



Agenda item 6.8(b)  
For decision

**Council**

**CNL(02)24**

***Report of the Third Liaison Meeting with the Salmon Farming Industry***



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1. Since February 2000, the Liaison Group between NASCO and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry has met annually. The Council had previously welcomed this closer, more open and broader cooperation with the salmon farming industry and the commitment to work together on issues of mutual concern. The third meeting of the Liaison Group was held in Westport, Ireland during 8-9 April and the report of the meeting is contained in Attachment 1.
2. At its second meeting the Liaison Group had developed Guidelines on Containment of Farm salmon. The Council had agreed these Guidelines and had asked that the Liaison Group monitor the development of the Action Plans envisaged under the Guidelines and their implementation, and advise the Council on progress on an annual basis. At the Westport meeting verbal reports were made on progress in developing and implementing Action Plans on Containment of Farm Salmon. While it was recognised that salmon farming countries would proceed at different speeds in implementing their Action Plans, the Liaison Group agreed that there was a need to develop a systematic process for reporting on implementation of these Action Plans. A format for reporting on an annual basis is contained in Annex 4 of the report.
3. The Liaison Group also received a progress report from its Salmon Cooperation Group, established to explore options for enhanced cooperation between wild and farmed salmon interests. The Group has identified ten areas for joint initiatives but initially will review existing cooperative ventures between wild and farmed salmon interests. Funding for this review has been secured from industry sources. The Liaison Group has asked that the Salmon Cooperation Group proceed with this review and further develop its proposals for joint initiatives.
4. The Council had requested that the Terms of Reference developed by the SCPA in relation to application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics (see document CNL(02)17) be made available to the Liaison Group so that the Group's comments could be considered at NASCO's Nineteenth Annual Meeting. The industry representatives indicated that they would need time to develop a response to these Terms of Reference but that they would be considered at a meeting of the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA) in late April. At the time of preparation of this paper, no response had been received from the salmon farming industry but we expect that any comments will be available at the Annual Meeting. The Council will be considering these Terms of Reference under agenda item 6.2(d) of its agenda.
5. The industry representatives proposed to the Liaison Group that the ISFA should, in future, be the organization which would represent the industry within the Liaison Group. NASCO requested that a copy of the Constitution of the ISFA be provided and asked for an indication of how a North Atlantic group within ISFA might be structured. At the time of preparation of this paper, no response had been received from the salmon farming industry but we expect that this information will be available at the Annual Meeting.

6. The Council is asked to:

- note the format for reporting to the Liaison Group annually on implementation of Actions Plans on Containment of Farm Salmon;
- note the proposals from the Salmon Cooperation Group;
- consider any comments from the industry on the Terms of Reference in relation to application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics and decide on appropriate action;
- consider the proposal that the ISFA should be the organization to represent the salmon farming industry in the Liaison Group.

Secretary  
Edinburgh  
3 May, 2002

**SLG(02)9**

***Report of the Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and  
NASCO Liaison Group***

***Hotel Westport, Westport, Co. Mayo, Ireland***

***8 and 9 April, 2002***

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Secretary of NASCO, Dr Malcolm Windsor, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Westport. He expressed sincere thanks to the Marine Institute and the Irish Salmon Growers Association for the arrangements made and for their excellent hospitality. An opening statement was made on behalf of the North Atlantic salmon farming industry (Annex 1). An opening statement was made on behalf of NASCO (Annex 2).

- 1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 3.

**2. Appointment of a Chairman**

- 2.1 The Liaison Group appointed Mr James Ryan as its Chairman for a period of two years. The Liaison Group expressed appreciation to the previous Chairman, Mr. Andrew Thomson, for his excellent work on behalf of the group.

**3. Nomination of a Rapporteur**

- 3.1 Dr Peter Hutchinson, Assistant Secretary of NASCO, was appointed as Rapporteur.

**4. Adoption of the Agenda**

- 4.1 The Liaison Group adopted its agenda, SLG(02)7. It was agreed to consider two new items, NASCO's policy on communications and the structure for future representation by the industry in the Liaison Group, under "Any Other Business" (agenda item 10).

**5. Matters Arising since the First Meeting of the Liaison Group**

***(a) Attendance at NASCO meetings***

At its meeting in 2001 the Liaison Group had agreed to recommend to the Council of NASCO that both the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Liaison Group be invited to attend future NASCO meetings so as to contribute to the relevant agenda item where a report on the work of the Liaison Group is made. This proposal had been accepted by NASCO and was acceptable to the North Atlantic salmon farming industry. Clarification was sought by the industry on the funding arrangements concerning

attendance at NASCO's annual meetings by the Chairman or Rapporteur of the Liaison Group when these posts are held by industry representatives. It was confirmed that this would be an issue for the industry or Contracting Party concerned.

(b) *Report on NASCO's Special Liaison Meetings on Measures to Minimise Impacts of Aquaculture on Wild Salmon Stocks*

A report of NASCO's three Special Liaison Meetings, which had been attended by representatives of the North Atlantic salmon farming industry, was made available to the Liaison Group, CNL(01)69.

(c) *Guiding Principles for Cooperation between NASCO and its Contracting Parties and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry*

The Guiding Principles for Cooperation between NASCO and its Contracting Parties and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry had been proposed by the Liaison Group at its 2001 meeting. These were acceptable to NASCO and to the industry.

(d) *Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon*

The Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon, adopted by the Liaison Group at its 2001 meeting, had been considered by the Council of NASCO at its Eighteenth Annual Meeting. The Council had agreed to these guidelines but had stressed the need for these to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to take account of new technology and better information on impacts of escaped farm salmon on the wild salmon stocks. The Council had asked that the Liaison Group monitor the development of the Action Plans envisaged under the Guidelines and their implementation and advise the Council of NASCO on progress on an annual basis (see agenda item 6). The North Atlantic salmon farming industry representatives confirmed that the Guidelines were acceptable to them.

(e) *NAC Protocols on Introductions and Transfers*

At the Liaison Group's 2001 meeting, representatives of the salmon farming industry in North America had referred to the need to re-examine NASCO's North American Commission's Protocols on Introductions and Transfers in the light of the development by the Liaison Group of Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon. Canada indicated that it had developed a new policy on introductions and transfers and that consultations were ongoing in Canada with relevant stakeholders. Once this process was complete there would be consultations with the US with regard to reviewing the NAC Protocols in the light of the new policy. The Liaison Group agreed to keep this matter under review.

(f) *Norwegian Research Council's Scientific Research Programme on Salmon*

The representative of the Norwegian Fish Farmers Association provided an update on the new scientific research programme on wild Atlantic salmon, initiated in 2001, which is being funded through the Norwegian Research Council from public and private (including aquaculture industry) sources. The Norwegian salmon farming industry has made a financial contribution to the programme in 2002 with the aim of

increasing understanding of sea lice impacts on wild salmon stocks. It is hoped that the hydro-electric generation industry might also contribute to the programme. A separate programme on aquaculture research operates on issues such as rearing new species in aquaculture, improved cage design and fish health, etc. This programme also involves funding from the aquaculture industry.

## **6. Progress in Developing and Implementing Action Plans on Containment**

- 6.1 Verbal reports were made by the Parties on progress in developing and implementing Action Plans on Containment of Farm Salmon. The reports indicated that each country with salmon farming had begun the process of implementing Action Plans by cooperation between industry and government. Detailed discussions on these plans had been initiated and the reports confirmed that there had been progress in implementation. Furthermore, progress had been made on the establishment of reporting procedures following an escape. The industry stressed the need for rapid authorization for recapture procedures to recover farmed fish following an escape.
- 6.2 It was accepted that salmon farming countries would inevitably proceed at different speeds in implementing their Action Plans. Nevertheless, the Liaison Group agreed that there was a need to develop a systematic process for reporting on implementation of these Action Plans. The Liaison Group agreed a format, in accordance with Section 7 of the Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon, SLG(01)12, for reporting on an annual basis on implementation of the Action Plans, SLG(02)8 (Annex 4).

## **7. Report of the Salmon Cooperation Group**

- 7.1 At its 2001 meeting the Liaison Group had established a Salmon Cooperation Group to explore options for enhanced cooperation between wild and farmed salmon interests. A progress report was made on the work of this Group, SLG(02)6 (Annex 5). The Group had identified ten areas for possible joint initiatives but initially would be working to review all existing cooperative ventures between wild and farmed salmon interests. Funding for this review had been secured from industry sources. The NASCO representatives expressed their appreciation to the industry for agreeing to fund this review. The Liaison Group asked the Salmon Cooperation Group to proceed with this review and to further develop its proposals for joint initiatives between wild and farmed salmon interests.

## **8. Reports on the Status of Wild Salmon Stocks**

- 8.1 A summary of the scientific advice from ICES on the status of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic in 2000 was presented. In addition, brief reports were made by the NASCO Parties which provided updated information on the status of wild salmon stocks in 2001. These reports highlighted the very low abundance of both European and North American salmon which appears to be linked to increased mortality of salmon at sea. NASCO's new International Cooperative Salmon Research Board, established to investigate the causes of marine mortality of salmon, was described. NASCO indicated that in view of the crisis situation facing wild salmon stocks, the challenge is to protect the very existence and the genetic diversity of the wild stocks which form a living gene bank. Moreover, there is a need to safeguard the very



significant social and economic benefits associated with wild salmon. In these circumstances it will be necessary to look at all the threats to the resource, including those associated with aquaculture, so as to ensure the conservation of the resource, which will ultimately be of benefit to both wild and farmed salmon interests.

- 8.2 The industry stated that it has resources and technical expertise of relevance to conservation of wild salmon and has put significant efforts into the protection of genetic diversity.

## **9. Application of the Precautionary Approach to Salmon Management**

- 9.1 NASCO and its Contracting Parties have agreed to adopt and apply the Precautionary Approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of salmon in order to protect the resource and preserve the environments in which it lives. A brief report was made by NASCO on progress in applying the Precautionary Approach to management of salmon fisheries in the North Atlantic and to habitat protection and restoration. It was agreed that all of the agreements developed by NASCO in relation to the Precautionary Approach would be made available to industry representatives. NASCO's Standing Committee on the Precautionary Approach (SCPA) will next consider application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics. It will also separately consider how social and economic aspects can be incorporated in application of the Precautionary Approach.
- 9.2 NASCO's SCPA had recently 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. The Council of NASCO had agreed that these Draft Terms of Reference, SLG(02)3, should be made available to the Liaison Group before their consideration by NASCO so that the Group's comments could be reviewed at NASCO's Nineteenth Annual Meeting. Under the Liaison Group's Guiding Principles for Cooperation, the Parties agree to work cooperatively when consideration is given to application of the Precautionary Approach to salmon aquaculture.
- 9.3 The industry representatives referred to their existing commitment to the Precautionary Approach through use of environmental management schemes and existing measures required by regulatory bodies. In the light of these commitments, the industry expressed some concern that the Precautionary Approach could be used as a mechanism to prevent the further development of their industry. Concern was also expressed about the possible amendment of NASCO's agreements, as a result of the review envisaged in the Terms of Reference, before they had even been implemented. Furthermore, the industry pointed out that existing national and regional laws and regulations would need to be taken into account in the review. The industry indicated that it would prefer a risk management approach to application of the Precautionary Approach. NASCO indicated that the need to take account of appropriate risk assessments is already incorporated in the Terms of Reference, that the review is an essential process in applying the Precautionary Approach and that its successful resolution should help the industry in dealing with its critics. The industry indicated that they would need time to develop a response to these Terms of Reference. They agreed to consider them at the next meeting of the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) to be held in late April and to develop a



response well in advance of NASCO's next annual meeting in June, including proposals as to how the industry might contribute to this aspect of the SCPA's work.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- 10.1 The industry representatives referred to the problems caused at NASCO's last annual meeting as a result of the issue by one NGO of a press release at a sensitive stage of the meeting. They asked if there had been any progress on the proposed development by NASCO of a policy on communications. The Secretary of NASCO reported that the NGOs were developing their own code of practice concerning contact with the media during NASCO meetings. This would be examined by the Council prior to a decision in June on possible new rules for NGOs. The Secretary expected that there would be sanctions incorporated in the new rules. It was agreed to circulate the NASCO paper on communications policy to the Liaison Group.
- 10.2 The industry representatives reported that all countries farming salmon in the North Atlantic area are now represented within ISFA, which represents 91% of production, and they proposed that this organization, which is a federation of national salmon farming associations, should in future be the organization which would represent the industry within the Liaison Group. NASCO requested the industry representatives to provide it with a copy of the Constitution for ISFA. They also asked for an indication of how a North Atlantic group within ISFA might be structured.
- 10.3 Reference was made to the need for research to examine the hypothesis that escaped farm salmon from one country might be carried with ocean currents into territorial waters of, and enter rivers in, other countries. The Liaison Group asked the Salmon Cooperation Group to consider this proposal.

## **11. Date and Place of Next Meeting**

- 11.1 The Liaison Group proposed to hold a further meeting in about a year's time, principally to review the reports on implementation of the Action Plans on containment using the newly agreed format and to consider the proposals from the Salmon Cooperation Group. The date and place of the meeting would be agreed by correspondence.

## **12. Report of the Liaison Group Meeting**

- 12.1 The Liaison Group agreed a report of its meeting.



## **Opening Statement by Mr James Ryan on behalf of the North Atlantic salmon farming industry**

On behalf of both the Irish Salmon Growers Association and myself, as I actually live here in Westport, I would like to welcome you all to this small but thriving little town on the west coast of Ireland. Both aquaculture and angling contribute in no small way to the economy of Westport. I hope after your stay here that you will go back to your own countries and promote the west of Ireland as THE place to come to for your holiday in the sun – it's always like this here.

On behalf of the Atlantic salmon farming industry, I would like to say that we are very pleased with the progress that has been made by this Group over the last two years. We have enjoyed getting to know each other and we have even managed to do some very significant work. We have produced the Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon and this is not just a document to sit gathering dust on a shelf. Even as we speak here now, those guidelines are being applied by ordinary individual fish farm workers in the remotest of locations – from the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick to the most obscure corners of Scottish lochs and Norwegian fjords. This is a classic example of what international cooperation can achieve in spite of major differences in outlook between the negotiating parties.

In this age when everyone is so short of time, these meetings are, of course, a burden to all parties but in spite of this the salmon farming industry is an enthusiastic supporter of the process provided it continues to result in the streamlining and simplification of regulation and enforcement. We have no interest in being part of something which ultimately makes our business impossible to operate.

We believe that over the last two years we have shown our bona fides and as a kind of payback to NASCO, which should not be too onerous, we would now like you to assist us in applying our extensive knowledge of salmon husbandry to the cause of the restoration of wild salmon stocks. While our industry has had a very difficult year in the market place, and this has forced us to concentrate on the survival of our businesses, I believe that this meeting, here in Westport, can act as the launch pad for a new era of cooperation between wild salmon interests and aquaculture. I am confident, therefore, that we will have a good meeting. Thank you.



## **Opening Statement by Dr Malcolm Windsor on behalf of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)**

First, on behalf of the NASCO delegates to this Liaison Group Meeting, I would like to thank our Irish colleagues in the Marine Institute and the salmon farming industry here in Ireland for the arrangements made for this meeting. It is a pleasure for us to be here in the west of Ireland and we greatly appreciate the meeting facilities you have provided and the excellent visits which allowed us to learn more about management of both wild salmon stocks and the salmon farming industry here.

We in NASCO greatly value the spirit of cooperation that has developed through these meetings and we look forward to building on the progress made at earlier Liaison Group meetings. At our second meeting in Ottawa last year we made good progress in developing Guidelines for Containment of Farm Salmon. We need your confirmation that the guidelines are acceptable to the industry. The Council of NASCO has welcomed this and asked that the Liaison Group monitor the development and implementation of the action plans envisaged under these Guidelines and advise on progress on an annual basis. We look forward to receiving reports on this important initiative from the countries represented here today.

In Ottawa we also established a Salmon Cooperation Group to further explore options for enhanced cooperation between wild and farmed salmon interests. I know that this group has been active over the last twelve months and I hope will have some interesting proposals for us to consider over the next two days.

The Council of NASCO has also asked that draft Terms of Reference for a meeting of its Standing Committee on the Precautionary Approach to consider application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture (including ranching and stocking) and transgenics be considered by this Group. By this NASCO means the risks to the wild stocks from these activities. You may recall that under our Guiding Principles we agreed to work cooperatively when consideration is given to application of the Precautionary Approach to salmon aquaculture and we would like to have some feedback from the industry on these Terms of Reference which will be conveyed to NASCO Council when it meets in June. At that stage the Council will also resolve the extent of stakeholder participation in the Committees work.

Let me reassure the industry that we do not believe that salmon farming is the cause of all the problems with the wild stocks, but the wild stocks are in a desperate situation and we cannot afford to ignore any threat.

Finally the salmon farming industry has requested that reports be made by NASCO's Parties on the current status of wild salmon stocks, which is still giving rise to serious concerns.

So we have much to consider over the next couple of days but I am confident that the goodwill and spirit of cooperation that has been so evident in our work over the last two years will allow us to make further real progress on issues of mutual concern. We in NASCO look forward to working with you here in Westport and to a productive meeting.



***North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO  
Liaison Group***

Hotel Westport, Westport, Ireland  
8-9 April 2002

***List of Participants***

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**Guidelines for Containment of Farm Salmon  
Development and Implementation of Action Plans  
Format for Reporting to the Liaison Group**

1. Is there currently an Action Plan for containment of farm salmon so as to achieve a level of escapes that is as close to zero as practicable? If yes, please attach a copy. If no, what is the anticipated timetable for development of an Action Plan?
2. Is information available on the level and causes of escapes? If yes, please provide details.
3. Is information available on implementation of and compliance with the Action Plan? If yes, please provide details.
4. Is information available on the effectiveness of the Action Plan in minimizing escapes? If yes, please provide details.
5. Have areas for research and development in support of the Action Plan been identified? If yes, please provide details.

**Note :**

*“Action Plan” means a national Action Plan or regional Plans. Action Plans are the process through which internationally agreed guidelines on containment are implemented at national or regional level through existing or new voluntary codes of practice, regulations, or a combination of both.*



## SLG(02)6

*Report of the Salmon Cooperation Group*

At its meeting in Ottawa in February 2001, the North Atlantic salmon farming industry and NASCO Liaison Group discussed how the salmon farming industry might assist with restoration and enhancement of wild salmon stocks. The meeting recognised that the industry has considerable experience in hatchery techniques, in reducing costs of rearing salmon and in genetic aspects, and some experience in rearing triploid salmon. The Liaison Group considered a proposal from the salmon farming industry representatives to establish a Committee on Future Cooperation to further explore the options for enhanced cooperation between wild and farmed salmon interests.

The Liaison Group appointed:

James Ryan, Managing Director, Killary Salmon Limited, Ireland

Dr Ken Whelan, Director Salmon Management Services Division, Marine Institute, Ireland

Jack Taylor, Executive Director, Office of the Commissioner for Aquaculture Development, Fisheries and Oceans, Canada

Sebastian Belle, Executive Director, Maine Aquaculture Association, USA

to the Committee and asked that it report back on progress to the Liaison Group's next meeting, scheduled for Westport, Co. Mayo in April 2002.

Since its formation the Salmon Cooperation Group has largely corresponded by e-mail and has identified the following as its overall objectives:

1. To carry out a full review of all existing cooperative ventures between wild salmon and fish farming interests;
2. To identify future areas of cooperative work;
3. To seek financial support or support in kind for such programmes;
4. To put in place a fund to support such programmes.

It has identified the following as possible areas for joint initiatives:

- Wild salmon restoration programmes
- Wild salmon enhancement programmes
- Studies of wild/farmed interactions
- The compilation of a manual of modern rearing/husbandry techniques
- Educational programmes regarding the biology, management and rearing of wild and farmed stocks
- Provision of smolts for large-scale marine research programmes
- Involvement with community-based management initiatives
- Organise a special session of NASCO on restoration and enhancement
- Genetic studies
- Disease and parasite studies

At its meeting in Mondariz, Spain, NASCO endorsed the work of the Group and it was agreed that objective 1 (*To carry out a full review of all existing cooperative ventures between wild salmon and fish farming interests*) should commence as soon as possible. It was agreed that this project should identify the key cooperative programmes currently taking place and prioritise areas where future cooperation would prove most fruitful. The project would also identify possible partnerships between the salmon farming industry and wild fish interests.

Funding to support this initial review has now been secured from industry sources and with the agreement of the Liaison Group a six-month contract for a Research Assistant will be advertised and the work will commence as soon as possible.