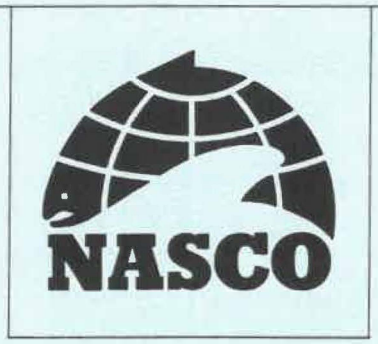
NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

ORGANISATION POUR LA CONSERVATION DU SAUMON DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD



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Council

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Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2000

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Note: This Report is not intended for publication but is submitted to the Council under Article 5, paragraph 6 of the Convention which requires the submission of an annual report to the Parties. The report is a summary of the activities of the Organization in 2000. Full details of the work of the Organization are contained in the reports of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Council and regional Commissions and in the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

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Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2000

1. Introduction

1.1 At the invitation of the Canadian Government, NASCO held its Seventeenth Annual Meeting in Miramichi, New Brunswick. Further progress was made on a number of issues, as summarised below.

2. Council

2.1 The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Council was held during the period 5 - 9 June 2000 under the Presidency of Mr Einar Lemche (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) and Vice-Presidency of Mr Ole Tougaard (European Union). Representatives of all the Contracting Parties, two inter-governmental organizations, 15 non-governmental organizations and media representatives attended the meetings.

The Precautionary Approach to Salmon Management

2.2 The Standing Committee on the Precautionary Approach (SCPA), established by the Council at its Sixteenth Annual Meeting, held its first meeting in March 2000 on the topic of application of a Precautionary Approach to management of North Atlantic salmon fisheries. The Committee's report included some general comments on interpretation of the guiding principles of the Precautionary Approach, guiding definitions of terms used in salmon fisheries management, and a decision structure for use by the Council and Commissions of NASCO and by the relevant authorities in the management of single and mixed stock fisheries. The Council agreed the definitions and provisionally adopted the decision structure. It was agreed that the decision structure would be considered by the Commissions at their meetings and that each Contracting Party should initially 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.

2.3 The Council agreed that the SCPA should, as the next step, consider application of the Precautionary Approach to habitat protection and restoration. The SCPA was also asked to develop terms of reference in relation to the implication of socio-economic issues for application of a Precautionary Approach and, in this regard, the Contracting Parties were asked to provide relevant background information and ideas.

2.4 The Council asked the Secretary to prepare a single document containing the various Council documents on the Precautionary Approach to Salmon Management and to make this available on the Organization's website.

Unreported Catches

2.5 The Secretary presented information provided by the Parties in relation to unreported catches. These returns indicate that in 1999 unreported catches were estimated to be between 917 and 1,160 tonnes. Illegal fishing appears to be a major contributing factor to the continuing high level of unreported catches, although not in all countries. The Council expressed concern about the continuing high level of unreported catches and emphasised the need to take stronger measures to minimise the level of unreported catches. The Contracting Parties were requested to provide a breakdown of their unreported catch in the 2001 returns, since this information might be useful when considering measures to minimise unreported catches. The Council was advised of the development of a preliminary draft international plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, which will be considered at the next meeting of the FAO Committee on Fisheries. The Secretary was asked to follow developments with this initiative.

Scientific Research Fishing in the Convention Area

2.6 The Council considered a proposal to establish a five-year international cooperative research programme and agreed to set up a Working Group, under Norwegian Chairmanship, to:

- develop ideas for a programme to identify and explain the causes of increased marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and examine the possibilities for counteracting the mortality;
- advise on possible sources of funding for the research programme and how to organise it;
- consider the issue of by-catch in pelagic fisheries.

It was agreed that the Working Group should meet in the autumn of 2000 and that the Secretary should write to the Contracting Parties inviting nominations for the Group. The Council recognised the need to draw on existing information so as to avoid duplication of effort. In this regard Canada drew the attention of the Council to an upcoming scientific meeting in Halifax to investigate the possible causes of the high marine mortality.

By-catch of Atlantic Salmon

2.7 The Council agreed that the issue of by-catch should be considered by the Working Group on International Cooperative Research referred to in paragraph 2.6 above. The USA referred to reports of by-catch of Atlantic salmon in a troll fishery for albacore off the west coast of Ireland. The European Union indicated that efforts would be made to try to get information for the next annual meeting.

Fishing for Salmon in International Waters

2.8 Details of actions taken in relation to the Resolution on Fishing for Salmon on the High Seas were presented. There have been no sightings of vessels from non-Contracting Parties fishing for salmon in international waters since February 1994 but there have been few surveillance flights over the winter and spring period. The Council asked the Secretary to continue to liaise with the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) with a view to obtaining relevant information on sightings. The Secretary was also asked to take action in relation to any future sightings.

Impacts of Aquaculture on Wild Salmon Stocks

Special Liaison Meeting to Review Measures to Minimise Impacts of Aquaculture on the Wild Stocks

2.9 The Council held its second Special Liaison Meeting on the measures taken by the European Union and its Member States to minimise the impacts of salmon aquaculture on the wild stocks. A separate report of this meeting has been prepared. The Council confirmed that there would be a third Special Liaison Meeting on Aquaculture at the 2001 meeting with presentations by the United States, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The Council took note of a report of the 1999 Special Liaison Meeting at which there had been presentations by Canada and Norway.

Returns Made in Accordance with the Oslo Resolution

2.10 A report was presented on the returns made in accordance with Article 5 of the Oslo Resolution. The Council agreed that for subsequent returns it wished only to be advised of new measures and asked that the Secretary take this up with the Parties when requesting information for 2001.

Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry

2.11 The report of the meeting of the Liaison Group between NASCO and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry, held in London in February 2000, was presented. The Council 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 Council agreed:

- that the Constitution for the Liaison Group was acceptable to NASCO;
- that the Chairman of the Liaison Group (if from the aquaculture industry side) be invited to attend future NASCO meetings;
- on the areas for discussion and cooperation at subsequent meetings as detailed in the report. Additionally, it was agreed that the Liaison Group should put NASCO's work on the Precautionary Approach on its agenda so that this can be taken into account in its future work;
- to hold a second meeting of the Liaison Group in North America in February 2001.

2.12 The Liaison Group had developed a Declaration detailing principles for cooperation between NASCO and the salmon farming industry in the North Atlantic. The Council felt that this should be seen as "Guiding Principles" or a "Statement of Objectives" rather than a "Declaration". The Council expressed the view that there was a lack of balance in the current wording, since while there is a reference there to the benefits of aquaculture, there is no reference to its possible negative effects on the wild stocks. The risks of such negative effects were the reason for NASCO taking the initiative to establish the Liaison Group. In the Council's view, this imbalance would need to be adjusted. Furthermore, while the document refers to the North Atlantic salmon farming industry as NASFI, there is no such organization and this issue needed to be addressed. There was, therefore, a need for further consideration of the document at the next Liaison Group Meeting in February 2001 with these matters in mind.

Development of Guidelines on Physical Containment of Farm Salmon

2.13 The Council considered a report of the meeting of the Working Group to Develop Guidelines on Containment of Farmed Salmon. The Council welcomed the development of the draft guidelines but saw a need for further work to ensure that they would result in a higher standard of containment. As presently drafted they could only be considered to be a minimum standard. There was a need to include elements on monitoring, control and enforcement, and a requirement to adopt improved technology as this becomes available. The Council asked that these points be raised at the next meetings of the Liaison Group and of the Working Group to Develop Guidelines on the Containment of Farmed Salmon.

Transgenic Salmon

2.14 At its Fourteenth Annual Meeting the Council had adopted NASCO Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmon, designed to prevent impacts on the wild stocks. Under these guidelines the Parties agreed to advise the Council of any proposal to permit the rearing of transgenic salmonids, providing details of proposed containment and other measures to safeguard the wild stocks.

2.15 Canada had advised the Council that a company located in Eastern Canada is currently producing transgenic Atlantic salmon and rainbow trout broodstock in a secure land-based facility. The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans had not received any formal proposal for commercial rearing but if this should occur then the proposal would be thoroughly examined and a risk analysis performed as per the Fisheries Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The USA informed the Council of preliminary discussions between a company and the US Food and Drug Administration. The permitting process, which includes environmental analysis, was described, and the USA agreed to keep NASCO informed.

2.16 The Council recognised that while transgenic salmon are not presently being reared commercially, there is a need to consider this issue carefully under a Precautionary Approach. The Council therefore asked that when the Standing Committee on the

Precautionary Approach considers the issue of introductions and transfers, it should also consider how the Precautionary Approach would apply to transgenic salmon.

St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

2.17 At its Sixteenth Annual Meeting the Council had asked the Secretary to write to the French authorities expressing concern about the increased level of catches of salmon at St Pierre and Miquelon in 1998. The Secretary made a report on these consultations.

2.18 The Council adopted a Resolution Concerning St Pierre and Miquelon. In accordance with the Resolution, the President was asked to communicate through appropriate diplomatic channels to convey NASCO's concern over the level of salmon harvest in St Pierre and Miquelon in 1998 and 1999, to urge France in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon to immediately set harvest limits for the 2000 salmon fishery at the lowest possible level consistent with advice provided by ICES, and to request that information on the measures taken be made available to NASCO at its 2001 Annual Meeting. The Council agreed that when the Resolution was transmitted to France by the President, France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) should be invited to attend the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO, as an observer, to report on measures taken. The issue of whether to invite France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to become a Contracting Party to NASCO will be considered by the Council at its next annual meeting.

Review of NASCO's Relationship with its Observer Organizations

2.19 The Secretary introduced a discussion document on this issue which concluded that the participation by observers in NASCO's meetings had been of mutual benefit and had enhanced transparency of international cooperation on salmon conservation and management. The Council decided that for the time being it would neither impose observer fees nor invite voluntary contributions from observer organizations.

2.20 Following the transmission of very large numbers of near identical e-mails by one NGO, which had caused serious congestion problems, the Council decided to adopt the following additional condition to govern representation by NASCO's Non-Government Observers:

> "7. Non-adherence to these conditions by a Non-Government Organization may lead to the suspension of that Organization's observer status by the Council for one or more meetings".

The Council decided that NGO observer status should apply to all plenary sessions of the Council and Commissions whether they be at the Annual Meeting or at inter-sessional meetings. However, observer status would not apply to meetings of NASCO's Working Groups or Committees. The proposal was made that NGOs should be permitted to make statements at any time at the discretion of the President, or that of a Commission Chairman. There was no unanimity on this issue and the

Council decided that the issue of all of the conditions for observers should remain on the agenda of the Council for the next meeting.

2.21 Since the last Annual Meeting, the World Wildlife Fund (US) has been granted observer status to NASCO. The Council agreed that, in general, organizations devoted to aquaculture would be admitted subject to the rules for non-government organization observers.

Methods of Calculating the Contributions to NASCO

2.22 At the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, concern had been expressed by the Icelandic delegation that major changes have taken place which have affected the catches used in calculating the contributions to NASCO. Iceland introduced a document proposing a revised system for budget contributions, based on a broader definition of nominal catches to include all man-handled salmon, weighted, for example, with respect to their threat to wild stocks, their value for angling or to spawning stocks and with respect to the precision of the statistics. The Council asked the Secretary to prepare a series of scenarios, including very low catches and a high proportion of catch and release, and to circulate these to the Parties before the end of the year.

Habitat Issues

2.23 The Council took note of a report of the Special Session on Habitat Issues held in 1999 and considered a summary of the issues arising from this Special Session. It was agreed that these issues should be taken into account by the SCPA when it considers application of the Precautionary Approach to habitat issues (see paragraph 2.3).

Predator-related Mortality

2.24 Canada made a presentation and tabled a paper on the effects of predators on Atlantic salmon. The Council noted that there is ongoing research on, and increasing understanding of, predator-related mortality.

Scientific Advice

2.25 The report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) was presented to the Council. The Council adopted a request for scientific advice from ICES to be presented in 2001.

Catch Statistics and their Analysis

2.26 The official catch returns by the Parties for 1999 and historical data for the period 1960-1999 were presented.

Measures Taken in Accordance with Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention

2.27 A report was presented on the returns made under Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention which deal with implementation of the Convention. The USA described the background to the proposal to list the distinct population segment of Atlantic salmon in Maine under the Endangered Species Act and the implications if listing occurs.

Review of International Salmon-Related Literature Published in 1999

2.28 The Council took note of a review of the literature concerning Atlantic salmon published during 1999.

Election of Officers

2.29 The Council unanimously elected Mr Jacque Robichaud (Canada) as President and Mr Eidur Gudnason (Iceland) as Vice-President.

Other Issues

2.30 The Council received a report from each of the three regional Commissions on its activities (see sections 3, 4 and 5 below).

2.31 The Council adopted the report of the Finance and Administration Committee (see section 6 below). The Council decided not to accept donations from non-members and NGOs at present.

2.32 The Council agreed that the proposed joint meeting of NASCO, NPAFC and IBSFC should focus only on scientific issues and might be held in conjunction the NPAFC's Research, Planning and Co-ordination Meeting in March 2002. The Secretary was asked to liaise with the NPAFC and IBSFC on this proposal.

2.33 The Council had previously recognised that there could be benefits from a joint meeting of all the North Atlantic Fisheries Commissions (i.e. NASCO, ICCAT, NEAFC and NAFO) to discuss issues of mutual interest such as the Precautionary Approach, control and enforcement schemes and data collection. The Council asked the Head of the EU Delegation and the Secretary to liaise with these organizations on this matter with a view to setting up a preparatory meeting in 2001 so that a joint session might be held in 2002.

2.34 The Council agreed to make the Organization's databases available for public access through the NASCO website from which information could be downloaded. The databases would not be available in an interactive format.

2.35 The winner of the $2,500 Grand Prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Bob Ritchie, Montrose, Scotland.

2.36 The Council adopted a report to the Parties on the activities of the Organization in 1999.

2.37 The Council agreed to hold its Eighteenth Annual Meeting from 4-8 June 2001 in Galicia, Spain. The Council agreed to hold its Nineteenth Annual Meeting from 3-7 June 2002, either in Edinburgh or elsewhere at the invitation of a Party.

3. North American Commission

3.1 The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission was held in Miramichi, Canada, during the period 5-9 June 2000 under the Chairmanship of Dr Ray Owen (USA).

Review of the 1999 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES

3.2 The Commission reviewed the 1999 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES.

Review of the 2000 Salmon Management Measures

3.3 A short summary of Canadian salmon management measures for 2000 was presented. There are no longer any commercial fisheries for salmon on Canada's east coast; the licence retirement program on the Lower North Shore of Quebec was completed at a cost of $1.4 million; an additional $0.7 million was spent to retire the remaining seven licences in Gaspé; all other commercial fisheries moratoria remain in place; in Newfoundland and Labrador the second year of a multi-year plan is being implemented. Conservation measures are in place, including a river classification system, and no retention of MSW salmon is permitted in insular Newfoundland; in the Maritimes and Gulf regions there are no MSW salmon fisheries permitted; work is underway for a recovery plan for stocks in the Inner Bay of Fundy; in Quebec, a multi-year plan has been announced which establishes conservation limits and management targets for each river. Canada acknowledged concern with respect to the level of its unreported catch and provided a brief summary of the measures being taken to reduce this catch.

3.4 A review of catches of and conservation measures for Atlantic salmon in the USA in 1999 was presented. In summary, documented total adult salmon returns in 1999 amounted to 1,452 salmon, 18% fewer than in 1998; in excess of 13 million juvenile salmon were stocked in 1999; four obstructions to fish passage were removed in Maine allowing for a significant increase in access to all anadromous fish. Following review, it was concluded that the Gulf of Maine distinct population segment of Atlantic salmon is in danger of extinction and on November 17, 1999, it was proposed to be listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Work of the Commission

3.5 The Commission agreed that in their reports to the Commission for 2001 each Party would refer to the provisional decision structure for management of salmon fisheries adopted by the Council, in order to provide an explicit summary of the steps they have

taken to address the Precautionary Approach in respect of domestic salmon management. There are no salmon fisheries in the US but the US will undertake to see how the recent decision to close the catch and release fishery in Maine conformed to the decision structure.

The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

3.6 The Commission adopted a Resolution concerning harvest levels at St Pierre and Miquelon, urging France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to cooperate with NASCO to rebuild salmon stocks of North American origin by setting harvest limits for the 2000 salmon fishery to the lowest possible level consistent with the advice provided by ICES. The Commission recommended to the Council that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) be invited to become a member of NASCO.

Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

3.7 A report on the activities of the Commission's Scientific Working Group on Introductions and Transfers was presented. Canada updated the Commission on the Federal-Provincial process for addressing the introductions and transfers policy in Canada. Recommendations on revisions to the NAC Protocols will be considered following consideration of this Federal-Provincial process. The USA proposed that the Working Group might wish to consider the work of the Risk Assessment Management Committee of the US Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

Acid Rain

3.8 Canada presented a review prepared by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on the effects of acid rain on Atlantic salmon of the Southern Upland of Nova Scotia. Natural production of Atlantic salmon does not occur in many of the 65 rivers of the Southern Upland due to acid toxicity and low marine survival. Significant reductions in toxicity are not anticipated in the near future and further declines in salmon production and losses of stocks are expected. Management options are: liming to neutralise river acidity, stocking of hatchery fish, live gene banking and further restrictions on exploitation. The report recommends support for a further 75% reduction in sulphur dioxide emission limits in eastern Canada and the USA.

3.9 The USA and Canada agreed to investigate the possibility of contacting the Committee on Environmental Cooperation of NAFTA regarding the potential for acid rain to impact salmon.

Sampling

3.10 The US emphasised the importance of sampling in the Labrador fishery. Canada indicated that three rivers were monitored in 1999 and plans for 2000 are under review. It may also be possible to collect additional data in Labrador from tags in the trout and char food fishery. Canada will monitor this issue closely.

Election of Officers

3.11 The Commission elected Mr Pierre Tremblay (Canada) as Chairman, and Dr Andrew Rosenberg (USA) as Vice-Chairman.

Other Issues

3.12 The winner of the Commission's $1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Albert Hillier, Glace Bay, Nova Scotia.

4. North-East Atlantic Commission

4.1 The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission was held in Miramichi, Canada, during the period 5-9 June 2000 under the Chairmanship of Mr Vladimir Moskalenko (Russian Federation).

Review of the 1999 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES

4.2 The Commission reviewed the 1999 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES. No commercial or research fishery was carried out at Faroes in 1999.

Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

4.3 At its Fourteenth Annual Meeting, the Commission had adopted a Resolution to Protect Wild Salmon Stocks from Introductions and Transfers. The first returns under the Resolution were presented. The Commission noted that there was a need to standardise returns in future and to develop a definition of the term "non-indigenous".

Regulatory Measures

4.4 Reports on recent salmon conservation measures were presented by the European Union (United Kingdom and Ireland) and Norway. The Commission decided not to set a quota for the Faroe Islands fishery in 2001 on the basis that salmon fishing will be limited in scope and in light of the intention of the Faroe Islands to manage the salmon fishery in a precautionary manner with a view to sustainability, and to make management decisions with due consideration to the ICES advice concerning the biological status of the stocks contributing to the fishery.

Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Work of the Commission

4.5 The European Union indicated that it is committed to evaluating the decision structure adopted by the Council on a provisional basis on selected rivers or groups of rivers in the UK and Ireland and the outcome of these evaluations will be reported to the Commission and the SCPA at the next Annual Meeting.

4.6 The approach to be used in the application of the Precautionary Approach in Norway was outlined. Norway has developed an improved system of classification for all rivers. There are plans for improved monitoring of stocks in homewaters which is a

vital element of the decision structure. Norway is also moving towards a quota-based management system to balance the sea fisheries and in-river fisheries in order to limit the number of stocks affected by mixed stock fisheries.

4.7 Iceland referred to the fact that it had been entirely free of coastal netting for two years as all remaining salmon fisheries had been purchased either by the State or by private funds and this had cost in the region of £500,000 to £600,000.

4.8 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stressed the need to take forward the principles of the Precautionary Approach and reminded the Commission that this issue was also being addressed in other fisheries fora. The Faroese authorities will consider how the principles of the Precautionary Approach can be implemented in legislation. There is a need for greater understanding of the terms of the Precautionary Approach and the implications for mixed stock fishing. There are few salmon rivers in the Faroes so an action plan had not been developed, but it is intended to move the process forward.

Election of Officers

4.9 The Commission re-elected Mr Vladimir Moskalenko (Russian Federation) as Chairman and Mr Arni Isaksson (Iceland) as Vice-Chairman.

Other Issues

4.10 The Chairman announced that the winner of the Commission's $1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Martin D. Kay of Warrington, England.

5. West Greenland Commission

5.1 The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission was held in Miramichi, Canada, during the period 5-9 June 2000 under the Chairmanship of Mr Andrew Thomson (European Union).

Review of the 1999 Fishery and Scientific Advice from ICES

5.2 The Commission reviewed the 1999 fishery and considered the scientific advice from ICES. Information was presented by the European Union on the exploitation of salmon in the UK and Ireland and by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on implementation of the regulatory measure for the 1999 Greenland internal consumption fishery. The Commission discussed the current condition of the stocks and commended the efforts made to improve monitoring at West Greenland.

Regulatory Measures

5.3 The Commission agreed that the measure adopted in 1999 should be endorsed and maintained for the 2000 season. Under this measure the catch in 2000 is restricted to that amount used for internal consumption in Greenland, which in the past has been estimated at 20 tonnes. There will be no commercial export of salmon. The

Commission considered the need to develop a harvest agreement for 2001 and beyond.

Application of the Precautionary Approach Decision Structure to the West Greenland Commission

5.4 All Parties agreed to apply the decision structure to various single and/or mixed stock fisheries under their purview so that a critical assessment can be made of the decision structure, and adjustments made in future as appropriate.

5.5 The Commission adopted a Resolution regarding the fishing of salmon at West Greenland. Under this Resolution, the Parties agree to maintain the spirit embodied in previous agreements within the West Greenland Commission and agreed that unless a significant improvement is demonstrated in the condition of stocks available to the West Greenland fishery, the catch at West Greenland in 2001 will be restricted to the lowest possible level. The Parties complimented Greenland for the continued improvement in monitoring and reporting procedures and agreed to cooperate to provide a comprehensive sampling of the West Greenland fishery.

Election of Officers

5.6 The Commission re-elected Mr Andrew Thomson (European Union) as Chairman and Mr Michael Calcutt (Canada) as Vice-Chairman.

Other Issues

5.7 The Chairman announced that the winner of the Commission's $1,500 prize in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Rikka Absalonsen of Sisimiut, West Greenland.

5.8 The Commission agreed that sampling of the catch at West Greenland is essential to the scientific work of the Commission.

6. Finance And Administration Matters

6.1 The Finance and Administration Committee met prior to the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Council under the Chairmanship of Dr Jean-Pierre Plé (USA).

Review of the Annual Payment to ICES

6.2 The Secretary reported on the continuing discussions with ICES. Progress had been made on the timeliness of the advice, as a result of changes to the way that the ACFM worked with the advice developed by correspondence. As a result, the ACFM report was available to NASCO delegates 2-3 weeks earlier than in recent years. The Committee acknowledged the good progress and asked the Secretary to continue to liaise with ICES and to stress the need for long-term stability in the payments to ICES since a new basis for payments would be needed beyond 2002. The Committee agreed that, as a result of the new arrangements for developing the advice by

correspondence, a reduction in costs might be expected, and asked that this be raised with ICES.

Donations to NASCO

6.3 A number of organizations had expressed the wish to make a financial contribution to the work of NASCO. The Committee agreed there was a need to carefully consider the issues raised by the offer of donations to NASCO, and asked that the Secretary prepare a background paper including possible draft guidelines detailing the conditions under which such donations might be accepted, and possible projects which may be funded by donations.

Consideration of the 2001 Draft Budget

6.4 The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council the adoption of the Draft 2001 Budget and Schedule of Contributions.

Stabilisation Fund

6.5 The Committee agreed that the Stabilisation Fund should be further built so as to be able to meet obligations to tenants and to staff. In order to allow more growth than through budgetary provision alone, the Committee agreed that it would be desirable to allow any budget surplus at the end of the Financial Year to be credited to the Stabilisation Fund. The Committee recommended to the Council a change to Financial Rule 6.3 to facilitate this.

Election of Officers

6.6 The Commission re-elected Dr Jean-Pierre Plé (USA) as Chairman and Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) as Vice-Chairman.

Other Issues

6.7 The Committee recommended to the Council the adoption of the audited accounts for 1999 and the re-appointment of the auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, for the 2000 accounts. The Committee asked the Secretary to examine the opportunities for cost savings in audit and other accountancy costs.

6.8 The Committee asked that the Secretary investigate the opportunities to protect the use of the name NASCO and its logo together, under appropriate international laws such as trademark protection.

Secretary
Edinburgh
9 April, 2001