



Agenda Item 5.2
For Information

Council

CNL(15)14

Programme for the Theme-based Special Session

*Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on
impacts of hydropower*

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Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower

A Theme-based Special Session of the Council of NASCO
Wednesday 3 June 2015 (pm)

Background:

In 2013, the Council decided to change the structure of its meetings, initially on a trial basis, to allow for greater exchange of information through Theme-based Special Sessions. The first one-day session was held in 2014 on the topic of '*Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit*'. Time will be limited for this year's Theme-based Special Session because there will be negotiations for new regulatory measures/decisions in 2015. However, in view of the very valuable exchanges during the first Theme-based Special Session, the Council agreed to allocate half a day to a further session during the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting. The Implementation Plan (IP)/Annual Progress Report (APR) Review Group was asked to identify a topic and develop a Programme.

Salmon habitat in freshwater has been greatly affected by various activities, both small- and large-scale in nature. It is clear that much habitat has been lost over the last 150 years, although in recent years there have also been some notable gains. NASCO's objectives of conserving, restoring and enhancing Atlantic salmon can only be achieved if their habitat is protected, restored and, where appropriate, enhanced. Under the Plan of Action for Habitat Protection and Restoration, CNL(01)51, the goal for NASCO and its Parties is to maintain and, where possible, increase the current productive capacity of Atlantic salmon habitat. Barriers to migration in fresh water and estuaries, whether natural or man-made, can block or delay access and may lead to increased mortality through, for example, diseases, predation and, in the case of smolts and kelts, passage through turbines. Delays in smolt migration may also affect their survival when they enter the sea.

Information presented in the current IPs and first APRs of several Parties and jurisdictions highlights threats and management challenges posed by obstructions, including hydropower facilities, to both upstream and downstream salmon migration. Progress in improving river connectivity is reported including closure of some hydropower stations (e.g. Denmark) and dam removal projects (e.g. Sweden, US). However, a number of Parties and jurisdictions have expressed concern about the increase in applications for 'run of the river' hydropower installations in salmon rivers in response to the need to meet renewable energy targets.

Objectives of the Theme-based Special Session:

The objectives of the Theme-based Special Session are to review and share best practice on the approaches taken by NASCO Parties and jurisdictions to:

1. balance the pressures to refurbish existing and install new obstructions against the potential impacts on river connectivity, with particular reference to hydropower developments;
2. mitigate the impacts of existing obstructions, including hydropower schemes, on salmon populations;
3. evaluate the benefits and costs of removing dams and other obstructions.

Programme:

A half-day (1400hrs - 1730hrs) has been allocated to the Theme-based Special Session on the afternoon of Wednesday 3 June. The Review Group (Paddy Gargan, Katrine Kaergaard, Paul Knight, Ted Potter, Rory Saunders and Sue Scott) has worked with the Secretary in planning the Theme-based Special Session and has developed the Programme (see below). Written papers will be distributed prior to the Annual Meeting and a report of the Theme-based Special Session will be prepared by the Review Group synthesising the management implications.

Presentations:

During the session, each presentation will be allocated 20 minutes to include 5 minutes for discussion. There will be a period for general discussion at the end of the session. In order to ensure a valuable exchange of information, the Review Group has requested that general background information be kept to a minimum in the presentations and that Parties and jurisdictions ensure that specific information is provided to address one or more of the objectives outlined above. In particular, the Review Group asks that presentations:

- describe arrangements in place for consultation and information exchange among relevant agencies and stakeholders in relation to hydropower developments;
- indicate, briefly, work underway to improve the evidence base relating to fish passage;
- describe how conservation of productive capacity is taken into account in evaluating options for hydropower developments;
- where hydropower developments are approved, on the basis of overriding socio-economic factors, describe how any losses of productive capacity are minimised and compensation or mitigation measures agreed so that there is no net loss of productive capacity;
- highlight any examples of initiatives to improve fish passage, with particular reference to hydropower developments, which involve collaboration between governments and other stakeholders.

While it is not feasible to have presentations from all Parties and jurisdictions in a half-day session, the Review Group requests that all Parties and jurisdictions are prepared to respond at the Theme-based Special Session to questions relating to the points detailed in the five bullet points above and to provide written responses after the Annual Meeting (by 15 August).



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Programme

Timing	Title	Presenter
1400 - 1410	Introduction	President and Review Group
1410 - 1430	River connectivity and Atlantic salmon in Eastern Canada - mitigating hydro development impacts	Tony Blanchard and Cal Wenghofer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
1430 - 1450	Restoring access for migratory fish in the Penobscot River; the importance of stakeholder collaboration	John Banks, Penobscot River Restoration Trust, US
1450 - 1510	Restoration of upstream and downstream connectivity on the River Rhine	Clemens Fieseler, Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, Germany
1510 - 1530	Maintaining and improving river connectivity: the current position and experience in England	Lawrence Talks, Environment Agency, England, UK
1530 - 1550	Tea/coffee break	
1550 - 1610	Progress in developing best available technology for hydropower generation and other initiatives to improve fish passage in Sweden	Håkan Carlstrand, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, Sweden
1610 - 1630	Measures to improve fish passage in the north-eastern United States including development of performance (survival) standards for fish passage at hydro-electric dams	Jeff Murphy, NOAA Fisheries, United States
1630 - 1645	Challenges in maintaining and improving river connectivity and fish passage - an NGO perspective	Paul Knight, Co-Chairman of NASCO's accredited NGOs
1645 - 1730	General Discussion	
1730	Concluding remarks & Close of Special Session	Review Group