

Council

CNL(09)15

***Focus Area Report on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers,
and Transgenics***

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At NASCO's Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting the Council agreed that the third focus area topic would be aquaculture and related activities. Draft Terms of Reference (TORs), CNL(08)37 (attached), were developed. It was agreed that these should be issued to the Parties and that any comments on the draft TORs should be forwarded to the Secretariat by 1 April 2009. We have received no comments from the Parties. However, last year the Council established a Task Force to develop best practice guidelines and standards to address the impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon stocks. The interim report by the Task Force which includes draft guidance on best practice is contained in the report of the Liaison Group, CNL(09)17.

In the event that the Council adopts best practice guidance there may be a need to consider how this is incorporated into the TORs for the Review Group and how reporting on the best practice guidance is to be achieved.

Secretary
Edinburgh
11 May 2009

CNL(08)37

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and Transgenics***

The first phase of the Next Steps process focused on the development of Implementation Plans by the Parties. The *Ad Hoc* Review Committee that met in March 2006 reviewed these plans for uniformity with the Council's Guidelines for their preparation [NSTF (06)10], and assessed how well the plans would lend themselves to evaluation in relation to NASCO's Resolution and Agreements.

Under the Next Steps process, Focus Area Reports (FARs) (as described in NSTF(06)10) are intended to provide an in-depth assessment of measures, as reflected in Implementation Plans, to implement NASCO Agreements, Resolutions, and Guidelines. The FARs provide the basis for review of the current management approach and proposed actions and to assess their efficacy in addressing the overall objectives of NASCO and in particular, to conserve and restore salmon stocks.

The Next Steps process identified three focus areas: Fishery Management, Protection and Restoration of Habitat, and Aquaculture and associated activities. The Fisheries Management FAR was conducted in 2007/2008; the Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement FAR was conducted in 2008/2009; and the third focus area is scheduled for 2009/2010. The third and final focus area is aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics.

The primary relevant NASCO document is the "Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimize Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks" (The Williamsburg Resolution) (CNL(06)48). The Williamsburg Resolution identifies the desire of NASCO to minimize the possible adverse impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics on wild stocks.

Focus Area Report on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Salmonids

Each Party or Jurisdiction will prepare a Focus Area Report by December 31, 2009. The report should be broadly structured as follows:

1. Introduction:

To provide an overview of:

- 1.1. Activities within the Party or Jurisdiction related to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics; and
- 1.2. Policy and management structure as it relates to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics;

2. Implementation of the Williamsburg Resolution:

To provide an assessment of progress made and/or planned to address the following articles in the Williamsburg Resolution:

- 2.1. The Parties shall cooperate in order to minimize adverse effects to the wild salmon stocks from aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics.
- 2.2. Each Party should require the proponent of an activity covered by the Williamsburg Resolution to provide all information necessary to demonstrate that the proposed activity will not have a significant adverse impact on wild salmon stocks or lead to irreversible change.
- 2.3. The Parties should develop and apply appropriate risk assessment methodologies in considering the measures to be taken in accordance with the Williamsburg Resolution.
- 2.4. Each Party shall take measures in accordance with Annexes 2, 3 and 4 of the Williamsburg Resolution to:
 - 2.4.1 minimize escapes of farmed salmon to a level that is as close as practicable to zero through the development and implementation of action plans as envisaged under the Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon (Annex 3 of the Williamsburg Resolution - CNL(01)53);
 - 2.4.2 minimize impacts of ranched salmon by utilizing local stocks and developing and applying appropriate release and harvest strategies;
 - 2.4.3 minimize the adverse genetic and other biological interactions from salmon enhancement activities, including introductions and transfers; and
 - 2.4.4 minimize the risk of disease and parasite transmission between all aquaculture activities, introductions and transfers, and wild salmon stocks.
- 2.5. Movements into a Commission area of reproductively viable Atlantic salmon or their gametes that have originated from outside that Commission area should not be permitted.
- 2.6. Introductions into a Commission area of reproductively viable non-indigenous anadromous salmonids or their gametes should not be permitted.
- 2.7. No non-indigenous fish should be introduced into a river containing Atlantic salmon without a thorough evaluation of the potential adverse impacts on the Atlantic salmon population(s) which indicates that there is no unacceptable risk of adverse ecological interactions.
- 2.8. The Parties should apply the Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmon (Annex 5 of the Williamsburg Resolution – CNL(04)41) , to protect against potential impacts from transgenic salmon on wild stocks.
- 2.9. Parties should, as appropriate, develop and apply river classification and zoning systems in accordance with Annex 6 of the Williamsburg Resolution for the purposes of developing management measures concerning aquaculture, and introductions and transfers.
- 2.10. The Parties should initiate corrective measures without delay where significant adverse impacts on wild salmon stocks are identified.

- 2.11 Each Party should encourage research and data collection (as detailed in Annex 7 of the Williamsburg Resolution) in support of the Williamsburg Resolution and should take steps to improve the effectiveness of the Williamsburg Resolution.
- 2.12 Educational materials should be developed and distributed to increase awareness of the risks that introductions and transfers of aquatic species may pose to wild salmon stocks and the need for measures to control these activities.

In considering the above, the Report should identify the expected extent and timescale of effects and an explanation of how socio-economic factors are applied and how this affects the attainment of NASCO's objectives.

It should be noted that Article 10 of the Williamsburg Resolution states that full implementation of the measures in the Resolution and its Annexes is essential in order to have confidence that the wild stocks are protected from irreversible genetic change, from ecological impacts and from impacts of disease and parasites.

The *Ad Hoc* Review Group for the Focus Area Review on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics

The *Ad Hoc* Review Group shall:

1. Review and analyze the FARs on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics.
2. Prepare a report which includes the following:
 - a. Identification of common challenges in the FARs;
 - b. Identification of common management and scientific approaches to challenges, as reported in the FARs;
 - c. Compilation of recommended best practice with the intention of increasing the collaborative learning aspect of the Next Steps Process; and
 - d. Recommendations and/or feedback on each FAR where additional actions may be helpful to ensure implementation of the 12 commitments within the Williamsburg Resolution.

The procedure the *Ad Hoc* Review Group will use to accomplish its work is as follows:

1. Meet in February 2010 to review the FARs submitted, collaborate to highlight questions and/or issues to be sent back to the Parties/Jurisdictions by March 1, 2010. These answers should assist the *Ad Hoc* Review Group in preparing their report as outlined in item 2 above. Responses would be due from the Parties/Jurisdictions by April 1, 2010.
2. Provide a draft report, as described in item 2, by May 15, 2010 for circulation to contracting Parties prior to the annual meeting.

3. Present an overview of the draft report at the Special Session at the 2010 Annual Meeting, and facilitate a discussion on the four areas identified above in item 2. Parties and jurisdictions will not be expected to present their FAR during the Special Session, but may be asked to present information at the request of the *Ad Hoc* Review Group.
4. Following the Special Session, prepare a final report for submission to the President by August 31, 2010.

Composition of the *Ad Hoc* Review Committee

- a. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands or Greenland (but not both));
- b. The remaining Parties to NASCO – 2 persons (to the extent possible reflecting balance among the membership and appropriate expertise);
- c. The Standing Scientific Committee – 1 person;
- d. Accredited NGO representatives – 2 persons (ideally one NGO from Europe and one from North America)

For 2009/2010, it was agreed that the persons representing NASCO would be X. The NGO representatives will be X.

The Secretary should act as *Ad Hoc* Review Group Coordinator. The individuals appointed by Parties should act in the interests of NASCO and in a personal capacity, specifically not representing their Party.

Schedule of Work

December 2009	Parties/Jurisdictions submit FARs
January 2010	Members of the <i>Ad Hoc</i> Review Group read and review FARs
February 2010	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Review Group meets to agree questions and issues to be raised with Parties/Jurisdictions
March 1, 2010	Secretariat to send questions and issues on FARs to Parties/ Jurisdictions
April 1, 2010	Parties/Jurisdictions return responses on questions and issues to <i>Ad Hoc</i> Review Group
April 2010	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Review Group conducts review of responses to see if questions were addressed and prepares draft report to the Council and for discussion at the Special Session

May 15, 2010	<i>Ad Hoc</i> review Group provides draft report to the Secretariat for distribution prior to the annual meeting
June 2010	Special Session
August 31, 2010	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Review Group submits final report to the President