

Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach

1. NASCO and its Contracting Parties agree to adopt and apply a Precautionary Approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of salmon in order to protect the resource and preserve the environments in which it lives. Accordingly, NASCO and its Contracting Parties should be more cautious when information is uncertain, unreliable or inadequate. The absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures.
2. The Precautionary Approach requires, *inter alia*:
 - a) consideration of the needs of future generations and avoidance of changes that are not potentially reversible;
 - b) prior identification of undesirable outcomes and of measures that will avoid them or correct them;
 - c) initiation of corrective measures without delay, and these should achieve their purpose promptly;
 - d) priority to be given to conserving the productive capacity of the resource where the likely impact of resource use is uncertain;
 - e) appropriate placement of the burden of proof by adhering to the above requirements.
3. The application of a Precautionary Approach should involve all parties concerned with salmon conservation, management and exploitation.
4. The Precautionary Approach will be applied by NASCO and by its Contracting Parties to the entire range of their salmon conservation and management activities. Initially the application will be to the following three areas:
 - Management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries
 - The formulation of management advice and associated scientific research
 - The area of introductions and transfers including aquaculture impacts and possible use of transgenic salmon.
5. Both NASCO and its Contracting Parties should as the next step address application of the Precautionary Approach to freshwater habitat issues and the by-catch of salmon in other fisheries.

Management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries

6. An objective for the management of salmon fisheries for NASCO and its Contracting Parties is to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks. For this purpose, management measures, taking account of uncertainty, should be aimed at maintaining all salmon stocks in the NASCO Convention area above their conservation limit (currently defined by NASCO as the spawning stock level that produces maximum sustainable yield), taking into account the best available information, and socio-economic factors including the interests of communities which are particularly dependent on salmon fisheries and the other factors identified in Article 9 of the Convention. In order to achieve this, a Precautionary Approach will be applied to the management both of fisheries regulated by NASCO and those in homewaters.
7. The application of the Precautionary Approach to salmon fishery management is an integrated process which requires at least the following:
 - a) that stocks be maintained above the conservation limits by the use of management targets;
 - b) that conservation limits and management targets be set for each river and combined as appropriate for the management of different stock groupings defined by managers;
 - c) the prior identification of undesirable outcomes including the failure to achieve conservation limits (biological factors) and instability in the catches (socio-economic factors);
 - d) that account be taken at each stage of the risks of not achieving the fisheries management objectives by considering uncertainty in the current state of the stocks, in biological reference points and fishery management capabilities;
 - e) the formulation of pre-agreed management actions in the form of procedures to be applied over a range of stock conditions;
 - f) assessment of the effectiveness of management actions in all salmon fisheries;
 - g) stock rebuilding programmes (including, as appropriate, habitat improvement, stock enhancement and fishery management actions) be developed for stocks that are below their conservation limits.
8. The management procedures for all salmon fisheries could include the following elements:
 - a) definition of target spawning stock levels in the relevant rivers;
 - b) definition of pre-fishery abundance of individual salmon stocks or groups of stocks occurring in the relevant fishery;
 - c) utilisation only of the surplus according to a) and b) above;
 - d) socio-economic factors.
9. New fisheries targeted on salmon or which could result in a by-catch of salmon should be subject to cautious conservation and management measures. In accordance with Article 2,

paragraph 3 of the Convention, the Parties shall invite the attention of non-Contracting Parties to any significant by-catch of salmon by its vessels.

10. Efforts to minimise unreported catches, and to improve estimates of them, are consistent with the Precautionary Approach. NASCO and its Contracting Parties agree to evaluate and report on progress in this area.

The formulation of management advice and associated scientific research

11. ICES or other scientific advisors should be requested, *inter alia*, to:
 - a) provide stock conservation limits and management targets for all river stocks;
 - b) advise on the risks of not achieving the objectives of NASCO or its Contracting Parties by considering uncertainty in the current state of the stocks, in biological reference points related to specific management objectives and in fishery management capabilities;
 - c) provide catch options or alternative management advice with associated risk assessments for the fisheries regulated by NASCO and homewater fisheries for all salmon stocks;
 - d) advise, in the light of current conditions in the freshwater and marine environment, on stock rebuilding programmes including, where appropriate, habitat improvement, stock enhancement, disease prevention and fishery management actions;
 - e) identify the monitoring and data collection required to better achieve the objectives of NASCO and its Contracting Parties;
 - f) advise on the impacts on salmon stocks of existing and new fisheries for other species, and of salmon fisheries on non-target species.

The area of introductions and transfers including aquaculture impacts and possible use of transgenic salmon

12. Implementation of the measures contained in the following agreements is essential in the light of the Precautionary Approach:
 - North American Commission Protocols on Introductions and Transfers, NAC(92)24
 - Amendments to the North American Commission Protocols on Introductions and Transfers, NAC(94)14
 - Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimise Impacts from Salmon Aquaculture on the Wild Salmon Stocks, CNL(94)53
 - NASCO Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmon, CNL(97)48

- Resolution by the North-East Atlantic Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization to Protect Wild Salmon Stocks from Introductions and Transfers, NEA(97)12.

The Parties therefore agree to report to the Council or to the appropriate Commission of NASCO on the steps taken to achieve the measures described in the above agreements. The Contracting Parties should ensure full implementation of these agreements and will consider whether the agreements need to be re-examined and complemented by additional steps.