



Agenda item 6.2(e)
For decision

Council

CNL(02)18

Future Actions in Relation to Application of the Precautionary Approach



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1. The Standing Committee on the Precautionary Approach (SCPA) has now held three meetings. The report of the most recent of these meetings is presented in document CNL(02)17. A summary of the actions taken to date in accordance with the Action Plan for Application of the Precautionary Approach is presented below.

Management of the North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries

2. At the 2000 Annual Meeting the Council provisionally adopted a Decision Structure to aid NASCO and the relevant authorities in implementing the Precautionary Approach to the management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries (SCPA(00)13). It was agreed that this Decision Structure would be applied by each Contracting Party on a selection of rivers with different stock status and management policies. At the 2001 Annual Meeting the Parties reported to the Council on their initial experiences in applying the Decision Structure. The Council asked that at its third meeting the SCPA undertake a detailed evaluation and future development of the Decision Structure. The SCPA has now completed this task and a revised Decision Structure is contained in document CNL(02)17. The SCPA has recommended that following its adoption by the Council the Decision Structure be applied immediately by NASCO and its Contracting Parties. The Committee has also recommended that the Council considers introducing a reporting and review procedure in relation to the Decision Structure. In short, this work is now completed subject to application of the new decision structure and development of a reporting and review procedure.

Habitat Protection and Restoration

3. At its 2002 Annual Meeting the Council adopted a NASCO Plan of Action for the Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Protection and Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat (CNL(01)51). It was agreed that the Parties should report back to the Council on the steps taken to develop and implement the habitat protection and restoration plans as envisaged under the NASCO Plan of Action. A Special Session for this purpose will be held at the Council's Nineteenth Annual Meeting and a programme for this Special Session is contained in document CNL(02)16. In the light of the presentations made at this Special Session, the Council may wish to consider what future actions it wishes to take in relation to habitat protection and restoration, including arrangements for reporting in the future. The SCPA had previously asked the Council to decide if the establishment of a database of the inventories of salmon rivers envisaged under the Plan of Action should be undertaken by the Secretariat by modification of the existing rivers database.

Introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics

4. The SCPA has developed Draft Terms of Reference for a future meeting of the Committee on application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics (see document CNL(02)17). Last year the Council agreed that these Draft Terms of Reference should be discussed with the

North Atlantic salmon farming industry through the Liaison Group. The comments from the industry on these Draft Terms of Reference are contained in document CNL(02)24. The SCPA has asked that the Council resolve the extent to which it wishes to see relevant stakeholders involved in the work of the Committee on this issue. The Council had previously agreed that the SCPA should meet to consider the issue of application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics so that a report could be made back to the Council at its Twentieth Annual Meeting in 2003.

Social and Economic Aspects of the Precautionary Approach

5. The SCPA has developed Draft Terms of Reference for incorporating social and economic aspects in the application of the Precautionary Approach (see document CNL(02)17). The Parties have been requested to compile, summarise and provide to the Secretariat before the 2002 Annual Meeting information on the social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon. The Committee has also recommended that the development of an internationally agreed framework or template for assessing social and economic values of Atlantic salmon, as envisaged in the Draft Terms of Reference, would need to be further advanced before a future meeting of the SCPA on this subject. A draft project proposal for the development of this framework or template is also contained in document CNL(02)17 and in this proposal it is suggested that the work be undertaken by a technical workshop of the Contracting Parties to be held in advance of the next SCPA meeting on social and economic aspects of the Precautionary Approach.

Remaining Elements of the Action Plan for Application of a Precautionary Approach

6. The major tasks in the Action Plan are now well underway and being addressed by the SCPA and the Council. The remaining tasks to be considered are by-catch of salmon and stock rebuilding programmes. The Council has referred the issue of by-catch to the new International Cooperative Salmon Research Board and in addition has asked that ICES provide in its advice for 2002 an estimate of by-catch of Atlantic salmon in fisheries for pelagic species in the North-East Atlantic Commission area. A stock rebuilding programme has been defined by the Council as an array of management measures including possibly habitat improvement, exploitation control and stocking designed to restore a stock above its conservation limit. Thus both the Decision Structure and the NASCO Plan of Action for Protection and Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat include elements relevant to stock rebuilding programmes. The Council had previously recognized that there may be benefits from the development of internationally agreed guidelines on stocking. However, given the commitments referred to in paragraph 4 and 5 above the Council may wish to delay further consideration of these remaining issues until its Twentieth Annual Meeting.

Possible Meetings Schedule

7. If the Council agrees to the recommendations of the SCPA there are a number of tasks which may require meetings of the Committee or sub-groups over the next twelve to eighteen months. These are as follows:

- meeting of the SCPA to consider application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics (the Council has requested that the Committee report back to the 2003 Annual Meeting on this issue);
 - meeting of a technical workshop of the Contracting Parties to develop a framework or template for assessing the social and economic values of Atlantic salmon;
 - meeting of the SCPA to consider how social and economic aspects can be incorporated in the application of the Precautionary Approach.
8. There may be advantages to holding the next meeting of the SCPA on application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics in conjunction with the next Liaison Group meeting in 2003. The Council will need to resolve the extent of stakeholder participation in this meeting but if the SCPA meeting was held prior to the Liaison Group meeting it would be possible for the Liaison Group to review the SCPA's recommendations and provide comments to the Council. The Liaison Group meetings are usually held in March or April and it is assumed that there will be a meeting in 2003. The SCPA has recommended that the technical workshop to develop a framework or template for assessing the social and economic values of Atlantic salmon be held before the SCPA meeting to consider these social and economic aspects. This workshop might be held in Edinburgh in Autumn 2002 with the SCPA meeting on social and economic aspects of the Precautionary Approach being held in Autumn 2003.
9. In summary, a possible schedule of meetings might be as follows:

Meeting	Topic	Date	Venue
Technical Workshop of the Contracting Parties	Development of a framework or template for assessing social and economic values of Atlantic salmon.	Autumn 2002	Edinburgh, Scotland
SCPA*	Application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics.	Spring 2003 Probably just before the Liaison Group meeting below	To be decided
Fourth Meeting of the Liaison Group	Issues of mutual concern to salmon farming and wild salmon interests.	Spring 2003	2002 meeting held in Europe, so probably North America
SCPA*	Incorporation of social and economic aspects in the application of the Precautionary Approach.	Autumn 2003	To be decided

Note*: The Committee may need more than one meeting to complete its work on these issues.

10. The Council is asked to consider the future actions it wishes to take in relation to the Precautionary Approach including arrangements for future meetings of the SCPA.

Secretary
Edinburgh
12 April, 2002