

## **CNL(14)55**

### ***Draft Report of the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the Council***

***Le Nouveau Monde Hotel, Saint-Malo, France***

***3 - 6 June, 2014***

#### **1. Opening Session**

- 1.1 The President of NASCO, Ms Mary Colligan (US), opened the meeting and introduced Ms Elisabeth Dupont-Kerlan, ONEMA who welcomed delegates to Saint-Malo (Annex 1). The President then made an Opening Statement (Annex 2).
- 1.2 Written Opening Statements were tabled by Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States (Annex 3).
- 1.3 A written Opening Statement was tabled by the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Committee (EIFAAC) (Annex 4).
- 1.4 A written Opening Statement was tabled on behalf of all the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 5).
- 1.5 A written Opening Statement was tabled by Sami Parliament (Norway) (Annex 6).
- 1.6 The President expressed appreciation for these statements and closed the Opening Session.
- 1.6 A list of participants is given in Annex 7.

#### **2. Adoption of Agenda**

- 2.1 The Council adopted its agenda, CNL(14)53 (Annex 8).

#### **3. Election of Officers**

- 3.1 The Council unanimously elected Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) as its President and Mr Jóannes Hansen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) as its Vice-President.

#### **4. Financial and Administrative Issues**

##### **4.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee**

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(14)5. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to adopt a Decision concerning the NASCO Deferred Salary Scheme and Staff Fund, CNL(14)19 (Annex 9);
- (ii) to accept the 2013 audited accounts, FAC(14)2;
- (iii) to adopt a budget for 2015 and to note a forecast budget for 2016, CNL(14)20 (Annex 10);
- (iv) to confirm the appointment of Chiene + Tait of Edinburgh as auditors for the 2014 accounts;
- (v) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee, CNL(14)5.

## **5. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information**

### **5.1 Secretary's Report**

The Secretary made a report to the Council, CNL(14)6, on: the status of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention and Membership of the regional Commissions; the receipt of contributions for 2014; applications for observer status to NASCO; applications to conduct scientific research fishing; fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties; NASCO's public relations work; the FAO FIRMS partnership; the Handbook of Basic Texts and the possibility of organising an International Year of the Salmon that is being discussed within the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC).

He reported that there had been no applications for NGO status since the last Annual Meeting and no applications to conduct scientific research fishing in the Convention area during 2014. There had been no changes to the status of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention or in the membership of the regional Commissions. All contributions for 2014 had been received and there were no arrears.

There had been no sightings of vessels fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties during the year since 1 April 2013, and none since the early 1990s, but surveillance is limited to the summer months. The External Performance Review Panel had concluded that NASCO had demonstrated that it had responded quickly to address IUU fishing in areas beyond fisheries jurisdiction by vessels registered to non-Parties. However, it felt that NASCO should consider enhancing its current surveillance efforts by requesting the cooperation of NEAFC and NAFO in reporting on any suspected IUU fishing activities for salmon that may be detected in their MCS operations. The Secretary reported that he had been engaged in discussions with the Secretaries of NEAFC and NAFO regarding possible cooperation on this matter and a report had been made under the Action Plan referred to in paragraph 6.3 below.

In 2013, the Council had accepted an invitation to participate in the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) partnership. The primary aim of FIRMS is to provide access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources. It is part of the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS). The Secretary reported that the FIRMS Partnership

Agreement was signed by the President and NASCO became a partner on 16 December 2013. Information about NASCO has been included on the FIRMS website. NASCO has been asked to provide additional information using an agreed FIRMS template and a draft document was considered by the Council. The Council agreed this document and asked that the Secretary send it to the FIRMS Secretariat for inclusion on the FIRMS website. The document would be updated in 2015 in the light of the advice from ICES.

The Council asked that the Secretary continue to liaise with the NPAFC and report back on any developments with regard to the possible International Year of the Salmon.

## **5.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2013**

In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention, the Council adopted a report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2013, CNL(14)7.

## **5.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize**

The President announced that the winner of the \$2,500 Grand Prize was Mr Valentin Efremenkov. The winning tag was of Russian origin and had been applied to a fresh summer run salmon in the recreational catch and release fishery on the Eastern Litsa River on the Kola Peninsula. It was recaptured by an angler fly-fishing on the same river. The Council offered its congratulations to the winner.

## **5.4 Scientific Advice from ICES**

The representative of ICES presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to the Council, CNL(13)8 (Annex 11). In response to a request from the representative of the European Union, the representative of ICES agreed that in future ACOM Reports page numbering for the different sections would be included in the table of main tasks in the report and that the nominal catches by country shown in Figure 10.1.5.2 would also be presented both as graphics and tables.

The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Island and Greenland) asked if ICES would support a scientific research fishery given that the information on stock composition is many years old. The representative of ICES responded that ICES looked to use the best available data. The representative of the NGOs referred to the lack of conservation limits (CLs) in Scotland and asked ICES to clarify the actual basis the stocks are managed. The representative of ICES responded that Scotland was working towards establishing CLs but these were unlikely to be developed imminently so other approaches were being used. This issue would be considered at the Theme-based Special Session.

In 2013, ICES had been asked to provide a review of the stock status categories currently used by the jurisdictions of NASCO, including within their Implementation Plans, and advise on common approaches that may be applicable throughout the NASCO area. NASCO has recommended the development of CLs for all stocks but these have not yet been developed by some jurisdictions where alternative stock abundance indicators may be used in management. ICES had advised that the

implementation of any standardised classification scheme may also be difficult, given differences in the way national management advice is presented in different jurisdictions. Nevertheless, ICES had considered that it might be possible to develop a classification more closely reflecting the generally applied categories used for describing stock status and providing management advice (i.e. conservation limits). ICES had developed a preliminary tentative example of this but indicated that approaches would need to be developed to enable compliance with the classification criteria to be averaged over time periods and thus avoid the need for updating of the rivers database on an annual basis.

The Council recognised the value of a consistent and uniform approach to presenting information in salmon stocks and decided to establish a Working Group comprising scientists and managers to work by correspondence and the coming year with a view to meeting during the 2015 Annual Meeting. The Council agreed Terms of Reference for this Working Group CNL(14)56 (Annex XX). The Secretary would liaise with the Parties on their participants to serve on the Working Group.

#### **5.5 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board**

The report of the meeting of the Board, CNL(14)9 (Annex 12), was presented by its Chairman, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway).

#### **5.6 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee**

The Acting Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC), Mr Tim Sheehan (US), presented a draft request to ICES for scientific advice. Upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES, CNL(14)10 (Annex 13).

Last year, on the recommendation of the SSC, the Council had decided that, in future, it would provide feedback to ICES on the responses provided to any new questions included in the request for advice. To facilitate this, the SSC had identified the origin (the Council, a Party or the NGOs) of new questions in the 2013 request for advice, CNL(13)10, so that appropriate feedback could be sought following presentation of the advice. The SSC had consulted the originators of the questions and included the feedback, or follow-up questions, in its report to the Council.

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

#### **6.1 Special Session: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2013 – 2018 Implementation Plans**

The first Annual Progress Reports (APRs) under the 2013 - 2018 Implementation Plans were made in 2014 using the agreed template, CNL(12)43. The primary purpose of the APRs is to provide details of: any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plans; actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plans 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.

The APRs had been subject to a critical evaluation by a Review Group. The purpose of the evaluation was to ensure that jurisdictions had provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their Implementation Plans along with the information required under the Convention. Where there were shortcomings, the Review Group had developed questions which had been sent to the jurisdictions with a request that they respond to these at the Annual Meeting. A summary of the returns (CNL(14)12) was presented under item 6.5. The returns themselves are contained in documents CNL(14)21 to CNL(14)40.

Dr Rory Saunders (US) presented the report of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group, CNL(14)11 (Annex 14), during a Special Session of the Council.

The Review Group had concluded that the new Implementation Plan reporting template had worked well in terms of focusing the plans on the key elements of NASCO Agreements. The Implementation Plans 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. Overall, the Review Group considered that the new plans 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.

For the Annual Progress Reports, the Review Group considered that the reporting had worked well; generally the reports 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 Annual Progress Reports 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 had suggested changes to the template that should further enhance reporting in the 2015 and subsequent APRs.

During the Special Session, the Parties/jurisdictions had the opportunity to respond to the questions raised by the Review Group. The written responses to these questions are included in document CNL(14)54 (Annex 15).

The Council agreed to the changes proposed to APR template (CNL(12)43), as detailed in the Review Group report and asked that where a Party/jurisdiction changes its IP it should send a revised version to the Secretariat no later than 1 December so that any revised actions can be included in the APR template for that Party/jurisdiction before it is issued for completion. The Review Group had recommended that rather than conducting its evaluations by correspondence it should meet for two days in April 2015 and that the members of the Review Group should continue to serve on the Group, as the Council had intended, for the 2015 evaluations. The Council agreed to both these proposals.

## 6.2 **Theme-based Special Session: Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks below their conservation limits**

At its Thirtieth Annual Meeting, the Council had decided to change the structure of its Annual Meetings, on a trial basis in 2014, in order to improve the opportunities for exchange of information during the meeting. The Council asked that the President and Secretary develop the agenda and schedule of meetings to allow for greater exchange of information through Theme-based Special Sessions. The management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks below their conservation limits was chosen as the topic of the first of these Theme-based Special Sessions, and a full-day had been allocated to the session. The Council had agreed that the presentations at this Special Session would include details on how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions including the interests of indigenous peoples.

A Steering Committee, comprising Guy Mawle (Co-Chair of the Socio-Economics Working Group), Jóannes Hansen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)), Niall O'Maoileidigh, Chairman (European Union), and Paul Knight (NGOs) had developed a Programme for the Theme-based Special Session, CNL(14)13 (Annex 16). The Steering Committee will prepare a report of the Theme-based Special Session after the Thirty-First Annual Meeting. The Council noted that an item on Mixed Stock Fisheries would be included on the agendas for the 2015 Annual Meeting of each of the Commissions.

The Council thanked the Steering Committee for its work in arranging the Theme-based Special Session and the speakers for their excellent contributions. The Council recognised that as there are to be negotiations for new regulatory measures/decisions in both the West Greenland Commission and North-East Atlantic Commission in 2015 it would not be able to allocate a full day to a Theme-based Special Session. However, in view of the very valuable exchanges during the 2014 session the Council decided to ask the APR Review Group to identify a topic for a half day Theme-based Special Session. The Review Group would be asked to identify a topic for the session and develop a Programme. **The Council decided to hold a Theme-based Special Session at its 2015 Annual Meeting.**

## 6.3 **Progress in implementing the 'Action Plan for Taking Forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO', CNL(13)38**

In 2013 the Council had adopted an 'Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO (CNL(13)38). The Secretary reported on progress in implementing the recommendations in the Action Plan, CNL(14)14 (Annex 17). The recommendations in the plan relate to:

- actions which had been implemented or planned at the time the Action Plan was developed and for which there was a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes (section 1);
- new actions developed in response to the recommendations contained within the External Performance Review Report and the review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO (section 2);

- actions to strengthen NASCO's work on the management of salmon fisheries (section 3).

The Council welcomed the progress that had been made and ask that the Secretariat provide a further update on progress at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

#### 6.4 **Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry**

In 2013, the Council agreed that an item should be retained on the its agenda entitled 'Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry', during which a representative of the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) would be invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon. The regular meetings of the Liaison Group would not be continued, but, if a specific need arose, consideration could be given to convening a joint *ad hoc* group. The President indicated that she had consulted the representative of ISFA, Professor Phil Thomas, who had indicated that ISFA did not have any issues that it wished to raise with the Council. The agenda item will be retained on the agenda for the 2015 meeting.

#### 6.5 **New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management**

In accordance with the 'Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps', this item had been included on the Council's agenda and ICES had been requested to provide relevant information, which is contained in document CNL(14)8. Information is also presented in the summary of Annual Progress Reports, CNL(14) 12.

#### 6.6 **Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management**

Last year the Socio-Economics Sub-Group had reported to the Council, CNL(13)14, on progress on a number of areas on which it had been working. Prior to the Thirtieth Annual Meeting, the Sub-Group had completed the development of the NASCO web pages concerning the socio-economic aspects of the wild salmon and a new page 'Measuring Value' had been included and other pages had been updated. The Sub-Group had concluded that this aspect of its work was complete except for updating the pages as new information became available.

Dr Guy Mawle (Co-Chair of the Socio-Economics Sub-Group) presented the Report of the Socio-Economic Sub-Group, CNL(14)17. He reported that the Sub-Group had previously prepared tables of socio-economic information relating to rod and line and net and trap fisheries (based on information available in 2008) for possible inclusion on the NASCO website. Following presentation of the Sub-Group's report last year, the Council had asked that Parties update these tables and information had been received from Canada, EU - Germany and EU - UK (England and Wales) and the US had had indicated that since there have been no targeted fisheries for Atlantic salmon in the US for many years, the information should be removed. Given that most of the information in the tables is five or six years old and is far from complete the Sub-Group recommended that the tables should not be made available on the NASCO website. The Sub-Group also recommended that the Parties/jurisdictions be requested to advise the Secretariat of any new studies relating to the socio-economic values of

the wild Atlantic salmon and reiterated that future Theme-based Special Sessions might be held on integrating socio-economic factors in decisions relating to habitat protection, restoration and enhancement and to aquaculture. The Council agreed with these recommendations.

#### **6.7 Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

A report on the management of the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon, CNL(14)15 (Annex 18), was presented by the representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon).

The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) expressed gratitude to NASCO for the invitation to the Thirty-First Annual Meeting and re-affirmed a commitment to supporting the work and objectives of the Organization. The Council was advised that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) shares NASCO's concerns not only for the conservation of Atlantic salmon, but also for the socio-economic value of the resource. She congratulated NASCO for the quality of its work over many years, including the presentations, documents and discussions at the present meeting, and re-iterated a commitment to contributing to improving knowledge of Atlantic salmon stocks by continuing and strengthening the sampling programme of salmon harvested around the islands of St Pierre and Miquelon. The Council was advised that, despite budgeting constraints, there is one permanent scientist based in St Pierre and a second fisheries scientist based on Miquelon who is involved in communications and sampling. It is hoped that strengthening the cooperation and information exchange with both the recreational and commercial fishing community of St Pierre will enable the improved data collection.

The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) thanked Canada for their help and expertise and noted that it hoped to further develop scientific cooperation on: possible correlations between annual salmon returns and increased harvests at St Pierre and Miquelon and variables affecting the abundance of the resource, such as climate change or changes in the migration patterns of salmon.

She advised the Council that it was hoped that the actions being taken would contribute to improved genetic knowledge of the origin of the salmon harvested at St Pierre and Miquelon and noted that these actions will be continued, as recommended by the scientific community, over the coming years. Other factors affecting the abundance of the resource would also be explored. She noted that the record high catch in 2013 was largely due to increased abundance of the resource. It was also noted that, based on NASCO's best practice guidelines, dialogue with all stakeholders in the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery would be renewed and strengthened. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) advised the Council that she hoped to continue the fruitful partnership with NASCO and looked forward to working with the Parties.

#### **6.8 Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions**

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

## **7. Other Business**

7.1 There was no other business.

## **8. Date and Place of Next Meeting**

8.1 The Council agreed to hold its Thirty-Second Annual Meeting during 2 – 5 June 2015 at a venue in the UK to be decided by the Secretary or elsewhere if an invitation is received from a NASCO Party before 1 July.

8.2 The Council accepted an invitation from the European Union to hold its Thirty-Third Annual Meeting during 7 – 10 June 2016 in Germany.

## **9. Report of the Meeting**

9.1 The Council agreed the report of the meeting.

## **10. Press Release**

10.1 The Council agreed a press release, CNL(14)XX (Annex 19).

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page XX, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of Council papers is included in Annex 20.