



Council

CNL(01)52

Report of the Meeting of the Working Group on International Cooperative Research

1. Last year Council agreed to set up a Working Group to develop ideas for a research program to identify and explain the issues of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and to examine the possibilities to counteract the mortality. The Working Group was asked to advise on possible sources of funding and how to organize it, and to consider the issue of by-catch in pelagic fisheries.
2. Council reviewed the report of the Working Group under reference CNL (01)21 at its 18th annual meeting in Mondariz, Spain. Council established a subsequent Working Group to advise on program coordination, research priorities, and financial and administrative implications and to report back during the 18th meeting. The Working Group met on June 6 under Mr. David Bevan, Head of the Canadian Delegation. Its report is attached.

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The Chairman, Mr. David Bevan of Canada, opened the meeting by expressing the views of Heads of Delegation regarding advice required by Council on steps to implement the "Report of the Working Group on International Cooperative Research", as summarized under cover of CNL(01)21.

Specifically, Mr. Bevan reported that Heads of Delegation were seeking further advice concerning prioritization of research projects proposed in CNL (01)21; for specific short term project priorities; for coordination of ongoing programming among member states; and for guidelines for solicitation and acceptance of donations from non-government sources in support of a contribution via NASCO to support international cooperative research projects to improve understanding of marine survival of salmon.

The Working Group agrees with the role brought forward at the Council meeting (i.e. broadening the NASCO activity in coordination of marine research, accepting donations, and funding projects to improve understanding of marine survival of salmon). The Working Group also advises that Council should direct the NASCO Secretariat to establish administrative mechanisms to accept private donations, and to establish an administrative framework to support the acceptance of contributions and to provide funding for projects. Solicitation of donations should be considered at a later date.

The Working Group suggests that the NASCO Secretariat avail itself of this opportunity to strengthen relationships with accredited NGO's and their extensive experiences in the area of fund raising, as well as to be aware of certain tax advantages that may accrue to donators for contributions via the NGO's. It is also suggested that any support (i.e., projects receiving contributions or grants, as well as sanctioned research of the Member parties) be clearly identified as sanctioned and/or funded by NASCO through its International Cooperative Research Program.

The Working Group is concerned over potential for considerable administrative burden on the NASCO Secretariat. It was therefore concluded that Council should establish a Board to oversee this initiative. Recognizing the urgent nature of this priority, the Working Group feels that within two weeks, contracting Members should each nominate one representative to serve on this Board, with the Chair selected annually by consensus among the members. The Chair will then continue to function using the principal of consensus rather than vote. Where consensus cannot be achieved, issues should be referred to Council for resolution.

NGO's have also expressed interest in representation on this Board. As noted above, there are certain benefits that may accrue from NGO involvement. Council may therefore wish to consider options for participation of accredited NGO's in Board activities.

The Board should be tasked with two initial functions:

1. Inventory all ongoing programs investigating survival of Atlantic salmon in the high seas, as well as in tidal water bays and estuaries; compile a plan of scientific research for contracting parties for the next three years, and provide a forum to coordinate efforts of members in future endeavors.
2. Establish priorities among project proposals in CNL(01)21. For various reasons the working group concluded that the highest immediate priority project is the "Post Smolt and Adult Migration and Distribution", budgeted in the range of £1.5 million to £3.5 million.

The Board should be directed to seek advice on all scientific matters from the Scientific Committee of NASCO. Specifically, the Scientific Committee should be asked to develop the three-year research plan, advise the Board on priorities, and evaluate project proposals. Its initial task of defining ongoing or scheduled research to improve understanding of marine survival for the 2002, 2003, and 2004 should be submitted to the Board by October 1, 2001.

The Working Group feels that the Scientific Committee should advise the Board on a detailed workplan for the "Post Smolt and Adult Migration and Distribution" project. The Board should then be empowered to identify program elements, and that, as sufficient funds become available to provide

reasonable certainty of completion, elements of the plan can be implemented.

Consequently, at such time as funding may become available, the Board should be fully prepared to define projects, terms and conditions for eligibility, and solicit specific proposals from member states. Eligibility for participation in research should be discretionary to member states, recognizing that the stated goals and objectives of NASCO must be reflected in all aspects of any project. Larger cooperative proposals among member states should also be encouraged. Proposals submitted on any project call from the Board should initially be limited to not more than two from each member or party; however, the Board may revise its approach based on initial experiences.

Member states will be required to assume costs for their participation on this Board. The Working Group feels that the Board should review advice from the Science Committee and adopt priorities via electronic communication. However, it is recommended that Council members commit to an early meeting of the Board to finalize its priorities. With this in mind, it is suggested that the March 14-15, 2002 Vancouver Symposium may provide an opportunity for this meeting.

In summary, the Working Group is proposing that Council take the following steps to implement conclusions of Report CNL (01)21 to broaden NASCO's activity in coordination of marine research, accepting donations, and funding projects to improve understanding of marine survival of salmon:

1. Direct the Secretariat to establish administrative mechanisms to accept private donations, and to establish an administrative framework to support the acceptance of contributions and to provide funding for projects. (Solicitation of donations should be considered at a later date).
2. Establish a Board to oversee this initiative, and for contracting parties to name members to this Board within two weeks. The Board should also be the focal point for NASCO's coordination of research programs to improve understanding of marine survival of salmon.
3. Direct the Scientific Committee to establish a three-year plan for ongoing and scheduled research by contracting Members into marine

survival of salmon by October 1, 2001, and to advise the Board on a detailed research plan on post smolt and adult migration and distribution.

4. Direct the Board, in consultation with the scientific committee, to define projects, terms and conditions for funding eligibility and, at such time as funds become available, solicit, evaluate and approve proposals from among member states. Priority should be assigned to projects in support of the post smolt and adult migration and distribution research plan.
5. Plan an early meeting of the Board (not later than the March 14-15 Vancouver Symposium).

June 7, 2001

List of Participants

Canada

David Bevan (Chairman)
Mike Calcut
David Dunn (Rapporteur)
David Meerberg

European Union

Ken Whelan

Norway

Raoul Bierach
Lars Petter Hansen

United States of America

Russell Brown
Stephen Chase
Steve Gephard
Francis Juanes

