

Council Inter-sessional Correspondence

The Council's inter-sessional correspondence took place from 8 – 27 May. It is set out below, under the relevant Agenda item. If an Agenda item is not listed, no inter-sessional correspondence took place.

6a. Decisions by the Council on the Process for the Third Performance Review

6.1 The representative of the United States understood that the discussion regarding the performance review had been postponed to the autumn inter-sessional Council meeting but noted concern that this could impact the ability to agree a budget given there are significant budgetary implications associated with conducting a performance review. As such, the United States would like to recommend that a conversation about whether to delay the performance review is had now, during the inter-sessional correspondence period. She proposed that this decision could be agreed informally prior to the FAC meeting next week and agreed formally during the Council video conference.

6.2 The representative reported that the United States supports at least a one-year delay in conducting the performance review given the circumstances. She said if we are able to hold an autumn inter-sessional meeting, it might be possible to discuss the process for setting up the performance review then with the aim to agree a process at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

6.3 There has been some relevant discussion under inter-sessional correspondence for the Finance and Administration Committee, relating to possible postponement of the performance review. The representative of Norway was concerned about the cost of the performance review and commented '*...If the EPR is delayed until 2022 or 2023 then the cost of the review could be budgeted for over more than one year.*' The United States representative to the FAC wrote '*To help ease the financial burden, we agree with Norway's comment concerning a possible delay in the timing of the next Performance Review. We note that if the Council could decide in the near-term on the sole question of postponing the Performance Review for at least one year, that would ease the work of the FAC in 2020.*' The representative of the European Union to the FAC noted '*the Norwegian proposal to establish a dedicated fund for performance reviews should be given full consideration. It has been proposed that the performance review could be postponed by one year and this would possibly provide some flexibility in starting such fund.*'

7a. Evaluation of Implementation Plans under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)

7.1 The representative of the NGOs noted that this would be discussed at the autumn inter-sessional meeting of the Council, but reiterated points made in emails from the NGO Co-Chairs on 23 October 2019 and 6 December 2019, circulated to all Heads of Delegation, referring to NGO concerns over a decline in the transparency and inclusivity of NASCO's decision-making over the Implementation Plan reporting process. The representative stated that the NGOs look forward to being involved in a full and frank discussion of their concerns at that meeting.

7d. The International Year of the Salmon: Consideration of the Final Report

7.2 IYS Funds: The representative of Norway referred to [CNL\(20\)22](#) and made a number

of points. He noted that developing the Rivers Database may be a good idea if that is what is needed to get all Parties / jurisdictions to report into the database, as a basis for future State of Salmon Reports. He said it was not entirely clear what was required and would like a clearer picture before deciding what was needed. He thought the issue could be postponed if needed.

- 7.3 The representative of Canada stated that further discussion is required on appropriate projects to support the IYS and reported that Canada is not convinced that the Rivers Database, as currently constructed and used, is a system that should be maintained or enhanced without a review of the approach and the metrics used for the database. He suggested a technical discussion on what metrics would be essential for the state of salmon reporting is required after the Annual Meeting.
- 7.4 The representative of Norway reported that they did not think a shorter version of the State of North Atlantic Salmon Report is needed. He also reported that Norway had already commissioned a translation into the Norwegian and Sami languages, and that other Parties could do the same if needed. The representative of Canada supported Norway's view on this.
- 7.5 The representative of the United States agreed that funds in the IYS account should be used to support initiatives related to the goals of IYS. She commented that of the three options identified for using these funds, the United States support further consideration of using these funds to improve the Rivers Database, as outlined (i.e., building a proper database incorporating GIS aspects to enable full data display compatibility). However, more information was needed on the scope of the work and associated costs. The United States would support a proposal for the Secretariat to develop a budget, scope of work, and anticipated results for improvement of the Rivers Database to be considered at the autumn inter-sessional meeting of the Council.
- 7.6 IYS Website: The representative of Canada made comments on the surplus in the IYS fund and asked whether there was agreement from NPAFC to solely fund the IYS website, and whether NASCO would be removed as a partner in this effort, if so? The representative of the United States reported that the United States anticipates supporting the proposal that the IYS website stay operational until at the least the end of 2022 and be solely funded by the NPAFC. However, she also requested clarification on whether there would be any changes to the website as a result of NPAFC being the sole funder.
- 7.7 Twitter: The representative of Canada agreed that the IYS Twitter account should be repurposed to an all-NASCO account, including IYS activities. The representative of the United States also supported the proposal to rebrand NASCO's IYS Twitter account to a NASCO Twitter account.
- 7.8 Concluding Symposium: The representative of Canada agreed to establishing a Symposium Steering Committee and suggested the need to be clear about the objectives and whether a face-to-face global event should be planned versus a more virtual format. He agreed that having the Symposium Steering Committee start in 2020 is appropriate if a face-to-face meeting is not proposed i.e. video conferences.
- 7.9 The representative of the United States noted previous agreement of the Parties to support a Concluding Symposium in 2022 as well as the commitment of £25,000 that has been reserved as NASCO's contribution. She said that the United States had reviewed the draft Terms of Reference and suggested including a contingency plan should a site inspection trip not be feasible due to travel restrictions. She also suggested that it may be appropriate to indicate that such a trip may be carried out by a subset of

the Steering Committee rather than the Committee as a whole. The representative of the United States agree that the Secretariat should work with NPAFC to establish a joint Symposium Steering Committee.

- 7.10 **IYS Legacy Activities:** The representative of Canada supported the State of North Atlantic Salmon Report as an IYS legacy activity and suggested that the appropriate recurrence period be five years. The representative of the United States agreed with Canada that an update to the State of North Atlantic Salmon Report and a future Symposium are appropriate legacy activities and likewise suggested that a three to five-year interval may be appropriate. She suggested that the report and Symposium not coincide in the same year and supported consideration of the workload associated with developing these activities when proposing any schedule / interval. The representative of the United States supported a recommendation that the Secretariat develop a proposal for the scope and timing for IYS Legacy Activities to be presented at the 2021 Annual Meeting, noting that such legacy activities may also be an appropriate use of any remaining funds in the IYS account should any funds be available following consideration of other activities.
- 7e) **Progress in Implementing the ‘Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, CNL(13)38**
- 7.11 The representative of the NGOs referred to their statement under Agenda item 7a above but added that one of the actions taken forward from [CNL\(13\)38](#) was the implementation of Theme-based Special Sessions (TBSS) held at Annual Meetings. He reported that the NGOs understood the reasons for cancelling the TBSS on aquaculture planned for 2020, but would like to recommend that this is postponed until the 2021 Annual Meeting and that a full day be put aside for presentations and discussion around the current actions taken by NASCO Parties and jurisdictions to protect wild salmon from the adverse impacts of open-net salmon farming. To facilitate this TBSS, and as 2021 is a year in which regulatory measures will need to be discussed, the NGOs would support an extra day being added to the 2021 Annual Meeting if required.
- 7i) **Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**
- 7.12 The representative of the United States said it appreciated the report provided by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) on the outcome of its 2019 fishery but that they continued to be concerned about the potential harvest of endangered United States-origin salmon in the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery, as even small harvests of United States-origin salmon in that fishery could have significant impacts on United States stocks given their current low abundance. The representative of the United States noted concern that the sampling design for the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery is not sufficient to adequately detect endangered salmon populations, including those of United States origin, that may be taken there. She also noted that ICES has again recommended improved catch statistics and sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery to improve information on, among other things, stock origin of harvested salmon. With this in mind, the representative of the United States asked a number of questions of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon).
- 7.13 First, the representative of the United States noted that catches in the 2019 St Pierre and Miquelon fishery were very similar to those reported for 2018. Last year, France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) reported this was due to a reduction in effort by commercial fishermen as they were targeting other species and to poor weather

affecting recreational catches. The representative of the United States asked if this was the case again this year or whether something else affected catches?

- 7.14 The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) confirmed that professional fishermen's effort was significantly reduced because at that time of the year, most of them are busy targeting other species (snowcrab and lobster). She reported that weather was average in the 2019 season, with 11 days of strong wind in June (the month with the highest recorded catches).
- 7.15 Second, the representative of the United States asked what management measures were in place for the 2020 St Pierre and Miquelon fishery and whether catch and / or effort limits had been set.
- 7.16 The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) reported that there should not be substantial changes to management measures in 2020 compared to 2019. She said that there has been a change of person in the position of Head of Maritime Affairs in the summer of 2019 and that he or the relevant staff from St Pierre and Miquelon would aim to attend the NAC and Council meetings, together with Herlé Goraguer (Ifremer).
- 7.17 Third, in line with ICES advice, the representative of the United States asked what steps were being taken to improve the completeness and timely reporting of detailed catch statistics on the St Pierre and Miquelon fishery to ICES, such as the proportion of large versus small salmon in the total catch and other catch characteristics.
- 7.18 The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) replied that it would be possible to provide ICES with the catch statistics next March via the French representative to the WGNAS (Mathieu Buoro), and that, from 2020 onwards, the proportion of small versus large salmon would be detailed. She reported that the percent of small salmon (<63cm) in the total catch was calculated (66.5%) and included in the St Pierre and Miquelon Annual Report, but too late for the WGNAS meeting because of a few late logbook returns (health-related). She also reported that 66.5% in the total catch is consistent with 70% small in the 63 salmon sample (WGNAS report). She noted that in previous years the percentage in the sample was as much as 92% because there was a gap when Herlé was away on the first week of June for the NASCO meeting - a time when more large salmon were present. She added that several volunteers were now contributing.
- 7.19 Fourth, the representative of the United States asked what steps France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) is taking to address the ICES recommendations to provide improved sample characteristics to allow ICES to better characterise the impact of the fishery on contributing stocks and to ensure it is representative of all aspects of the fishery across the fishing season into the future. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) referred to the response above that from 2020 onward, the detailed sampling scheme across the whole fishing season would be available via the French representative to the ICES WGNAS.
- 7.20 Finally, the representative of the United States asked whether France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) had given additional consideration to the question of joining NASCO. The representative of the United States encouraged France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to do so.
- 7.21 The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) reported that for now, France wishes to retain its observer status to NASCO and continues, as previously committed, co-operation with NASCO, its members and the scientific community.

8. Other Business

- 8.1 The representative of the NGOs noted, with appreciation, the efforts of the Secretariat and President to develop a plan to conduct this year's Annual Meeting when travel and face-to-face meetings are not possible. He stated that while this situation is not ideal and limits NASCO's ability to conduct its business, it has provided an opportunity to explore alternative procedures for doing business, some of which NASCO may want to consider using more regularly going forward. Accordingly, he said that the NGOs would like to recommend an agenda item for the next face-to-face meeting of Council to discuss if and how any of the procedures developed to conduct the 2020 Annual Meeting could be incorporated into NASCO's future operations.