

**Council**

**CNL(10)39**

***Report on the Activities of  
the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization  
in 2009***

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Note: This Report is not intended for publication but is submitted to the Council under Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention which requires the submission of an annual report to the Parties. The report is a summary of the activities of the Organization in 2009, focusing on the actions taken. Full details of the work of the Organization are contained in the reports of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions and in the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

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### *Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2009*

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 NASCO held its Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting in Molde, Norway, at the invitation of the Norwegian Government. The Organization greatly appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the hosts.

#### **2. Council**

- 2.1 The Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Council was held during the period 2 - 5 June 2009, under the Presidency of Mr Arni Isaksson (Iceland) and Vice-Presidency of Ms Mary Colligan (USA). Representatives of all the Parties, and observers from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), three inter-government organizations and 17 non-government organizations, attended the meetings.

#### **Next Steps for NASCO**

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

- 2.2 The final report of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review Group was presented. The Group's assessments made it clear that while enormous progress had been made in managing fisheries, some challenges remain. No FARs were available to the Group from six jurisdictions and this is regrettable. After the Review Group's report had been completed, and prior to the Annual Meeting, a Fisheries Management FAR was received from EU (Sweden). Reports were presented on Salmon Fisheries and Stocks in France and on the Management of Salmon Fisheries in Quebec.

- 2.3 The Review Group had developed guidance as a way of providing clarification for NASCO's guidelines, agreements and definitions relating to fisheries management. The Council adopted 'NASCO Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries'.

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

- 2.4 The interim report of the Focus Area Review Group on Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement was presented. The Group had reviewed and analysed FARs submitted by 11 jurisdictions and had provided feedback to the Parties and jurisdictions on additional actions. The Group noted with concern the absence of FARs for a number of jurisdictions. Prior to the Annual Meeting, but after the Group's draft report had been completed, a FAR had been received from EU (Sweden).

2.5 The Council agreed that Focus Area Reports on Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection, Restoration and Enhancement would be accepted if submitted to the Secretariat before 1 September 2009, and would, where possible, be reviewed.

(c) *Aquaculture and Related Activities*

2.6 At its 2008 Annual Meeting the Council had developed Draft Terms of Reference for the third focus area of aquaculture and related activities. During 2009 an ISFA/NASCO Task Force established with the North Atlantic salmon farming industry had developed Guidance on Best Management Practices (see paragraph 2.12 below). The Council agreed to incorporate this Guidance in the Terms of Reference for the aquaculture and related activities FAR review.

2.7 The President indicated that he believed that the aquaculture and related activities FAR 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. He suggested that 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 might be appropriately involved in the preparation of the FARs within each jurisdiction. Furthermore, the President indicated that 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 before the NASCO Annual Meeting to receive feedback from ISFA. ISFA would also be invited to participate in the Special Session in 2010. This would provide very good opportunities for input to review process by the industry and certainly more than for the other sectors that have been reviewed. The Council adopted this proposal.

*Progress in implementing a Public Relations Strategy*

2.8 A report from the PR Sub-Group was presented, including a report by the Assistant Secretary on progress with development of the NASCO and IASRB websites. The Council welcomed the excellent progress made in improving the NASCO and IASRB websites and agreed that the new NASCO website should be launched at the end of June and further developed during the year by including information from the rivers database.

2.9 The Council asked the PR Sub-Group to continue its work on developing a network of media contacts in the Parties and in identifying PR opportunities over the coming year. The Council also asked the PR Sub-Group to develop a press release from the Annual Meeting.

**Annual reports on Implementation Plans**

2.10 In 2008, the Council asked the Secretary to develop a simple reporting structure for the annual returns on Implementation Plans to be used in 2009 that should include the

reporting obligations under the Convention. Such a format had been agreed by correspondence prior to the 2009 Annual Meeting and was used for the 2009 returns. Returns were received from 13 jurisdictions and a summary of these was presented. 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. The Council adopted the format for use in future annual reports.

### **Liaison with the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry**

- 2.11 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 interim report of the Task Force was presented to the Council.
- 2.12 The Council was advised 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, the Task Force considered that it needs to be strengthened in its interpretation and application, particularly in terms of defined goals and assessment of outcomes. 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 but a set of principles was developed by the Task Force entitled 'Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks' so as 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.

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

- 2.13 A paper was tabled by Iceland 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 Council was advised that ten rivers in Quebec are being monitored for red vent syndrome.

### **Incorporating Social and Economic factors in Salmon Management**

- 2.14 A report on the work of the Socio-Economics Sub-Group was presented. It had previously been proposed that a Special Session on socio-economics be held during the 2009 Annual Meeting but this had been postponed. The Council agreed a work programme for the Sub-Group for 2009 - 2012 in order that further progress in addressing the tasks assigned to it could be made. For 2009 – 2010, these tasks include continuing the work to collate all relevant social and economic values associated with wild Atlantic salmon and developing a structure and presentation for inclusion of socio-economic information in the 'State-of Salmon' report and the

NASCO website. The Sub-Group had also been asked to prepare for a Special Session at the 2011 Annual Meeting to discuss approaches for incorporating social and economic aspects under the Precautionary Approach. The Council agreed on the composition of the Sub Group and invited jurisdictions to nominate representatives to support the work of the Sub Group.

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

- 2.15 The report of the meeting of the Board was presented. The first year of the SALSEA Programme had been very successful. At its meeting, the Board had reviewed the updated 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. However, the Council was advised 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.
- 2.16 The ‘Salmon Summit’ planned for 2011 was referred to. This would be the culmination of the SALSEA Programme and would cover not only the scientific findings but also the management implications of the research conducted under the SALSEA Programme. The Council was advised that the programme had generated more than 100 times the original investment by NASCO but that funds are now very low.

### **The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

- 2.17 Reports were tabled on the 2008 salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon and on the sampling programme. The Council was advised that the outcome of an inter-ministerial consultation within France was that full membership of NASCO by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) was not considered 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. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) wished to have its status as an observer to NASCO confirmed. 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 was the second highest in the time series. The President was also asked to express the Council’s support for expanding the sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon to include genetic analysis and to request that information on the fishery and the sampling programme be made available earlier in the year in time for the meeting of the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic salmon.

### **Scientific Advice**

- 2.18 The scientific advice from ICES was presented. The Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES to be presented in 2010.

### **Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area**

- 2.19 Prior to the 2009 Annual Meeting, the Council had approved applications to conduct

scientific research fishing from Canada and Iceland. An application to conduct scientific research fishing in 2008 and 2009 under the SALSEA-Merge project had been approved in 2008.

### **Other Business**

- 2.20 A report on a stakeholder meeting to consider options for a salmon management plan for Baltic salmon was presented by the European Union. A response to questions posed by the NGOs concerning Baltic salmon was tabled. The European Union also provided clarification concerning the phasing-out of coastal fisheries in UK (Northern Ireland).
- 2.21 The Council received a report from each of the three regional Commissions on its activities (see sections 3, 4 and 5 below).
- 2.22 The Council adopted the report of the Finance and Administration Committee (see section 6 below).
- 2.23 The Council adopted a report to the Parties on the Activities of the Organization in 2008.
- 2.24 The winner of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize was Mr John Chaffey, Canada. The Council decided to extend the scope of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme to include all tags returned to the West Greenland Commission area.
- 2.25 The Council agreed that delegates' e-mail addresses would in future be included in the List of Participants.
- 2.26 The Council accepted an invitation from Canada to hold its Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting in Quebec during 1 - 4 June 2010. The Council agreed to hold its Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting during 7 - 10 June 2011 at a place to be decided.

## **3. North American Commission**

- 3.1 The Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission was held in Molde, Norway, during the period 2 – 5 June 2009 under the Chairmanship of Mr Guy Beaupré (Canada).

### *Review of the 2008 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES*

- 3.2 The Commission reviewed the 2008 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The Commission agreed a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2010. In response to a question from the EU, Canada indicated that while no estimate of unreported catch had been provided to ICES, perhaps because of timing issues, an estimate was included in Canada's annual return on its Implementation Plan. The US indicated that it had also provided an estimate of unreported catch in its annual report.

### *Review and Discussion of the 2009 Salmon Management Measures*

- 3.3. The United States presented a report on US Atlantic Salmon Management and Research Activities in 2008. Canada summarized information on its 2009 fisheries management activities.

#### *The St. Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery*

- 3.4 France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) presented information on the St. Pierre and Miquelon fishery. The Commission fully supported the recommendation of the Council to write to France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) expressing disappointment that France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) does not intend to accede to the NASCO Convention and highlighting why it believes this to be important. The Commission welcomed the offer of support from the NGOs in encouraging France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to improve cooperation with NASCO. In response to a question from the NGOs, France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) indicated that no estimate of unreported catch is available for the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery.

#### *Salmonid Introductions and Transfers*

- 3.5 During 2009, a Working Group had met to re-examine aspects of the NAC Protocols on Introductions and Transfers; specifically the relevance of the database on Introductions and Transfers and the Scientific Working Group, given the significant improvements that have occurred both within and between Canada and the US on monitoring and management of introductions and, transfers for enhancement and aquaculture purposes. Canada recognised the significant effort by the Working Group and noted that there is added complexity in finalizing this work in Canada since two levels of government are involved in managing introductions and transfers of salmonids for aquaculture purposes. Moreover, the responsibility for fish health issues in Canada is in the process of being transferred from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to another Department in Canada's government. In light of this, Canada noted the need for additional domestic consultations before they could respond officially concerning this matter.

#### *Sampling in the Labrador Fishery*

- 3.6 Canada provided an update on the sampling activity in the Labrador fishery in 2008 and confirmed that it intends to continue to support this important sampling activity in 2009. In response to a question from the NGOs about whether the sampling would include genetic sampling to allow river of origin to be determined, Canada noted that while genetic material is being collected, such analysis is not planned due to resource constraints and lack of existing data to discriminate salmon to river of origin. The existing data allows discrimination between US and Canadian salmon.

#### *Other Business*

- 3.7 The winner of the North American Commission prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Trevor Hunter, New Brunswick, Canada.

- 3.8 The Commission agreed to delete the agenda covering the review and discussion of salmon management measures from future agendas given that comprehensive information on research, stock status, and management activities for the United States and Canada is available in each country's Implementation Plans, annual reports on those plans, focus area reports and in the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) report.
- 3.9 Canada reported on two catch and release studies which will begin in 2009 on the des Escoumins River, Quebec North Shore and the Conne River, Newfoundland.

#### **4 North East Atlantic Commission**

- 4.1 The Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission was held in Molde, Norway, during the period 2 - 5 June 2009 under the Chairmanship of Mr Richard Cowan (European Union).

##### *Review of the 2008 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES*

- 4.2 The Commission noted that there had been no salmon fishery at Faroes in 2008. The Commission considered the scientific advice from ICES and agreed a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2010.
- 4.3 The Chairman noted that the presentation from ICES had indicated that ICES had been unable to make progress in developing quantitative catch advice because there are no explicit management objectives for provision of advice for the Faroese fishery and no pre-agreed sharing arrangement among NASCO Parties. He suggested that there is a need to address this issue before there is a harvestable surplus. The Commission agreed that there should be further discussions on this issue among Heads of Delegations following the Annual Meeting with a view to developing arrangements to commence work on developing management objectives in advance the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting.

##### *Regulatory Measures*

- 4.4 The Commission adopted a decision concerning fishing of salmon in Faroese waters in 2010.
- 4.5 Norway referred to documents concerning interceptory salmon fishing on the Norwegian coast in which Norway recognized the legitimate interests of the Russian Federation and possibly other countries in respect to interceptory salmon fishing on the Norwegian coast. Norway indicated that it believes that it is important to maintain open and positive dialogue with the Russian Federation and potentially affected EU countries with regard to its fishing regulations for 2010 and beyond. The Commission was advised that the Russian Federation and Norway had engaged in fruitful and constructive talks on this issue during the Annual Meeting and had agreed on a further process of cooperation. The main elements of this process are as follows:

- In early September, the Russian Federation will be given the opportunity to



comment on a proposal for general guidelines for the upcoming regulations;

- A proposal for new regulations will be subject to a public hearing in November, and the proposal will also be sent to the authorities in the Russian Federation for information;
  - The final proposal from the Directorate for Nature Management to the Ministry of Environment will be sent to the Russian Federation before the final regulations are finalised, and feedback from the Russian Federation will be carefully considered in the decision process;
  - The same approach will be taken towards the European Union.
- 4.6 The Russian Federation confirmed that excellent dialogue had been held since last year and advised that a scientific project for Russian and Norwegian rivers in the northern area will be conducted. The representative of the European Union indicated that his delegation would be keen to participate in trilateral consultations in the coming year.

*Risk of Transmission of Gyrodactylus salaris in the Commission Area*

- 4.7 The European Union tabled a document detailing measures concerning the contingency planning for the parasite *G.salaris* in Finland. Existing measures are in place concerning restrictions on movements of live fish and eggs and baitfish and in Autumn 2009 a project will commence to develop the information required to support contingency planning. The European Union also tabled a document providing information on the monitoring programmes in Sweden and on cooperation with Norway and Finland in relation to this parasite.
- 4.8 In response to a question from the NGOs, the European Union referred to a Declaration from the European Commission and made the following statement: ‘The Commission intends to contribute to the future protection of susceptible stocks of Atlantic salmon in freshwater, as laid down in the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC, against the threat of *Gyrodactylus salaris*. This is possible pursuant to Article 43 of the proposed Directive, which can be used as a legal base to carry over the current measures laid down in Commission Decision 2004/453/EC under the new Directive. The Commission intends to present to the Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health, a proposal to maintain the current *G.salaris* guarantees laid down in Decision 2004/453/EC, in line with Article 63(3).’

*Other Business*

- 4.9 The winner of the Commission’s US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Oddvar Egelanddal, Norway.

## **5. West Greenland Commission**

- 5.1 The Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission was held in Molde, Norway during the period 2 – 5 June 2009 under the Chairmanship of Mr Guy Beaupré (Canada).

### *Review of the 2008 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES*

- 5.2 The Commission reviewed the 2008 fishery at West Greenland and considered the scientific advice from ICES. The Commission adopted a request to ICES for scientific advice to be presented in 2010.

### *Regulatory measures*

- 5.3 The Commission adopted a multi-annual regulatory measure for the West Greenland Salmon Fishery for the calendar years 2009 – 2011.

### *Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery*

- 5.4 In response to a request from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for clarification on the need to sample 900 salmon, the US explained that the aim is to get a large sample so that an adequate number of European fish is obtained (as they comprise only around 15% of the catch) but there is a limit to the number of fish that can be processed by samplers and there are also budgeting issues.
- 5.5 In response to a question from the NGOs, the US indicated that while there are no guarantees that samples obtained are from within the internal-use fishery and are not an additional harvest, checks and balances have been introduced. Samplers can only handle a certain number of fish and they cannot accept more fish than they can sample in the day, and targets and limits will be set. A sub-sample of the fisherman's catch would be purchased and the fisherman would sell the remainder at the market as normal. Once the fish have been sampled they will be donated to institutions not sold, so these institutions will not need to purchase these fish at the market.
- 5.6 The Commission adopted a West Greenland Fishery Sampling Agreement for 2009.

### *Other Business*

- 5.7 The winner of the Commission's US\$1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Massinuaq Molgaard, Sisimiut, Greenland.

## **6. Finance and Administration Matters**

- 6.1 The Finance and Administration Committee met prior to the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Council under the Chairmanship of Dr Boris Prischepa (Russian Federation).

### *Relationship with ICES*

- 6.2 ICES has made considerable progress in addressing NASCO's concerns about the timeliness and quality of presentation of the advice and about the need for financial stability, although the current weakness of the pound sterling against the Danish Kroner had resulted in large increases in the payment to ICES. ICES had advised that there was a possibility of increased charges to client Commissions. The Committee indicated

that it would be concerned about any proposal from ICES to increase the payment due above the rate of inflation in Denmark. In the event that this was proposed, the Committee asked that the Secretary obtain from ICES a detailed explanation of the reasons for the increase and report back to the Committee.

*Funding of the West Greenland Sampling Programme*

- 6.3 The Committee recognised the importance of the sampling programme at West Greenland and agreed to recommend to the Council that funds be made available from the Working Capital Fund to enable the samplers to purchase the fish required for the extended sampling programme. This arrangement would apply only to the 2009 sampling programme and the funds would be reimbursed within 2 – 3 months and before the end of NASCO's financial year. Any proposal to repeat the arrangement in 2010 would be raised with the Committee at its 2010 Annual Meeting.

*2010 Budget*

- 6.4 The Committee recommended to the Council the adoption of the 2010 Budget and Schedule of Contributions.

*Audited Accounts*

- 6.5 The Committee recommended to the Council the adoption of the 2008 audited accounts. The Committee recommended to the Council the appointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers of Queen Street, Edinburgh, as auditors for the 2009 audited accounts, or such other company as may be agreed by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Secretary  
Edinburgh  
9 April 2010