the APR provides very little information on the progress made to address them in 2013. The Review Group encourages more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2015 APR. No estimate of unreported catch has been provided.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Work is reported to be continuing to increase surveillance on rivers in order to decrease poaching (Action F1) but no progress has been described other than coordination between river basins and between autonomous communities for border rivers. In order to regulate river catches to avoid over exploitation, quotas and fishing seasons were reduced and reserves created in 2013 but no details have been provided (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Work is said to be continuing to keep fish passes clear (Action H1), increase awareness of the problems faced by salmon at the southern limit of their range in Europe (Action H2), and update an inventory of obstructions to fish movements (Action H3), but virtually no details have been provided other than to report that a population census was conducted (H2) and the distribution area was monitored (H3).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: No actions were proposed in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *The answer to question 2.2 suggests that there is 100% catch and release in the in-river fisheries; if this is the case why is there a reported catch?*
2. *Action F1 suggests that poaching occurs; an estimate of unreported catch would, therefore, be expected.*
3. *What action is being taken to address the concerns about climate change and what were the findings of the population census (Action H2)?*
4. *What is the anticipated timescale for developing the inventory of obstructions and what action will be taken to address them (Action H3)?*
5. *The Implementation Plan for Asturias provided no details of measures to prevent the introduction of the parasite *G. salaris*. A brief summary of the measures in place would be welcome.*

European Union – Spain (Cantabria), CNL(14)26

The Implementation Plan identifies ten proposed actions but the APR provides very little information on the progress made to address them in 2013. The APR indicates that work on six actions has not yet commenced. The Review Group encourages more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2015 APR.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Monitoring of catches is ongoing as part of a programme to assess the status of stocks with a view to reducing exploitation of MSW salmon (Action F1). Monitoring of catches together with a tagging programme is being used to establish exploitation levels (Action F4). Juvenile surveys have been undertaken as part of an action to develop conservation limits and management targets (Action F3) and in connection with operating an index river site (Action F5). However, no further details of progress have been provided. No action was taken in 2013 to promote catch and release among stakeholders (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: There has been no progress on any of the proposed actions: to improve fish passage by removing dams, removing culverts, installing fishways and upgrading road-stream crossings (Action H1); to conduct research on the impacts of hydropower and implement new regulations to require fish passage facilities (Action H2); to provide appropriate river flows by implementing sustainable abstraction programmes (Action H3); and to develop integrated catchment management to reduce land-use impacts (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: An action to regulate salmonid stocking in Cantabrian rivers by implementing and enforcing the existing and a proposed new stocking programme has not yet commenced (Action A1).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *What is the proposed timescale for developing conservation limits for Cantabrian salmon stocks and how are fisheries managed in their absence (Action F3)?*
2. *What are the timescales for the commencing the proposed actions to improve fish passage (Action H1), undertake research on the impacts of hydropower (Action H2), provide appropriate river flows (Action H3) and develop integrated catchment management (Action H4)?*
3. *Is the annual report on status of salmon stocks and fisheries made available to the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon?*
4. *What is the proposed timescale for the regulation of stocking in Cantabrian rivers and will it conform to NASCO guidance on stocking (Action A1)?*
5. *The Implementation Plan for Cantabria provided no details of measures to prevent the introduction of the parasite *G. salaris*. A brief summary of the measures in place would be welcome.*

European Union – Spain (Galicia), CNL(14)24

The Implementation Plan identifies eight proposed actions but the APR provides very little information on the progress made to address them in 2013. The APR indicates that work on three actions has not yet commenced. Unreported catches and catch and release are recorded as ‘unknown’ and no estimates are provided. The Review Group encourages more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2015 APR.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: New reaches of the rivers Mera, Anllóns and Sor have been declared ‘salmon areas’ as part of an action to develop the management of trout in salmon rivers (Action F3); this should provide greater protection for salmon parr as natural baits are prohibited in these areas. The development of a Conservation/Restoration Plan for salmon rivers in the A Coruña province is nearly complete (Action F4); stocking programmes have been initiated in the rivers Anllóns and Sor but no details have been provided. Proposed actions to develop conservation limits for at least the Rivers Eo and Ulla (Action F1) and work with the central government of Spain to develop fishing rules and undertake research in the River Miño (Action F2) have not yet been started.

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Three dams were removed in 2013 increasing access to the upper Eo River, and a plan for the demolition of seven dams in the lower Ulla basin is being developed (Action H4). Guidelines for the implementation of compensation flows are under discussion (Action H3). No progress is reported on development of criteria for management of riparian vegetation (Action H1), or the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (Action H2).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: No actions were proposed in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

- 1. What are the timescales for commencing the proposed actions to develop conservation limits (F1), develop fishing rules and undertake research in the River Miño (F2) and develop criteria for management of riparian vegetation (H1)?*
- 2. How are fisheries managed in the absence of conservation limits and the fishing rules referred to in question 4 above?*
- 3. Are there any plans to develop estimates of unreported catch and the extent of catch and release?*
- 4. Do the stocking programmes in the A Coruña province conform to the NASCO guidance on stocking (Action F4)?*
- 5. The reference to the development of a ‘cover index’ in Action H1 is unclear and clarification would be welcome.*
- 6. What actions are being taken under the EU-WFD to protect and restore salmon habitat (Action H2)?*
- 7. What data on sea lice levels or containment are being collected at the experimental fish farm and how will they be taken into account in the evaluation of the project?*

8. *The Implementation Plan for Galicia provided no details of measures to prevent the introduction of the parasite G. salaris. A brief summary of the measures in place would be welcome.*

European Union – Spain (Navarra), CNL(14)35

No Implementation Plan has been submitted yet for the Autonomous Community of Navarra, but its APR indicates that the Government of Navarra started to prepare an Atlantic Salmon Management Plan in 2013. A preliminary draft is being revised but there is no scheduled date for its approval and no budget allocated for its implementation. The only other information provided in the APR is the nominal catch data, with no information on unreported catch or catch and release. While welcoming the submission of an APR for Navarra, the information provided does not meet all of NASCO's reporting requirements.

European Union – Sweden, CNL(14)22

The Implementation Plan identifies eighteen proposed actions and the APR provides brief information on the progress made to address them in 2013. Further information has been provided on planned work which is helpful. The APR indicates that work on six actions has not yet commenced.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: To reduce exploitation of wild fish, a new regulation setting a bag limit of two salmonid fish for anglers is proposed for 2014 (Action F1). A ban on gill net fishing in coastal waters deeper than 3m has been agreed and will be effective from March 2014 (Action F2). Fin clipping of reared salmon and trout has continued in 2013 and allows wild and reared salmon to be distinguished (Action F3). No progress was reported in establishing a genetic baseline for salmon stocks but work will commence in 2014 (Action F4). The index river continued to be operated in 2013 and the efficacy of the smolt trap was evaluated; an evaluation of the adult trap is scheduled for 2014. Together with new habitat data this work will support the establishment of conservation limits and management targets (Actions F5 and F6). Work in establishing in-river exploitation levels has not yet commenced (Action F7). More detailed catch statistics are being sought including information on catch and release which has been obtained for some rivers; effort data is still lacking (Action F8). The number of MSW salmon landed in 2013 declined although it is not clear if this was due to declining abundance or management actions (Action F9). Juvenile surveys were conducted in 17 of the 23 rivers in 2013 (Action F10). No new fish management units (FMUs) were established in 2013 (Action F11).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Liming of acidified salmon rivers was undertaken according to an agreed schedule but no details of the number of rivers treated or the results of monitoring the outcome are provided (Action H1). Habitat surveys will commence in 2014 (Action H2). Habitat restoration in salmon rivers is planned for 2015 (Action H3). Scientific background documents relating to establishing criteria for best available technology (BAT) for hydropower generation were published in 2013 and guidance will be produced in 2014 (Action H4). Work in establishing criteria and a work plan for surveillance of hydropower plants according to Environmental Law and the BAT is planned for 2015 (Action H5).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Annual monitoring of rivers for the presence of *G. salaris* was undertaken as planned and no new infested rivers were detected in 2013. Cooperation with Norway on *G. salaris* has been established (Action A1). Genetic screening for escaped farmed salmon will be undertaken when the genetic baseline scheduled for 2016 has been established (Action A2).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *The APR refers to a reduction in landings of MSW salmon in 2013. Is this because of declining abundance or the effect of management measures? Are any additional measures planned to protect MSW salmon in addition to the introduction of a two fish bag limit in 2014 (Action F1)?*
2. *Why does the ban on gill netting for salmon only apply at depths >3m in coastal waters and how will exploitation of mixed stocks in gill net fisheries in waters < 3m be controlled (Action F2)?*

3. *The stated objective is to phase out mixed-stock fisheries on wild salmon in reared rivers, and mixed-stock fisheries on the coast. How will this objective will be achieved given that a gill-net fishery at depths <3 m will still be in place along the coast (Action F2)?*
4. *Are there plans to treat rivers infested with the parasite *G. salaris* or are other measures planned to prevent its spread (Action A1)?*

European Union – UK (England and Wales), CNL(14)31

The Implementation Plan identifies twelve proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013. Further information has been provided on work planned which is helpful.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: An annual assessment of the status of salmon stocks was conducted in 2013 *inter alia* to determine the need for emergency regulatory controls (Action F1). Net Limitation Orders (NLOs) were reviewed for several single stock fisheries and some changes introduced in the number of licenses issued. Consultations are underway for other NLOs (Action F2). A range of actions have been taken to implement the policy on mixed-stock fisheries including review of the need for, and consultations on, new regulatory measures and genetic analyses are ongoing to determine the origin of catches in MSFs (Action F3). Promotion, with stakeholders, of catch and release fishing is ongoing and the 2013 provisional estimate (69%) is the highest in the time series (Action F4). A high level of compliance in use and recording of carcass tagging was observed in 2013 with no evidence of sale of rod (or illegally) caught salmon. Intelligence information is being used to direct enforcement operations and a national intelligence model is scheduled for implementation in 2014 (Action F5).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Fencing and planting targets under the ‘Keeping Rivers Cool’ project were met in two pilot catchments and partially completed in a third in 2013. Water companies submitted their business plans in 2013 and are required to consider climate change in their Water Resources Management Plans. Climate change is considered in river planning and will be reported in River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) due for consultation in 2014. Draft thermal standards for transitional and coastal waters are being developed (Action H1). Work was undertaken at 49 barriers improving access to ~1000km of river in England and Wales, protocols for new regulations are being developed to require fish passage and screening in England and research is underway into the effects of new in-river hydropower schemes (Action H2). The risk of environmental damage from unsustainable abstraction has been reduced or prevented since 2008 and a review of consents on all Natura 2000 rivers was concluded in 2013 and new licences, where warranted, are expected in 2014. A new Water Bill has nearly completed its passage through Parliament and includes provisions relating to sustainable management of water (Action H3). Progress on a number of actions relating to integrated catchment management through RBMPs are reported including surveys to determine why rivers are failing to achieve good ecological status, provision of catchment sensitive farming advice, launch of the Catchment Based Approach in 2013 and establishment of partnerships and financial rewards for good environmental stewardship (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Discussions are ongoing to agree stocking levels for brown trout and will be incorporated into stocking permits. A target to stop all stocking of diploid brown trout will come into force by 2015 but compliance with the policy in 2013 was higher than target. A review of stocking policy and hatchery operations was completed in Wales in 2013 (Action A1). A new live fish movement regulation is due for implementation in 2014, EU regulations on use of alien and locally absent species are being fully implemented, monitoring of wild fish populations for new and emerging disease threats has continued, projects are underway to assess the risks of *G. salaris* establishment and spread, the ‘check, clean, dry campaign’ is promoted, a new AquaInvaders ‘app’ has been made available to anglers to help report new occurrences and the distribution of non-

native species (including fish) and a five-year eradication programme for the topmouth gudgeon has been developed and implemented (Action A2). The application of national and EU regulations concerning discharge controls and prohibited substances is continuing and research on contaminants from fish farms is ongoing and expected for completion in 2014.

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *Are any interim measures for the North-East coast beach net fishery being considered (prior to the review in 2017) in light of the increased catch in 2013 (Action F3)?*
2. *Of the 1,300 cross-compliance inspections referred to in the APR, how many resulted in prosecutions and were remedial actions required (Action H4)?*
3. *How is the 'check, clean, dry' campaign promoted?*

European Union – UK (Northern Ireland), CNL(14)27

The Implementation Plan identifies eleven proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013. For Actions F1, F2 and F3 progress has been reported in the Description of the Action. Further information has been provided on work planned which is helpful.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: The voluntary cessation of commercial mixed-stock fishing in the DCAL area was maintained in 2013 and regular patrols confirmed no activity. Legislation will be in place in 2014 to prevent commercial netting until a series of criteria have been met including consistent achievement of conservation limits. There has been no commercial netting of salmon in the Loughs Agency area since 2010 (Action F1). Voluntary catch and release was requested in the DCAL area in 2012 and 2013 and enforcement patrols in 2013 indicated that a significant number of anglers complied with this request. Legislation will be in place in 2014 to make catch and release mandatory unless agreed criteria are met (Action F2). Mandatory catch and release before 1 June was required in the DCAL area in 2013 to protect MSW salmon, and only one infringement was detected during regular enforcement patrols. In the Loughs Agency area there was a public consultation on the number of MSW salmon that could be taken by anglers as part of a review of salmon conservation measures (Action F3). Patrols were conducted regularly in 2013 in both the DCAL and Loughs Agency areas, and details of nets and illegally caught salmon seized are provided (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Applications for hydropower are assessed, recommendations for fish passage requirements are provided and compliance monitored. A scientific monitoring programme will be carried out in 2014 to assess the potential impact of small scale hydropower on salmon (Action H1). Habitat improvement works were carried out in a number of rivers to restore habitat in impacted stretches of rivers following drainage and other works (Action H2). Monitoring programmes are in place in relation to trade and sewage waste discharge which now include indicative EU Water Framework Directive classifications but no data have been provided on enforcement actions taken (Action H3). A programme of works has been initiated to identify structures on major salmon rivers that could be barriers to migration. This has been completed on the Six Mile River, and two barriers are being considered for removal (Action H4). To reduce illegal alterations to salmon habitat, an advisory leaflet has been prepared for the DCAL area, and a river morphology handbook has been prepared detailing the permissions required to undertake work in rivers (Action H5). In order to develop an inventory of current and potential salmon habitat, surveys were conducted in two rivers in 2013 and conservation limits were established. Further surveys are planned for 2014. Habitat improvement works have been conducted in five rivers (Action H6).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Data was collected in 2013 to assess sea lice levels in a wild salmon stock and the level of genetic introgression of escaped farmed salmon on wild salmon stocks, and analysis will commence in 2014 (Action A1).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *What is the proportion of salmon that are released following capture by angling in the Loughs Agency area (Action F3)?*
2. *The APR (Action H3) refers to 'NASCO fishing data' and its use in the formulation of programmes of measures under the Water Framework Directive. What data does this refer to?*

European Union – UK (Scotland), CNL(14)32

The APR indicates that the Implementation Plan for the period 2013 – 2018 had been updated to reflect progress and developments, including a significant amount of planned activity. This will include an independent review of wild fisheries management in Scotland to be conducted in 2014 (sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the APR). The updated Implementation Plan was made available to the Review Group as document CNL(14)60.

While recognising this new Implementation Plan and the planned activities it contains, the Review Group was tasked with evaluating the APRs submitted by the Parties/jurisdictions to assess the progress that has been made on each of the actions in the previous year (2013).

- The APR for UK (Scotland) contained no details of monitoring/enforcement results (i.e. progress to date on the actions in the Implementation Plan), no indication of whether or not the actions were ongoing or completed and no assessment of whether or not the actions had achieved their objectives.
- The information presented on actions was only the description of the actions to be taken and their expected outcomes, as contained in the previous 2013 – 2018 Implementation Plan and incorporated in the APR by the Secretariat as requested by the Council. There was, therefore, no information in the APR to evaluate.

The Review Group also noted that at the time of the evaluation (16 April), the APR contained no information on catch statistics, although it indicated that these data would be made available on 29 April. The Review Group was aware, however, that catch statistics had been provided to ICES in late March. The APR template also allows for reporting of the information required under the Convention. This information includes details of any laws, regulations and programmes that have been adopted or repealed since the last notification. The Review Group is aware that in 2013 a significant new act had entered into force (Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013).

The Review Group encourages UK (Scotland) to report next year on progress against each action in its revised Implementation Plan using the agreed APR template (covering actions taken in 2014).

Norway, CNL(14)28

The Implementation Plan identifies twelve proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013. The Review Group welcomes the fact that further information on certain actions has been reported through ICES (e.g. experiments with temporary weirs to monitor and separate out farmed fish). Further information has been provided on work planned which is helpful.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: An annual assessment of stock status in terms of attainment of management targets was completed in 2012 for the period 2009 – 2011 (Action F1). Mid-season assessments of the fishery and salmon runs have been undertaken in some rivers, and their utility is being evaluated and introduction in other rivers is being considered (Action F2). Revised spawning targets have been developed in 2013, and a new generation of spawning targets will be developed from 2016 dependent on development of a sufficient scientific basis (Action F3). A new regulatory regime for the River Tana is being negotiated with Finland (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Planned liming programmes were undertaken in 21 rivers in 2013 (Action H1). Work is underway to revise the rules of operation for the largest and oldest hydropower plants by 2022, and the next step is to set environmental objectives in regulated rivers (Action H2) and to develop and implement River Basin Management Plans to protect and restore habitat for all water bodies according to the EU Water Framework Directive by 2015 (Action H4), but no details are provided of progress made in 2013. Eleven fish passes were restored in 2013 (Action H3).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: A regional carrying capacity model for sea lice is under development, but no details are provided of progress made in 2013 although it is anticipated that the model will be implemented in risk assessment and management from 2015 (Action A1). A new action plan is under development for the control of *G. salaris* which it is anticipated will involve rotenone treatment of 7 rivers over the next three years; surveillance programmes have been established on 14 treated rivers (Action A3). Action is also being taken to remove pink salmon from rivers in Finnmark in accordance with an agreed action plan but no details of the method used have been provided (Action A4). Progress has been reported on a range of actions to improve precautionary measures at fish farms: research on the use of sterile farmed salmon is underway; trials with the use of temporary weirs to monitor and remove escaped farm salmon from rivers showed the method to be effective but expensive; methods to identify the origin of farm escapees using trace elements are being evaluated; and a programme to improve estimates of farm escapees in wild populations is being set up (all under Action A2).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *What is the process for determining the new regulations for the River Tana with Finland and how is it anticipated that this will change the management regime to facilitate stock rebuilding (Action F4)?*
2. *How are the costs and benefits of hydropower generation assessed against conservation and restoration measures for salmon (Action H2)?*

3. *How are geographical areas with the highest risk of negative impacts from sea lice and biggest potential for further growth of salmon farming (or sea lice impact) being assessed (Action A1)?*

Russian Federation, CNL(14)29

The Implementation Plan identifies nine proposed actions, and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013. No information has been provided on unreported catch or the extent of catch and release but in all other respects the APR has been completed satisfactorily.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A comprehensive genetic baseline has been established through the Kolarctic Atlantic Salmon project, and a migration model and recommendations for management measures for coastal fisheries are being developed (Action F2). New amendments to the regulations for harvesting anadromous fish came into force in 2013 which will allow the establishment of science-based quotas for salmon fisheries conducted by indigenous people, although no timescale is provided for their introduction (Action F4). There has been progress in identifying where unreported catches may be occurring and in estimating these catches (Action F1). Conservation limits had previously been set for all rivers in the Murmansk region and for all exploited stocks in the Arkhangelsk and Nenets regions but not in Karelia. The APR indicates that new conservation limits based on assessment of carrying capacity of the rivers of Murmansk and Arkangelsk are planned using the findings from Action H1, but additional funding is needed (Action F3).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Reassessment of the carrying capacity of the salmon rivers in order to develop inventories has commenced in most regions, and is completed for the Barents Sea rivers, but no progress is reported to date for Karelia (Action H1). While general recommendations on habitat restoration have been developed, no detailed habitat plans have yet been developed (Action H2).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: A new Federal Law has come into force in relation to aquaculture but the APR indicates that by-laws are now required (Action A1). Monitoring is undertaken for the parasite *G. salaris*, which is present in the Keret River in Karelia; while the APR highlights a risk of further spread of the parasite by anglers, no measures to prevent this have yet been developed (Action A2). There are rules in place relating to movements from outside the North-East Atlantic Commission area of reproductively viable non-indigenous anadromous salmonids or their gametes, and the APR confirms that no such movements occurred in 2013 (Action A3).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

- 1. What is the anticipated timescale and process for the development of management measures for the coastal fishery (Action F2) and the introduction of science-based quotas for the indigenous people's fishery (Action F4)?*
- 2. No information has been provided on unreported catch or the extent of catch and release. The Review Group notes that there is an action (F1) intended to develop estimates of unreported catch. What is the timescale for meeting these two reporting requirements to NASCO?*
- 3. Inventories of salmon rivers are being developed or have been completed in some areas, but the APR indicates that completion of this task requires additional funding (Action H1). Will a lack of funding prevent this task being completed as scheduled by 2018?*

4. *The Implementation Plan for the Russian Federation provided no baseline information on current levels of sea lice or containment in salmon farms. How will progress towards NASCO's international goals for sea lice and containment be assessed and how will the findings be shared with the international community? Will the new Federal Law on Aquaculture and subsequent bylaws provide for this baseline data collection (Action A1)?*
5. *What measures are planned, other than monitoring, to minimise this risk of the further spread of *G. salaris* by anglers (e.g. increasing awareness of the risks, mandatory disinfection of gear, and treatment of the River Keret) (Action A2)?*

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The Implementation Plan identifies twelve proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2013.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: In order to minimise possible bycatch of sea run salmon, there is a prohibition on retaining landlocked salmon and brown trout over 25 inches in length in certain waters, and fishing regulations explain that sea run salmon are endangered and cannot be taken. There are also consultations among biologists in order to reduce the effects of competition and predation on salmon, although this has not yet led to a comprehensive conservation plan covering the salmon's range (Action F1). The closure of all directed fisheries for salmon was maintained in 2013, databases were queried for presence of salmon in catches, and surveillance was conducted for potential poaching although no results were provided (Action F2). The US participated actively in NASCO meetings concerning the West Greenland and St Pierre and Miquelon fisheries (Action F3).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The Veazie Dam, the lowermost dam on the Penobscot River and a partial barrier to salmon, was removed in 2013 and, taken together with the removal of Great Works Dam in 2012, it is anticipated that this will significantly improve fish passage for salmon and other fish species. Several other smaller dam removal and fish passage improvement projects have recently been completed or are underway (Action H1). An archive of enforcement and monitoring results in relation to implementation of the Clean Water Act is available online, and, in summary, fines over the last five years amount to ~\$210,000 (Action H2). NMFS and FWS completed many consultations in 2013 with other Federal Agencies and provided recommendations to prevent degradation of Essential and Critical Fish Habitat and reduce incidental mortality, although the APR notes that there may have been some loss to productive capacity (Actions H3 and H4). There has been re-focusing of the limited resources towards actions most likely to benefit salmon and, following the 'Salmon Summit', increased focus on river connectivity and ensuring as many healthy smolts as possible leave rivers in the US. However, financial constraints have required reductions in conservation hatchery production throughout the United States (Action H5).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Monitoring has continued in relation to the protective measures agreed in 2003 and in 2013 there was one reported escape event at a fish farm but no aquaculture origin fish were captured in rivers in Maine. Maine's aquaculture suspect identification and notification protocol was updated. Disease monitoring and control was conducted at both conservation hatcheries (in accordance with protocols and biosecurity plans) and adults taken from the wild to hatcheries were screened for diseases (Action A1). Fish health status in the Northeast Region is reviewed annually and guidelines have been developed that enable prevention of importations or transfer among States of baitfish infected with listed pathogens (Action A2). Broodstock management protocols have been implemented at conservation hatcheries to maintain genetic diversity of the hatchery stock rebuilding program and a parr collection programme was initiated in 2013 to reduce reliance on sea-run fish for broodstock (Action A3). There has been coordination within Maine in relation to planned stocking events, and the APR indicates that some stocking of brown trout continues, although it is not clear if this is a concern for wild Atlantic salmon (Action A4).

Questions for response at the 2014 Annual Meeting:

1. *What were the results of the surveillance conducted routinely in rivers for potential poaching activity (Action F2)?*
2. *What is the expected impact of the reduced financial support on the maintenance of the hatchery programme for stock rebuilding of endangered salmon populations, including for maintaining genetic diversity in the hatchery programme (Action H5)?*
3. *With regard implementing the protective measures identified in the 2003 Biological Opinion concerning aquaculture, what has been the outcome of the continuing collaboration with Canadian provincial and federal agencies to inform new regulations for consistency with US federal permit requirements (Action A1)?*
4. *Have there been any incidents of disease outbreaks of concern to wild salmon linked to bait fish importation or transfer (Action A2)?*
5. *How is the coordination of state programs that stock salmonids to support recreational fisheries being achieved and are there concerns that continuing stocking of brown trout could impact endangered salmon populations (Action A4)?*
6. *As the United States was unable to publish current levels of sea lice in salmon farms in their Implementation Plan, how will progress towards NASCO's international goals for sea lice be assessed and how will the findings be shared with the international community?*