

CNL(09)51

Draft Report of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Council Rica Seilet Hotel, Molde, Norway

2-5 June, 2009

Draft Report

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The President, Mr Arni Isaksson, opened the meeting. A welcoming address was made by Ms Heidi Sørensen, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment, Norway (Annex 1). The County Governor of Møre Og Romsdal, Mr Ottar Befring, welcomed delegates to Molde (Annex 2). The President thanked the State Secretary and the County Governor for their welcomes and made an Opening Statement on the work of the Organization (Annex 3).
- 1.2 The representatives of Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America made Opening Statements (Annex 4).
- 1.3 An Opening Statement was made by the representative of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) (Annex 5). A written statement was distributed by the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO).
- 1.4 A past president of NASCO (1992 – 1996), Mr Borre Petterson, also made a statement (Annex 6).
- 1.5 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of all the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 7).
- 1.6 The President expressed appreciation to the Parties and to the observer organizations for their statements and closed the Opening Session.
- 1.7 A list of participants is given in Annex 8.

2. Adoption of Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its agenda, CNL(09)46 (Annex 9).

3. Financial and Administrative Issues

3.1 Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Dr Boris Prischepa (Russian Federation), presented the report of the Committee, CNL(09)5. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council took the following decisions:

- (i) to accept the audited 2008 annual financial statement, FAC(09)2;

- (ii) to authorise the Secretary to use up to US\$48,000 (approximately £32,000) from the Working Capital Fund to purchase salmon in support of the SALSEA West Greenland Extended Sampling Programme in the event that this was the preferred option for obtaining the samples;
- (iii) to adopt a budget for 2010 and to note a forecast budget for 2011, CNL(09)38 (Annex 10);
- (iv) to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) of Edinburgh as auditors for the 2009 accounts, or such other company as may be agreed by the Secretary following consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee;
- (v) to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

The President thanked Dr Prischepa for his work and for that of the Committee.

4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

4.1 Secretary's Report

The Secretary made a report to the Council on the status of ratifications of, and accessions to, the Convention and membership of the Commissions. He reported on fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties. There had been no sightings during the year since 1 April 2008 but surveillance is limited to the summer months. He also reported on inter-sessional activities.

In accordance with Financial Rule 5.5, the Secretary reported on the receipt of contributions for 2009. All contributions had been received and there were no arrears.

The Secretary reported (CNL(09)6) that since the last Annual Meeting of the Council, two new non-government organizations had been granted observer status: the Irish Seal Sanctuary, Ireland; and the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, USA. In total, NASCO currently has 35 accredited NGOs.

4.2 Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2008

In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention, the Council adopted a report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2008, CNL(09)7.

4.3 Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

The President announced that the winner of the \$2,500 Grand Prize was Mr John Chaffery, Lewisporte, Newfoundland. The Council offered its congratulations to the winner.

4.4 Scientific Advice from ICES

The representative of ICES presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to the Council, CNL(09)8 (Annex 11). The ICES presentations to the Council and Commissions were tabled, CNL(09)44.

4.5 Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

The Secretary reported to the Council, CNL(09)36, that there had been two applications to conduct scientific research fishing since the last annual meeting. These applications were from Canada and Iceland and had been approved by the Heads of Delegations prior to the Annual Meeting. Last year, the Council had also approved an application from the SALSEA-Merge project to conduct scientific research fishing in 2008 and 2009. Detailed reports on scientific research fishing conducted during 2008 were made to the IASRB.

4.6 Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

The report of the meeting of the Board, CNL(09)9 (Annex 12), was presented by its Chairman, Dr Ken Whelan (European Union). He reported on the first year of the SALSEA Programme which had been very successful. He reported that the Board had: updated its inventory of research related to salmon mortality in the sea; received advice from its Scientific Advisory Group including recommendations on research and workshops that might be supported by the Board; and had considered a range of financial and administrative matters. The Chairman's presentation is contained in document CNL(09)47 (Annex 13). He stated, however, that in spite of the success of the programme, the Board had very little funding. The Board had set up a small group to identify new funding sources.

The representative of Canada congratulated Dr Whelan on his presentation and indicated that opportunities to use this to promote SALSEA outside NASCO should be explored. He referred to the progress of SALSEA-North America which had involved investment and resources from various user groups. He thanked the US for their partnership in the post-smolt surveys and indicated that acoustic tagging projects were generating some interesting results.

The representative of the NGOs indicated that the SALSEA programme was delivering some very exciting results. He suggested that advocates for SALSEA might be appointed to promote the research programme with potential funders. He stressed that it would be very important to identify the management implications of the findings.

The Secretary referred to the 'Salmon Summit' plan for 2011. This would be the culmination of the SALSEA Programme and would cover not only the scientific findings but also the management implications. He confirmed that the programme had generated more than 100 times the original investment by NASCO but that funds are now very low.

4.7 Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

The Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee, Dr Peter Hutchinson, presented a draft request to ICES for scientific advice. Upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES, CNL(09)10 (Annex 14).

5. Next Steps for NASCO

5.1 Special Session: Progress with the Next Steps Strategy

(a) Final Report of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review Group

Focus area reports (FARs) are intended to provide in-depth assessments of the actions taken on the particular focus area under consideration and provide a basis for review of the actions taken and their efficacy in achieving NASCO's objectives. The first focus area is the management of salmon fisheries.

The Council had established an *Ad Hoc* Review Group to review and analyse the fisheries management FARs and highlight issues to be raised with the Parties and jurisdictions. This work was done during 2008 and presented to the Council in the Group's interim report, CNL(08)13, presented at a Special Session last year. The Group was then asked to complete its work by assessing the extent to which the information provided in the FARs indicates that NASCO's goals are being, or will be, achieved and by suggesting additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO's agreements and by preparing a comparative overview of the FARs highlighting best practice and challenges and approaches to addressing these challenges in the management of salmon fisheries.

The final report, CNL(09)11 (Annex 15), of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review Group was presented in a Special Session and there was considerable discussion of the findings. The Group had completed its Terms of Reference. Fisheries Management FARs had been received from Canada, IP(08)9rev; Denmark (in respect of Greenland), IP(08)7rev; EU - Denmark, IP(08)12; EU - Finland, IP(08)3; EU - Ireland, IP(08)13; EU - UK (England and Wales), IP(08)5rev; EU - UK (Northern Ireland), IP(08)4; EU - UK (Scotland), IP(08)2rev; Iceland, IP(08)10; Norway, IP(08)11; the Russian Federation, IP(08)8; and the USA, IP(08)6. A compilation of Fisheries Management FARs is contained in CNL(09)13 (available on CD). It is clear from the Group's assessments that while enormous progress has been made in managing fisheries some challenges remain.

No FARs were available to the Group from six jurisdictions and this jeopardizes the success of the review process. After the Review Group's report had been completed, and prior to the Annual Meeting, a fisheries management FAR was received from EU - Sweden, IP(08)25. A paper was tabled on Salmon Fisheries and Salmon Stocks in France, CNL(09)31. A paper on Management of Salmon Rivers in Quebec, CNL(09)40, was tabled for information.

The Group had recommended to the Council that it consider formally adopting guidance on best practice, IP(08)23, as a way of providing clarification for NASCO's guidelines, agreements and definitions relating to fishery management. If the Council decided not to adopt the guidance, the Group had recommended that the Council revisits the guidelines, agreements and definitions with a view to clarifying ambiguities, contradictions and lack of clarity so that management can be based upon clearer principles and in order to facilitate the work of subsequent Groups reviewing the FARs on the management of salmon fisheries.

(b) Draft Report of the Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement Focus Area Review Group

The interim report of the *Ad Hoc* Focus Area Review Group on Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement was presented, CNL(09)12 (Annex 16). The Group had been asked to review and analyze the Focus Area Reports on Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Habitat and prepare a report which identified common challenges and common management and scientific approaches to these challenges, as reported in the FARs; which compiled recommended best practice with the intention of increasing the collaborative learning aspect of the 'Next Steps' Process; and which provided recommendations and/or feedback for each FAR where additional actions may be helpful to ensure consistency with the NASCO 'Plan of Action'.

The Group had reviewed and analysed the FARs and had provided feedback to the Parties and jurisdictions on additional actions. FARs had been reviewed for Canada, IP(09)3; EU – Denmark, IP(09)12; EU - Finland, IP(09)4; EU - Ireland, IP(09)10; EU - UK (England and Wales), IP(09)5; EU - UK (Northern Ireland), IP(09)14; EU - UK (Scotland), IP(09)8; Iceland, IP(09)6; Norway, IP(09)11; Russian Federation, IP(09)13; and the USA, IP(09)7. A compilation of Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement FARs is contained in CNL(09)13 (available on CD). All FARs and the Implementation Plans have been made available on the website. The Group had noted with concern the absence of FARs for a number of jurisdictions.

The Group presented its interim report during the Special Session and there were subsequent discussions. Prior to the Annual Meeting a habitat FAR had been received from EU(Sweden), IP(09)19.

(c) **Progress in implementing a Public Relations Strategy**

In 2007, the Council had received a report from its Public Relations Working Group, CNL(07)16. This Group had proposed that the initial priorities were to redevelop the IASRB and NASCO websites and to develop an annual 'State of the Salmon' report for media purposes. Last year, in order to progress this issue the Council established a PR Sub-Group that met during the Annual Meeting under the Chairmanship of Mr Chris Poupard, Chairman of the NGOs, with the following objectives:

- to propose a structure and contents for the 'State of Salmon' report on NASCO's website taking into account the elements recommended in CNL(08)14 and any additional components recommended;
- to propose the 'Next Steps' on a Communications Strategy.

A report on the Sub-Group's activities since last year was presented by its Chairman. This included a report on progress with development of the NASCO and IASRB websites. Since the last meeting the NASCO website had been redeveloped and further improvements had been made to the IASRB website. The Council welcomed the excellent progress made in improving these websites. Mr Poupard proposed that the priorities for the coming year would be to complete the website development, including incorporating the rivers database information, and to progress the 'State of the Salmon' report. The Council welcomed the progress made in redesigning the NASCO website and agreed that it should be launched at the end of June and further developed during the year by including information from the rivers database. The Council asked that the PR Group continue its work on developing a network of media contacts in the Parties and in identifying PR opportunities over the coming year. The PR Sub Group was also asked to develop a press release from the meeting.

5.2 Decisions by the Council in the light of the ‘Next Steps for NASCO’ Special Session

Management of Salmon Fisheries

The Council appointed a group under the Chairmanship of Ted Potter (EU) to review the *Ad Hoc* Review Group’s ‘NASCO Guidance on Best Practice for the Management of Salmon Fisheries’. Mr Potter introduced document CNL(09)41 ‘NASCO Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries’ which comprised ten key elements. Most of the discussions in revising the Best Practice document had related to the process of fisheries management. After some revision, this document was adopted by the Council, CNL(09)43 (Annex 17). The representative of the NGOs indicated that he believed that the changes to the document represented a missed opportunity. While it is not a bad document, the Implementation Plans and FARs are a key element of the ‘Next Steps’ process and the NGOs, therefore, believed that the document should have been much more aspirational in nature.

Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement

The President indicated that as there had been no specific comment on the Habitat Review Group’s findings to date, it will continue with its work and report to the Council by the end of the year and at a Special Session in 2010.

Aquaculture and Related Activities

At its Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting, the Council had developed draft Terms of Reference, CNL(08)37, for the third focus area, aquaculture and related activities, and agreed that any comments on these should be forwarded to the Secretariat by 1 April 2009. Any revisions to the Terms of Reference would then be issued prior to the 2009 Annual Meeting. The Secretary reported, CNL(09)15 (Annex 18), that no changes had been received from the Parties. The Council noted that in the light of the report of the Task Force (see paragraph 6.2) there was a need to incorporate the reporting elements from this document in the TORs for the Review Group.

The President indicated that he believed that the Aquaculture Review Group should have the same composition as the previous two Groups and as laid down in the ‘Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and Reporting on Progress’ adopted by the Council, NSTF(06)10. He suggested the NASCO representatives should be from Norway as the world’s leading producer of both wild and farmed salmon, from Canada as the North American representative and from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). He noted that there had been some discussions about the involvement of the salmon farming industry, but noted that they have already been involved in the work of the Task Force and he anticipated that they would be heavily involved in the preparation of the FARs. Furthermore, the Secretary had committed to issue the Review Group’s report to ISFA on the same day as it is issued to NASCO delegates and then to hold a Liaison Group meeting in early May to receive feedback from ISFA. ISFA would also be invited to participate in the Special Session in 2010. He believed that this would provide very good opportunities for input to the process by the industry and certainly more than for the other sectors that have been reviewed.

The representative of the EU indicated that he felt that the Review Group would benefit from the addition of expertise from the EU. He also referred to the need for continued engagement with the industry. However, he would not wish to disrupt the proposal.

Canada noted that there were opportunities for the industry to make their points and for NASCO to engage with the industry. He stressed that there had been benefits of close involvement, and he would like to see the Task Force and Liaison Group in this work.

The Council adopted the President's proposal.

The NGO Chair indicated that the NGOs had exactly the same difficulties in choosing their representation.

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

6.1 Annual Reports on Implementation Plans

The Council's Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, NSTF(06)10, indicate that reports to the Council should be provided in two formats: written annual reports and focus area reports (FARs) presented at Special Sessions and subject to review. The primary purpose of the annual returns is to track progress in implementing the actions contained in the Implementation Plans. Last year, the Council had asked the Secretary to develop a simple reporting structure to be used in 2009 that should include the reporting obligations under the Convention.

The Secretary reported that a format for the annual returns had been agreed in correspondence with Heads of Delegations and had been used for the 2009 return. A summary of these returns was presented, CNL(09)16 (Annex 19). Returns had been received from Canada, CNL(09)30, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland, CNL(09)33, EU-Finland, CNL(09)23, EU-Ireland, CNL(09)22, EU-Sweden, CNL(09)29, EU-Spain, CNL(09)34 and CNL(09)35, EU-UK (England and Wales), CNL(09)28, EU-UK (Northern Ireland), CNL(09)27, EU-UK (Scotland), CNL(09)21, Iceland, CNL(09)26, Norway, CNL(09)25, the Russian Federation, CNL(09)22 and the USA, CNL(09)24.

The Council agreed that the new reporting format meant that the reporting burden was kept to an appropriate level while ensuring that progress in implementing the measures in the Parties and jurisdictions Implementation Plans could be tracked. It was agreed that the reporting format should be used for future annual reports.

6.2 Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry

In 2008 the Council had decided to proceed with a Task Force comprising representatives of the Parties and an NGO representative and to which ISFA experts would be invited to participate. The Terms of Reference for the Task Force would be to develop a series of best practice recommendations to address the continuing impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon stocks designed to achieve impact targets.

The Co-Chair of the Task Force, Ms Mary Colligan (USA) introduced the interim report of the Task. This report was included in the report of the Liaison Group meeting, CNL(09)17 (Annex 20), which had been held at the request of the industry to allow for a review of progress made by the Task Force. She indicated that a meeting of the ISFA and NASCO Secretariats had been held on 10 November 2008 to discuss arrangements for the meeting of the Task Force, the meeting had developed recommendations on the

composition, timetable and Terms of Reference for the Task Force which had been agreed by NASCO and ISFA.

The Task Force had met in Boston in March 2008. She indicated that the Task Force had noted the existing national and international Codes of Practice and legislation regarding management of impacts of salmon farming on the wild salmon stocks, and considered that the Williamsburg Resolution remains valid. However, it needs to be strengthened in its interpretation and application, particularly in terms of defined goals and assessment of outcomes. She indicated that the Task Force believed that it is neither possible nor desirable to construct detailed international Codes of Practice which would cover all situations in which the Atlantic salmon is farmed. The Parties, jurisdictions and industries concerned are best placed to do that and there is no suggestion that there should be jurisdictional uniformity with regard to management of aquaculture. To this end, the Task Force has developed 'Guidance on Best Management Practices to address impacts of sea lice and escaped farmed salmon on wild salmon stocks' intended to assist the NASCO Parties and jurisdictions in framing the management of salmon aquaculture, in cooperation with their industries, in developing future NASCO implementation plans and in preparing their Focus Area Reports for the 2010 review and subsequently.

The Council's decision in relation to the Task Force and Liaison Group recommendations are contained in paragraph 5.2.

6.3 New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management

In accordance with the 'Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps', this item had been included on the Council's agenda and ICES had been requested to provide relevant information, which is contained in document CNL(08)8. A paper was tabled by Iceland, CNL(09)37 that referred to environmental changes that might have damaging consequences for wild Atlantic salmon. Information was provided on red vent syndrome, flounder, sea lamprey, the parasite *Ichthyophonus hoferi* and the algae, *Didymosphenia geminata*. The representative of Canada indicated that ten rivers in Quebec are being monitored for *Didymosphenia*. The President indicated that there was valuable information on new factors affecting salmon abundance in document CNL(09)16.

6.4 Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Salmon Management

Under the Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Step', CNL(05)49, the key issues identified in relation to the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon are:

- ensuring that appropriate emphasis is given to the social and economic aspects of the wild Atlantic salmon;
- strengthening the socio-economic data as a basis for managing salmon;
- integrating socio-economic aspects in decision-making processes; and
- disseminating socio-economic information to ensure due weight is given to the salmon compared to other important commercial and public interests.

To progress these aspects the Council had established a Working Group on Socio-Economics which had presented an interim report to the Council at its Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting in 2008. It had been recognised that the Group would need several meetings to complete its work.

The Group had commenced work in developing an international collation of social and

economic values to inform management and which would support NASCO's public relations work. In order to progress this work, the Working Group had established a Sub-Group. It had been proposed that a Special Session be held during the 2009 Annual Meeting but because of other commitments the Sub-Group was only able to make limited progress so the Special Session was postponed. A report on the work of the Sub-Group was presented by its Chairman, Dr Oystein Aas. The Council welcomed this presentation which is contained in CNL(09)50. The Council agreed that in order to make further progress in addressing the tasks assigned to it, the following work programme for a Sub-Group should be followed.

2009-2010

1. Continue work to collate all relevant social and economic values associated with wild salmon;
2. Develop a report and a presentation on this collation for inclusion in the "State-of Salmon" report and the NASCO website. This report will be presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

2010-2012

3. Prepare for a Special Session at the 2011 Annual Meeting to discuss approaches for incorporating social and economic aspects under the Precautionary Approach.
4. Consider approaches for conducting an Atlantic-wide study on the Total Economic Value of wild salmon and report in 2012.

The Sub-Group should continue to comprise Dr Guy Mawle (EU) - Chairman, Dr Oystein Aas (Norway), and Dr Gudni Gudbergsson (Iceland) together with representatives from North America, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the NGOs. In addition, jurisdictions would be invited to nominate representatives to support the work of the Sub-Group. The Secretariat will liaise with the Parties on their nominations for this work. These representatives should be knowledgeable in social and economic aspects and have time and resources to participate fully in the Sub-Group's work.

6.5 St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

At its 2007 Annual Meeting the Council had asked the President to write to the French authorities to invite France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to accede to the Convention. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), Mrs Christian Laurent Monpetit, advised the Council, CNL(09)18 that the outcome of an inter-ministerial consultation in France was that full membership of NASCO by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) did not appear to be appropriate given the low level of the catch which is taken in a traditional fishery which had limited impact on the economic development of the archipelago. In this regard France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) wishes to have its representation at NASCO as an observer confirmed. Reports were tabled on the 2008 salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon CNL(09)32 and on the sampling programme, CNL(09)39.

The Council expressed appreciation to the representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for attending the Annual Meeting and but expressed disappointment at the decision concerning accession to the Convention which would have been of benefit to both Parties. The Council authorised the President to write to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to express disappointment at the decision

and referring to concerns about the increased catch in 2008, which although low, was the second highest in the time-series and was approximately 80% higher than in 2007. The President was also asked to express the Council's support for continuing the sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon and that information on the fishery and the sampling programme be made available earlier in the year in time for the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic salmon. A draft letter from the President, CNL(09)42 was circulated.

6.6 Reports on the Work of the Three Regional Commissions

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

7. Other Business

7.1 At the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting, the representative of the European Union had tabled a paper on salmon management in the Baltic Sea, CNL(08)26. The Council had agreed to seek close cooperation on matters concerning Baltic salmon through the European Union and Russia. The representative of the European Union reported on a stakeholder meeting held in Brussels on 28 April 2008 to consider options for a salmon management plan for Baltic salmon. He indicated that the Assistant Secretary of NASCO had presented information on the work of NASCO that had been well received. A response to questions posed by the NGOs was also tabled, CNL(09)45.

7.2 In response to a question from the NGOs concerning the phasing out of coastal fisheries in EU-UK(Northern Ireland), the representative of the EU responded that the commitment in the Implementation Plan for Northern Ireland concerning phasing-out of coastal fisheries that intercept mixed stocks remains. Funds were received in 2008 to offer the remaining six coastal nets compensation to cease fishing but to date this had been declined by the fishermen. Further improvements to spawner escapement will require a range of additional measures that apply to all exploitation and it is in this context that a review has commenced. The representative of the NGOs thanked the EU and indicated that in the light of the information which was not available at the start of the meeting it is clear that the commitment in the Implementation Plan remains intact although its implementation may be delayed. Consequently he wished to withdraw the relevant part of the NGO's Opening Statement.

8. Date and Place of Next Meeting

8.1 The Council accepted an invitation from Canada to hold its Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting in Quebec during 1 - 4 June 2010.

8.2 The Council agreed to hold its Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting during 7 - 12 June 2011 at a place to be decided.

9. Report of the Meeting

[9.1 The Council agreed the report of the meeting.]

10. Press Release

[10.1 The Council agreed a press release, CNL(09)48 (Annex 21).]