



Agenda item 5.2
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Council

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Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2013

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Note: This Report is not intended for publication but is submitted to the Council under Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention which requires the submission of an annual report to the Parties. The report is a summary of the activities of the Organization in 2013, focusing on the actions taken. Full details of the work of the Organization are contained in the reports of the Thirtieth Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions and in the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

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Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the invitation of the Irish Government through the European Union, NASCO held its Thirtieth Annual Meeting in Drogheda, Ireland. The Organization greatly appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the hosts.

2. Council

- 2.1 The Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Council was held during 4 - 7 June 2013, under the Presidency of Ms Mary Colligan (US). Representatives of all the Parties, and observers from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), four inter-government organizations and sixteen accredited non-government organizations participated in the meeting.

(a) Report of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the Parties – A Vision for the Future of NASCO

- 2.2 In 2012, the Council had recognised that completion of the first cycle of reporting and review under the ‘Next Steps’ process and receipt of the External Performance Review Report had provided the Council with an opportunity to revisit its vision for the future of NASCO. An inter-sessional meeting of the Parties had, therefore, been held in order to:

- discuss the priority objectives and action areas for NASCO;
- review and evaluate the recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel;
- consider the recommendations from the ‘Next Steps’ process, other information concerning improvements of the functioning and operation of NASCO and input from stakeholders; and
- develop an Action Plan for consideration by the Council on potential actions.

- 2.3 The report of this inter-sessional meeting was presented in a Special Session. The Council welcomed the report and agreed on a number of actions. The vision, challenges and goals identified in the Strategic Approach for NASCO’s ‘Next Steps’ remain the priority areas for the Organization. The Parties had considered options for modernising and strengthening the work of NASCO in the light of the External Performance Review Panel’s findings, focusing on the ability of the proposals to further salmon conservation and management. While it had been recognised that NASCO’s Convention reflects the situation and circumstances at the time of its drafting, in practice the language had not constrained the Parties from incorporating modern fisheries management principles and addressing a broad range of impacts on the salmon and its habitat. In relation to protection and restoration of salmon habitat and aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics, the Parties had agreed that the ongoing actions in Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports were

the most productive way forward. However, for management of fisheries it was agreed that additional action was necessary and appropriate for strengthening efforts.

- 2.4 With regard to NASCO's future liaison with the salmon farming industry, the Council decided that while there was no longer a need for a permanent body (i.e. the Liaison Group) there remained the option to convene a joint *ad hoc* group if necessary. Furthermore, an item would be retained on future Council agendas to allow for an exchange of information between the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) and NASCO on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon and a representative from ISFA would be invited to participate.
- 2.5 At the inter-sessional meeting, the Parties were invited to submit to the Secretariat proposals for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings. Papers were received, prior to the Annual Meeting, from four Parties (Canada, Norway, the Russian Federation and the US). No suggestions were received for changing the location of the meeting. Following discussion of the documents, the Council decided not to change the frequency of its Annual Meeting but agreed to change its structure on a trial basis for 2014, with the aim of improving the opportunities for exchange of information during the meeting. The Council asked that the President and Secretary develop a Draft Agenda and Schedule of Meetings to allow for this through a Theme-based Special Session. The topic chosen for the first Theme-based Special Session, in 2014, was the management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits. The Council asked that the presentations at the Special Session should include details of how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions (see paragraph 2.13 below). Consideration would be given to holding future Themed-based Special Sessions on managing salmon under a changing climate and on developments in containment technology, including closed containment systems.
- 2.6 The Council decided that it may be beneficial to revise the stock categories used in the rivers database in order to better reflect stock status relative to the attainment of conservation limits. It therefore requested that ICES 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. The Council would decide on any changes needed to the categories in the rivers database in the light of the response from ICES.
- 2.7 The Council adopted an 'Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO'.

(b) Report of the Implementation Plan Review Group

- 2.8 Following a comprehensive review of the strengths and weaknesses of reporting under the first Implementation Plans (2007 – 2012), the Council had agreed that Implementation Plans would be the key documents in the second reporting cycle, but that greater emphasis should be placed on: the actions to be taken over a five year period; clearly identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales; and appropriate monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken. New Implementation Plans (for the period 2013 – 2018) were evaluated by a Review Group, comprising representatives of the Parties and the NGOs, to ensure that they provided a fair and

equitable basis for assessing progress in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. The report of the Review Group was presented.

2.9 The Council welcomed the improvements that had been made in reporting, although it noted that some issues of non-reporting and timeliness of reports had been highlighted by the Review Group. Both the Review Group and the Socio-economics Sub-Group had highlighted the fact that the Implementation Plan template did not include a question on how socio-economic factors are included in decisions relating to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics. The Council was advised that there is a question in the template 'What is the approach for determining the location of aquaculture facilities in (a) freshwater and (b) marine environments to minimise the risks to the wild salmon stocks' and that it had been anticipated that Parties and jurisdictions would indicate, in their responses to this question, how socio-economic factors are included in decisions relating to siting of aquaculture facilities. It was noted that this could be clarified in the template.

2.10 The Council noted that the Review Group was only required to highlight those plans that contained clear omissions or inadequacies in the answers/information provided. However, this meant that some plans that had been accepted could still contain unclear or incomplete answers/information. The Council recognised that this could give rise to difficulties in evaluating Annual Progress Reports and asked that any remaining issues in the Implementation Plans be addressed (including, ideally, any areas that scored 2 or 3) prior to 1 September 2013. In addition, the Parties were asked to provide feedback on the use of the template by 1 September 2013. The Council agreed that there should be a Special Session at its 2014 Annual Meeting to allow for presentation and discussion of the evaluations of the Annual Progress Reports under the Implementation Plans. The format, roles and arrangements for this Special Session on the Annual Progress Reports would be resolved by the Parties inter-sessionally.

(c) Annual Reports on Progress in Implementing NASCO's Agreements

2.11 The primary purpose of the annual returns is to track progress in implementing the actions contained in the Implementation Plans. A summary of the returns was presented.

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

2.12 Information was provided in the ACOM report from ICES and by the Parties in their annual returns.

(e) Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management

2.13 The report of the Socio-economics Sub-Group was presented. The Sub-Group had previously proposed that a Special Session on socio-economics be held in order to provide an opportunity for a more detailed exchange of information on how jurisdictions are incorporating socio-economic factors in decisions relating to: management of salmon fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; and aquaculture and related activities. The Council decided that the presentations in the 2014 Theme-

based Special Session, on the topic of management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits (see paragraph 2.5 above), should include consideration of how socio-economic factors are integrated into management decisions. The Council recognised the importance of ensuring that the Special Session allows for consideration of the interests of indigenous peoples. The Sub-Group had previously developed tables of socio-economic information relating to rod and line and net and trap fisheries in a format suitable for inclusion on the NASCO website. These tables were not complete, but were considered to be work in progress, and gaps in the information presented had been highlighted. The Sub-Group had not yet included these tables on the website, but proposed that their inclusion would be a good way to disseminate basic socio-economic data about the fisheries. The Council asked that the Parties, to the extent possible, provide updated information to the Secretariat with a view to including the tables on the website.

(f) The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB)

2.14 The report of the meeting of the Board was presented. The Board had previously decided to review its future role in the light of the inter-sessional meeting of the Parties (see (a) above) and the report of the meeting of the Board's Scientific Advisory Group's (SAG) Sub-Group on the Future Direction of Research on Marine Survival of Salmon. The Board decided that one priority should be to analyse the remaining samples and data arising from the SALSEA programme and recognised that it would be important to first clarify what remaining samples are available, how their analysis could benefit salmon management and how much the analyses would cost. The SAG Chairman agreed to develop this information. The Board decided that a particular focus should be studies to partition marine mortality and it agreed to the establishment of a Telemetry Sub-Group. As a first step, the Sub-Group will work by correspondence or hold a workshop to develop a 'road map' outlining a large-scale international telemetry project to ultimately provide quantitative estimates of mortality during phases of the marine life-cycle of salmon. The 'road map' will identify how the research will support conservation and management, provide an overview of resources required, identify key partners and identify current and proposed telemetry projects that could be linked with and enhanced by the proposed project.

(g) Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

2.15 A report was tabled containing information on management of the fishery and details of catches, the number of licenses issued and the sampling programme. There had been no scientific sampling of the fishery in 2012 and the provisional catch for 2012 was 1.446 tonnes compared to 3.756 tonnes in 2011. Canada and the US welcomed the commitment from France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to enhance the sampling programme in future and offered again to support the analysis of samples for genetic stock identification and/or scale analysis. The NGOs indicated that although the harvest in the fishery in 2012 had declined markedly, it intercepts endangered stocks of salmon in the US and threatened stocks in Newfoundland.

2.16 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that the question of acceding to the Convention would be discussed again but that it is likely that, as there is no option to have status as a Cooperating Non-Member State, France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) would wish to retain observer status to NASCO.

(h) Appointment of a new Secretary

2.17 Dr Peter Hutchinson was appointed as Secretary of NASCO for a four year period commencing on 1 July 2013.

(i) Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

2.18 There had been no applications to conduct scientific research fishing in the Convention area during 2013.

(i) Other Business

2.19 The scientific advice from ICES was presented. The Council adopted a request for scientific advice to be presented in 2014. The Council decided that, in future, it would provide feedback to ICES on the responses provided to any new questions included in the request for advice. In this regard, the SSC had identified the origin (Council, Party or NGO) of new questions in the 2013 request for advice, so that appropriate feedback can be sought following the presentation of the advice in 2014.

2.20 The Council accepted an invitation to join the FAO Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) partnership. The primary aim of the partnership is to provide access to a wide range of high-quality information on the global monitoring and management of fishery marine resources and it is part of the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS).

2.21 The Council was advised that the Sami Parliament-Norway has been granted observer status to NASCO, and that the observer status of the North-west Atlantic Marine Alliance had ceased. In total, NASCO currently has 34 accredited NGOs.

2.22 The Council received a report from each of the three regional Commissions on its activities (see sections 3, 4 and 5 below).

2.23 The Council adopted the report of the Finance and Administration Committee (see section 6 below).

2.24 The Council adopted a Report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2012.

2.25 The winner of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize was Ms Kathrine Pedersen, Norway.

2.26 The Council accepted an invitation from the European Union to hold its Thirty-First Annual Meeting in France during 3 - 6 June 2014.

3. North American Commission

3.1 The Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission was held in Drogheda, Ireland during 4 - 7 June 2013 under the Chairmanship of Mr Stephen Gephard (US).

(a) Review of the 2012 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES

3.2 The Commission reviewed the 2012 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The Commission agreed a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2014.

3.3 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) questioned what the reference to seasonal coverage of sampling meant. ICES indicated that the samples should be spatially and temporally representative of the catch.

(b) Management Objectives for Salmon Stocks in the US and Scotia-Fundy Region of Canada.

3.4 The United States presented a paper which referred to new management targets and indicated that it retained the right to revisit these objectives in case of changes in its management process and/or significant changes in stock status. Canada noted that recovery objectives have been defined for the three Designatable Units of Atlantic salmon (Outer Bay of Fundy, Southern Uplands of Nova Scotia, and Eastern Cape Breton, Nova Scotia) that comprise the Scotia-Fundy region. Canada indicated that it was not currently in a position to revise these objectives but expressed a willingness to participate in a process to review this issue.

(c) The St. Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

3.5 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) provided an overview of the fishery in 2012. The Commission was advised that the number of inspections in 2012 was 310, up from 60 in 2011. France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) had worked to improve management of the fishery before the start of the 2013 season with meetings being held in St. Pierre and Miquelon both for the professional and recreational fishermen. At these meetings:

- the permanent scientist in St. Pierre and Miquelon had given presentations on the biology and migrations of salmon and the objectives of NASCO;
- the Maritime Affairs administration had presented the new 'carnet de peche'. This includes reminders of the regulations and is to be used to collect mandatory data on a daily basis (catch size, time of day and place of catching).

3.6 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that there had not been enough scientific data to update the report with regard to research and sampling; only two fish were sampled in 2012 while the objective was to sample 20 - 25 fish. The objective remains to sample at least 20 - 25 fish in 2013 and identify the origin of the sampled fish against a Northwest Atlantic baseline of data. A France/Canada workshop was held in St. Pierre and Miquelon in 2012 (financed by the Territorial Council and Ministry). Scientists from Quebec and France met to carry out analysis of salmon scales. The workshop outlined the importance of the inter-lab collaboration

exercise, and ended with common annotation of some scale images to start a reference collection of Northwest Atlantic salmon (report available online).

- 3.7 Canada and the United States expressed their interest in France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) becoming a member of NASCO. However France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that at this time it would likely elect to remain as an observer to NASCO, but committed to provide catch and sampling data in a transparent manner. Canada indicated that effort should be put into sampling and offered to assist the scientist in St. Pierre and Miquelon with data collection and analysis. The United States appreciated the commitment from France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to data collection and the meetings with the fishermen referred to previously and offered to accept and process scale samples from the fishery. The United States noted its concern for every fish harvested given the low numbers returning to rivers in the United States. France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) advised the Commission that, in the past, samples had to be sent to a laboratory in France. However, they may be ready to have sample analysis completed in North America.
- 3.8 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) advised the Commission that it was unaware of any reason as to why the catch by the professional fishermen had decreased in 2012. In response to a question from the NGOs, neither Canada nor France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) were aware of Canadian aquaculture fish being shipped to St. Pierre and Miquelon. The Commission was advised that although there are reporting requirements, there is no quota for the fishery and tags are not required.

(d) Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

- 3.9 The United States and Canada presented reports summarising: the number of disease incidences; the number of breaches of containment; and a summary of introductions of salmonids from outside the Commission area. The United States provided an overview of an existing application to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to sell genetically modified salmon raised in facilities outside the United States. Egg production would be from a facility in Prince Edward Island, Canada and grow-out would occur in Panama. The proposal was for processed, table-ready salmon to enter the United States. The FDA is considering the proposal and has found no significant impact. Canada informed the Commission that there had been applications from two companies on the East coast to import small numbers of Norwegian-origin Atlantic salmon eggs from an Icelandic facility for the purpose of conducting performance trials in net cages at sea. All these requests were denied, due in part to the uncertainty surrounding growth, survival, and reproduction of potential farm escapes. Canada agreed to provide clarification on the incidence of disease in Canada and that it would update its paper to provide this information and suggested that the template should be changed to include this data for all parties.

(e) Sampling in the Labrador Fishery

- 3.10 Canada provided an overview of the sampling programme to date, expected results and plans to continue.

(f) Other Business

- 3.11 The winner of the North American Commission prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Jody Middleton, Canada.
- 3.12 A document was tabled that provided a range of options to consider in a sampling plan for the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon. Canada and the United States both offered assistance to support sampling at St. Pierre and Miquelon through increased coordination, sample processing and/or data analysis. The NGOs noted that it may be difficult for the recreational fishermen to accurately determine the sex of the fish.

4. North-East Atlantic Commission

- 4.1 The Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission was held in Drogheda, Ireland during 4 – 7 June 2013, under the Chairmanship of Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway).

(a) Review of the 2012 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES

- 4.2 The Commission considered the scientific advice from ICES and agreed a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2014. The NGOs noted that the ICES presentation indicated that there had been no signs of improvement in stock status and had emphasised the need for action to restore stocks.

(b) Management of Mixed-Stock Fisheries

- 4.3 This item had been included on the 2013 Agenda at the request of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that there should be a focus on this topic because of the mismatch between hard and soft law measures and how they were applied to managing mixed-stock fisheries and by-catch.
- 4.4 Presentations on the management of mixed-stock fisheries were made by the European Union (Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, and the UK), Norway and the Russian Federation.
- 4.5 The Commission was advised that the Solway Firth fishery in the European Union (UK-Scotland) was not classed as a mixed-stock fishery as, where rivers discharge into one estuary, they are classed as a single management unit (river stock) and that exploitation of all river stocks, whether classed as a mixed-stock fishery or not, were managed in the same way, i.e. by aiming to meet their Conservation Limit. The NGOs stated that the EU presentation demonstrated that there are significant mixed-stock fisheries across the EU and sought clarification of the steps being taken to reduce their impacts and to ensure areas classified as Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive are being managed properly. The European Union stated that the Habitats Directive has to be transposed into national legislation by EU Member States and that implementation is then monitored. Indications of failure to implement the Directive lead to discussions and potentially to infraction proceedings and fines. The threat of fines is often enough to lead to action. The NGOs stated that

there is also a moral obligation in respect of management, as Greenland and the Faroe Islands are asked not to fish while the EU continues to operate mixed-stock fisheries. The representative of the European Union stated that it is not a matter of morals but a matter of law.

- 4.6 The NGOs noted that around 60,000 fish are taken annually in mixed-stock fisheries in Norway, and asked if Norway believed that appropriate action is being taken in order to meet NASCO commitments, particularly given the actions taken in Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Norway responded that the number of fish has been decreasing substantially and indicated that not all stocks exploited are below their Conservation Limits. Norway does not intend to close all its mixed-stock fisheries. As in previous years, bilateral consultations were held at the 2013 Annual Meeting on the mixed-stock fishery in coastal waters of Northern Norway. Salmon of Russian origin are intercepted in this fishery. Some elements of the fishery were discussed, among them the type of gear used for salmon fishing in the Norwegian county of Finnmark. The Parties at the consultations had exchanged views on the process to further the negotiations regarding this fishery and its impact on Russian salmon. This process was agreed. The Parties will have a report from the international Kolarctic salmon project, in which Russia, Norway and Finland are participating, in early 2014. Russia and Norway will then have a bilateral meeting in April 2014 after the publication of the report to discuss further the issue of the interceptory sea fishery based on the project findings. Further actions by the Parties will be decided according to the outcome of the bilateral meeting.
- 4.7 The Russian Federation indicated that the actions described in its presentation would be taken and were part of an action plan described in its Implementation Plan.
- 4.8 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) thanked the Parties for their presentations and noted that they highlight the imbalance between NASCO's Convention-based and other measures; the issue of mixed-stock fisheries needs therefore to remain high on the agenda and Parties should bear their own mixed-stock fisheries in mind when considering the management of the fisheries at Faroe Islands and West Greenland.
- 4.9 The NGOs stated that there was a need to discuss mixed-stock fisheries more deeply, that there are some complex mixed-stock fisheries in Norway and noted that there can never be assurance that they are not impacting on weak stocks, and that these should be areas of discussion in the Special Session on mixed-stock fisheries planned for 2014. The Chairman noted that this is a complicated area and regulatory decisions on mixed-stock fisheries are very difficult. It was also noted there may be uncertainty with regard to interpretation of NASCO's guidelines concerning mixed-stock fisheries and how to incorporate socio-economic issues in any management decisions taken.

(c) Progress with development of a Risk Framework for the Faroese Fishery

- 4.10 ICES reported on the progress made since 2012 in advising on the implications of selecting different numbers of management units. In response to a question from the NGOs, ICES advised the Commission that it is not possible to definitively state how long it would take before a quota would become available for the Faroese salmon fishery but noted that the situation can change quickly, to the extent that there could

be significant change over the period of one year.

- 4.11 The Commission was advised that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) would need more time for domestic consultations before it would be able to further consider a Risk Framework for the Faroese fishery. The Chairman suggested that the Commission should seek to resolve the issues concerning the Risk Framework as soon as possible so that it can be agreed before there is the potential for a fishery, and encouraged the Parties to consider how progress could be made over the coming year.

(d) Regulatory Measures

- 4.12 At the Commission's Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting in 2012, a Decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was agreed, together with a Framework of Indicators (FWI). The report of the FWI Working Group in 2013 highlighted that there had been a significant change in the indicators for the Southern NEAC MSW stock complex. The FWI indicated that the PFA forecast for this stock complex was an over-estimate. The Group had concluded that a full reassessment of the ICES management advice was required. The Group had also recommended that ICES be asked to review and update the NEAC indicator data sets and FWI worksheet before they are used in association with a future multi-annual regulatory measure for the Faroes salmon fishery. In accordance with the Group's findings, ICES had been requested to provide catch options or alternative management advice for the North-East Atlantic Commission area for 2013 - 2016 and to update the FWI.
- 4.13 ICES advised the Commission that there were no mixed-stock fishery catch options for the North-East Atlantic Commission stock complexes for the years 2013/14 – 2015/16. ICES recommended that in future, when the fishery is closed, the FWI should only be used to signal an under-estimate of forecast abundance. If this approach had been used in 2013, the reassessment of the management advice would not have been required. The Commission agreed that this approach to running the FWI should be applied in 2014.
- 4.14 The Commission decided to continue with the decision agreed in 2012 for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 and agreed that a Working Group would again be established to run the FWI in January 2014.

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

- 4.15 The Commission was advised that of the 48 rivers infected with *G. salaris* in Norway, 20 have been declared free from the parasite after successful rotenone treatment and a further 14 have been treated and are being monitored to confirm that they are free of the parasite. A new Action Plan was to be developed in Norway in 2013, which would include rotenone treatment of five infected rivers in the Rauma region in 2013 and 2014; rotenone treatment in two rivers in the Skibotn region in 2015 and 2016; and the construction of a barrier in order to reduce the area to be treated in the river Driva. This barrier will be built 27km upstream in 2014 or 2015, depending on the necessary approvals and funding being obtained.

4.16 The NGOs indicated a concern about the further spread of *G. salaris* and believe that all Parties and jurisdictions should have contingency plans in place in order to minimise the risk of its introduction.

(f) Other Business

4.17 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was The River Owners' Association on the River Figgjo, Norway.

4.18 The NGOs noted that there was no agenda item on aquaculture in the North-East Atlantic Commission area and stressed that Parties should be confident that proposed aquaculture facilities will not impact on wild fish. The NGOs suggested that a detailed discussion on this topic is needed, and that the Annual Progress Reports under the Parties' Implementation Plans need to be comprehensive and clear, in order to allow full consideration of this issue.

5. West Greenland Commission

5.1 The Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission was held in Drogheda, Ireland during 4 - 7 June 2013. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Mr Ted Potter (European Union) chaired the meeting.

(a) Review of the 2012 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES

5.2 The Commission reviewed the 2012 fishery at West Greenland and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The Commission adopted a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2014.

5.3 A report was presented on the fishery in Greenland in 2012. For the first time under the Commission's Regulatory Measure for an internal use only fishery, Greenland permitted landings at fish factories; a quota of 35t was imposed on these landings. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that unlike other components of Greenland's fishery where landed salmon is used at home, sold in local open air markets, or provided to hospitals and other institutions in its fresh form, factory landed product is processed, frozen, and sold to supermarkets and grocery stores for year-round sale. Prior to the advent of the factory landings quota, wild Atlantic salmon was available only as fresh product during the three months of the fishing season (August-October). This change in management approach is expected to reduce product waste from spoilage and facilitate competition between domestically produced salmon with imported salmon sold in grocery stores in Greenland. In addition, factory reporting is more accurate than reporting from other components of the fishery and may reduce unreported catches. Total reported landings for the 2012 fishery at West Greenland amounted to 34t. Of this, 19t was harvested for private or subsistence consumption or sale to open air markets, etc. and 15t was harvested against the allocated 35t factory landings quota.

5.4 Several Commission members expressed concern about Greenland's decision to establish a 35t factory landings quota, noting that a commercial quota of this type, that included processing and freezing capabilities, facilitated internal market expansion. This, combined with the lack of limitations on the fresh fish component of the fishery,

created the potential for substantial increases in capacity, effort and catches. It was also noted by these Parties that it could take some time to see these changes and that increased harvests could impact imperiled salmon stocks. It was suggested that catches could reach upwards of 65t if the entire 35t factory landings quota were taken together with the 10t unreported catch level and the more traditional component of the local use fishery, estimated to be about 20t, but which has, in the past been as high as 43t.

- 5.5 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) advised the Commission that such changes would already have been observed in 2012 if they were going to occur and that the market for salmon in Greenland was self-limiting, given the size of the country's population and the balancing effect of the market for fresh vs frozen salmon. The price of salmon sold to factories was only a third of salmon sold elsewhere in Greenland, such as open air markets, which also had a limiting effect on harvests and the number of fishermen reporting landings was about the same from 2011 to 2012 and had been relatively stable over the last 10-year period.
- 5.6 While appreciating the explanation given, some Parties expressed concern about relying on market forces to control the salmon fishery and noted that they were not confident that harvests would not increase. It was noted that the total number of licenses to fish salmon had increased by 20% from 2011 to 2012 and that there were no regulations in Greenland to limit access to, or effort in, the fishery. It was noted that the fish currently being imported from Norway would be of farmed origin and the factory landings would result in some of these being replaced by wild caught salmon. This was an additional concern.
- 5.7 The United States underscored the precarious state of US wild salmon stocks and noted the critical importance of limiting mortality of US origin salmon to the lowest possible level. The need for effective monitoring of, and reporting on, the West Greenland fishery was stressed and the need for additional improvement in that regard was noted. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) advised that there was no requirement for fishermen in Greenland to file nil reports but that all fishermen are required to report their catches.
- 5.8 The NGOs reiterated many of the concerns expressed by the Parties and asked how Greenland ensured that factories did not export salmon. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stressed that there was really no substantive change to the fishery and that there are regulations in place that ban export of wild salmon. The change was introduced in response to the recommendation made by the Focus Area Review Group on fisheries management that a quota be established. It was noted that this recommendation was for a quota to restrict total catch, not just one component of the fishery.

(b) Regulatory Measures

- 5.9 A Multi-Annual Measure for the West Greenland fishery was adopted at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Commission to apply to the fishery in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Under the measure, the catch at West Greenland would be restricted to the amount used for internal consumption in Greenland, which in the past has been estimated to be 20t annually. The Commission also agreed in 2012 that the same

procedure used during the previous Regulatory Measure for applying the Framework of Indicators (FWI) would apply during the period of the new Measure. The Commission was advised that application of the FWI in 2013 indicated that there had been no significant change and, therefore, that a reassessment of the ICES management advice for the 2013 fishery at West Greenland was not required and the 2012 Regulatory Measure would continue to apply in 2013.

- 5.10 In light of the discussion on the change to the management structure of Greenland's fishery, the United States expressed concern that Greenland's fishery as proposed for 2013 and 2014 was not in line with the basic assumptions behind the 2012 measure and would, therefore, be inconsistent with that Regulatory Measure. In an effort to ensure as much consistency as possible between the fishery and Regulatory Measure, the United States proposed a supplementary action calling on Greenland not to authorise factory landings in 2013 and 2014 or, at least, to lower the factory landings quota to 15t. It also proposed that an inter-sessional meeting of the Commission be convened to begin work on the development of a new Regulatory Measure and that reporting and monitoring of Greenland's fishery be improved.
- 5.11 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) did not feel such a measure was needed given the extensive explanations of the fishery. Moreover, it noted that there is a significant imbalance with regard to the management of Greenland's fishery and the homewater fisheries of some other Commission members, including one Party which had been harvesting six times more salmon than Greenland for the last 10 years, and that Greenland's catch amounted to only 1.5% of total catches in the North Atlantic. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) found the US proposal unacceptable and believed that the Regulatory Measure agreed in 2012 should continue, Greenland was acting in a manner consistent with that agreement and it was inappropriate for the Commission to set a quota for the internal use fishery as this was solely a Greenlandic decision.
- 5.12 The United States responded that the explanations offered by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) were sufficiently clear. This did not mean, however, that there were not still concerns. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) again stated that there is only one fishery in Greenland and its two components regulate one another. The European Union shared the US concerns and expressed support in principle for the US proposal, noting that the situation in Greenland had the potential to become a problem. Canada noted concern about the change to Greenland's fisheries management and indicated that it needed time to consider the best approach to address the issue. It also noted concern about data collection and reporting on Greenland's fishery and stressed that improvements were needed to be able to accurately assess it.
- 5.13 The NGOs reiterated strong concerns about the factory landings quota and its potential implications and noted that if each Greenlander consumed only 1 salmon a year, the harvest would amount to 180t. It was also noted that Parties should not depend on the 2012 fishery to be a predictor of the future. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that the figures offered by the NGO representative were not realistic and reiterated that there is a tradeoff between catches for factories and catches made to supply open air markets.

- 5.14 In light of the differing views expressed by the Parties, the Chairman noted that agreement on all aspects of the US proposal could not be reached and opened the floor for views on a way forward. Canada asked Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) if they could commit to improving monitoring of the fishery as a whole and also noted openness to convening the Commission inter-sessionally to consider the management of the Greenland fishery further. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reiterated that catch data would improve as a result of the ability of fishermen to land at factories. The Chairman reminded the Parties that Greenland had previously committed to taking steps to improve monitoring and reporting in its fishery. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that actions in this regard had already been taken in accordance with the new Executive Order, including airing TV spots and deploying wildlife officers to communities in Greenland to remind fishermen to report their salmon catches.
- 5.15 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) advised that Greenland's government would be aware of any increases in licenses, although it was not possible to limit access to licenses at this time. It was stressed that, given limited opportunities and resources, Greenland has a great interest in the conservation of wild salmon as Greenlandic people would perhaps be most significantly impacted if the resource were no longer available to them. Greenland is not in a position at this time to curtail the internal use fishery.
- 5.16 The Parties supported tentatively scheduling an inter-sessional meeting of the Commission and if such a meeting were needed, it should occur after the data became available for Greenland's 2013 fishery. In that regard, the target timeframe for a meeting was mid-March.
- 5.17 The European Union noted that they considered that Greenland was acting in good faith in managing their fishery and that the interests of the Parties were converging. The United States also recognised that discussions had been difficult and noted their appreciation for the openness of the discussions. It was acknowledged that the open air market landings had decreased in 2012 and that factory landings resulted in improved reporting. The US noted that 2012 was the first year of the new management approach in Greenland and it was not clear what impact this might have on the growth of the fishery, and that the year Greenland implemented new management measures was the same year that the United States had very poor returns.
- 5.18 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) took note of the views expressed and expressed disappointment that the Parties could not understand Greenland's situation. It was again stressed that Greenland is entitled to a fair share of the resource and that some other jurisdictions are not doing as much as they should to conserve Atlantic salmon and that these discussions would be reported to the new Greenlandic government.
- 5.19 The NGOs expressed extreme disappointment that no action was taken to limit Greenland's factory landings and stated the view that Greenland's fishery was occurring outside the NASCO regulatory agreement.

(c) Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

- 5.20 The West Greenland salmon fishery sampling programme provides valuable biological data to the ICES stock assessments that inform science-based management decisions for the West Greenland fishery. The Commission adopted a West Greenland Fishery Sampling Agreement for 2013.
- 5.21 The NGOs welcomed the agreement and noted the difficulty of collecting catch statistics in Greenland, given the remoteness of the communities and the nature of the fishery. It was stressed that accurate statistics on the fishery were critical for effective science and management and the Parties were urged to consider further enhancements to monitoring and data collection, including expanding the use of observers in a way that ensures a stratified approach and provides a linkage to genetic analyses. The NGOs indicated that such actions could help further identify where salmon from weaker stocks most likely occur, including as by-catch in other fisheries, so management actions can be more accurately targeted to protect the most vulnerable populations. The Commission was advised that the current sampling programme does provide broad coverage and an ability to discriminate among stocks. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that all fishermen are required to report their catches and that wildlife officers monitor Greenland, including in remote locations, to be sure reporting is occurring as required. In addition, it was noted that the management approach recently implemented allowing landings at factories will most likely result in decreases in unreported catch levels. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stressed that additional fisheries observers in Greenlandic communities were not needed. The Chairman observed that such an approach would also likely have substantial resource implications.

(e) Other Business

- 5.22 A paper on Management Objectives for Atlantic Salmon in the United States was presented. It was noted that the current management objectives for US stocks are out of step with NASCO agreements as well as domestic requirements and are in need of revision. The Commission was advised of the rationale used to develop the new management objectives and was requested to offer any feedback it may have. Canada noted its support for the new management objectives put forward by the United States. The United States advised the Commission that the matter had not been put before ICES, but that they would welcome ICES review of the implications of the new management objectives. The Commission was advised of the possibility that ICES would advise that the management objectives were lower than the Conservation Limits on US rivers and, consequently, could suggest that the objectives are not conservative enough. The Commission referred the matter to the SSC to develop an appropriate question for ICES.
- 5.23 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Ole Simonsen, Nanortalik, Greenland.
- 5.24 The Commission elected Mr Ted Potter (European Union) as its Chairman and Mr Carl McLean (Canada) as its Vice-Chairman.

6. Finance and Administration Matters

6.1 The Finance and Administration Committee met prior to, and during, the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Council under the Chairmanship of Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway).

(a) Relationship with ICES

6.2 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ICES is subject to review every three years. The Committee recommended that the MoU with ICES be continued for a further period of three years from 2013 on the understanding that, during this period, there should be no increase in costs above the rate of inflation in Denmark. The possibility of receiving the advice earlier than the date specified in the MoU (10 May) had been raised with ICES. The Committee asked that the Secretary continue to liaise with ICES on this matter, noting that it is particularly important to receive the advice early in years when catch advice is provided to inform negotiations of Regulatory Measures.

(b) Consideration of the 2014 Draft Budget, Schedule of Contributions and Five-year Budgeting Plan

6.3 In 2012, the Committee had requested that a more detailed break-down of the planned expenditure be shown within budget heads and the Secretariat had, therefore, developed a new format for the 2014 Draft Budget which the Committee welcomed. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council the adoption of a 2014 Draft Budget and 2015 Forecast Budget. A five-year spending plan (2014 - 2018) was also provided for information. The US thanked the Secretary for providing salary information and asked that this information continue to be given to the Committee on a confidential basis.

(c) Audited Accounts

6.4 The audited accounts for 2012 were presented. The Committee was advised that the Council had decided to change auditors for the 2012 accounts, and that Chiene and Tait had completed the audit effectively and the accounts had been issued to the Parties by 15 February 2013 as required. The Committee recommended to the Council the adoption of the 2012 audited accounts.

6.5 The Committee was advised that a management letter had been received from Chiene and Tait concerning the Staff Fund Rules, the potential retention of Secretariat member status for former employees, and making reference to a special review. These matters were discussed by the Heads of Delegations and the Committee. It was decided that the Parties would draft questions for Chiene and Tait regarding the scope of the analysis of the Staff Fund and retention of Secretariat member status for former employees. Parties will also submit questions to seek clarification from Chiene and Tait on the products and cost of their conducting a special review. All questions to be submitted will be circulated to the Parties. The Secretary would then relay these questions to Chiene and Tait on behalf of NASCO and provide the response from Chiene and Tait to the Heads of Delegations who will then take a decision on how they would like to proceed. In the event that Chiene and Tait are unable to address all of the questions,

then alternative arrangements will be considered by the Parties.

- 6.6 The Committee noted that in 2012, the Council had agreed to appoint Chiene and Tait of Dublin Street, Edinburgh, as auditors for the 2012, 2013 and 2014 audited accounts.

(d) Other Business

- 6.7 A Draft MoU with OSPAR which had been developed by OSPAR, was considered at the 2012 Annual Meeting. Following simplification of the document, a revised Draft MoU was presented and the Committee recommended that it be adopted by the Council and sent to the OSPAR Commission for consideration at its Annual Meeting. Once the MoU has been accepted by the OSPAR Commission, it would then be signed by the President on behalf of NASCO.
- 6.8 The Committee asked that the Secretariat obtain a quotation for re-printing the Handbook of Basic Texts and consult with the Parties so that a decision can be taken on whether or not to proceed.

Secretary
Edinburgh
8 April 2014