



Agenda item 5.2
For decision

Council

CNL(01)32

Future Actions in Relation to Application of the Precautionary Approach

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1. The Standing Committee on the Precautionary Approach (SCPA) as now held two meetings, one on application of the Precautionary Approach to the management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries and one on habitat protection and restoration. In addition, it has developed proposed Terms of Reference for consideration of social and economic implications for application of a Precautionary Approach.

Management of North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries

2. Last year, on the recommendation of the SCPA, the Council provisionally adopted a decision structure for use in the management of single and mixed stock fisheries, pending a detailed evaluation over a two-year period. It was agreed that the decision structure would be considered by NASCO's Commissions, and that each Contracting Party should apply the decision structure on a selection of rivers with different stock status and management policies. The Contracting Parties would report annually to the Commissions, and the Commissions and Contracting Parties would report back to the SCPA in the spring of 2002 so that there could be a thorough evaluation of the decision structure. The President has asked that a brief progress report be made by the Parties to the Council at its 2001 Annual Meeting.

Habitat Protection and Restoration

3. The recommendations of the SCPA on habitat protection and restoration are contained in document CNL(01)17 and will be considered by the Council at its Annual Meeting. The SCPA has developed a proposed NASCO Plan of Action under which each Contracting Party should seek to develop a Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Plan or Plans for presentation at NASCO's Annual Meeting in 2002, and report to NASCO on progress towards the implementation of their plans on an ongoing basis.

One possibility would be to hold Special Liaison Meetings on Habitat, similar in format to those being held on measures to minimise impacts of salmon aquaculture, in order to review the initiatives by the Parties to protect and restore salmon habitat.

Socio-Economic Aspects

4. Terms of Reference for Consideration of Social and Economic Implications for Application of a Precautionary Approach, developed by the SCPA, will also be considered by the Council at its Annual Meeting. These Terms of Reference recommend the commissioning of studies and, if the Council accepts the Committee's proposals, there will be a need for a future meeting or meetings of the SCPA to review the results of the studies and to address the other issues identified in these Terms of Reference.

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

5. The major remaining task in the Action Plan which has yet to be addressed by the SCPA is the application of a Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics (including stocking and ranching). Given the commitments in terms of management of Atlantic salmon fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and socio-economic issues outlined above, the Council may wish to delay detailed consideration of this aspect of the Action Plan until after the Nineteenth Annual Meeting. However, if the Council agreed, the SCPA might be asked to develop Terms of Reference for a meeting on application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics for consideration at the Nineteenth Annual Meeting.

Possible Meeting Schedule

6. Quite apart from Precautionary Approach meetings, the Council will be asked to confirm the Joint Meeting with NPAFC and IBSFC proposed for March 14-15 2002 in Vancouver, Canada (see document CNL(01)5), and the third Liaison Group meeting with the salmon farming industry, proposed for 8-9 April 2002 in Galway, Ireland. In addition to these meetings there are a number of tasks before the SCPA which may require meetings of the Committee as follows:

a thorough evaluation of the decision structure for management of salmon fisheries (proposed by the Council for the spring of 2002);

presentation of reports from the Contracting Parties on their Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Plans. (The SCPA has proposed that this be undertaken at NASCO's 2002 Annual Meeting);

a review of the social and economic implications for application of the Precautionary Approach. (This meeting might need to await the results of a study by independent sociologists and economists).

7. There would likely be advantages to holding the next meeting of the SCPA in conjunction with one of the other two meetings to be held during 2002. The joint meeting with NPAFC and IBSFC will focus on issues associated with the problems of increased marine mortality of salmon, and is more likely to be of interest to managers and stock assessment biologists than to socio-economists. It might, therefore, be appropriate to schedule a meeting of the SCPA to evaluate the decision structure immediately before the joint meeting on 14 and 15 March 2002 in Vancouver. At this meeting, the SCPA might also be asked to develop Terms of Reference for application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics.
8. If the Council agrees with the recommendations of the SCPA, the review of the salmon habitat protection and restoration plans could be held during the Nineteenth Annual Meeting, scheduled for 3-7 June 2002. The Council may wish to consider

holding a Special Liaison Meeting on habitat issues as part of this 2002 annual meeting.

9. Finally, there would be a need to schedule a separate meeting or meetings of the SCPA to consider socio-economic issues. We have suggested two possible periods, December 2001/January 2002 and the autumn of 2002. The second of these periods would allow more time in which to commission studies if the Council decided this was necessary. The issue of application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics might best be postponed until 2003.
10. In summary, a possible schedule of meetings might be as follows:

Meeting	Topic	Date	Venue
SCPA *	Implications of socio-economic issues for application of the Precautionary Approach	December 2001/January 2002	To be decided
SCPA	Evaluation of the decision structure for management of salmon fisheries. Development of Terms of Reference for application of the Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics	11-13 March 2002	Vancouver, Canada
Joint meeting with NPAFC and IBSFC	Factors influencing marine mortality of salmon	14-15 March 2002	Vancouver, Canada
Third Liaison Group Meeting	Issues of mutual concern to salmon aquaculture and wild salmon interests	8-9 April 2002 (possible site visits on 6-7 April)	Galway, Ireland
Nineteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO	Review of Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Plans	3-7 June 2002 (possible Special Liaison Meeting on habitat issues on 3 June)	To be decided
SCPA *	Implications of socio-economic issues for application of the Precautionary Approach	Autumn 2002	To be decided
SCPA	Application of a Precautionary Approach to introductions and transfers, aquaculture and transgenics	Spring 2003	To be decided

**Note: The Committee may need more than one meeting to complete its work on the implications of socio-economic issues for application of the Precautionary Approach. We have therefore scheduled two meetings. At the first meeting there might be an initial review of any available information provided by the Parties. The second meeting would allow more time for any studies commissioned by the Council to be undertaken and the results considered by the Parties. However, if the Council felt that only one meeting was necessary, either of the allocated dates could be released.*

11. 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
9 April, 2001