



Agenda Item 5.1
For decision

Council

CNL(15)12

***Report of the Meeting of the
Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group***

CNL(15)12

Report of the Meeting of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group

**Hotel Nine Zero, Tremont Street, Boston MA, USA
14 and 15 April 2015**

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Review Group nominated Mr Ted Potter (EU) to chair the meeting. He noted that the main task before the Review Group was to evaluate the 2015 Annual Progress Reports (APRs) to ensure that Parties/jurisdictions had provided a clear account of progress in implementing the actions detailed in their Implementation Plans (IPs) and the additional information required under the Convention. The Council had requested that the APRs be submitted by 1 April 2015, and the Group was advised that most, but not all, Parties/jurisdictions, had been able to meet this deadline. The Chair reminded the members of the Group that they had been appointed to represent NASCO and not their Party/Organisation. He noted that the Review Group would also need to decide on arrangements for presentation of its report to the Council and confirm the arrangements for the 2015 Theme-based Special Session on the topic of *‘Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower’*.
- 1.2 The members of the Review Group are Paddy Gargan, Katrine Kaergaard, Paul Knight, Ted Potter, Rory Saunders and Sue Scott. The NASCO Secretary coordinated the arrangements but was unable to attend the meeting itself.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Review Group adopted its agenda, IP(15)2 (Annex 1), after including a new item 7 ‘Recommendations for the third round of Implementation Plans’.

3. Review of the Terms of Reference and Consideration of Working Methods

Implementation Plans

- 3.1 The Council had agreed (see CNL(12)44) that the purpose in evaluating the IPs is to ensure that, as far as possible, they provide a fair and equitable account of the actions that each jurisdiction intends to take to implement NASCO’s Resolutions and Guidelines. Most of the IPs had been reviewed prior to NASCO’s Thirtieth (2013) Annual Meeting. The Review Group had been asked by the Council to assess each response to the questions in the IP template as: ‘satisfactory answers/information’ (assigned a score of 1); ‘unclear or incomplete answers/information’ (assigned a score of 2); and ‘clear omissions or inadequacies in answers/information’ (assigned a score of 3). Where the Review Group had considered that IPs contained answers in categories 2 or 3, these had been returned to the Party/jurisdiction with guidance on how the Group considered the IP should be improved. Re-submitted plans were then re-evaluated to

determine whether the areas highlighted had been addressed. Where clear omissions or inadequacies (i.e. scores of 3) remained, these had been highlighted in the Group's 2013 and 2014 reports to the Council, CNL(13)12 and CNL(14)11.

Annual Progress Reports (APRs)

- 3.2 The primary purpose of APRs is to provide details of:
- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the IP;
 - actions that have been taken under the IP in the previous year;
 - significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
 - actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
- 3.3 The Council had agreed (see CNL(12)44) that the purpose of the evaluation of the APRs is to ensure that Parties/jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their IPs and have provided the information required under the Convention. Where the Review Group identified shortcomings, it had been asked to develop a list of questions to be sent to the Party/jurisdiction concerned. In 2014, Parties/jurisdictions had responded to the Review Group's questions at the Annual Meeting and had provided written responses to the questions after that meeting. However, for the 2015 review, the Council had agreed that Parties/jurisdictions should provide written responses to the questions in advance of the Annual Meeting so that these could be distributed and discussed during a Special Session of the Council to be held during the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting.

Working Methods

- 3.4 The Review Group adopted the same working methods as it had adopted in 2013 and 2014. Further details are contained in the Group's 2013 and 2014 reports, CNL(13)12, and CNL(14)11, respectively. In summary, the Review Group adopted the following 'ground rules' in undertaking its 2015 evaluations:
- (a) Initial reviewers were appointed for each APR (predominantly the same reviewers as for the IPs and 2014 APR evaluations) and asked to lead the discussion within the Group and to produce an initial evaluation of each APR. This included an assessment of progress against each of the actions in the IP and the reporting on: new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management; stock status and new factors affecting salmon abundance; catch statistics; and the additional information required under the Convention;
 - (b) In reporting the evaluations, the initial reviewers remained anonymous but in the event that one or more members of the Review Group did not agree with a particular aspect or aspects of the evaluation, the report would indicate that there were dissenting views but not disclose which members of the Group expressed the dissenting views unless they wished to be identified;
 - (c) The Group drew on information in the IPs, but commented only on the information presented in the APRs;
 - (d) Because not all Parties/jurisdictions were represented on the Group, it was agreed that a member of the Review Group from a NASCO Party/jurisdiction whose APR was being reviewed would not be present during the initial review

of that report. The members of the Group were appointed by the Council to represent NASCO, not their Party/Organisation.

- 3.5 For each APR, the Review Group assessed whether satisfactory responses had been provided on:
- any changes to the IP, new initiatives and significant changes in stock status;
 - the provision of complete catch data;
 - progress made on each action; and
 - other returns required under the Convention.

- 3.6 When all evaluations were complete, a consistency check was undertaken of all the assessments. As with the 2014 review, the template used for the evaluations provided a general assessment of the APR, a more detailed commentary on progress on each of the actions (relating to management of salmon fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and aquaculture and related activities) and a list of questions to be sent to the Parties/jurisdictions for response, in writing, prior to the Annual Meeting.

4. Progress report on receipt of Implementation Plans and evaluation of any new IPs

Implementation Plan Evaluations prior to the 2014 Annual Meeting

- 4.1 In its report to the Council's Thirty-First (2014) Annual Meeting, the Review Group had noted that it had reviewed 17 IPs and of these 10 were considered to be satisfactory. The Group had emphasised that a score of '1' simply meant that a satisfactory answer/information had been provided and it did not mean that the Party/jurisdiction concerned was necessarily meeting NASCO guidelines or agreements. In some cases, responses were considered to be satisfactory even when the response was incomplete, provided that an action had been identified to begin to address any major shortcoming.
- 4.2 The Review Group had considered that the following IPs contained clear omissions or inadequacies: Canada; Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Island and Greenland) - Faroe Islands; EU - Spain (Asturias); EU - Spain (Cantabria); EU - Spain (Galicia); EU - UK (Scotland); and the Russian Federation. For these Parties/jurisdictions, the Review Group had noted that it was clear that providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment (questions 4.2 and 4.3 in the IP template, respectively) was challenging. However, the Group had expressed the opinion that the IPs for all Parties/jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place. The Group had recommended that this aspect should be addressed through the APRs or, if that was not feasible, prior to the start of the next IP cycle.
- 4.3 The Review Group had noted that, in the case of the Faroe Islands, there are no self-sustaining wild salmon stocks to protect from aquaculture related impacts, but the IP recognises that wild stocks from other countries migrate into the Faroese zone and that there is a need for measures consistent with NASCO agreements. It also noted that the IP for the Russian Federation refers to the development of new legislation in relation to aquaculture including measures to protect the wild stocks. This legislation has since entered into force but the Group did not know if this will provide a mechanism for provision of such information in the future.

Implementation Plan Evaluations since the 2014 Annual Meeting

- 4.4 Since its 2014 report to the Council, the Review Group had evaluated a new IP from EU - Spain (Navarra), CNL(14)77. This new plan was considered by the Review Group to be satisfactory.
- 4.5 At its 2014 Annual Meeting, the Council had asked that where a Party/jurisdiction had changed its IP, it should send the revised IP to the Secretariat no later than 1 December each year. The Review Group noted that revised IPs had been provided by Canada, CNL(14)73, EU - Germany, CNL(14)70, EU - UK (England and Wales), CNL(14)71, EU - UK (Northern Ireland), CNL(14)69, EU - UK (Scotland), CNL(14)76, Norway, CNL(14)74, and the United States, CNL(14)75. The Review Group did not re-evaluate these IPs but it noted that the changes made in revising IPs ranged from minor editorial changes to the inclusion of a new action (EU - Germany) and the removal of an action (United States).
- 4.6 It is the Council's intention that IPs apply for a period of five years (2013 - 2018), and generally require no annual modification unless circumstances change significantly. The Review Group noted that the template used in the updated IP for EU – UK (Scotland) had been modified for some, but not all, actions to allow for progress to be reported. The Group reiterates that the Council's intention is that progress is reported through the APRs and not in updating the IPs, not least because the IPs are not re-evaluated and any progress included in the IP but not in the APR would not be included in that evaluation.
- 4.7 Those IPs that had previously been identified to contain clear inadequacies or omissions (as listed in paragraph 4.2 above) and which had been updated in 2014 (i.e. Canada and EU - UK (Scotland)) were checked to see if any new information had been provided that would affect the Group's assessment and lead to a satisfactory evaluation. This was not the case.

Jurisdictions not submitting Implementation Plans

- 4.8 At the time of the Review Group's meeting, no IPs had been received for EU - France and EU - Portugal although it is understood that a Plan for EU - France is under preparation. The continuing lack of IPs for these two jurisdictions is a concern to the Review Group, particularly as it is now approximately half way into the second reporting cycle. Given the significant challenges facing salmon managers in the southern part of the species' range, it is important that these jurisdictions report on the measures being taken to safeguard the resource. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the Review Group remains of the opinion that, overall, the 2013 - 2018 IPs are an improvement over those provided in the first cycle, not least because they include measurable outcomes and the amount of information provided was more amenable to evaluation. Furthermore, the Group welcomes the progress made by some jurisdictions in contributing to this reporting process for the first time. However, the Group believes that there is scope for further improvements to address the aims of the NASCO 'Next Steps' process and has developed some suggestions for the next reporting cycle in section 7 below.

5. Evaluation of the 2015 Annual Progress Reports and development of feedback to the Parties/jurisdictions

Overview of the 2014 Annual Progress Report Evaluations

- 5.1 Last year, the Review Group had noted that, as it was the first year of reporting through APRs, some teething problems were to be expected. Overall, however, the reporting had worked well; generally the 2014 APRs were submitted on time and the template ensured that the amount of information provided, particularly when compared to the previous Focus Area Reports, was amenable to review and was better focused on outcomes of actions to address particular threats/challenges identified in the IPs. Some APRs had provided very limited information on which to assess progress and some information had not been presented in the appropriate sections of the template. The Review Group had suggested, and the Council had agreed, to some changes to the template that were intended to further enhance reporting in the 2015 and subsequent APRs. In particular, the APR template had been changed to read ‘Progress on Action to Date’ rather than ‘Monitoring/Enforcement Results’ and clarification was provided to indicate that a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress was being sought. The APR template had also been modified to indicate that information on stock status should be provided through the IPs every 5 years while section 2.1 of the APR should only briefly highlight any significant changes that might have occurred since the IP was prepared or updated. Clarification had also been provided to indicate that the ‘Description of Actions’ or ‘Expected Outcomes’ should remain as submitted in the IP and that these would be included in the APR template by the Secretariat. Changes had also been made to ‘Current Status of Action (e.g. ‘Not Started’, ‘Ongoing’, ‘Completed’)’ to clarify that a one or two word answer is expected and to indicate that ‘Achieved objective?’ should only be completed in the template where an action had been completed.

2015 Annual Progress Report Evaluations

- 5.2 The revised APR template, incorporating the changes referred to in paragraph 5.1 above, had been issued to all Parties/jurisdictions by the Secretariat on 9 January 2015. The Council had asked that the APRs be completed and returned to the Secretariat by 1 April 2015 for critical evaluation by the Review Group. As requested by the Council, the Secretariat had included in the APR template for each Party/jurisdiction the ‘Description of Actions’ and ‘Expected Outcomes’ as contained in the IPs. The Review Group was advised that some Parties/jurisdictions had made changes to these fields in completing the APR template resulting in differences between the APR and the IP. The Review Group, therefore, recommends that in future, the Secretariat be asked to make these fields in the template non-editable before issuing the template to the Parties/jurisdictions for completion.
- 5.3 Where the Review Group considered that there were shortcomings in an APR, the Council had requested that it develop a list of questions to be sent to the Party/jurisdiction concerned by 1 May. The Review Group agreed that the questions should be sent to the Parties/jurisdictions by the Secretary as soon as possible after its meeting and that each Party/jurisdiction should be asked to respond in writing to these questions no later than 15 May so that the responses can be circulated prior to, and discussed at, the Special Session scheduled to be held during the 2015 Annual Meeting.

5.4 Sixteen APRs were submitted prior to, or shortly after, the deadline of 1 April. Two further APRs were received either immediately before (Russian Federation) or during (Canada) the Review Group’s meeting, approximately two weeks after the deadline for submission. The Review Group evaluated the following APRs:

Party/jurisdiction	Document No.	Date received by Secretariat
Canada	CNL(15)38	14/04/2015
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands	CNL(15)31	31/03/2015
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland	CNL(15)28	30/03/2015
EU - Denmark	CNL(15)35	27/03/2015
EU - Finland	CNL(15)33	02/04/2015
EU - Germany	CNL(15)21	20/03/2015
EU - France		
EU - Ireland	CNL(15)36	02/04/2015
EU - Portugal		
EU - Spain (Asturias)	CNL(15)23	27/03/2015
EU - Spain (Cantabria)	CNL(15)24	27/03/2015
EU - Spain (Galicia)	CNL(15)25	27/03/2015
EU - Spain (Navarra)	CNL(15)26	27/03/2015
EU - Sweden	CNL(15)22	23/03/2015
EU - UK (England and Wales)	CNL(15)27	27/03/2015
EU - UK (Northern Ireland)	CNL(15)29	30/03/2015
EU - UK (Scotland)	CNL(15)34	02/04/2015
Norway	CNL(15)30	31/03/2015
Russian Federation	CNL(15)37	13/04/2015
United States	CNL(15)32	31/03/2015

5.5 The Review Group’s evaluations of these APRs are contained in document IP(15)3 (Annex 2). The Review Group noted that while the clarification made to the reporting template had further improved the consistency of the reporting, several Parties/jurisdictions’ APRs had not provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating some or all of the actions detailed in their IPs as had been requested by the Council. These reports either included one or more gaps in the ‘Progress on Action to Date’, or the comment provided bore no relationship to the proposed action. Those APRs that the Review Group considered provided a clear and comprehensive report of progress on all ongoing and completed actions are listed in the table below:

Party/jurisdiction	Document No.
Canada	CNL(15)38
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland	CNL(15)28
EU - Germany	CNL(15)21
EU - UK (England and Wales)	CNL(15)27
Norway	CNL(15)30
Russian Federation	CNL(15)37

- 5.6 The Review Group prepared a summary table (Table 1 below) to provide an overview of the number of actions in each IP/APR, the progress with their implementation and the extent to which that progress was reported (i.e. Not started, Ongoing (with clear progress report), Ongoing (without clear progress report), Completed (with clear progress report), Completed (without clear progress report)) for each Party/jurisdiction. This table should be interpreted with care taking account of the explanatory footnotes.
- 5.7 The Review Group noted that a number of Parties/jurisdictions reported some interesting and useful developments towards addressing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, including:
- Canada: The establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon to make recommendations on addressing low returns of Atlantic salmon on the East coast of Canada;
 - EU - UK (England and Wales): The introduction of a ban on stocking salmon in Wales;
 - EU - Finland, EU - UK (Northern Ireland) and the Russian Federation: Significant advances in developing river specific conservation limits;
 - EU - Germany: plans to establish a separate locally adapted indigenous salmon population in tributaries of the Rhine in North Rhine Westphalia;
 - EU - UK (Scotland): the completion of an independent review of the management of salmon and freshwater fisheries and launch of a public consultation on statutory measures to introduce a licensing system for killing wild salmon with associated carcass tagging;
 - EU - Sweden: Ongoing work to establish criteria for best available technology for hydropower generation (scheduled for completion in 2015);
 - Norway: A new regulation putting the responsibility on the aquaculture industry to fund and organize recapture of escaped salmon through a mandatory fee on each licence;
 - USA: the transition to measurable survival standards at hydro-electric dams within the freshwater range of endangered salmon in Maine.
- 5.8 The Review Group noted that evaluating the progress made on actions was very difficult when the descriptions of the planned actions in the IP were vague or imprecise. The Review Group had previously highlighted such shortcomings in some of the IPs but not all of these had been improved. The Review Group has, therefore, noted this difficulty in its evaluation of some of the APRs.

- 5.9 The Review Group had previously asked that the APRs should not rely on links to information on the internet to report progress on an action, but such links had still been included in a number of the 2015 APRs. While such links may be helpful in providing additional information, the APR itself should provide a brief, stand-alone summary of the progress made.
- 5.10 The Review Group noted that a number of the 2015 APRs had provided similar information to that provided in 2014 even when the Review Group had sought clarification or further detail. When preparing future APRs, Parties/jurisdictions are reminded to take account of any previous questions asked by the Review Group to ensure that the reported progress is clear.
- 5.11 Overall, the Review Group considered that the most common fault with the information provided on progress with actions was a lack of quantitative information on what has been achieved and/or what the results have been. All Parties/jurisdictions are asked to address this in future APRs. The Review Group noted some examples of good practice in this respect, including: the detailed summary of enforcement activities provided by Canada (Action F4); and the clear and concise information on enforcement and log book returns provided by EU - Ireland (Actions F1 and F2).
- 5.12 All the evaluations of the 2015 APRs were agreed unanimously by the Review Group.

Parties/jurisdictions not submitting APRs

- 5.13 The Review Group welcomes the improvement in the number of Parties/jurisdictions submitting an APR and the timeliness of reporting. However no APRs (or IPs) had been received from EU - France or EU - Portugal by the time the Group met to undertake its evaluations. This is a serious concern to the Group because the purpose of IPs and APRs is to provide a simple and transparent approach for reporting on the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines as agreed under the 'Next Steps' process and on actions taken in accordance with the Convention. The current IPs cover the period 2013 - 2018 so the 2015 APRs represent close to the mid-point of the reporting cycle. Furthermore, the APRs for Canada and the Russian Federation were received well after the deadline (see 5.4 above) leaving little time for their evaluation. Timely reporting is important if the evaluation process is to be thorough and consistent.

6. Arrangements for presenting the Group's report to the Council

- 6.1 The Review Group agreed that the Chairman would present its report to the Council during the Special Session at the Thirty-Second Annual Meeting. The Group agreed that this should briefly summarise the Group's working methods and provide an overview of the evaluations in terms of completeness and timeliness of reporting and progress to date. The circulation of the responses to the Group's questions ahead of the Annual Meeting should facilitate a richer discussion at the meeting involving all Parties and NGOs.

7 Recommendations for the third round of Implementation Plans

- 7.1 The Review Group discussed shortcomings in the process for developing actions under the IPs and reporting progress in the APRs that the Group thought should be considered in the preparation for the next cycle of reporting. In this regard, the Review Group noted that many of the actions that were planned by Parties/jurisdictions had been vague or unclear making it difficult to assess progress. In other cases, actions had little bearing on NASCO agreements or guidelines, even when the Party/jurisdiction was not abiding by the terms of the agreements and guidelines. The Review Group suggested that, within the next round of IPs, it may be necessary to include specific topic areas on which Parties/jurisdictions would be expected to provide an action if they do not demonstrate that they were fully compliant with NASCO agreements and guidelines.
- 7.2 The Review Group had previously noted the difficulty in assessing progress on actions that are unclear or imprecise. Greater efforts should be made in the next round of IPs to ensure that all actions are clearly and concisely described. Any IPs that do not do so should not be accepted by the Review Group but returned to the Party/jurisdiction for revision.
- 7.3 The Review Group has noted particular problems with obtaining information from some Parties/jurisdictions with marine salmon farms to demonstrate progress towards NASCO's international goals for sea lice and containment. There may be a need to include some standard questions in the template for the next round of IPs with a view to ensuring that such information is provided by all Parties/jurisdictions with marine salmon farms.

8. Arrangements for the Theme-based Special Session

- 8.1 At the Thirty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO, in order to improve information exchange on a chosen topic, the Council had held its first Theme-based Special Session. The programme for this session, on the topic of '*Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on stocks below their conservation limit*', had been developed by a Steering Committee that had also organised and chaired the session and prepared the report. The Council had recognised that in view of the excellent exchanges during the 2014 session it would hold another Theme-based Special Session during the 2015 Annual Meeting. The Review Group had been asked to identify a topic and develop the Programme.
- 8.2 On the basis of its evaluations of the 2014 APRs, the Review Group had noted that a number of Parties/jurisdictions have concerns about the increase in applications for 'run of the river' hydro-electric installations in salmon rivers and had recommended that the Council consider this issue as a topic for a future Theme-based Special Session. Accordingly, the Review Group had agreed that the topic for the 2015 Theme-based Special Session should be '*Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower*' and a Programme has been developed, CNL(15)14. The Review Group discussed the chairing and conduct of the Theme-based Special Session and agreed that it would be useful to prepare a publication of the presentations and discussions as had been done for the 2014 session.

- 8.3 The Review Group noted that guidance had already been sent to the Parties/jurisdictions relating to the information that they should prepare for the Theme-based Special Session. For those Parties/jurisdictions making presentations, written contributions had been requested by 30 April 2015. The Review Group agreed that these reports should be included in the final report, along with a synthesis of best practice and helpful guidance.
- 8.4 The Review Group also proposed that time for questions during the Special Session itself should be carefully orchestrated by the Group. It was agreed that the time available after each presentation should be used to seek comments from other Parties/jurisdictions addressing similar issues to the speaker. It was further agreed that the final discussion should be structured around the three objectives of the session, with questions targeted at key Parties/jurisdictions. Approximately 15 minutes should be spent on each of the session objectives, which are to review and share best practice on the approaches taken by NASCO Parties/jurisdictions to:
1. balance the pressures to refurbish existing and install new obstructions against the potential impacts on river connectivity, with particular reference to hydropower developments;
 2. mitigate the impacts of existing obstructions, including hydropower schemes, on salmon populations; and
 3. evaluate the benefits and costs of removing dams and other obstructions.
- 8.5 The Review Group agreed that the main output from the Theme-based Special Session should be a comprehensive document that highlights best practice. It was agreed that all Parties/jurisdictions should be reminded by the Secretary before the Annual Meeting that they may be asked to respond to questions during the Theme-based Special Session. They should also be requested to provide brief written answers to the following questions, as detailed in the programme, by 31 August so that these could be included in the report of the session:
- describe arrangements in place for consultation and information exchange among relevant agencies and stakeholders in relation to hydropower developments;
 - indicate, briefly, work underway to improve the evidence base relating to fish passage;
 - describe how conservation of productive capacity is taken into account in evaluating options for hydropower developments;
 - where hydropower developments are approved, on the basis of overriding socio-economic factors, describe how any losses of productive capacity are minimised and compensation or mitigation measures agreed so that there is no net loss of productive capacity;
 - highlight any examples of initiatives to improve fish passage, with particular reference to hydropower developments, which involve collaboration between governments and other stakeholders.
- 8.6 The Review Group agreed that all members of the Group should be involved in managing the session (e.g. one for the introduction, two to chair the two presentation sessions, two to lead the final discussion and one to present the concluding remarks).

9. Report of the Meeting

9.1 The Review Group agreed a report of its meeting.

10. Any other business

10.1 There was no other business.

11. Close of the Meeting

11.1 The Chair thanked the members of the Review Group for their contribution to the meeting and wished them a safe journey home. He undertook to liaise with the Secretary so that the Group's questions for the Parties/jurisdictions could be sent out at the earliest opportunity.

Table 1: Summary overview of progress on the actions reported in the APRs

	Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)			European Union																
	Canada	Faroe Islands	Greenland	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Ireland	Portugal	Spain - Asturias	Spain - Cantabria	Spain - Galicia	Spain - Navarra	Sweden	UK - England & Wales	UK - Northern Ireland	UK - Scotland	Norway	Russian Federation	USA
Actions Related to the Management of Salmon Fisheries																				
F1	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG		OG	OG		OG-NP	NS	NS	NS	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG
F2	OG		OG	OG-NP	OG		OG	OG		OG-NP	NS	NS	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG
F3	OG			OG-NP				OG			NS	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	OG
F4	OG										NS	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	CD
F5	OG										OG			OG	OG		OG-NP			
F6														OG						
F7														NS						
F8														OG						
F9														OG						
F10														OG						
F11														OG						
Actions Related to Habitat Protection and Restoration																				
H1	OG		OG	OG-NP	OG-NP		OG	OG		OG-NP	NS	NS	NS	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG
H2	OG			OG-NP			OG	OG		OG-NP	OG	OG-NP	NS	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG
H3	OG			OG-NP			OG	OG		CD-NP	NS	OG		OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG		OG-NP
H4								OG-NP			NS	OG		OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG		OG
H5														OG		OG				
H6																OG				
Actions Related to Aquaculture and Associated Activities																				
A1	OG	OG			OG		OG	OG-NP			NS			OG	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG
A2	OG				OG-NP		OG	OG-NP						OG	OG		OG-NP	OG	OG	OG
A3	OG							OG						OG			OG-NP	OG	OG	OG
A4	OG																	OG		OG-NP

Key: NS = Not Started; OG = Ongoing - with clear progress report; OG-NP = Ongoing - without clear progress report; CD = Completed - with clear progress report; CD-NP = Completed - without clear progress report.

Note: The table above is intended to show for each Party/jurisdiction which actions in the Implementation Plan have been initiated and are ongoing, which have yet to commence, and which are completed. It should be noted that the Implementation Plans specify the planned timescales for implementing the actions and these will differ, with not all scheduled to commence in 2013 and some continuing beyond 2018. The scope of the work under each action will also differ. In some cases, an action to address a particular threat/challenge might comprise a number of different elements and although the action is shown as ongoing it does not mean that all elements have commenced or conversely that some are not completed. Some actions that are shown as ongoing were reported as completed for 2014 but are scheduled to occur annually during the period of the Implementation Plan. There is also a wide range in the number of actions in each Implementation Plan.

IP(15)2

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Review of the Terms of Reference and Consideration of Working Methods
4. Progress report on receipt of Implementation Plans and evaluation of any new IPs
5. Evaluation of the 2015 Annual Progress Reports and development of feedback to the Parties/jurisdictions
6. Arrangements for presenting the Group's report to the Council
7. Recommendations for the third round of Implementation Plans
8. Arrangements for the Theme-based Special Session
9. Report of the Meeting
10. Any other business
11. Close of the Meeting

IP(15)3

Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports and Questions from the Review Group to Parties/jurisdictions**Canada, CNL(15)38**

The APR notes a marked difference in the salmon returns to the Maritime provinces and Quebec, where they were generally very poor in 2014, and to Newfoundland and Labrador where they were generally very good, although the Review Group was aware that the return estimates for Labrador were based on a single index river. The APR provides catch data for the in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries with full details of unreported catches and catch and release. In December 2014, Canada announced the creation of a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon to make recommendations on addressing low returns of Atlantic salmon. Through the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program, \$2.1 million was contributed to 68 projects relating to Atlantic salmon.

The Implementation Plan identifies 12 proposed actions but, as previously reported by the Review Group, the precise activities that were planned are unclear, making it difficult to evaluate the progress made. Nevertheless, the APR provides clear and detailed reports on most of the areas covered.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A scientific review of limit reference points and approaches for establishing the other reference points is underway and is expected to be published in summer 2015 and a number of new measures have been introduced with the aim of reducing recreational harvests in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec to sustainable levels (Action F1). New Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations are expected to be put in place in 2015 (Action F2). Liming has continued on the West River, Nova Scotia (funded by the Atlantic Salmon Federation and Nova Scotia Salmon Association) and has resulted in increased pH and smolt production (Action F3). Very useful data have been provided on enforcement activities undertaken in 2014, and the establishment of a new National Fisheries Intelligence Service is expected to enhance this work (Action F4). Measures are already in place to restrict by-catch of salmon, and the implementation of these is continuing (Action F5).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Specialised review teams have been established under the Fisheries Protection Program (FFP) to manage specific activities that impact salmon, and significant funding has been provided under three federal programs to provide ongoing support to conservation and enhancement activities (Action H1). Guidelines are being prepared on pipeline watercourse crossings, transportation watercourse crossings, large and medium water intakes and marine and coastal infrastructure to support the development of performance-based standards (Action H2). Inter-jurisdictional discussions and collaborative activities are ongoing, but no new agreements have been struck (Action H3).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: New Aquaculture Activities Regulations (AAR) have been developed to clarify conditions under which aquaculture operators may treat their fish and deposit organic matter. A bay management area plan was adopted for Newfoundland and Labrador in 2014 (Action A1). New Brunswick has revised its

Governance Framework for Containment and plans to make the necessary regulatory changes in 2016, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Code of Containment was updated in 2014 (Action A2). Canada's National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms was reviewed and updated in 2013 and continues to be implemented (Action A3). Canada has previously decided to permit the commercial production of transgenic Atlantic salmon in contained facilities; in 2014, there were no known regulatory violations in relation to these activities (Action A4).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *Given the very poor returns of large salmon in 2014 what actions are planned to implement measures to further protect these stock components in the Maritime provinces and Quebec (Action F1)?*
2. *In what way does the Policy for the Conservation of Wild Atlantic Salmon guide Canada's actions in relation to regulatory responsibilities for fisheries, habitat and aquaculture (Actions F1 and H3)? How is progress under the Policy reviewed?*
3. *When will the guidelines on pipeline watercourse crossings, transportation watercourse crossings, large and medium water intakes and marine and coastal infrastructure be delivered and what processes are being applied to manage these areas in the meantime (Action H2).*
4. *The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in a transparent manner in their Implementation Plans to provide a baseline for demonstrating progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. Canada has not provided these data. Can the results of monitoring and enforcement for sea lice and escaped farmed salmon be provided? (Actions A1 and A2)*

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands, CNL(15)31

There are no self-sustaining salmon populations in the Faroe Islands. The APR notes that there is interest in conducting a research fishery for salmon in the Faroes in support of development of a Risk Framework; any proposal will be discussed with NASCO Parties.

The Implementation Plan identifies only two proposed actions, and the APR reports on the progress made to address these in 2014.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Action F1 indicates that the Faroe Islands will manage any salmon fishery through international cooperation and on the basis of the advice from ICES regarding the stocks contributing to the Faroese salmon fishery, in a precautionary manner and with a view to sustainability. Consistent with the advice from ICES, no salmon fishery was conducted by the Faroe Islands in 2014.

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Because of the small size of the Faroese rivers, there is no historic record of any natural wild salmon population in Faroese rivers. Since there are no self-supporting wild salmon stocks in Faroese rivers, there are no actions in the Implementation Plan relating to habitat protection and restoration.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: The Implementation Plan indicates that 25 marine farms produced 77t of salmon in 2012. During 2014 monitoring and enforcement by the Faroese Veterinary Authority continued and the APR indicates that had there been an issue with regard to sea lice and containment, these matters would have been dealt with in accordance with the regulatory procedures. Rearing of transgenic salmon is not permitted under the Veterinary Law (Action A1).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in their Implementation Plans to provide a baseline for demonstrating progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. The Faroe Islands have not provided these data. Can the results of monitoring and enforcement for sea lice and escaped farmed salmon be provided (Action A1)?*
- 2. What are the regulatory measures in place in the Faroes to combat potential sea lice in salmon farms (e.g. treatment threshold levels, fallowing, single year class stocking, etc (Action A1))?*

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Greenland, CNL(15)28

The APR provides catch data for the calendar year 2014, which was the highest in recent years. The Review Group notes that the same estimate of unreported catch has been provided by Greenland since the 1990s (not by ICES as indicated in the APR). However, the APR indicates that a phone survey has been conducted to increase awareness among fishermen of the need to report additional information for the 2014 fishery and to assist the licensed fishermen in correctly reporting the new information required; the Review Group welcomed this development and looks forward to presentation of the findings.

The Implementation Plan identifies three actions and the APR describes progress on each of these.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A new reporting system was implemented in 2012 that requires that effort data are provided (number of nets, net type, hours fished); a phone survey was conducted by the GFLK in an effort to improve the reporting for 2014 and this has increased awareness of the way to complete the reporting forms. A similar phone survey is planned after the 2015 season (Action F1). In 2012 and 2013, a quota of 35t was set for landings to fish factories; this quota is reviewed and revised as necessary in the light of catches and biological data; in 2014 the quota was reduced to 30t because the previous quotas had not been fully utilised and in the light of the ICES advice (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: There is only one salmon river in Greenland, the Kapisillit River, and a protection plan is under development for the entire river including the estuary in order to safeguard it from pollution, development of agriculture and gill netting (Action H1). The APR indicates that a report identifying areas that should be protected as part of the biodiversity strategy has been completed but the process has been delayed by the Government elections in the autumn of 2014. The work is expected to resume in 2015.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: There is no aquaculture in Greenland and consequently there are no proposed actions in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *Based on the initial results from the phone survey, is it possible to provide an indication of the accuracy of reported and unreported catches (Action F1)?*

European Union - Denmark, CNL(15)35

The APR provides catch data for the in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries and indicates that Denmark is seeking to increase salmon production by 25% by 2020.

The Implementation Plan identifies six proposed actions, but no information has been provided in the 2015 APR on any progress made with these.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Denmark has a national cormorant plan to regulate recruitment of cormorants where predation on salmonids is perceived to be a problem, (Action F1). Action F2 refers to an evaluation of by-catch of salmon and sea trout in the Ringkøbing Fjord. Action F3 relates to the development of more reliable reference points for four wild salmon stocks. No progress has been reported on these three planned actions.

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: There are three actions in the IP that involve an evaluation of the benefits of removing obstructions in rivers (Action H1), general habitat restoration work (Action H2), and identification and quantification of spawning and nursery habitats that can be opened (Action H3). No progress has been reported on these three planned actions.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: No actions were proposed in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. What action has been taken to regulate recruitment of cormorants on salmon rivers in Denmark in 2014 (Action F1)?*
- 2. When is the research project on by-catch of salmon and sea trout in the Ringkøbing Fjord expected to report (Action F2)?*
- 3. What was the result of the assessment under the new management plan 2013/2014 regarding whether reliable reference points can be established for Danish salmon rivers (Action F3)?*
- 4. What progress has been made with removing the ~1,500 migratory obstructions referred to in the IP, and what benefits have been recorded to salmon and sea trout populations (Action H1)?*
- 5. What progress has been made with restoring about 1,000 km of river, mostly smaller streams, from earlier canalisation, pipe-laying and dredging (Action H2)?*
- 6. What progress has been made with identifying and quantifying spawning and nursery habitat that will be opened up (Action H3)?*
- 7. What measures are planned to achieve the 25% increase in salmon production in Danish rivers by 2020 (Section 4.2)?*

European Union – Finland, CNL(15)33

The APR provides catch data and unreported catches for the in-river fisheries in Finland; catch and release is reported to be very low but no statistics are provided and it is not clear if reporting is required. The APR notes that this practice may increase in future in order to conserve stocks and the Review Group considers that it will be important to ensure that reporting procedures are in place if this is the case. An important achievement in Finland in 2014 has been the establishment of Conservation Limits for practically all populations of the tributaries and the main stem of the River Teno, providing a sound basis for stock assessments in support of management.

The Implementation Plan identifies only five proposed actions, but the APR provides very little information on the progress made to address them in 2014, despite some improvement compared to the 2014 APR. The Review Group again encourages more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2016 APR. For Action F2, progress has been reported in the ‘Description of Action’.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: A new regulatory regime for the River Teno is being negotiated with Norway with a view to reducing fishing mortality where attainment of reference points is not achieved. The APR indicates that some progress has been made in defining common goals and in developing proposals for new regulations based on biological reference points but there have been delays in completing the agreement (Action F1). Conservation Limits have been established for 24 populations in the Teno stock complex, and attainment has been assessed for nine populations (an increase from five previously) and for the entire system (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The Implementation Plan indicates that there are only minor habitat issues in the Atlantic salmon rivers in Finland. The APR indicates that guidance has been issued to road constructors (Action H1).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: A network of 24 disinfection stations has been set up, and training of the personnel at these stations and at fishing license sales points has been undertaken to prevent the spread of *Gyrodactylus salaris* (Action A1). Monitoring for the occurrence of escaped farm salmon originating in Norway continued in 2014, but, as in the 2014 APR, no results have been provided (Action A2).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. The Review Group notes with concern that the timescale for development of a new agreement for the Teno River appears to be delayed, possibly by at least two years. What measures will be put in place to protect the stocks that are below their Conservation Limits until a new agreement is adopted (Action F4)?*
- 2. When will complete river specific Conservation Limits be established for the all River Teno salmon stocks and when will these be made available to ICES for use in developing advice to NASCO (Action F2)?*
- 3. Given that recommendations have been given to road constructors, what monitoring has been undertaken on the use of these recommendations and compliance of construction work with them (Action H1)?*

4. *What measures are taken to remove escaped farmed salmon from the River Teno when they are discovered in the monitoring programme (Action A2)?*

European Union – Germany, CNL(15)21

The APR highlights a number of important new developments in 2014, including the installation of fish protection devices on two hydropower plants and genetic studies to investigate the origin and diversity of stocks. In addition, a helpful and extensive summary of new factors and significant changes in stock status has been provided.

The Implementation Plan identifies seven proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2014. Detailed supplementary information is provided in appendices to the APR. The APR has taken account of the Review Group's questions from 2014, although no estimate of unreported catch has been provided.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Fishing has been prohibited in several zones and information campaigns targeted at fishermen in several federal states have been used since 2013 to reduce by-catches and illegal catches of salmon, but no data are provided on the extent of the problem; the Netherlands has been asked to examine fishing activities at the coast to ensure that salmon are not taken (Action F1). An interesting project is underway on part of the Agger river with the aim of developing a self-sustaining salmon population by gradually reducing the stocking (Action F2).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: An ambitious programme is underway to restore good fish passage at 250 barrages in federal waterways, and this will benefit salmon restoration in the rivers Rhine, Ems, Weser and Elbe; implementation is taking longer than anticipated, however planning of more than 30 projects had started by the beginning of 2015; one fishway is under construction and three have been completed and are being monitored (Action H1). A management plan for the Rhine containing a description of measures for migrating fish and a list of obstacles that will be modified by 2012 has been drafted, but no details have been provided (Action H2). There are plans to improve longitudinal connectivity at 116 sites on the river Elbe and its primary tributaries; it is expected that 35 sites (30%) will be completed by the end of 2015, 46 locations (40%) are in planning and the work on 26 sites has not yet begun (22%). No details of progress for 2014 have been provided (Action H3).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: The Review Group noted with interest the plans to establish a separate locally adapted indigenous salmon population in tributaries of the Rhine in North Rhine Westphalia and the successful trial operation of the hatchery in 2014 (Action A1). Progress has been made concerning the harmonisation of the genetic monitoring of salmon in the Rhine catchment based on the approach developed under the SALSEA programme. The monitoring will continue (Action A2).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. Reference is made to cormorant predation on downstream migrating smolts in the Rhine. Have any mitigation measures been considered (Section 2.2)?*
- 2. What caused the slower than expected progress in implementing measures to improve fish passage in Actions H1 and H3?*

European Union – Ireland, CNL(15)36

The APR provides catch data for the river and estuary fisheries and details of the total unreported catch and catch and release. It also provides a detailed summary of the status of stocks and the stock forecasts and catch advice for 2015.

The Implementation Plan identifies ten proposed actions but, as previously reported by the Review Group, the precise activities that were planned for some actions are unclear, making it difficult to evaluate the progress made. Nevertheless, the APR provides clear and comprehensive reports on many of the areas covered and useful quantitative data are provided to demonstrate progress on monitoring programmes etc. The Review Group is keen to see more quantitative information provided in the APRs and therefore welcomes the information provided relating to fisheries and habitat. However, reports of progress on two actions relating to aquaculture are missing.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Enforcement activities concerning illegal fishing in 2014 are well described including man hours spent, number of nets seized, number of on-the-spot fines issued and number of prosecutions (Action F1). Efforts are being made to improve catch reporting through the use of national carcass tagging and logbooks; the percentage of recreational fishermen that did report was lower than in 2013, but all anglers who do not return logbooks are written to and a proportion taken to court; an electronic licence application system is in place and 35% of anglers purchased licenses on line (Action F2). A national reporting mechanism for fish counter data and validation has been put in place in 2014 (Action F3).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Improvement has been made concerning agricultural enrichment and initiatives to improve water quality through improved agricultural practices. The APR indicates that Ireland has virtually eliminated seriously polluted river sites, and 71% of Irish river channels are unpolluted (i.e. good status or higher), which is very positive (Action H1). The Forestry Act was passed into law in October 2014, and a GIS-based management system is being used to ensure that planting, felling and road building operations in forests are approved only following detailed environmental consultation with a range of public bodies and the general public (Action H2). The EPA has developed a National Inspection Plan to protect water quality and human health by using a two-strand approach of education and awareness strategies linked with a risk-based inspection process (Action H3). No progress has been reported in relation to reducing lice levels on salmon farms under Action H4.

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: No progress was reported in relation to preventing the escape of farmed salmon or on actions to recapture farmed salmon following escape events (Action A1) or on measures to reduce sea lice levels in farms (Action A2). *Neoparamoeba perurans* was detected in many marine farms, however early and repeated treatment kept mortality at a very low level; Pancreas Disease (PD) was diagnosed on a number of sites in 2014; and disease mitigation measures are in place on all sites in an effort to keep PD related loss to a minimum (Action A3).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *To what extent was annual fallowing of sites, use of single generation sites, avoidance of partial lice treatments and harvesting remote from grower sites used in 2014 to reduce the potential impact of sea lice infestation at salmon farms (Action H4)?*
2. *How quickly were escape events reported by the farmers in 2014, how promptly were measures put in place to recapture a significant proportion of the stock and were these considered to have been successful (Action A1)?*
3. *How many times were lice thresholds exceeded and were any orders made to require early harvesting (Action A2)?*

European Union – Spain (Asturias), CNL(15)23

There are no salmon fisheries in estuaries or the sea but the APR provides catch data for the in-river fisheries. No catch and release data are provided but the response to a question in 2014 indicates it is 100% from mid to end July and unreported catch reported as negligible.

The Implementation Plan identifies five planned actions; the APR indicates that three of these are ongoing and two have been completed, but no progress has been reported on any action (compared to the 2014 APR when progress was described for five actions).

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Action F1 seeks to increase surveillance on rivers in order to decrease poaching and Action F2 aims to regulate river catches to avoid over exploitation. While both actions are described as ongoing, no progress reports have been provided.

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: An annual programme of cleaning and maintenance of the ladders in mini plants and removing obstacles impeding the movement of salmon upstream has been completed for 2014 but no progress report has been provided (Action H1). An up-to-date inventory of river obstacles that impede passage in the river network has been completed, but no details have been provided (Action H3). Efforts to increase awareness of the effects of climate change on salmon at the southern limit of their distribution are ongoing but no report on progress has been provided (Action H2).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: There are no actions relating to aquaculture in the IP, since as indicated in the APR, only local broodstock are used in hatcheries and there is no commercial aquaculture.

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. What progress has been made with increasing surveillance in order to reduce poaching (Action F1)?*
- 2. What new measures have been introduced to regulate river catches in order to avoid overfishing (Action F2)?*
- 3. What actions have been taken to clean and maintain fish ladders and remove obstacles impeding the upstream movement of salmon (Action H1)?*
- 4. What action has been taken to increase public awareness of the risks of climate change to salmon stocks in Asturias (Action H2)?*
- 5. How many obstacles to migration were identified in the inventory and what measures are planned to improve fish passage at these obstacles (Action H3)?*

European Union – Spain (Cantabria), CNL(15)24

There are no salmon fisheries in estuaries or the sea but the APR provides catch data for the in-river fisheries, including unreported catch and catch and release.

The Implementation Plan identifies 10 planned actions; the APR indicates that work has not started on eight of the actions and is ongoing on the other two (compared to work ongoing on four actions in the 2014 APR).

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Action F1 aims to reduce exploitation of MSW salmon and Action F2 relates to promotion of catch and release among stakeholders. Action F3 relates to the development of Conservation Limits and management targets, and Action F4 seeks to establish exploitation levels. No work has started on these four planned actions, but juvenile surveys have been undertaken on the index river (Action F5).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The IP includes four actions: to improve fish passage by removing dams, removing culverts, installing fishways and upgrading road-stream crossings (Action H1); to conduct research on the impacts of hydropower and implement new regulations to require fish passage facilities (Action H2); to provide appropriate river flows by implementing sustainable abstraction programmes (Action H3); and to develop integrated catchment management to reduce land-use impacts (Action H4). No work has started on three of these planned actions. However, fish screen installation projects are ongoing at ten hydro-electric developments on two salmon rivers, Saja-Besaya and Asón (Action H2).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: No work has started on the single planned action to regulate salmonid stocking by implementing and enforcing the existing and a proposed new stocking programme (Action A1).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. The Review Group notes that all the actions in the IP were scheduled to commence in 2014. Progress was reported on four actions last year compared to only two in the 2015 APR. When will work commence on the majority of the planned actions?*
- 2. What plans are there to initiate the collection of data from the index river on sea survival, run-timing, stock diversity and smolt and sea age (Action F5)?*
- 3. When will results be available from the studies of fish screens at 10 hydroelectric developments on the rivers Saja-Besaya and Asón (Action H2)?*

European Union – Spain (Galicia), CNL(15)25

There are no salmon fisheries in the sea, but the APR provides catch data for the in-river and estuary fisheries. Unreported catch and catch and release is reported to be unknown.

The Implementation Plan identifies eight proposed actions; the APR indicates that work has not started on three of the actions but is ongoing on the remaining five. The APR indicates that a major initiative to re-organise the sport-fisheries on the river Ulla has been completed and that the stocking programme has continued on the rivers Sor and Anllóns (A Coruña province).

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Action F1 aims to develop Conservation Limits for, at least, the Rivers Eo and Ulla (Action F1). Action F2 involves working with the central government of Spain to develop fishing rules and undertake research in the River Miño. Neither of these planned actions has commenced. New reaches of the rivers Mera, Anllóns and Sor have been declared ‘salmon areas’ so as to afford a higher protection for parr, as natural baits are banned in these areas, although as this was reported last year it is not clear if there has been further progress (Action F3). The development of a Conservation/Restoration Plan for salmon rivers in the A Coruña province is nearly complete; stocking programmes have been initiated in the rivers Anllóns and Sor using fish from nearby rivers (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Action H1 relates to implementation of guidelines for the management of riparian vegetation. This planned action has not commenced. Several programmes related to implementation of the WFD are ongoing, but no details of progress to date have been provided (Action H2). Guidelines for the implementation of compensation flows in river basin management plans are under discussion (Action H3). As reported last year, three dams were removed in 2013 in the upper Eo river, and the river is now accessible to its historical limit; demolition of seven dams in the lower Ulla basin (related to the Margal-Ulla LIFE project) is due to begin next year (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: There are no actions relating to aquaculture in the IP.

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. When will Conservation Limits be established for the rivers Eo and Ulla, Masma, Mandeo and Lárez (Action F1)?*
- 2. What progress has been made in cooperating with the central government of Spain in order to develop fishing rules and research on the salmon population of the River Miño?*
- 3. When will criteria for management of riparian vegetation be developed (Action H1)?*
- 4. What action has been taken to implement compensation flows under the guidelines of River Basin Management Plans (Action H3)?*
- 5. What action was taken in 2014 to remove obstacles, construct fishways and improve accessibility (Action H4)?*

European Union – Spain (Navarra), CNL(15)26

The APR provides catch data for the in-river fisheries and there are no fisheries in estuaries or the sea. No data were provided for catch and release.

The Implementation Plan identifies six proposed actions; the APR indicates that work has not started on three of the actions but has been completed for 2014 on the other three.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: Due to lack of funding, work has not started on the development of reference limits for indicators of conservation status (Action F1). Biological data have been collected on rod caught salmon and monitoring of juveniles and smolts has been undertaken (Action F2). A TAC of 66 salmon was set for the rod fishery in 2014 based on the number of returning salmon over the last five years (Action F3). Broodstock collection and fry rearing and stocking (after marking) have been undertaken on the Bidasoa river and its tributaries in 2014 (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: No work has started on the two planned actions to update salmonid mesohabitat maps (Action H1) and to improve river connectivity (Action H2).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: There are no actions relating to aquaculture in the Implementation Plan.

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. When are Conservation Limits expected to be developed for salmon stocks in Navarra and, given that the stock status is considered unfavourable, on what basis is the TAC set (Action F1)?*
- 2. When are the salmonid mesohabitat maps expected to be updated and how are assessments of the potential impacts of construction work undertaken without these data (Actions H2)?*
- 3. Has the Life project been funded and if not what plans are there to evaluate the fishways and improve connectivity (Action H3)?*

European Union – Sweden, CNL(15)22

The APR provides complete catch data for the calendar year 2014. The APR indicates that the Swedish Government has initiated the development of a national plan for the conservation and management of both Atlantic and Baltic salmon, taking into account international agreements; the plan will be presented in Autumn 2015. New legislation was implemented in 2014 banning the use of gill nets for salmon fishing in coastal waters (depth >3 m), however catches did not decrease and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has filed a law suit against responsible fishermen.

The Implementation Plan identifies 18 proposed actions and the APR provides brief information on the progress made to address them in 2014. The APR indicates that work on only one action has not yet commenced (an improvement from six actions in the 2014 APR). However, the report is lacking in quantitative information on actions achieved.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: To reduce exploitation of wild fish, a new regulation setting a bag limit of two salmon per angler per day in the sea was introduced in 2014; preliminary surveys suggest increased recruitment in weak stocks (Action F1). A ban on gill net fishing in coastal waters deeper than 3m was introduced in 2014; there have been some initial problems with illegal fishing following introduction of the ban (Action F2). Fin clipping of reared salmon and trout has continued (167,665 in 2014) and allows wild and reared salmon to be distinguished (Action F3). Sampling began in 2014 in support of the establishment of a genetic baseline for salmon stocks with data analysis planned for late 2015; the baseline will allow identification of stocks in mixed-stock fisheries (Action F4). The index river Ätran/Högvadsån continued to be operated in 2014 for smolt and spawner census, and the 2014 run was above the fifteen year average (Action F5). Work in establishing Conservation Limits and management targets is progressing as planned and should be completed in 2015/16 (Action F6). Work in establishing in-river exploitation levels using tag returns and catch and effort data has not yet started due to lack of funding (Action F7). More detailed catch statistics are being sought, including information on catch and release and effort; a plan for collection of better catch statistics was prepared in 2014, but its implementation is lacking due to legal problems and the reporting from the non-commercial fishery being voluntary; further work is required and the project is ongoing (Action F8). Reducing over-exploitation of MSW fish in rivers through restrictions on landing large fish was not enforced in 2014, but further action is planned including providing information to sport fishing associations to reduce landing of large fish (Action F9). Juvenile surveys were conducted, but no details have been provided on the number of rivers surveyed; some rivers still lack monitoring but, subject to funding being available, will be surveyed in 2015 (Action F10). No new fish management units (FMUs) were established in 2014 as the authorities cannot require this under current legislation (Action F11).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Liming of 78% of rivers in Sweden is essential to maintain their productivity, and this work was ongoing in 2014 although no details of the numbers of rivers treated in 2014 or the results of monitoring have been provided (Action H1). A database of habitat surveys is being developed by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, but no details have been provided (Action H2). An action for continued habitat restoration in salmon rivers was planned for 2015 but has been postponed one year (Action H3). No information has been provided on progress in 2014 in establishing criteria for best available technology (BAT) for hydropower generation, but the action is scheduled for completion in autumn 2015; last year's APR indicated that scientific background documents were published in 2013 and guidance was to be developed during spring 2014 (Action H4).

Work in establishing criteria, and a work plan for surveillance of hydropower plants according to Environmental Law and the BAT is ongoing and will be finished in autumn 2015 (Action H5).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Annual monitoring of rivers for the presence of *G. salaris* was undertaken as planned in 2014 and no new infested rivers were detected (Action A1). Genetic screening for escaped farmed salmon will be undertaken when the genetic baseline scheduled for late 2015 (see Action F4) has been established (Action A2).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *How many MSW fish are expected to be saved by the introduction of the two fish per day bag limit (Action F1)?*
2. *What is the timescale for the lawsuit intended to address the increase in illegal fishing referred to in Action F2?*
3. *Is new legislation planned to facilitate the formation of fish management units and in what timescale. If not, how will progress be made on Action F11?*
4. *How many rivers were subject to liming in 2014, how effective was it and how many rivers still remain untreated (Action H1)?*
5. *What type of measures are planned for the restoration of habitat in salmon rivers (other than continuation of liming and application of best practice at hydroelectric facilities) and in how many rivers will these be implemented (Action H3)?*

European Union – UK (England and Wales), CNL(15)27

The APR provides complete catch data for the calendar year 2014; the low catches were affected by low river flows and probably also by the consequent low angling effort. The APR indicates that Natural Resources Wales has decided to end the stocking of salmon (and sea trout) into Welsh rivers, to be replaced from 2015 by alternative means of delivering benefit for fish and fisheries.

The Implementation Plan identifies 12 proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive progress report on each of them.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: An annual assessment of the status of salmon stocks was completed for 2014 to determine, *inter alia*, the need for emergency regulatory controls (Action F1). Net limitation orders (NLOs) were reviewed for the fisheries in the joint estuaries of the rivers Tamar, Tavy and Lynher and restrictions introduced to protect the weakest of the stocks; a catch limit of 10 salmon per licence was introduced for the Solway haaf nets (Action F2). A new NLO was introduced for the Severn Estuary mixed-stock fishery for lave and seine nets and catch limits per net were set; a review of the Anglian fishery NLO is underway with new regulations scheduled for 2016; and an investigation is underway into the possibility of limiting catches in the North-East coast fishery, and a genetic study is ongoing to investigate use of SNP markers in discriminating among river stocks contributing to the fishery (Action A3). Catch and release fishing in rod fisheries is being jointly promoted with stakeholders and has increased from 10% in 1993 to >60% in the last four years, with 2014 levels estimated at 77%, the highest in the time series (Action F4). A high (yet unspecified) level of compliance in the use of carcass tags has been seen amongst licensed net fishers in 2014 with no evidence of the sale of illegally caught fish; intelligence-led targeted operations have continued in order to reduce illegal fishing resulting in successful convictions and ‘Buyer beware’ campaigns have been conducted (Action F5).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: There was substantial progress with the Keeping Rivers Cool Project in 2014 with riparian shade maps being completed for all catchments in England and distributed to RBMP Catchment coordinators; approximately 20,000 trees had been planted by 2014 and 9.5 km of fencing erected (Action H1). Climate change is considered in RBMPs and the final plans are expected to be published by the end of 2015; a review of the impacts of thermal emissions on the marine environment has been published (Action H1). Progress in re-connecting salmon habitat in 2014 was also substantial with work being undertaken on 12 barriers to fish migrations in England, improving access for salmon to 185 km of river, and completion of one fish pass and 25 easements in Wales in 2014, improving access to about 150 km of river; research is continuing into the effects of new in-river hydropower schemes and an investigation into the effectiveness of different approaches to screening has commenced; and a report on the potential cumulative effects of hydropower has been published (Action H2). Actions have been taken to provide appropriate river flows; the Restoring Sustainable Abstraction Programme has prevented damage to the environment associated with 135 unsustainable abstraction licences (44 in salmon rivers); and the Water Act entered into force in 2014 (Action H3). Progress on a number of actions concerning integrated catchment management is reported including in relation to sources of sediment, stakeholder engagement, incentive schemes, pollution prevention and soil protection, and Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: All stocking is regulated on an ongoing basis; Natural Resources Wales has decided to end the stocking of salmon (and sea

trout) into Welsh rivers, mainly intended to mitigate for upland impounding reservoirs, and alternative approaches will be adopted including easing of barriers to migration (Action A1). With effect from 1 January 2015 only triploid brown trout, or the progeny of local broodstock schemes, may be stocked into rivers in England and Wales (Action A1). New live fish movement legislation came into force on 1 January 2015; a five-year programme to eradicate the highly invasive topmouth gudgeon has been developed and implemented; and a new app, 'AquaInvaders', has been developed (Action A2). More than 3,000km of river were improved or prevented from deterioration through controls on discharges; and research into the effects of fish farms has been completed and is expected to be published in 2015 (Action A3).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *What levels of compliance have been achieved in the carcass tagging programme (Action F5)?*
2. *When is it expected that the new fish passage regulations will be implemented (Action H2)?*
3. *Is any work in Wales being conducted to eradicate non-native fish at high risk sites (Action A2)?*
4. *Why does the Import of Live Fish Act now only apply to the ornamental fish sector and does this increase the risks of importing non-native fish or diseases and parasites (Action A2)?*

European Union - UK (Northern Ireland), CNL(15)29

The Review Group notes that new salmon conservation legislation has been introduced to prevent the taking of salmon from rivers failing to meet their management targets in order to conserve their productive capacity.

The Implementation Plan identifies 11 planned actions and the APR reports progress made to address most of them in 2014, although no progress is reported for Action F3.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: New legislation was introduced in 2014 to control commercial netting in the DCAL area based on an assessment of individual stocks contributing to the fishery and it was planned to establish a standing scientific committee on salmon for the DCAL area in 2015 (Action F1). There has been no commercial netting of salmon in the Loughs Agency area since 2010 (Action F1). Voluntary catch and release was requested in the DCAL area in 2012 and 2013, and enforcement patrols in 2013 indicated that a significant number of anglers complied with this request. Last year's APR indicated that legislation would be in place in 2014 to make catch and release mandatory unless agreed criteria are met and new legislation is now in place to control harvesting based on an assessment of individual river stocks; it is reported that 90% of salmon were returned after capture in the DCAL area in 2014 (Action F2). No progress for 2014 has been reported on the introduction of mandatory catch and release before 1 June in the DCAL area to protect MSW salmon (Action A3). Monitoring of compliance with legislation is carried out through planned patrols, response to reports of illegal activity and working with private water bailiffs but no details are provided of activities in 2014 (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: An interdepartmental working group has been established to review and update current protocols and procedures used to grant permissions for hydropower; and assessment of the impact on fisheries of water abstraction licensing and planning applications continued in 2014 (Action H1). Assessment of the impact of drainage and other works on fisheries continued in 2014 (Action H2). Monitoring programmes were undertaken in 2014 in relation to trade and sewage waste discharge which now include indicative EU Water Framework Directive classifications; and procedures are in place to deal with incidents but no data have been provided on enforcement actions taken (Action H3). A programme of works has been initiated to identify structures on major salmon rivers that could be barriers to migration and improvement works have been undertaken on five rivers. Post-enhancement monitoring has been carried out on the Sixmile Water following improvement works in 2013. The restoration hatchery programme was continued on the River Lagan in 2014. Extensive habitat improvements were conducted in the Foyle area including the planting of 1,500 trees in the Upper Roe catchment. An overall continuity classification covering the majority of Northern Ireland is being developed (Action H4). To reduce illegal alterations to salmon habitat, an advisory leaflet has been prepared for the DCAL area and distributed to the public (Action H5). In order to develop an inventory of current and potential salmon habitat, surveys were conducted in the Glenarm and Kilkeel rivers and habitat information has been reviewed on the Melvin system. (Action H6).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Data collected to assess sea lice levels in a wild salmon stock indicated that 74% and 90% of wild fish had no sea lice in 2012 and 2013, respectively. The level of genetic introgression of escaped farmed salmon on wild salmon stocks was analysed in 2014. Between 2.6% and 6.7% of juveniles sampled across ten rivers in Northern Ireland were classed as being farmed or part-farmed origin, compared to an

earlier study, based on returning adults, which showed that between 0.7% and 2.9% were of farmed origin (Action A1).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *Please provide clarification regarding the current management of mixed-stock fisheries and the extent of closures in the Loughs Agency area and the DCAL areas?*
2. *Was the new catch and release legislation in place for 2014 and if so was it effective? What information is available on catch and release in the Loughs Agency area?*
3. *What progress has been made with regard to the imposition of mandatory catch and release of all rod caught salmon before 1st June in the DCAL area (Action F3)?*
4. *Please provide details on the number of net seizures, prosecutions, or other measurable progress in Action F4?*
5. *What monitoring data can be presented to demonstrate progress in terms of levels of sea lice on farmed fish and numbers of escaped farmed salmon (Action A1)?*
6. *Are the results of the genetic analysis described in Action A1 available?*

European Union – UK (Scotland), CNL(15)34

A revised IP with 12 proposed actions (some of which are quite ambitious) was submitted in December of 2014 and the Review Group notes that substantial improvements have been made. In October 2014, an independent review of the management of salmon and freshwater fisheries in Scotland was published and major policy recommendations are currently before the Scottish Parliament. The APR does not provide catch data for calendar year 2014, but the reason for this is explained in section 2.2d.

The APR has provided little or no measurable progress on many of the planned actions in the APR. Further clarification is, therefore, sought on a number of items below.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: An independent review of the management of salmon and freshwater fisheries reported to Scottish Ministers in October 2014 (Action F1a). This included a recommendation for urgent action to improve the regulation of the killing of salmon and the Scottish Government has launched a public consultation on measures to ban the killing of salmon except under license and to introduce carcass tags to support the licensing scheme (Action F4b). Research has commenced into the economic and financial contribution of wild fisheries in Scotland (Action F1b). No clear progress has been reported on the implementation of local fishery management plans (Action F2a), but initial funding has been secured to investigate engineering requirements, options and costs involved in the deployment of a network of counters (Action F2b and F3a). With regard to assessing the nature of mixed-stock fisheries, a paper on the use of genetics to identify regions of origin of salmon will be submitted in 2015, and a paper has been published as a contribution to better understanding coastal migrations of adult salmon (Action F3b). Scoping work will commence in 2015 in relation to studies on migration routes of smolts (Action F3c). In 2014, 154 nets were seized and 164 offences reported (Action F4a). Action F5a-i includes one action relating to investigation of the impacts of marine renewables and eight actions relating to delivery of a framework for sustainable aquaculture; very little progress has been reported other than the launch of the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre. A link is provided to the industry's enhanced, voluntary quarterly publication of sea lice data, but the latest report appears to be for May 2013 and is no longer available, and no summary of progress is provided in the APR.

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The Review Group notes Scotland's apparently bold climate change adaptation plans; no progress has been reported on the majority of these plans although monitoring is being put in place to allow assessment of the efficacy of management actions to be assessed (Action H1a-f). The Review Group also notes a seemingly comprehensive programme to improve river connectivity through the identification and easing / removal of barriers, but no clear progress has been reported (Action H2a-b). Similarly there are plans to ensure appropriate provision of river flows, but no information is provided on progress made in 2014 other than indicating the approach that will be used for monitoring (Action H3a-b). Scotland has proposed taking an integrated catchment management approach to reduce the impact of land use, but no information is provided on progress made in 2014 other than indicating the approach that will be used for monitoring (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Regulation of salmonid and freshwater fish stocking in Scottish rivers has continued with the ASFB granting 33 consents and MSS 2 consents, and 38 offences reported in 2014 (Action A1). The APR indicates that work is continuing on contingency planning arrangements for *Gyrodactylus*, including a 'live test' of the agreed plan, but no details have been provided and no progress is reported on

Implementing European Council Regulation No. 708/2007 concerning Use of Alien and Locally Absent Species in Aquaculture (Action A2). Action A3 relates to actions taken under the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013. It is difficult to evaluate progress on Action A3 because the planned activities to ensure that farmed and wild fisheries and their interactions are managed effectively are not clear. Reference is made to the expected Scottish Technical Standard in the spring of 2015 and technical requirements regulations are planned to go before the Scottish Parliament in 2016. A link to website site providing an update on the work of a Ministerial Working Group is provided but no summary of progress has been provided.

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *What progress has been made with developing the Scottish salmon counter network, what is the timeframe for completing this work, and could details of the peer reviewed genetic study be provided (Action F2b, F3a and F3b)?*
2. *In the absence of meaningful Conservation Limits and assessment of spawning escapement through the counter network, how will harvest levels be established under the present management regime and if licensing is introduced in future following the consultation process (Action F1 and F2)*
3. *What progress has been made with developing and implementing the monitoring/research strategy for potential marine renewables and salmonid interactions and what is the timeframe for completing this work (Action F5a)? What progress has been made with the planned enhanced industry-led voluntary sea lice reporting over 30 river catchment areas and what information was reported in 2014 (Action F5d)? What is the expected timeframe for the DEPOMOD modelling tool to enhance SEPA discharge consents (Action F5f)?*
4. *What progress has been made with the implementation of a national river temperature monitoring strategy for salmon rivers and what is the expected timeframe for identifying sensitive areas and taking appropriate management action (Action H1b)? In what ways is climate change considered within strategic environmental frameworks (Action H1e)?*
5. *How many high priority barriers were removed from salmon rivers in 2014 (Action H2)?*
6. *What level of stocking was consented, was it consistent with NASCO guidelines and what were the offences for? What penalties were applied when offences were committed (e.g. would there be fines for an offence) (Action A1)?*
7. *What progress has been made with the implementation of the EU Regulation on the Use of Alien and Locally Absent Species in Aquaculture (Action A2)?*
8. *How was the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre designed to be responsive to Actions F5a - i?*
9. *The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in their Implementation Plans to provide a baseline for demonstrating progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. Scotland has not provided these data. Can the results of monitoring and enforcement for sea lice and escaped farmed salmon be provided (Action A3)?*

Norway, CNL(15)30

The APR provides catch data for the in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries. A new regulation entered into force in February 2015 putting the responsibility on the aquaculture industry to fund and organise recapture of escaped salmon through a mandatory fee on each licence. The fund will be managed by a board consisting of members appointed from management authorities as well as the industry. Extraordinary regulations were implemented in some regions during 2014, in response to lower than expected salmon runs.

The Implementation Plan identifies 12 planned actions and details have been provided of progress made on all of these; all are ongoing.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: New advice has been developed on regulatory measures for 2016-2018 and this will be implemented by the end of 2015 although no details of the measures are provided (Action F1). An increasing number of rivers are subject to mandatory mid-season assessment of the fishery and salmon run, and pre-agreed measures applied. Specific toolkits for implementing this are being developed for each river; legislation is being developed to introduce similar requirements for the sea fisheries (Action F2). Work is continuing to improve Conservation Limits that make better use of GIS-information for prediction of habitat characterisation and more stock recruitment data series (Action F3). Negotiations between Finland and Norway are continuing on a new management regime for the River Tano/Teno but delays are reported and Norway is considering replacing the current bilateral agreement with a national management regime. However, Norway's primary goal remains to have a new bilateral agreement in place in 2017 (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: Liming is continuing on 21 salmon rivers; stocks have been re-established in some rivers, and catches on affected rivers have increased from 10 tonnes in the 1980s to 45-50 tonnes today. A new plan of action (2016-2020) for the national liming program will be completed in 2015 (Action H1). Assessments have been carried out as part of the review of the rules of operations for the largest and oldest hydropower plants, and revised flow requirements have been implemented on a number of rivers. The terms of hydropower licenses are being revised for several important salmon rivers. Prioritising of habitat improvements, including flow requirements, and measures to mitigate barriers caused by roads are planned as part of the implementation of the WFD river basin management plans (Actions H2 and H3). Partly as a result of the implementation of the National Atlantic Salmon Watercourses and Fjords scheme, fewer plans for major developments on salmon rivers are being approved leading to increased protection of salmon populations (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: The Norwegian Veterinary Institute has been monitoring the sensitivity of drugs against sea lice and taking more severe action, including compulsory slaughtering and reduced permitted site biomass, against fish farms that are exceeding the sea lice limits in a more or less systematic manner (Action A1). The effect of stricter requirements on mesh size to reduce escape of 'juvenile' salmon is being evaluated. Use of sterile fish is being tested on a commercial scale at several sites and experience of the use of these fish is expected to increase through the issuing of new 'green licences'. The resistance weir in the River Etne is still being operated and will be evaluated and testing of DNA methods for tracing origin of escapes is continuing (Action A2). A new action plan for the control of *Gyrodactylus salaris* for 2014 - 2016 has been adopted and treatment of rivers is continuing (Action A3). Measures have been implemented to reduce the

spawning stock of pink salmon in rivers in Finnmark county and a monitoring programme implemented (Action A4).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *The Review Group notes with concern that the timescale for development of a new agreement for the Tana River appears to be delayed. What measures will be put in place to protect the stocks that are below their Conservation Limits until a new agreement is adopted (Action F4)?*
2. *What progress has been made with the development of a regional carrying capacity model for sea lice; and what results have emerged from the monitoring programme of sensitivity of drugs against sea lice (Action A1)?*
3. *What proportion of farms have exceeded the sea lice limit and on how many has action been taken to require slaughtering and/or reduction of site maximum allowed biomass (Action A1)?*
4. *What actions have been taken to remove pink salmon and have any self-reproducing populations been established? Does the monitoring indicate that minnow populations are expanding their range towards salmon areas (Action A4)?*

Russian Federation, CNL(15)37

The Implementation Plan identifies nine proposed actions, and the APR provides a clear report on the progress made to address them in 2014. The APR provides the complete nominal catch data in section 2.2 but no unreported catch data and incomplete data on catch and release have been provided. In all other respects the APR has been completed satisfactorily.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: There has been continued progress in identifying where unreported catches may be occurring and in estimating these catches, particularly from the Tuloma River where it was estimated that 30 - 50% of adult returns were taken by illegal in-river fisheries; no other estimates were available for 2014. Measures to reduce the level of unreported catches in the Varzuga River were developed. The Review Group notes that the APR indicates that further studies to estimate the scale of unreported catches and additional measures to reduce them are needed (Action A1). A comprehensive genetic baseline has been established through the Kolarctic Salmon Project (2011 - 2013), allowing for precise identification of wild salmon caught at sea to individual rivers/regions, providing opportunities for more adaptive and informed management of coastal salmon fisheries (Action F2). Conservation Limits have been set for all salmon stocks in the Murmansk region. Estimates of adult returns to Murmansk rivers were derived by direct counting at barrier fences and fish ladder (3 stocks) and by mark-recapture in recreational fisheries (5 stocks). In the Arkhangelsk region and the Nenets Autonomous Region Conservation Limits have been set for exploited salmon stocks, but no Conservation Limits have been established, to date, in the Republic of Karelia (Action F3). New Fishing Regulations for the Northern Fisheries basin came into force in 2014 providing clearer legislation to manage the fisheries conducted by indigenous small nations of the north (Action F4).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The task to reassess the carrying capacity of the Barents Sea rivers of the Murmansk region was completed. The re-assessment of the carrying capacity of the White Sea rivers of the Murmansk and Archangelsk regions is underway. The study to estimate salmon habitat and productive capacity in the Republic of Karelia has been planned (Action H1). While general recommendations on habitat restoration have been developed for a number of rivers, no detailed habitat plans have yet been developed for specific rivers (Action H2).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: A new Federal Law came into force in relation to aquaculture on 1 January 2014, and a number of by-laws also came into force in 2014, but the APR indicates that more are required (Action A1). Monitoring is undertaken for *G. salaris* in a number of rivers, and the parasite is present in the Keret River in Karelia. While the APR highlights a risk of further spread of the parasite in rivers of the Republic of Karelia and a risk of its introduction to the Murmansk region through recreational fisheries and through freshwater aquaculture activities, no measures to prevent this have yet been introduced although new veterinary measures for aquaculture activities were under development in 2014 for the Murmansk region (Action A2). A comprehensive scientific evaluation is required prior to any introduction of aquatic species, and no movements originating from outside the North-East Atlantic Commission area of reproductively viable non-indigenous anadromous salmonids or their gametes have occurred (Action A3).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

1. *What progress has been made in developing and implementing a procedure for voluntary reporting of catch and release? What are the reasons why such reporting cannot be made mandatory?*
2. *Given the very high level of unreported catch estimated on the Tuloma River, what measures are planned to address this and what measures are planned in other rivers (Action F1)?*
3. *In the light of the findings of the Kolarctic Salmon Project, what is the expected timescale for implementing management measures in the coastal fisheries so as to ensure the protection of the weakest contributing stocks (Action F2)?*
4. *When will detailed plans be developed for habitat protection and restoration on specific rivers (Action H2)?*
5. *In answer to a question on A1 in last year's report, the Russian Federation indicated that it would provide more information on how sea lice are managed under the new Federal Law on aquaculture. This information is not contained in this year's APR, and the Review Group requests that it be provided.*
6. *The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in their Implementation Plans to provide a baseline for demonstrating progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. The Russian Federation has not provided these data. Can the results of monitoring and enforcement for sea lice and escaped farmed salmon be provided? (Action A1)*

United States of America, CNL(15)32

In December 2014, the USA updated its Implementation Plan (CNL(14)75) to more accurately reflect the current status of Atlantic salmon in southern New England. Programs in Maine remain largely unchanged. New information on hatcheries supplementing recreational fisheries and conservation hatcheries supporting endangered salmon populations have been included and the status of stocks has been re-aligned to mirror information in the rivers database.

The Implementation Plan identifies eleven proposed actions, one less than in the 2014 APR following removal of Action H5, relating to strategic evaluation of limited resources in the light of climate change. The APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address most of the planned actions in 2014. In 2014, the Penobscot River was selected as a habitat focus under NOAA's Habitat Blueprint, thereby elevating restoration efforts through fiscal investments. The transition to measurable survival standards at hydro-electric dams in the range of endangered salmon in Maine began in earnest in 2014. Each dam in the mainstem of the Penobscot River (with the exception of Weldon Dam) must now pass 96% of all smolts within 24 hours and 95% of all adults within 48 hours. The dam owners must also be able to demonstrate that these performance standards are being achieved through quantitative studies.

Actions related to management of salmon fisheries: The US continued to work with other Parties to the West Greenland Commission including at the 2014 annual, intersessional and working group meetings and supported continued sampling of the West Greenland salmon fishery. In the North American Commission, the US reviewed information on the mixed-stock fishery at Labrador and supported efforts to monitor and sample the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery (Action F1). In order to minimise possible bycatch of sea run salmon, there is a prohibition on retaining landlocked salmon and brown trout > 25 inches in length in over 30 specific waters, and fishing regulations explain that sea run salmon are endangered and cannot be removed from the water. There are also consultations among biologists in order to reduce the effects of competition and predation on salmon, although this has not yet led to a comprehensive conservation plan covering the salmon's range (Action F2). The closure of all directed fisheries for salmon was maintained in 2014, databases relating to vessel landings, dealer sales and observer programmes, were queried for presence of salmon in catches and no reports of Atlantic salmon having been caught were found. Using recent estimates of discards from databases to estimate total discards of federally managed species (including Atlantic salmon) across 56 commercial fleets, it was estimated that approximately 49 pounds of Atlantic salmon would have been discarded on an annual basis (using data from July 2012 through June 2013). Surveillance in rivers is routinely conducted for potential poaching activity although no results were provided (Action F3).

Actions related to habitat protection and restoration: The first dam on the Falls River, a tributary of the Connecticut River, was removed in the fall of 2014 and within a week an adult salmon was observed upstream of the former dam. In 2014, 33 additional aquatic connectivity projects were completed across the Gulf of Maine DPS and a total of over 229 km of stream were made accessible as a result of these projects (Action H1). An archive of enforcement and monitoring results in relation to implementation of the Clean Water Act is available online, and, in summary, fines over the last five years amounted to ~\$180,000 with no fines in 2014 (Action H2). Consultations continued in 2014 among federal agencies where their activities occur in or near areas where Atlantic salmon Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is designated and

conservation recommendations were issued which may include measures to avoid, minimise, mitigate or otherwise offset adverse effects on salmon habitat. However, no details have been provided. (Action H3). Under the Endangered Species Act, the United States has designated critical habitat for Atlantic salmon. NOAA and USFWS conduct consultations with other federal agencies pursuant to the Endangered Species Act which requires all federal agencies to ensure that any action they undertake or fund does not prevent the survival and recovery of endangered Atlantic salmon. In 2014, NOAA and USFWS completed well over 100 consultations. In each consultation, conservation recommendations made by NOAA and/or USFWS led to changes in actions that prevented degradation of designated critical habitat and reduced incidental mortality to levels that did not prevent the survival and recovery of endangered salmon (Action H4).

Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities: Monitoring has continued in relation to the protective measures agreed in 2003 and in 2014 no aquaculture-origin fish were reported captured in Maine rivers. Monitoring for the incidence of sea lice on sea-run salmon returning to the Penobscot River continued in 2014. After detection of the causative agent of Bacterial Kidney Disease and clinical signs of the disease in some fish at two Atlantic salmon net-pen facilities in 2013, biosecurity measures and routine fish health surveillance were increased in 2014 and strict disinfection and biosecurity protocols applied. Test results have shown little infectious pressure in 2014 with very few fish having tested positive and there has been no elevated mortality and no fish expressing any clinical signs of BKD (Action A1). Fish health status in the Northeast Region is reviewed annually and guidelines have been developed that enable prevention of importations or transfer among States of baitfish infected with listed pathogens. Revisions to the existing fish health guidelines were completed in 2014 to include fish importation, movement and transfer between all states in the Northeast United States (Action A2). Broodstock management protocols have been implemented at conservation hatcheries to maintain genetic diversity of the hatchery stock rebuilding program and a parr collection programme, initiated in 2013, continued in 2014 to reduce reliance on sea-run fish for broodstock. Estimates of genetic diversity are used to monitor if genetic diversity within seven broodstock populations is being maintained over time. Pedigree lines have been established for the Dennys populations to reduce the rate loss of genetic diversity and to increase estimates of effective population size (Action A3). Coordination with state programs that stock salmonids to support recreational fisheries is said to occur on a river-by river basis, but no details have been provided on progress in 2014 (Action A4).

Questions for written response prior to the 2015 Annual Meeting:

- 1. What were the results of the surveillance conducted in rivers in 2014 to identify any poaching activity for Atlantic salmon (Action F2)?*
- 2. By what date will the comprehensive conservation plan for Atlantic salmon in Maine, referred to in Action F2, be implemented)?*
- 3. How many rivers were monitored for escaped farmed salmon in 2014 and was monitoring only implemented when an escape event was notified (Action A1)?*
- 4. The US indicated in a response to a question raised by the Review Group in 2014 that in order to gain a better understanding of the temporal and spatial distribution of sea lice throughout the Gulf of Maine, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) had funded studies to investigate the presence and abundance of sea lice on wild fish communities in embayments with salmon farms (Cobscook Bay) and areas without (Penobscot Bay). Can the results of these studies be provided?*