



Agenda item 4.2  
For adoption

## **Council**

**CNL(15)7**

### ***Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2014***

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Council**
- 3. North American Commission**
- 4. North-East Atlantic Commission**
- 5. West Greenland Commission**
- 6. Finance and Administration Matters**

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 2014, focusing on the actions taken. Full details of the work of the Organization are contained in the reports of the Thirty-First Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions and in the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.



***Report on the Activities of  
the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization  
in 2014***

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At the invitation of the Government of France, through the European Union, NASCO held its Thirty-First Annual Meeting in Saint-Malo, France. The Organization greatly appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the hosts.

**2. Council**

- 2.1 The Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the Council was held during 3 - 6 June 2014, under the Presidency of Ms Mary Colligan (United States). Representatives of all the Parties, and observers from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), four inter-government organizations and fourteen accredited non-government organizations participated in the meeting.

**(a) Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2013 – 2018 Implementation Plans**

- 2.2 The first Annual Progress Reports (APRs) under the 2013 - 2018 Implementation Plans (IPs) were made in 2014. The primary purpose of the APRs is to provide details of: any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the IPs; actions that have been taken under the IPs 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.
- 2.3 The APRs had been subject to a critical evaluation by a Review Group in order to ensure that jurisdictions had provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their IPs, along with the information required under the Convention. Where there were shortcomings, the Review Group had developed questions which were sent to the jurisdictions with a request that they respond to these, both orally and in writing, at the Annual Meeting. The report of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group was presented during a Special Session of the Council. The Parties/jurisdictions had the opportunity to respond to the questions raised by the Review Group during this session.
- 2.4 The Review Group had concluded that the new IP reporting template had worked well in terms of focusing the plans on the key elements of NASCO Agreements and noted that 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, the IPs 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 IPs were an improvement compared to those developed in the first reporting cycle. The Review Group had noted that the timeliness of reporting and the lack of IPs for some

jurisdictions remains a concern and that 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.

2.5 For the APRs, 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. However, 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 had suggested changes to the template that should further enhance reporting in the 2015 and subsequent APRs and these changes were agreed by the Council. The Council 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 also recommended that rather than conducting its evaluations by correspondence, it should meet for two days in April 2015 and that the current members of the Review Group should continue to serve on the Group, as the Council had intended, for the remaining evaluations under the five-year period covered by the IPs. The Council agreed to both these proposals. The Council agreed that in future the Parties should provide written responses to the Review Group's questions prior to the Annual Meeting.

**(b) Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks below their conservation limit**

2.6 At its Thirtieth Annual Meeting, the Council agreed 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 its Annual Meetings. It decided to do so through Theme-based Special Sessions, the first of which was held at the Thirty-First Annual Meeting on the topic of 'Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks below their conservation limit'. A full day was allocated to this session and the programme was developed by a Steering Committee comprising representatives of the Parties, the Socio-Economics Sub-Group and the NGOs. The Council had asked that presentations include details of how socio-economic issues are considered in management decisions, including the interests of indigenous peoples. A full report of the Theme-based Special Session was prepared by the Steering Committee.

2.7 The Council noted that an item on mixed-stock fisheries would be included in the agendas for the 2015 Annual Meetings of each of the Commissions. Due to the negotiations for new regulatory measures/decisions in both the West Greenland and North-East Atlantic Commissions, it was noted that there would not be sufficient time to allocate a full day to a Theme-based Special Session at the 2015 Annual Meeting. However, in light of the very valuable exchanges during the 2014 session, the Council agreed to allocate a half day for a Theme-based Special Session in 2015 and the APR Review Group was asked to choose a topic and develop a Programme for this session. At its 2015 Annual Meeting, the Council will agree a topic and appoint a Steering Committee for the 2016 Theme-based Special Session.

**(c) 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’**

2.8 The Council was updated on progress in implementing the 2013 Action Plan. 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 asked that the Secretariat provide a further update on progress at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

2.9 The Council was advised that although 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, 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 Council was advised that the Secretary had been engaged in discussions with the Secretaries of NEAFC and NAFO regarding possible cooperation on this matter.

**(d) Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management**

2.10 The Report of the Socio-Economic Sub-Group was presented. 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 in 2013, 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 United States had indicated that since there have been no targeted fisheries for Atlantic salmon in the USA for many years, the information should be removed from the tables. 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.

**(e) Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry**

- 2.11 In 2013, the Council had agreed that an item should be retained on 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. ISFA indicated that it did not have any issues that it wished to raise with the Council at the Thirty-First Annual Meeting. The item will be retained on the Agenda for the 2015 Annual Meeting.

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

- 2.12 A report was tabled containing information on management of the fishery. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) re-affirmed a commitment to supporting the work and objectives of NASCO. 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. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) re-iterated a commitment to contribute 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. There is one permanent scientist based in St Pierre and a second fisheries scientist based on Miquelon 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 and Miquelon will enable improved data collection.
- 2.13 France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) 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. The Council was advised 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. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) indicated 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 participants and stakeholders in the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery would be renewed and strengthened. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) advised the Council that it hoped to continue the fruitful partnership with NASCO.
- 2.14 The United States requested that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) consider establishing management control measures for the fishery and that doing so would be consistent with the EU-France’s laudable commitment to conservation and restoration of salmon in France.

**(g) Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area**

- 2.15 There were no applications to conduct scientific research fishing in the Convention area during 2014.

**(h) Scientific Advice**

- 2.16 The scientific advice from ICES was presented. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if ICES would support a scientific research fishery at the Faroe Islands given that the information on stock composition is many years old. ICES advised the Commission that it sought to use the best available data, but noted that it is not appropriate for ICES to offer an opinion on whether there should be a scientific research fishery at the Faroe Islands. The NGOs referred to the lack of Conservation Limits (CLs) in Scotland and asked ICES to clarify the actual basis for management of the stocks. 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 further at the Theme-based Special Session.
- 2.17 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 IPs, and to 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 on stock status and decided to establish a Working Group, comprising scientists and managers, to work by correspondence over the coming year and with a view to meeting during the 2015 Annual Meeting. The Council agreed Terms of Reference for this Working Group.
- 2.18 The Council adopted a request for scientific advice to be presented in 2015. The Council agreed that the originator of new questions in the Council and Commissions should be asked to provide feedback to ICES in the light of the advice provided.

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

- 2.19 Information was provided in the ACOM report from ICES and by the Parties in their APRs.

**(j) The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB)**

- 2.20 The report of the IASRB was presented. The Board had recognised the potential that a large, international, collaborative telemetry project has to provide valuable new information on migration paths and quantitative estimates of mortality during phases of the marine life-cycle of salmon. It adopted a Resolution that: encourages NASCO Parties to continue the development of local collaborative telemetry projects;

encourages the development of large international collaborative telemetry projects that together build upon and expand local efforts; requests Parties to make efforts to identify funding sources to support telemetry projects; and supports the development of the SALSEA Programme by facilitating international collaboration in these areas. The Board agreed to hold a workshop to support and facilitate the development of an international telemetry programme. The objective of this programme is: to monitor the progress of salmon from NAC and NEAC rivers along their migration routes to and from the marine feeding areas; and to estimate stage and area specific mortality rates of these salmon during the marine phase of their lifecycle, including the transition from the freshwater to the marine environments.

**(k) International Year of the Salmon**

2.21 The Council was advised that discussions had been held with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) regarding the possibility of an International Year of the Salmon. The Secretary agreed to continue to liaise with NPAFC on this matter and report back on any developments.

**(l) Election of Officers**

2.22 The Council 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.

**(m) Other business**

2.23 The Council was advised that NASCO became a partner in the Fishery Resources Monitoring System (FIRMS) Partnership Agreement on 16 December 2013. Information about NASCO has been included on the FIRMS website and NASCO had been asked to provide additional information using an agreed FIRMS template. The Council agreed the information contained within the template and asked that it be sent 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.

2.24 The Council adopted a Report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2013.

2.25 The winner of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize was Mr Valentin Efremenkov of the Russian Federation.

2.26 The Council accepted an invitation from Canada to hold its Thirty-Second Annual Meeting in Canada during 2 - 5 June 2015. The Council accepted an invitation from the European Union to hold its Thirty-Third Annual Meeting in Germany during 7 - 10 June 2016.

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

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



- 2.29 The Council was advised that that there had been no applications for NGO status since the last Annual Meeting and 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.

### **3. North American Commission**

- 3.1 The Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the North American Commission was held in Saint-Malo, France during 3 - 6 June 2014 under the Chairmanship of Mr Stephen Gephard (United States).

#### **(a) Review of the 2013 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES**

- 3.2 The Commission reviewed the 2013 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The United States indicated that there has been an increasing trend in catches at St Pierre and Miquelon since 1995, and while the total catch may be considered relatively small, returns to rivers in Canada and the United States can be affected by small harvests. In response to a question from Canada, the representative of ICES advised the Commission that estimates of returns are based on a number of factors, including total catch and the extent of catch and release. The representative of ICES also indicated that there are 12 rivers in North America where smolt production is assessed. In response to a question from the NGOs, ICES indicated that the Labrador area is large and it is important that the river monitoring be representative.

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

- 3.3 The United States referred to the proposed new management objectives it had presented at the 2013 meetings of the North American and West Greenland Commissions. ICES had been asked to review these objectives and address any implications for catch advice. The advice from ICES was received and the United States indicated that, as there were no objections to the approach, ICES should use the revised management objectives in the future.

- 3.4 Canada advised the Commission that recovery objectives are currently being developed using a similar approach for the three designatable units of salmon in the Scotia-Fundy area.

#### **(c) The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

- 3.5 France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) had provided an overview of the 2013 fishery to the Council. The United States indicated that the additional information provided in the report would better inform the Commission and expressed its appreciation for this. The United States invited France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to continue to provide such information and to further engage with NASCO. It noted that as France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) is not a member of NASCO, there is no opportunity to discuss regulatory measures and requested that management measures be adopted by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) that are consistent with the goals of NASCO.

- 3.6 The United States noted that the catch in St Pierre and Miquelon had increased and that there seems to be no limit on the annual catch or number of permits issued. It indicated its concern that without management controls the catch could increase significantly, and hoped that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) would join the Members of the Commission to discuss the matter further and adopt management measures that control and limit catch. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that the number of fishing permits remains stable.
- 3.7 Canada indicated its support for the statement by the United States and added that COSEWIC has assessed some of the stocks harvested at St Pierre and Miquelon as threatened or endangered. Canada stated that it is difficult to deal with stakeholders on the COSEWIC recommendations while the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery continues. It noted that a fishery on stocks which COSEWIC has recommended be listed as endangered by a State which is not a member of NASCO is problematic. Canada reiterated its belief that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) should join NASCO so that it would have to abide by the same rules as other Parties and invited France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to do so. Canada stated that it is willing to work with St Pierre and Miquelon on sampling of the fishery.

**(d) Salmonid Introductions and Transfers**

- 3.8 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 indicated that low level releases from aquaculture facilities are reported to other government agencies and NGOs. Canada noted that data on disease are the property of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and its website is updated on a real time basis. Canada provided the link to the website and stated that it believed that this is more appropriate than providing outdated data in a report to the Commission. Regarding introductions and transfers, Canada confirmed that the Saga strain was imported from Iceland for use in land-based production.
- 3.9 The NGOs expressed appreciation for the reporting of low level escapes by the United States and asked if Canada could do the same. Canada indicated that the existing regulatory regimes to report Canadian escapes are currently under review by Canada and its stakeholders. As aquaculture reporting is a responsibility of the provincial partners in Canada, thresholds to report the number of escapes vary per province. Canada noted that the province of New Brunswick is currently required to report on escapes of 100 fish or more and that this Regulation is currently under review. It is anticipated that there will be a reduced threshold for reporting, potentially to be introduced at some point over the next year. For other Atlantic Canadian provinces, Canada noted that these provinces are reviewing existing regulations with the goal of further defining the necessary regulations to reduce the threshold of when to report escapes. In addition to changing the regulatory reporting obligations, and to ensure stakeholders are consulted and involved, a Containment Liaison Committee has been established in the Newfoundland region and one is scheduled to be developed in the Maritime region that will include regulators, the salmon farming industry and other stakeholders. These Committees meet to review the escapement data and review Codes of Containment on an annual basis. Canada advised the Commission that it would be happy to report to NASCO and its North American Commission partners on

any changes to the existing Regulations, when these changes take place.

- 3.10 The NGOs indicated that there were numerous incidents of disease indicated for salmonids in eastern Canada for 2013 through to 30 April 2013 in the websites referred to by Canada; however, the website does not provide details on the location and types of operations where these diseases were found. Such information, similar in detail to that provided by the United States for BKD, would be useful. In response to a question from the NGOs, Canada indicated that it would consider presenting such information in tabular form in future years.

**(e) Sampling in the Labrador Fishery**

- 3.11 The US asked if Canada planned to continue monitoring the index rivers in Labrador or, given the small proportion of rivers monitored, if there were any plans to expand the monitoring programme in future. Canada indicated that the sampling is funded by several departments and work will continue between departments to maintain the current monitoring programs. Expanded funding in the short term is unlikely; however it is Canada's intention to work with its partners to expand monitoring in the future if the funding is available.

**(f) Election of Officers**

- 3.12 The Commission elected Mr Tony Blanchard (Canada) as its Chairman and Mr Patrick Keliher (United States) as its Vice-Chairman.

**(g) Other Business**

- 3.13 The winner of the North American Commission prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Claude LeBlanc, Canada.

## **4. North-East Atlantic Commission**

- 4.1 The Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission was held in Saint-Malo, France during 3 - 6 June 2014, under the Chairmanship of Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway).

**(a) Review of the 2013 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES**

- 4.2 The Commission considered the scientific advice from ICES. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that there has been no salmon fishery at the Faroe Islands for a number of years, but stocks are still not in a healthy condition and asked ICES what the main reasons for this may be. ICES advised that marine survival had been low since the 1990s and that there had been changes at sea, such as broad changes in ecosystems in the North Atlantic, which could have affected the availability of food. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if scientific fisheries should be prosecuted with the aim of improving available data, given that ICES is working with old data and noted that genetic analysis of historical scale samples had indicated that North American salmon were present in the Faroese fishery area. ICES acknowledged that new data would be useful. The European Union noted the importance of new research/data, given the changed circumstances and the age of

the data being used and stated that the EU supports discussion at NASCO to this end, including on a research protocol. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that it wished to continue dialogue with other Parties. In response to a question from the NGOs, ICES acknowledged that the overall status of the Southern NEAC stock masks differences among rivers but indicated that the ICES website and WGNAS report provide more information on individual countries and this could be considered for inclusion in future presentations at NASCO/NEAC meetings.

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

- 4.3 The Commission agreed that it would be important to make further progress on the development of a Risk Framework for the Faroese Salmon Fishery prior to negotiations in 2015 for a new regulatory measure/decision for the Faroese fishery to apply from 2016. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that it would be willing to follow the ICES advice provided in 2015, and that a new regulation could be put in place that utilised the Framework of Indicators. There would be consultations on this matter in the Faroe Islands. The Chairman noted that the presence of North American stocks was not included in the previous advice/recommendations provided by ICES on the Risk Framework. The Commission agreed a new question to ICES to address this issue.

**(c) Regulatory Measures**

- 4.4 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 2014 highlighted that the PFA forecast for the Northern NEAC MSW stock complex was an over-estimate. The Group had therefore concluded that 'no reassessment of the existing management advice for the Faroes fishery is required from ICES in 2014'. In accordance with the request for scientific advice adopted by the Council last year, ICES had been advised that it would not need to provide catch options or alternative management advice for the NEAC area in 2014. The Commission noted that the Decision adopted in 2012 will continue to apply to the 2015 fishery.
- 4.5 The Russian Federation provided an update on discussions with Norway on matters of common interest in salmon management, which were discussed at a meeting between the two Parties in April 2014, and at which plans for new regulatory measures for the whole of Norway from 2016 were presented, together with information on the process for phasing-out bend net fishing in Finnmark by 2018. Russia was supportive of Norway's plans for new regulations to be implemented from 2016, and welcomed plans to ban bend nets, but due to the high proportion of salmon originating from Russian rivers taken in the sea fishery in the Varangerfjord, Russia insisted that new measures aimed at reducing the catch of Russian salmon in that region be implemented in 2015. It was agreed that, as before, Russia will be consulted on proposals for new regulations for 2016 and informed of progress in phasing-out bend nets in Finnmark. Norway and Russia agreed that regulation in Finnmark should be handled cooperatively, and that future cooperation would be facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) covering cooperation on research, monitoring, scientific advice and management. Russia and Norway aimed to sign such a MoU in Autumn 2014. Norway confirmed that its Environment Agency would investigate how catches of salmon originating in

Russian rivers could be reduced in the Varangerfjord from 2015, and that the Russian Federation would be carefully consulted. It was emphasised that the Varangerfjord fishery is historical and of significant importance for Sami culture and economic life and that making possible future restrictions would be a demanding task.

- 4.6 The Russian Federation stated that it appreciates that this is a difficult issue requiring the right balance between salmon conservation and indigenous peoples' interests. However, it is concerned about the large proportion of salmon from Russian rivers taken as catch in northern Norway, particularly given the overall decline in salmon abundance in the North Atlantic and its uncertain future prospects, and Russia's salmon conservation efforts at home where there is no sea fishery in the Barents Sea and catch and release fishing is predominantly exercised in recreational fisheries (including on the rivers from which salmon are intercepted in Norwegian waters). Russia strictly regulates all salmon fisheries, including by TAC and quotas, with a goal to maintain Russian salmon stocks in as a healthy condition as possible given the contemporary challenges. The Commission was advised that Russia also wants the resource to provide the maximum possible benefit in Russia i.e. employment and income to local people, who sometimes do not have any other means to earn a living. Conservation of stocks and Norway's interception of salmon returning to Russian rivers has been the main reason for Russia's dialogue with Norway over the last years, with Russia's objective being for further steps to be taken and measures to be adopted to further reduce sea catches of salmon, first and foremost in areas where large catches of Russian salmon take place, such as the Varangerfjord, as has again been confirmed by recent findings from the Kolarctic-salmon project. Russia's intention is to continue the dialogue with Norway on this issue; Russia wishes to move this matter forward together to find a solution acceptable to both Parties.

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

- 4.7 The Commission was advised that efforts to eradicate *G. Salaris* in Norway are continuing as planned. The five infected rivers in the Rauma region were to be treated with rotenone for the second time in 2014. Norway would also complete the necessary planning and mapping of two infected rivers in the Skibotn region which were last treated five years ago, with the aim of treating these rivers again to eradicate the parasite by the end of 2014. If successful, Norway will have reduced the number of infected rivers from 49 to 7 by 2016.
- 4.8 The Commission was updated on the situation in Sweden, where a regulation was introduced in two steps to prevent infestation in rivers. The last infection was in 2005. All Swedish rivers draining into the Skaggerak north of the Gota alv are declared free of the parasite. The progression of *G. salaris* in infected rivers and the impact on salmon stocks are followed up by a monitoring programme. There are indications that *G. salaris* does not have such a large impact on Swedish salmon stocks as it does on those in Norway, and that the impact has declined over time since the first documented infection. There is no plan to treat infected rivers with rotenone given the secondary effects of rotenone on the whole ecosystem. The Commission was advised that rotenone is not approved in the EU as a biocide as a proper risk assessment has not been undertaken, but that it may be used by EU Member States as an emergency measure when other measures have been exhausted. It was also noted that there is a current regulatory proposal for the EU on invasive alien species and *G.*

*salaris* was one of the species covered by the Impact Assessment carried out in preparing this proposal. The proposed regulation will require EU Member States to have plans in place to intervene and to prevent introduction of *G. salaris* where possible.

**(e) Election of Officers**

4.9 The Commission elected Dr Ciaran Byrne (European Union) as its Chairman and Dr Konstantin Drevetnyak (Russian Federation) as its Vice-Chairman.

**(f) Other Business**

4.10 The Commission appointed Ms Elena Samoylova (Russian Federation) as a member of the Standing Scientific Committee.

4.11 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Fred Miers of Denbighshire in Wales.

**5. West Greenland Commission**

5.1 The Thirty-First Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission was held in Saint-Malo, France during 3 - 6 June 2014 under the Chairmanship of Mr Ted Potter (European Union).

**(a) Review of the 2013 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES**

5.2 The Commission reviewed the 2013 fishery at West Greenland and considered the scientific advice from ICES. It was noted that a report on the 2013 fishery had been presented at the inter-sessional meeting of the Commission.

5.3 The Commission was reminded that a new management rebuilding objective for salmon in the United States was presented to the Commission in 2013. The United States welcomed the 2014 review by ICES of the implications of the new management objectives and noted that the impact of the change on the ICES scientific advice for 2012 - 2014 would have been negligible. The Commission acknowledged that the new objective would be used by ICES in the provision of scientific advice in 2015 and beyond, unless and until further revisions to the management objective were made.

**(b) Report of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the Commission**

5.4 The report of the inter-sessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission was presented. There was general agreement that the inter-sessional meeting had provided an important opportunity to share information and exchange views prior to the 2014 NASCO Annual Meeting. In addition, the Chairman's proposal for a possible addendum to the regulatory measure adopted in 2012 and applying to the fishery at West Greenland in 2012, 2013 and 2014 was considered to provide a valuable framework for further discussion.

(c) **Regulatory Measures**

- 5.5 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 2014 concluded that there had been no significant change in the indicators and, therefore, that a reassessment of the ICES management advice for the 2014 fishery at West Greenland was not required and the 2012 Regulatory Measure would continue to apply in 2014.
- 5.6 The Chairman referred to the proposal for a possible addendum to the regulatory measure which had been tabled at the inter-sessional meeting of the Commission. It was stressed that the proposal was provided to stimulate ideas and discussion of the issue prior to the 2014 meeting of the West Greenland Commission. The first paragraph of the addendum concerned the potential for assisting Greenland on the development of approaches to improve the monitoring of landings to ensure full reporting. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) recalled that the Greenland Government had adopted an Executive Order in 2012 aimed at improving catch accounting. The Commission was advised that given the proximity of the 2014 fishing season, developing and implementing new monitoring and management approaches was not feasible and it was suggested that discussions focus on finding solutions for 2015. The United States noted that effective monitoring is the first step in asserting management control and stressed that the sampling program had demonstrated that there is underreporting in the fishery. The Commission agreed that cooperative work to develop ideas for improving the monitoring and control regime for the West Greenland fishery for 2015 would be useful and should be undertaken in a timely way to ensure that any agreed approaches could be implemented in time for the 2015 season. The Commission agreed to establish an *Ad hoc* Working Group on Monitoring and Control and adopted Terms of Reference and a timetable for the work of the Group. It was agreed that the *Ad hoc* Working Group would meet in Greenland and complete its work by the end of January 2015 to allow time for Greenland to consider the recommendations and develop a draft plan for discussion at a March West Greenland Commission inter-sessional meeting. The Working Group would be Chaired by Canada. It was agreed that NGO participation on this Group would be allowed, provided that the participating NGO would agree to a non-disclosure of certain information, given the confidential nature of some data to be made available to the Group.
- 5.7 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) advised the Commission that it would translate the new Executive Order into English so that it could be part of the information available to the Working Group. It was noted that some of the Parties' concern might stem from a lack of knowledge of the monitoring and management regulations in place in Greenland. The Commission was advised that in the past, Greenland had implemented a management system that allowed in-season action to be taken for the fishery based on pre-fishery abundance information.

- 5.8 The second paragraph of the proposed addendum concerned limiting the total catch at West Greenland in 2014 to the average for 2004 - 2013 (28t). Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that such a limitation was not acceptable. The Commission was advised that the internal consumption fishery at West Greenland would continue as it had in previous years, including that there would be no export of salmon. Canada expressed concern about the potential catch level for 2014 and asked for some indication of the controls that would be on the fishery for the coming season. Canada stated that, at a minimum, it would like to see controls such that the 2014 catch level would not exceed that of 2013. The United States also expressed concern about the recent increasing catch trend in the fishery and further noted that the catch levels of two of the three components of the fishery were unrestricted and that there is a potential for more increases in catch if fish are available. The United States indicated that the West Greenland Commission needed to further consider what might be possible with regard to improving management of the 2014 fishery.
- 5.9 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that it was not possible to say at this time whether the 2014 factory landings quota would be set higher or lower than in previous years. It was noted that the Greenland Government was still considering the recent performance of the fishery and other factors, which would inform their decision-making on this matter. The Commission was advised that any quota set would only restrict the factory landings component of the fishery. The United States acknowledged that catch reporting for factory landed fish was better than for other components of the West Greenland fishery, but stressed that such landings had not been contemplated in the current regulatory measure. The United States indicated that the current measure was based on the understanding that the internal use fishery was delimited by a three-month season and that harvests would be used for personal consumption or sold as fresh product at local markets, restaurants and various institutions. It was noted that the factory quota extends the means to expand the fishery, which has now occurred. The United States expressed deep concern and disappointment at the current management decisions by Greenland. Given that the scientific advice for 2015 is likely to be the same as for the last 12 years, the United States indicated that it would need assurances that more effective management can and will be put in place by Greenland in 2015. The United States further indicated that some positive action by Greenland in 2014 would demonstrate good faith and would be important going into the 2015 discussions on the management of the West Greenland fishery.
- 5.10 In response to a question from Canada, Greenland noted that the factory landings quota had not been met for the last two years and that Greenland will consider the fact that factories appear to have reached their processing and freezing capacity for salmon, as well as the concerns of the Parties, when it sets its factory landings quota in June or July.
- 5.11 The European Union expressed disappointment with the current situation, noting that the EU had high hopes for progress on this issue after the West Greenland Commission inter-sessional meeting. It stated a concern that Parties would be leaving the meeting with no indication of how Greenland would manage its fishery in 2014, which was a different situation than in 2013. The European Union acknowledged that the issue was a difficult one, but stated that some practical steps forward were



possible. It indicated that there was an inconsistency in how the mixed-stock fishery at West Greenland was being addressed by NASCO and how NASCO was handling the situation of the Faroe Islands. It noted that consideration should be given in 2015 to addressing this inconsistency in light of the clarity of the scientific advice.

- 5.12 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reiterated that Greenland would implement the current agreement and that they intended to establish a factory landings quota for some small settlements. Considering the concerns expressed by the Parties and taking into account that the factory landings quota has not been fully utilised in either 2012 or 2013, a minor reduction in the factory landings quota for 2014 would be recommended to the Minister and the Commission would be informed of the final factory landings quota set by Greenland for 2014.
- 5.13 The third paragraph of the proposed addendum concerned the development of a new regulatory measure to begin in 2015. The United States indicated that consideration must be given to a number of things if a harvest is to be allowed at West Greenland despite scientific advice to the contrary. The United States referred to NASCO's Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries which call for the ability of Parties to fully manage a fishery, including to effectively monitor it, to close it when limits are reached, and to enforce the rules. The United States stressed that such management control gives Parties confidence that rules can and will be followed. With regard to the West Greenland fishery, the United States indicated that there is significant uncertainty and risk under the current management structure with regard to the level of catches in the fishery and that this impacts the application of control measures, including stopping a fishery when a catch limit is reached. The result is that there is pressure to reduce catch limits in order to decrease risk. The United States underscored that effective catch accountability as well as fishery control and enforcement are essential components of fisheries management and that these basics will underpin the US view when considering the management of the West Greenland fishery.
- 5.14 The Commission agreed to convene an inter-sessional meeting in Nuuk, Greenland, in early March 2015 to establish, at a minimum, a framework or parameters for the development of a new agreement which could be adopted at the 2015 NASCO Annual Meeting, taking into consideration the draft plan (see 5.6 above) developed by Greenland.

**(d) Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery**

- 5.15 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 2014. The sampling team in 2014 would include an additional participant from the European Union (Ireland). In addition, the Greenland Government, in cooperation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Program Coordinator, would work with all factories receiving harvested salmon to collect biological characteristics data and samples from a proportion of the landed fish via factory staff.

**(e) Election of Officers**

5.16 The Commission re-elected Mr Ted Potter (European Union) as its Chairman and Mr Carl McLean (Canada) as its Vice-Chairman.

**(f) Other Business**

5.17 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Ms Susanne Thorin, Aasiaat, Greenland.

**6. Finance and Administration Matters**

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

**(a) Relationship with ICES**

6.2 The MoU with ICES was 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 and the 2014 advice was made available on 6 May. It was noted that it is particularly important to receive the advice early in years when catch advice is provided to inform negotiations of regulatory measures, as will be the case in 2015 for both the North-East Atlantic and West Greenland Commissions. It was also noted that one of the Council's aims in moving to multi-annual advice had been that in years when catch advice was not needed, broader questions of relevance to salmon conservation might be included in the request to ICES. The President indicated that she understood that because of the need to maintain time-series of data, limited additional time is actually available in years when there is no request for catch advice from ICES. The Secretary agreed to take both these matters up with the General Secretary of ICES.

**(b) Audited Accounts**

6.3 The audited accounts for 2013 were presented. The Committee was advised that Chiene and Tait had completed the audit effectively and the accounts had been issued to the Parties by 15 February 2014 as required. The Committee noted that the Organization's financial position was much more favourable than it had been at the start of 2013 and recommended to the Council the adoption of the 2013 audited accounts.

6.4 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.

**(c) Review of the NASCO Deferred Salary Scheme and Staff Fund**

6.5 A paper summarising the findings of the review of the NASCO Deferred Salary Scheme and Staff Fund that had been prepared by Chiene + Tait and Davidson Chalmers was presented. In light of the advice from Chiene + Tait and Davidson Chalmers, the Committee recommended to the Council that:

- it should adopt the revised Staff Rules and Staff Fund Rules proposed by Chiene + Tait and Davidson Chalmers as contained in document FAC(14)5 subject to clarification on two points;
- the financial statements should include a note in the audited accounts, commencing with the 2014 accounts, to disclose the total value of the Staff Fund and the associated obligation to Staff Fund members as of 31 December each year;
- the financial statements should include a note in the audited accounts, commencing with the 2014 accounts, to confirm that tax has been deducted from all remuneration paid to Secretariat members and retained by NASCO in accordance with the Staff Rules;
- the revised format for the payslips proposed by Chiene + Tait and Davidson Chalmers be used from 1 July 2014 for all Secretariat members;
- the Secretary should be asked to develop revised offers of appointment to Secretariat members to reflect the findings of the review by Chiene + Tait and Davidson Chalmers incorporating wording to reflect the changes made to the Staff Fund and Staff Fund Rules and to address the issue identified concerning temporary/part-time contracts.

**(d) MoU with OSPAR**

6.6 The Committee was advised that the MoU between NASCO and OSPAR was adopted by both Parties and, following its signature by the Presidents of both Organizations, came into effect on 5 August 2013. In accordance with the MoU, the OSPAR Commission had been sent copies of recent NASCO and IASRB reports and a representative of the OSPAR Commission had been invited to attend NASCO's Thirty-First Annual Meeting. The Secretary noted that similar information had not yet been provided by OSPAR but that he hoped to meet the OSPAR Secretary soon to discuss cooperation under the MoU. The Committee underscored that relevant information should flow to and from both Organizations.

**(e) Consideration of the 2015 Draft Budget, Schedule of Contributions and Five-year Budgeting Plan**

6.7 The Secretary advised the Committee that there was considerable uncertainty in the Draft Budget as the income from the property in 2015 will depend on whether new tenants can be found when the current tenants vacate the property in August 2014 and the rental achieved. He noted that it may be necessary to use the Working Capital Fund if the projected rental income is not achieved. The Secretary also indicated that the five-year budgeting plan had assumed that all annual meetings other than the 2017 Annual Meeting would be hosted by a NASCO Party/jurisdiction but as no invitation had been received for 2015 it would be necessary to increase the budget to cover the

additional costs. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council the adoption of a 2015 Draft Budget and 2016 Forecast Budget. A five-year spending plan (2015 - 2019) was also provided for information.

**(f) Election of Officers**

6.8 The Committee re-elected Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway) as its Chairman and Mr Doug Twining (Canada) as its Vice-Chairman.

**(g) Other Business**

6.9 In response to a question from the European Union, the Secretary indicated that 350 - 1,000 tags are entered into the Tag Return Incentive Scheme draw annually and that there are four prizes (a Grand Prize of \$2,500 and prizes in each of the three Commissions of \$1,500). In 2014, only two tags had been returned in the West Greenland Commission and one of these had been recaptured some years ago. The Committee recognised that the Tag Return Incentive Scheme had brought benefits in terms of publicity for the work of the Organization and the need to return tags, but recommended that the Secretary be asked to prepare a brief review of the operation of the scheme for consideration at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

6.10 The Committee was advised that following consultations with Heads of Delegations after the 2013 Annual Meeting, the NASCO Handbook had been re-printed.

Secretary  
Edinburgh  
10 April 2015