

**OBSERVERS' REPORTS FROM CO-OPERATING ORGANISATIONS**

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## **REPORT ON MEETINGS OF THE OSPAR COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

by

J.F. Pawlak, ICES Environment Adviser

This report will cover the following meetings held under the auspices of the OSPAR Commission during 1999/2000:

- 1) The Third Meeting in 1999 of the Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO), held in Nanterre, France, 29 November to 3 December 1999 (ICES Representative: Environment Adviser);
- 2) The meeting of the Working Group on Concentrations, Trends, and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (SIME), held in Stockholm, Sweden, 21–25 February 2000 (ICES Representative: Environment Adviser);
- 3) The meeting of the Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO), Hamburg, Germany, 27–31 March 2000 (ICES Representative: Environment Adviser);
- 4) The meeting of the OSPAR Commission, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 26–30 June 2000 (ICES Representatives: General Secretary, Environment Adviser).

### **Working Group on Concentrations, Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (SIME)**

SIME reviewed the commitments of OSPAR Contracting Parties to participation in the Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP), which represents the coordinated monitoring element of the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP). Draft guidance for how Contracting Parties can “opt out” of portions of the CEMP were prepared for further review by ASMO.

The submissions of JAMP/JMP data to ICES were reviewed, based on inventories compiled by ICES, and Contracting parties were encouraged to submit any outstanding data sets, particularly on nutrients, as well as associated national comments.

SIME reviewed the development of an Access database by the Netherlands for storing information on national monitoring programmes, including an automated procedure for obtaining information on data reported to ICES. This will ultimately be used to assess the implementation of the CEMP by Contracting Parties.

SIME considered information presented by ICES on routine data handling activities conducted by ICES on behalf of OSPAR, on the development of biological data reporting formats and data entry program, and on initial work towards the expansion of the environmental data reporting format to include biological effects monitoring data to be collected in the CEMP. The upgrading of the ICES website regarding environmental data inventories was also described.

Quality assurance aspects relevant to monitoring were reviewed, including the work of the ICES/OSPAR Steering Group on Quality Assurance of Biological Measurements Related to Eutrophication Effects (SGQAE). Confirmed the importance of the work of SGQAE, and invited ASMO to endorse the work programme for 2001 proposed by SGQAE.

The ICES Observer presented information from the 1999 ACME report concerning monitoring guidelines and techniques, and statistical issues regarding monitoring and assessment.

SIME considered the collection and assessment of information on hazardous substances in relation to the development of background documents for substances on the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action and also in relation to a draft preliminary list of substances of possible concern drawn up by DYNAMEC. Among other activities, it was agreed that the ICES database on contaminants in marine media should be checked with regard to any data that may have been submitted on these substances.

Various issues under the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme were considered, including information from ICES on specific substances in the marine environment (particularly TBT and brominated flame retardants), and ICES activities in relation to the development of biological effects techniques.

The ICES Observer provided further information to SIME covering items for which there were no formal requests. SIME then prepared several proposed requests to ICES for scientific advice, for review by ASMO 2000 with a view to their inclusion on the draft 2001 ICES Work Programme.

### **Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO)**

ASMO held three meetings in 1999. The primary objective of the second of these meetings was to review and accept the five regional Quality Status Reports (QSRs) while the third meeting finalized work on the regional QSRs and amended the draft QSR 2000 in preparation for peer review of this document by ICES in late January 2000

The ASMO meeting in March 2000 conducted a final review and acceptance of the QSR 2000 and agreed on an information package to support the launch of the QSRs.

ASMO reviewed the outcome of the 1999 meeting of the Working Group on Impacts on the Marine Environment (IMPACT), particularly with regard to the further development of Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) within OSPAR. It was noted that ten issues have been selected for the development of EcoQOs (commercial fish species, threatened or declining species, sea mammals, seabirds, fish communities, benthic communities, plankton communities, nutrient budgets and production, and oxygen consumption), for which ICES would need to play a significant role in the preparation of scientific advice. Prioritization of the issues for which EcoQOs can be developed will need to be made, taking into account the scientific feasibility of each of the issues, the practicality of undertaking the work including its cost, the specific requirements of the various OSPAR strategies, and the conclusions of the QSR 2000. Proposals for priority issues will be considered at ASMO2001.

ASMO then reviewed the report of the 1999 meeting of the Working Group on Inputs to the Marine Environment (INPUT). In this connection, ASMO reviewed the handling of data under the Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme, and agreed to future activities.

The draft Data Reports on the Comprehensive Study on Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID) in 1997 and 1998 were reviewed. Although the data were not complete, it was agreed that these reports should be made available to the public on request; it was recommended that an overview of these reports be published.

The report of the 1999 meeting of the Working Group on Nutrients and Eutrophication (NEUT) was considered and ASMO expressed dissatisfaction at the very slow pace of the work of this group. ASMO requested the OSPAR Commission to assess progress in this area to determine whether changes to current working procedures were required so that this work can be completed within the deadlines specified in the OSPAR Strategy.

The report of the SIME meeting in February 1999 was then considered. The Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP) was considered, along with the level of commitment indicated by Contracting Parties for the implementation of this monitoring programme. Based on the recommendation of SIME 2000, and provided that appropriate QA procedures are in place by 31 December 2001, ASMO agreed to recommend to the OSPAR Commission that the monitoring of effects and trends in concentrations of TBT become mandatory within the CEMP for all Contracting Parties from 1 January 2003 onwards.

ASMO also considered quality assurance issues, based on the outcome of the 2000 meeting of the ICES/OSPAR Steering Group on Quality Assurance of Biological Measurements related to Eutrophication Effects (SGQAE). ASMO urged Contracting Parties to send representatives to future meetings of this group and to provide comments to the draft General Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Biological Monitoring in the OSPAR Area that have been prepared by this group.

ASMO examined work strategies with regard to the implementation of the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) and considered arrangements for revision of the JAMP, for adoption in 2003. These will include convening a meeting of relevant Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to prepare a conceptual framework to be followed in developing a new JAMP, along with a proposed structure for a new JAMP. This will be reviewed by ASMO 2001.

Cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its Topic Centres was discussed. In particular, it was noted that the Third Meeting of the Inter-Regional Forum in September 1999 had resulted in the creation of three working groups: 1) on availability, assess and management of data required for marine environmental assessments in a European context; 2) on the development of common indicators; and 3) on the development of a marine GIS. Participation by OSPAR in the work of these three groups was discussed.

In addition, the EEA request for access to OSPAR's environmental monitoring data was addressed. On the basis of this discussion, the EEA was invited to recognize and acknowledge that OSPAR data are not just Member States' data in so far as OSPAR data have:

- 1) been collected in accordance with agreed OSPAR programmes which ensure:
  - application of harmonised sampling and analysis methodology according to established guidelines;
  - QA;
  - established harmonised reporting formats;
  - reporting of associated meta-data;
- 2) already been subject to assessments in which all Contracting Parties have participated. Therefore, OSPAR's assessment (as added value to the raw data) should be referred to if similar assessments are to be made by EEA.

As such, data and assessment results should be suitably referenced (OSPAR origin should be visible) so that the reported results are transparent. This would facilitate comparison by Contracting Parties of similar information under the different organisations.

The EEA was invited to participate actively in the ASMO activities on assessments and in particular the integrate assessments.

ASMO reviewed a compilation of proposed tasks for ICES for 2001 and agreed on a draft 2001 ICES Work Programme for submission to OSPAR 2000. ICES was requested to provide cost estimates for the requests for scientific advice and data handling on the draft Work Programme to the meeting of the OSPAR Heads of Delegation in May 2000.

ASMO then discussed the development of a long-term work programme for ICES, to support the usual short-term requests made by OSPAR on an annual basis. A preliminary list of issues was prepared for further deliberation in association with the ICES Environmental Dialogue Meeting.

## **1 OSPAR Commission**

The OSPAR Commission met Copenhagen, Denmark, on 26–30 June 2000.

In reviewing the work of ASMO, the Commission agreed, among other things, that monitoring of the effects and concentrations of TBT should become mandatory within the CEMP for all Contracting Parties from 1 January 2003 onwards. OSPAR also agreed in principle to a proposal with regard to a cooperation programme between OSPAR and the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of Long-Range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP).

OSPAR considered the QSR 2000 along with several suggested amendments. After discussion, OSPAR agreed to adopt the QSR 2000 subject to the amendments made, and to launch this and the five regional QSRs on Friday 30 June 2000 on the basis of a programme and materials prepared during the meeting.

OSPAR then examined a Briefing Document on the DYNAMEC Mechanism for the Selection and Prioritisation of Hazardous Substances and adopted it for publication on the OSPAR website. On the basis of this document, OSPAR revised the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action, and accepted the offers of a number of Contracting Parties to serve as lead countries for further work on these substances.

The work of the OSPAR Working Group on Impacts on the Marine Environment (IMPACT) in relation to the development of Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) was examined. OSPAR agreed on the ten issues identified for the development of EcoQOs, and also on a proposal for supplementary work on EcoQOs with the aim of having several EcoQOs prepared in advance of the Fifth North Sea Conference, to be held in Oslo in March 2002.

OSPAR examined proposals for a new working structure and working arrangements and agreed to maintain the second tier Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO) and to establish second tier Committees for each of the five OSPAR Strategies, as follows:

- 1) Biodiversity Committee (BDC);
- 2) Eutrophication Committee (EUC);
- 3) Hazardous Substance Committee (HSC);
- 4) Offshore Industry Committee (OIC);
- 5) Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC).

Terms of reference for these six Committees were adopted for the 2000/2001 intersessional period, along with detailed working arrangements for these Committees.

OSPAR approved the 2001 ICES Work Programme which includes:

- a) four requests for scientific information and advice, and routine data handling activities (DKK 860,238);
- b) creation of a relational database for data on contaminants in biota, sediments and water (initial amount allocated: DKK 126,152).

A further amount, to be decided by HOD(2) November 2000, will be added to the 2002 ICES Special Budget as a second installment for upgrading the ICES contaminant database, subject to further negotiations with ICES regarding the details of the work to be carried out by ICES and the associated costs for OSPAR.

## **REPORT ON MEETINGS OF THE BALTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMISSION (HELSINKI COMMISSION) AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

by

J.F. Pawlak, ICES Environment Adviser

ICES was represented at four meetings under the auspices of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission—the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), during 1999/2000. They are as follows:

- 1) The Tenth Meeting of the Environment Committee (EC), Copenhagen, Denmark, 4–2 October 1999 (ICES representative: Environmental Data Scientist);
- 2) The Twenty-first Meeting of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission), Helsinki, Finland, 20–22 March 2000 (ICES representative: General Secretary);
- 3) The First Meeting of the Monitoring and Assessment Group (MONAS), Tallinn, Estonia, 8–12 May 2000 (ICES representative: Environment Adviser);
- 4) The First Meeting of the HELCOM Nature Conservation and Coastal Zone Management Group (HABITAT), Tisvildeleje, Denmark, 22–26 May 2000 (ICES representative: Environment Adviser).

### **Environment Committee (EC)**

Owing to the new structure of groups under HELCOM that had been agreed at the Extraordinary meeting of the Helsinki Commission in September 1999, this was the last meeting of the Environment Committee. The main issues discussed included the implications of the new structure in terms of the continuity of the work that has traditionally been coordinated by the Environment Committee, which will be covered by the Monitoring and Assessment Group (MONAS) and the Nature Conservation and Coastal Zone Management Group (HABITAT). Quality assurance issues and amendments to the guidelines for the COMBINE monitoring programme were also considered. Further progress in the work on the preparation of the Fourth Periodic Assessment of the State of the Baltic Marine Environment, 1994–1998, was also reviewed.

### **Helsinki Commission (HELCOM)**

A summary of relevant issues from this meeting by the General Secretary is attached.

### **Monitoring and Assessment Group (MONAS)**

The First Meeting of the Monitoring and Assessment Group (MONAS) was held in Tallinn, Estonia, from 8–12 May 2000. This new Group is a combination of the former EC Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (EC MON) and the former TC Working Group on Inputs to the Marine Environment (TC INPUT).

The meeting considered the progress in the work of the ICES/HELCOM Steering Group on Quality Assurance of Biological Measurements in the Baltic Sea (SGQAB). MONAS expressed appreciation for the progress made and accepted terms of reference for the 2001 meeting of SGQAB.

The outcome of the Second ICES/HELCOM Workshop on Quality Assurance of Chemical Analytical Procedures and the results of the ICES/HELCOM Steering Group on Quality Assurance of Chemical Measurements in the Baltic Sea (SGQAC) were reviewed. MONAS accepted the proposed terms of reference for the 2001 meeting of SGQAC.

In discussing the results of a SGQAC questionnaire on laboratory performance that had been distributed to HELCOM laboratories, MONAS took note of ACME comments that there needs to be a clear specification of the quality level of analytical requirements for the various monitoring parameters. MONAS requested SGQAC and SGQAB to address the issue of analytical requirements at their 2001 meetings. MONAS noted that the roles of the SGQAC and SGQAB are now more important as quality assurance has been identified as a main priority in the HELCOM working programme.

In considering work to be requested from ICES, MONAS agreed on the following issues:

- a) ICES should continue to coordinate QA activities on biological and chemical measurements;
- b) The SGQAC and SGQAB groups are requested to review annually the quality of data submitted for the COMBINE programme. The SGQAC group should start the first year as a test case reviewing contaminants data for a thematic assessment. During the second year the SGQAB group should also be involved in the data review;
- c) ICES should define a project on indicators and environmental quality assessments based on data in the ICES oceanographic database.

MONAS considered a number of issues in relation to the monitoring of inputs of contaminants via rivers and atmospheric deposition and the preparation of a Fourth Pollution Load Compilation.

#### **Nature Conservation and Coastal Zone Management Group (HABITAT)**

The first meeting of this Group was held in Tisvildeleje, Denmark on 22–26 May 2000. This new Group is a combination of the former EC Working Group on Nature Conservation and the former Programme Implementation Task Force (PITF) Working Group on Management of Lagoons and Wetlands (MLW) group.

Among the many items covered, HABITAT discussed a possible HELCOM project on harbour porpoises. Sweden, as lead country for the HELCOM Recommendation on harbour porpoises, recommended that ASCOBANS should be requested to be the lead organization for this project on harbour porpoises. HABITAT stressed the importance of involvement of WWF, IBSFC, ICES, and HELCOM also in this project.

In considering progress in the work on Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA), HABITAT proposed that ICES be requested to consider whether it would be willing to coordinate biotope mapping procedures in the Baltic Sea Area.

Various other new projects were discussed, including a project proposal by WWF on “BaltWet: a Baltic Network on wetland planning and management”. HABITAT endorsed this project, provided that there will be not costs for HELCOM.



## REPORT OF THE TWENTY FIRST MEETING OF THE HELSINKI COMMISSION (HELCOM)

by

David Griffith, ICES General Secretary

The Twenty First meeting of HELCOM was held on 20–21 March 2000 in Helsinki, Finland. The General Secretary was the only participant from ICES, the Environment Adviser unfortunately having been unable to travel because of illness.

All the substantive business of this HELCOM meeting had been concluded by the evening of Day 1, leaving only the List of Decisions to be dealt with on the morning of Day 2. Major decisions had already been reached, in effect, at the Heads of Delegations (HoD) meeting in early March.

For ICES, the most relevant items on the agenda were:

*Item 6 – Institutional and organisational issues of the Commission.* Observer Organisations (ICES is one such) will be allowed to participate in the “open” part of future Heads of Delegations meetings.

*Item 7 – Accounts and budget.* The meeting adopted a very tight budget for HELCOM’s fiscal year 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, in which the payment to ICES for environmental advice is fixed at only FIM 130,000. This is equivalent to DKK 162,500, or just 60% of our forecast sum of DKK 275,000 which we have put into the ICES budget as representing the cost of providing the same range of advice to HELCOM as heretofore.

In a private discussion afterwards with the HELCOM Secretariat (Mieczysław Ostojski and Ain Lääne) and Niels-Peter Rühl (Germany; last Chair of HELCOM’s now defunct Environment Committee), they prioritised their requests to ICES as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>ICES cost estimate (FIM)</u>	<u>Priority</u>
4 <sup>th</sup> Periodic Assessment issues	64,000	1
Quality Assurance items (biological and chemical methodologies)	66,000	2
Marine mammals	45,000	} Lower priority
Fish remnants	41,000	

This position will be confirmed/clarified at the meetings of HELCOM’s Monitoring Group and Coastal Zone Group, both to be held in May.

Pointing out that HELCOM attaches a high status to their collaboration with ICES as “one of their most important partners”, they asked for flexibility in regard to their financial difficulties. The HELCOM General Secretary will review the matter if their budgetary situation improves during the year, but that will not occur before November 2000, if it happens at all.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING OF NORTH SEA SENIOR OFFICIALS

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

This Group met in Oslo 14-15 October 1999 to review of the progress of the actions agreed at the 4NSC and to further the planning of the 5 North Sea Conference to be held in March 2002. The meeting took place at "Statens Forurensningstilsyn" and was opened at 9:00 with Mr. Atle Fretheim, NSC secretariat, Norway in the chair. The meeting were closed Friday at 12:45. Chris Hopkins (Thursday), Hans Lassen Thursday 10:00- Friday (closing)) was present for ICES as observers. ICES presented a paper on the Integration of Fisheries and Environmental issues.

### Actions agreed:

- 1) Next meeting is planned for October 12-13, 2000.
- 2) The secretariat shall take the lead and prepare a document for adoption at the next CONSSO on key issues to be in focus on the 5NSC.
- 3) The secretariat shall develop a workplan for production of the follow products from the 5NSC;
  - c) The Declaration
  - d) The Basic Background paper on progress since the Esbjerg NSC (4NSC)
  - e) The Summary paper on achievements and problems in achieving the target set in Esbjerg.

The NSC secretariat was informed on the need of ICES and OSPAR for an early communication of the inputs required from both organisations.

### The meeting

There were two main topics on the agenda 1) Annual review of the progress of the actions agreed at the NSCs and 2) Plans for the fifth NSC.

*Annual review.* The topics included 1) Integration of Fisheries and Environmental issues, 2) Hazardous Substances and 3) Pollution from ships. Sweden presented the framework for a Workshop to be held in Sweden on Hazardous substances April-May 2000 (no dates fixed) 2-3 days Sweden invited all member states and all NGOs to contribute to this workshop. The Workshop was planned together with Norway and EC. There was a presentation of the Hellas incident. The reporting system for nutrients was discussed. There had been three meetings during the winter 98/99. Most countries could adopt the proposed guidelines while two countries still have reservations on the present version. The importance of having agreed guidelines for the fifth North Sea conference was stressed. Also the reporting system for hazardous substances was discussed. 11 substances were now included while many more (36) had been identified to desirable for reporting. The system should be seen as a prototype both source and product oriented. Norway as lead country moved to adopt the system but the point was objected to. There are other substances a common nomenclature will suffice at this point in time and while it is considered desirable to include these in the standard reporting. It was proposed to have this adopted on the expert level and use this as a practical standard that is not formally adopted. This adoption would be in the OSPAR WGCONSSO and the 5NSC secretariat will concentrate on preparing the 5NSC in particular the basic document and the executive summary.

*Concerning the 5NSC.* The Secretariat noted the review report would be on the North Sea as such and not a country-by-country progress report. The Esbjerg model of the progress report was recommended as being a very suitable.

The executive summary was considered very important. It would be evident that not all objectives were met but that the report should identify ways forward in meeting the targets. The basic document will be built on the OSPAR QSR 2000 (status of the North Sea) plus a background report on the sources of the human impact (industry etc.).

The editorial committee. The shipping would be used as the model group to check the text prepared by the NSC secretariat before this text is presented to CONSSO. Similar groups exist for the other issue chapters and these should be used as editorial groups for their remit. The texts would then be approved in CONSSO.

The need for precise planning of inputs from ICES and OSPAR and the time schedules were stressed by both organisations. Both noted that CONSSO in October next year will late or too late for the planning required within OSPAR and ICES.

## Key issues for 5NSC

In the outset it was noted that it was still early days for defining precisely the key topics outside those topics that follows from 4\NSC and the Bergen IMM. Several topics were mentioned and the similarity to the Agenda 21 issues was noted. Some examples are mentioned below

- a) Climate changes and the impact specifically on the North Sea
- b) Achieving the Esbjerg goals on NO<sub>3</sub>/NO<sub>2</sub> pollution, diffuse sources (include NO<sub>3</sub>/NO<sub>2</sub>), and fishing.
- c) Chemical pollution and oil spills as key issues to be focused upon at 5NSC

Norway and the secretariat took notes and will prepare a specific proposal for the October 2000 CONSSO meeting. Delegations were urged to make concrete proposal at the next meeting.

## REPORT OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (NEAFC)

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

NEAFC held its annual meeting on 22–26 November 1999, London, UK, to discuss and agree on management on Norwegian Spring Herring, Blue Whiting, Redfish in the Irminger Sea, Mackerel and Deep Sea fisheries. The President Ole Tougaard (EU) welcomed participants from Denmark on half of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, EU, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Russia. Canada, Japan, IBSFC and ICES were present in observer capacity. In total about 100 persons were present.

The NEAFC premises were officially opened on Tuesday 23 November. Fisheries Ministers from Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and UK together with EU Commissioner for fisheries were present.

ICES was presented by the chair of ACFM (Tore Jakobsen, Norway) and the ICES Fisheries Adviser (Hans Lassen). Tore Jakobsen presented ICES advice on fishery management for 2000. The presentation focused on the stocks under NEAFC regulation mentioned above and the principles under which ICES advice is formulated. He noted that NEAFC receives the full ACFM report in accordance with the MoU between NEAFC and ICES and he invited participants to raise questions on all stocks and not be constrained by those stocks that he covered in detail in his presentation.

During the discussion EC again expressed its wish to receive the ICES advice earlier than hitherto. Both Iceland and Norway echoed this. The Fisheries Adviser assured the delegations that ICES is looking seriously into its advisory procedures with the view (among several) to provide more timely advice. The Fisheries Adviser noted that are problems in achieving this goal. Several abundance surveys only concluded in late September provide data that are essential for the fish stock assessments, e.g. groundfish surveys in the North Sea. Another problem equal serious is to allow time for proper scientific review of the assessments.

NEAFC has in recent years developed a system of coastal state management agreements combined with NEAFC regulations that are consistent with the coastal state agreement. This approach is applied to Norwegian Spring Spawning herring and Mackerel. The report of a Coastal state meeting in October 1999 on Norwegian Spring Spawning herring was distributed. At this meeting a revision of the Harvest Control Rule was adopted, target  $F$  was decreased to  $F = 0.125$  from the previous value of  $F = 0.15$ . At this meeting the TAC and its allocation for 2000 was proposed. NEAFC adopted regulations in conformity with these proposals. At an extraordinary NEAFC meeting in February 1999 a three year TAC plan for mackerel was adopted. Russia and Iceland objected strongly to the mackerel agreement, Iceland claimed to have coastal state rights while Russia found that their historic fishing rights- in international waters - are not respected. The report of a Coastal state meeting on mackerel in October 1999 was distributed. The three year plan was adjusted to reflect some improvements in the stock situation and NEAFC adopted the TAC and its allocation with qualified majority. Oceanic redfish and blue whiting were also discussed and TACs for 2000 agreed.

Japan made a statement as observer. In this statement Japan underlined the its government commitment to international regulation of the fisheries and concluded that Japan would apply for accession to the NEAFC convention.

NEAFC discussed its control and enforcement scheme and adopted this scheme to come into force 1 January 2000. However accepting problems with the satellite surveillance scheme a lead-in period of six months was accepted. The control and enforcement scheme includes a satellite monitoring system.

NEAFC adopted staff rules for its secretariat.

NEAFC decided to hold the next ordinary annual meeting 21-24 November 2000.

## **REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES RESEARCH (ACFR): WORKING PARTY ON STATUS AND TREND OF FISHERIES**

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

The Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research, Working Party on Status and Trend of Fisheries, held its meeting on 30 November–3 December 1999, at FAO, Rome, Italy.

The Working Party was set up by the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research (ACFR) at its meeting in October 1998 with the following TORs

1. Evaluate data needs for status and trends reporting on a global scale on marine fisheries, including fisheries resources, fishing fleet capacity, participation in fisheries and economic performance, and propose a common template of essential information elements which could be used by the main providers of status and trends reports;
2. Propose arrangements for the involvement of regional fishery bodies and non-FAO experts in a consensus-seeking process for assembling, reviewing and disseminating fishery status and trends information (including reporting to COFI);
3. Advice on the relationship between FAO's data collection and status and trends reporting programme and the Living Marine Resources module of the Global Observing System (GOOS); and
4. Report on these activities to ACFR.

Members of the working party were appointed on a personal basis and the appointment is for two years. Members were drawn from regional bodies (NAFO (Tissa Amaratunga), IOTC (David Ardill), CECAF (Mr. Chakala), CPPS (Manuel Flores), ICCAT (Peter Miyake), SPC (Tim Lawson), ICLARM (John Monroe), CCAMLR...). WWF was represented. LMR GOOS was represented by Ned Cyr. ICES was represented by the Fisheries Adviser (Hans Lassen). There were several FAO staff members present (Serge Garcia, Richard Grainger, David Evans, Veravat Hongskul). Mike Sissenwine participated as Chair of ACFR. PICES and SEAFO sent apologies for their inability to be present.

### **Agenda**

- 1) Opening of Session
- 2) Appointment of chairpersons and rapporteurs
  - a) Co-chairs: Mike Sissenwine (US), Serge Garcia (FAO)
  - b) Rapporteurs (Richard Grainger and David Evans)
- 3) Adoption of Agenda and time table
  - a) Agenda and timetable were approved
- 4) Current status and trends reporting by FAO, regional fishery bodies and other organisations
  - a) David Evans (FAO consultant) introduced his paper that gave an overview of what the working party was expected to discuss and to reach agreement on. He noted the FAO obligations to COFI and recognised that other international organisations including regional fishery bodies and national agencies had obligations for reporting on status and trends in fish stocks. He concluded that there is a lot of information available and the great challenge is to maintain information integrity and value during the process of aggregation and synthesis to higher levels.
  - b) The discussion identified three areas for improvements
    - i) Transparency in the way the FAO reports are prepared
    - ii) Easier possibilities for assessment of data and information on which the FAO summary reports are based
    - iii) Broadening of the subject scope of the reports. The current emphasis is on the state of the fishery resources and should be extended to cover also economic and social aspects including fishing capacity.
  - c) It was concluded that there are opportunities for new arrangements for status and trends reports with broader involvement and shared responsibilities.
- 5) Data needs and availability

- a) The FAO Secretariat introduced two papers and the discussion focused on how better to bridge the gap between data availability and data needs.
  - b) There was a rather long discussion where elements like data quality and countries responsibility to report statistics were central.
  - c) Mike Sissenwine concluded
    - i) Recognition of the need and advantage of developing off new arrangements for status and trend reporting.
    - ii) Limited by data problem lack of stock assessment. A system with people closely linked to the local situation will probably function better
    - iii) The task is large and will be a long term commitment. The problem of getting countries to cooperate and allow information out of the country.
    - iv) More expertise at the local community level is required. This is a central requirement to improve the reporting system.
    - v) Cooperation between regional organisations would help to better use existing resources (man power in particular)
- 6) Information Quality Standards
- a) The FAO Secretariat introduced three papers and the discussion was on review of how status and trends reports in fisheries are prepared and reported.
    - i) Implementation of the precautionary approach
    - ii) How would one counties more aware of their obligations under the current international legislation
    - iii) Criteria, definitions and methods for quality assurance were also reviewed. It was recommended that a global process be developed for two purposes:
      - (1) To provide independent and objective support for the global reviews in SOFIA
      - (2) To offer a mechanism for submission of reports to FIGIS
- 7) Linkages with LMR/GOOS
- a) Ned Cyr presented LMR/GOOS based on a paper. The status is that they are starting discussions of the implementation plan in 2000 having planned a meeting in April 2000. It was noted that there should be cooperation between LMR-GOOS and FAO's status and trends reporting.
- 8) Proposal for format of a common template for reporting by stock, fishery or species including essential and optional elements for inclusion in Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS)
- a) FIGIS was presented. FIGIS is primary aimed at policy makers and more general the public, to promote standards and improved practice in the conduct of fisheries and fisheries-related activities and to provide comprehensive and coherent fisheries information.
  - b) It was stressed that FIGIS can only become a success through partnerships involving FAO and other UN agencies, regional fishery organisations and national centres of excellence.
  - c) There was a discussion on what information should be allowed into FIGIS and it was recognised that some screening needs to take place before data and information be allowed.
- 9) Development of partnership.
- a) Proposal for mechanisms and agreements for the involvement of regional fishery bodies and non-FAO experts in a consensus seeking process for assembling reviewing and disseminating fishery status and trends information. FAO is looking for -partners perhaps using a similar model as for ASFA. This discussion was not concluded and it was recommended that the forms and objectives of partnerships be further investigated.
- 10) Coordination with reporting for COFI on Implementation of the Code of Conduct (also sustainable indicators and fishing capacity).
- a) This was a short point on the agenda as it was recognised that the FAP code of conduct mandates FAO to monitor and report on the implementation of the Code to COFI.
  - b) The working party was informed that COFI also requested that monitoring and implementation of the CODE needed to be result-oriented, indicating trends in or status of stocks and human benefits.

- 11) Reporting mechanism for marine areas without RFB
- 12) Proposals for arrangements for the process for assembling data and information and conducting assessments on status and trends
  - a) A number of recommendations were adopted
  - b) The Working Party endorsed FAO's recent development of a state of the art electronic data base for Status and Trends information (FIGIS) as a critical tool for advancing status and trends reporting.
- 13) Future work of the Working Party
  - a) The Working Party decided to develop an action plan to advance Status and Trends Reporting.
  - b) The Working Party will support, facilitate and contribute to the continued development of FIGIS
- 14) Other matters
- 15) Adoption of Report

## REPORTS OF THE COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS (CWP)

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

CWP held two intersessional meetings: 11–12 February and 14–16 February 2000, respectively. Both meetings were held at ICES Headquarters.

### 1. Report of the Working Group on the production of an Atlantic CD-ROM presenting fisheries catch statistics for the entire Atlantic. 11-12 February 2000.

This Group was chaired by David Cross Eurostat and established the principles on which to produce an Atlantic fisheries Statistics CD-ROM. FAO, ICCAT, NAFO and ICES was presented at the meeting. The CD-ROM shall hold data from the individual agencies involved (FAO, CCAMLR, NAFO, ICES, ICCAT) and an integrated data file where overlaps have been eliminated. The FAO software FishStat Plus was chosen as the presentation software. Eurostat and FAO offered to take the lead in producing this CD-ROM. The deadline for the production was set to early autumn 2000.

### 2. Report of the Working Group on Precautionary Approach Terminology 14-16 February 2000

The Working Group convened chaired W. Brodie (NAFO Scientific Council Chairman). Attendees represented EC, FAO, ICCAT, ICES, or NAFO. There was agreement prior to the meeting not to review detailed calculations on case studies.

**Terminology for limit reference points** is rather consistent between agencies as ICES, NAFO and ICCAT all use  $B_{lim}$  and  $F_{lim}$  terms to refer to biomass and fishing mortality limit reference points. For one species ICES uses  $U_{lim}$  (where  $U$  is a catch per unit of effort) which is a proxy for  $B_{lim}$

**Terminology for threshold reference points** - the reference points outside which the stock is considered to be in an acceptable area within which targets may be set - differs between the agencies. ICES names these points  $F_{pa}$  and  $B_{pa}$ , NAFO names them  $F_{buf}$  and  $B_{buf}$ , ICCAT proposes to name them  $F_{thresh}$  and  $B_{thresh}$ . Conceptually these are similar in general terms but substantial differences exist both within and between agencies, which are described below.

**Target reference points** are not presently proposed by ICES nor acknowledged in its precautionary framework. NAFO has a conceptual definition of targets for fishing mortality and biomass ( $F_{target}$  and  $B_{target}$ ) but at present only proposes  $B_{target}$  reference points for rebuilding purposes. ICCAT notes that the ICCAT Convention defines  $F_{msy}$  and  $B_{msy}$  as targets.

Significant differences in operational definitions of reference points in the ICES, NAFO and ICCAT areas were identified. It is recognised that such differences have quite normally been driven by differences in both the different institutional framework in which these scientific bodies operate, and by the different dynamics of the stocks for which they provide advice. One key difference is that the three organisations have made different interpretations of the clause of the UNFSA which states :

"The fishing mortality rate which generates maximum sustainable yield should be regarded as a minimum standard for limit reference points. For stocks which are not overfished, fishery management strategies shall ensure that fishing mortality does not exceed that which corresponds to maximum sustainable yield, and that biomass does not fall below a predefined threshold. For overfished stocks, the biomass that would produce maximum sustainable yield can serve as a rebuilding target. "

Different interpretations arise because management agencies may also be committed to other objectives through other legal texts, and may have other obligations. The interpretation proposed by the NAFO Scientific Council has been that for all stocks an estimate of  $F_{msy}$  or an appropriate proxy should be adopted as the value for the limit reference point  $F_{lim}$ . The ICES interpretation of this clause has been less direct. ICES does not incorporate  $F_{msy}$  in its PA framework. ICES considered that  $F_{msy}$  is an extremely difficult parameter to estimate reliably and was therefore reluctant to use this value in the provision of management advice.



## H-MAP

### WORKSHOP ON "CENSUS OF MARINE LIFE" HISTORY OF MARINE ANIMAL POPULATIONS

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

The Workshop was held on 19–22 February 2000, in Esbjerg, Denmark. The "Census of Marine Life" is conceived to be a decade-long programme to assess and explain the historical and future diversity, abundance and distribution of fishes and other marine animals formulated around three main questions

1. What did live in the oceans
2. What does live in the oceans
3. What will live in the oceans

The H-MAP component of "Census of Marine Life" is aimed at answering the first question. H-MAP is under development and so far only funding for workshops to develop the project has come forward. Key movers of H-MAP are Poul Holm (Prof. South Danish University, Denmark, History), Tim Smith (Northeast Fisheries Science Centre, Wood Hole, Mass. US, Marine mammals biologist) and David Starkey (Prof. Univ. Hull. UK, History).

The workshop was held on 19-22 February 2000 with formal discussions planned for 20-22 February. The Fisheries Adviser participated only on Sunday 20 February 2000.

There were about 30 participants in the workshop fisheries ecologists, e.g. John Steele, Ram Myers, Villy Christensen, Jürgen Alheit and a number of historians who are working on fisheries, e.g. the organisers Poul Holm and David Stakey.

The aim of the workshop was to develop a paper that could be used as the basis for fund applications. This paper titled "History of Marine Animal Populations: Testing Ecological Hypotheses" was available as draft at the beginning of the meeting. This paper was surprising in as much as the emphasis was on testing ecological hypotheses. Work on historical time series would be helpful in improving our understanding the functioning of the marine ecosystem since ecological hypotheses could be tested using longer time series than is often available. The improved ecological understanding may indirectly lead to estimates of "what did live in the oceans".

Two case studies (the Newfoundland Cod fisheries 1500- and the Baltic Cod fisheries 1500- ) were briefly presented to provide background to the revision of the draft paper mentioned above. More case studies were planned for presentation on the Monday. The agenda and papers distributed are available with the Fisheries Adviser.

The discussion was lively and it appears to me that the paper will see major revisions before it will go further. Elements that were considered important to cover better were foremost the vision of creating a new academic discipline of "history of the marine environment and how human impact has transformed this environment in historic times". The two other elements in the project are 1) improve understanding of role of the marine environment in the development of the human society and 2) improve understanding of the processes in the marine environment.

The GLOBEC programme has elements that are closely linked or overlap with this project. The two initiatives should be coordinated.

## **REPORT OF THE ARCTIC CLIMATE IMPACT ASSESSMENT MEETING (ACIA)**

by

H. Loeng, Chair of Oceanography Committee

The meeting was held in Washington DC, USA on 28 February–1 March 2000 (ICES was represented by Chair of the Oceanography Committee: Harald Loeng).

In the spring of 1999, AMAP, CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna), IASC (International Arctic Science Committee), IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), and WCRP (World Climate Research Programme) jointly explored the idea of preparing an assessment of climate change and its consequences with leaders in science, government and other interested bodies. These explorations and detailed discussions led to a formal proposal to the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) of the Arctic Council to plan for and conduct an Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), including the effects of increased UV radiation, over the next several years.

The goal of ACIA is to:

- Evaluate and synthesize knowledge on climate variability, climate change, and increased UV radiation and their consequences, and
- Provide useful and reliable information to the governments, organizations and peoples of the Arctic region in order to support policy-making processes

The assessment will include environmental, human health, and social and economic impacts and recommend further actions. The assessment will be conducted in the context of other developments and pressures on the Arctic environment, its economy, regional resources, and peoples.

ICES is invited to have a member on the ASC, and until June 2000, the Chair of the ICES Oceanography Committee has been that member. Drafting groups led by a lead author appointed by the ASC will carry out the writing of the ACIA. The first report will be ready in 20004.

## REPORT OF THE ICCAT METHODS WORKING GROUP MEETING

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

The meeting was held in Madrid, Spain on 8–11 May 2000. ICCAT SCRS created during its 1998 and 1999 meetings, a Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods. The Working Group were given the overall mandate to provide a mechanism for cross-fertilization of scientific ideas between species working groups and to implement quality management for stock assessment methods, leading to the review, testing and documentation of assessment methods used by the SCRS. The specific objectives for this first meeting were to: a) develop a protocol for the review of methods, and prioritize future work by the Working Group; b) to evaluate methods for CPUE standardization that take targeting into account; c) to evaluate methods for CPUE standardization that take spatial heterogeneity into account; and d) advice on assessment mechanisms to monitor stock rebuilding. Other stock assessment methodological issues were presented and commented upon, as well.

The meeting had representation from EU (EC, France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland), Japan, USA, South Africa. IOTC and ICES had sent observers.

The Working Group discussed quality control aspects of stock assessments within and between ICCAT working groups and discussed quality control procedures within other international commissions. As an initial step in this process, ICCAT's Methods Working Group recommended that a catalogue of ICCAT approved applications (i.e. software) be developed. The catalogue would address only whether the software implementing the method works as intended, and whether the software is properly documented. The catalogue is *not* intended to evaluate the merits of the analysis method, itself. Suggestions were made for protocols for conducting assessments within species working groups to facilitate record-keeping, transparency, peer review and the implementation of innovation.

Several methods for incorporating targeting and spatial heterogeneity into CPUE standardisation have been used and were discussed. Simple deterministic simulations were conducted to evaluate possible strengths and weaknesses of the targeting methods. Of the options examined, using the ratio of catch of the species of interest to the total catch as a variable to define targeting tended to perform better than the other options, but in some circumstances even that method could be misleading. The long-term solution appears to be data collection of detailed effort characteristics. This recommendation has previously been made by various species working groups.

A number of issues related to mechanisms for monitor stock rebuilding were discussed, particularly in regard to balancing the need for consistency of the stock rebuilding evaluation methods versus the need to implement appropriate improvements of methods. Suggestions were made to facilitate the evaluation and communication of management advice on rebuilding progress. In particular it was suggested that if changes in the stock evaluation methods are truly needed during the rebuilding period, then parallel analyses are needed, i.e. examining rebuilding scenarios using both the old and the new method.

The Working Group discussed development of its terms of reference. Terms of reference for specific meetings should be focused on specific issues, however, allowing a limited amount of time at meetings (perhaps up to 20%) to present and discuss new methodological ideas and issues. The Group recommended considering co-operation on methodological assessment issues with other tuna and non-tuna and asked ICCAT SCRS to initiate such discussions.

The meeting raised a number questions also of interest to ICES quality procedures

Would adoption of methods and software by other organisations be sufficient for inclusion in the ICES catalogue of adopted methods and software? If this is so then some harmonisation of the criteria for adoption of a method

Would more co-operation between the ICCAT Methods Working Group and the purported ICES Methods Working be beneficial? Could such a co-operation go to the length of a joint working group?

How much documentation of national quality procedures is required for an ICES working group to make an evaluation of the usefulness of the data submitted?

**INTERNATIONAL BALTIC SEA FISHERY COMMISSION (IBSFC)**  
**REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR COD, HERRING AND SPRAT**

by  
Henrik Sparholt, ICES Fisheries Assessment Scientist

Henrik Sparholt, ICES Fisheries Assessment Scientist, attended as an observer at the meeting of the IBSFC Working Group on Long-Term Management Objectives and Strategies for Cod, Herring and Sprat on 22-24 May 2000, in Turku, Finland. All IBSFC member countries except Russia were represented. In total the Group had about 50 participants, representing managers, scientists and the fishing industry.

Three points on the agenda were closely related to the ICES advisory work:

1. Considerations of options for improving gear selectivity in the cod fishery taking into account the outcome of the EC financed Project for Improvement of Baltic Cod Management (BACOMA),
2. Considerations of long-term objectives and strategies for the management of Baltic herring and sprat stocks in the light of the latest scientific advice available from ICES, identification of management goals and management strategies following the TORs for the Group,
3. Consideration of the year 2000 TAC for cod in the light of the in-year revision of the cod TAC advice for 2000 from ICES.

Ad 1.

Regarding the BACOMA project ICES observer presented a preliminary ACFM/ICES respond to an IBSFC request concerning an evaluation by ICES of the BACOMA project. This presentation was based on an evaluation of the BACOMA project, made by the ICES Working Group on Baltic Fisheries Assessment in April 2000, and on a following (mainly) e-mail discussion between ACFM members. The BACOMA report and ICES preliminary respond formed the basis for a significant discussion within the present Group about an increase in minimum mesh size in the Baltic cod fishery. There was agreement on a need for an increase in the mesh size due to avoiding discards and due to simulations in the BACOMA project, which showed substantial improvements in the long-term projected forecasts if the mesh size is increased in the trawl fishery. How much to increase the mesh size and whether it should be accompanied by an increase in minimum landing size of cod were, however, not decided.

Ad 2.

Long-term management measures and strategies for herring and sprat resulted in a recommendation for PA points for sprat. It was recommended by the Group that  $Blim = 200,000t$ ,  $Bpa = 275,000t$  and  $Fpa = 0.4$ . The two first figures are exactly what ICES has advised/proposed and the  $Fpa$  value is quite close. ICES proposed in 1998 an  $Fpa$  value of 0.42 and in 1999 a value of 0.35. Regarding herring (Sub-div. 25-29+32) the decision was postponed and it was agreed to wait for further advice from ICES. The herring stock is decreasing further according to the most recent assessment. The weight at age is still low and there are not yet consensus about the causes of this. It was speculated whether the herring stock was at present in a population dynamic regime that differed from the past. ICES  $Blim$  is based on the "lowest observed" SSB concept, but the lowest observed value becomes smaller and smaller for each year, as the stock is in a declining period. There was concern about the stock development. The Group requested that ACFM/ICES suggest a recovery plan for the herring stock at its May 2000 meeting. This recovery plan should contain a gradually reduction in  $F$  over a number of years until the stock recovers. The present ICES proposal and consideration of  $Blim = 750,000t$  and  $Bpa = 1$  million t were felt to be too high.

Ad 3.

The in-year revision of the ICES advice on cod TAC for 2000 was well received. ICES was commended for showing flexibility by accepting to give advice with an unusual deadline (10 May 2000), made possible by intersessional ACFM work. It was mentioned that Table 4 in the advice should rather give actual % than just state "high" and "low" probability etc., regarding the medium-term projections in the forecast table. It was found surprising that the probability for SSB increasing above  $Bpa$  was high for  $F = 0.55$  while it was low for an only slightly higher  $F = 0.60$ . The revised advice for 2000 was somewhat higher for cod in Sub-div. 22-24 than advised last year and lower for cod in Sub-div. 25-32. The sum was however rather similar to the advice from last year, which also was the TAC agreed by IBSFC. It was therefore agreed by the Group not to recommend IBSFC to change the present TAC for 2000 of 105,000t.

## REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION (NASCO)

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

NASCO held its 17<sup>th</sup> meeting on 5–9 June 2000, Port Miramichi, Canada. ICES was represented by the ACFM Chair: Tore Jakobsen and the Fisheries Adviser Hans Lassen. Tore Jakobsen made four presentations of the ICES advice, one to the NASCO Council and one to each of the three commissions (Northeast Atlantic, North American and the West Greenland Commissions). The presentations were well received and the chair answered a number of clarifying questions on specific elements of the advice. Several parties noted with satisfaction that the ICES advice had been available about 3 weeks earlier than in former years. This was very positively received and ICES was thanked for its efforts in this respect. NASCO expects that a similar deadline will be met in 2001 and ICES indicated its intention to do so.

Each of the three Commissions and finally the NASCO Council adopted a request for advice from ICES on management in 2002 similar to NASCO requests of recent years. The main change is the addition of a request "using case studies, illustrate options for taking account of risk in the provision of catch advice and comment upon the relative merit of each option. ICES attention was in particular drawn to the harvest model for the West Greenland Commission. This model includes as input data on catches at Labrador and these data are not forthcoming after 1997. The West Greenland Commission wishes ICES to think on models that are more robust to incoming data. It was underlined that the application of long term agreement harvest model in the context of the Precautionary Approach must be based on well-understood and stable scientific input. It is specifically noted in the request that if changes are made in the harvest model ICES is obliged to provide results based on both the new calculations and calculations based on the old model. This is to allow direct evaluation of the effect of the change on the advice. Changes to the model could be either a change in parameters, revisions of the underlying data series or a new model. This point was specifically raised in the West Greenland Commission and ICES was asked if the text conveyed this message. ICES confirmed this interpretation of the request and noted that it is in conformity with the stated ICES policy on transparency in the advice. ICES was asked if the adopted set of requests is inside the framework of the NASCO-ICES MoU for recurrent request and NASCO hence not be charged extra for non-recurrent advice. ICES answered that no authoritative answer could be provided at this stage but also that so far no element in the request had been identified that would be considered as non-recurrent.

The Canadian minister for Fisheries, the Honourable Herb Dhaliwal, addressed the meeting. He confirmed Canada's commitment to conservation of Atlantic salmon.

The first day was a meeting in the Liaison Group on Aquaculture issues. This Group looks on aquaculture issues that are relevant in salmon management. For this meeting the theme was "Review Measures to Minimise Impacts of Aquaculture on Wild Stocks". The underlying concept was that if properly managed, there is room both for wild salmon and for salmon farming. EU (EC, Scotland, Ireland) made several presentations on issues and regulations both on the EU level and at the national level. EC presented regulations and policies at the EU level. Scotland and Ireland presented their regulations on salmon farming at some length and included a long list of measures aimed at control imports of egg, fry and salmon and disease control. Also regulations aimed at avoiding escapement from salmon farms was noted. NASCO is working on developing a set of guidelines for the future co-operation between the aqua-farming industry and NASCO. The next meeting of this Liaison Group is suggested for February 2001 in North America, pending consultations with the industry groups.

The main NASCO meeting was opened on Tuesday 6 June 9:00, This meeting was attended by 14 NGOs and two IGOs (North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission (NPAFC) represented by Dr. V. Federenko). There were opening statements from Canada, Denmark (on behalf of Faeroe Islands and Greenland), EU, Iceland, Norway, Russia and USA. Dr. Federenko, NPAFC then made an opening statement. Finally, there was a joint opening statement on behalf of all 14 NGOs. This was followed by three NGO that individually made supplementary statements. WWF had sent about 350 e-mail (identical) to each delegation to NASCO. This was found to be very unfortunate and WWF excused this as a technical error.

The president of NEAFC, Ole Tougaard introduced paper CNL (00)46 that is a proposal for a joint meeting involving NASCO, NPAFC and IBSFC. An agenda has not yet been developed. The meeting should:

- 1) focus on science examining common causes of marine mortality of salmon, e.g. sea mortality

- 2) be held in March 2002 back to back with the NPAFC meeting dealing with similar issues for Pacific salmon. Tentative place and dates are Vancouver March 2002

It was proposed that also NEAFC and NAMMCO and ICES be contacted with a view to involve these organisations in the meeting.

NASCO has build databases documenting regulations on river fisheries, returns from the Oslo declaration, etc. NASCO agreed that the databases should be in the public domain and that NASCO should provide web based access. There is not fund available presenting the database on the web except for simple downloading. There was discussion on the "health warnings" required for such a document to be downloaded . The NASCO Secretariat cannot guaranty that the databases are always updated. For several countries the regulations are only be available in the national language.

Donors have offered money to NASCO to be associated with the NASCO name. NASCO has returned these contributions to ensure NASCO's undisputed independence of commercial and other interests. NASCO wants its independence to be absolutely unchallenged and will not accept such voluntary donations.

NASCO standing committee on the Precautionary Approach has developed a decision structure presented in annex IV of paper CNL (00)18 called "Decision Structure to Aid the Council and Commissions of NASCO and the Relevant Authorities in Implementing the Precautionary Approach to Management of North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries". These guidelines were adopted with a view to be used on this 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and later meetings. The guidelines were adopted as a provisional tool for taking decision in NASCO, and they shall be reviewed in 2002 (after three years). The NASCO Council decided to focus on habitat and socio-economic issues at the next meeting of the standing committee planned in late 2000 or early 2001.

The NASCO secretariat has issued a new version of the NASCO handbook. The NASCO general secretary Malcolm Windsor presented this booklet.

Norway proposed in paper CNL (00)43 that NASCO takes the initiative to establish a coordinated five year research project on salmon life in the seas, on the background of the decrease in marine survival of salmon.. The final report should give guidelines for future management of salmon. NASCO established an open ended group of scientists and managers, Norway will provide a convenor. The Group should report back to NASCO next year. The tasks of the Group are

- 1) to sketch a project that will
  - a) identify and explain the causes for the increased marine mortality of Atlantic salmon
  - b) examine the possibilities to counteract the increased mortality
  - c) to outline a detailed programme how the project should be organised
- 2) to establish a budget for the project and consider possibilities for funding

There is a similar co-operation project between USA and Ireland. (Kevin Friedland and Ken Whelan) This programme will include a salmon element, but is wider focusing on changes in the marine environment. Canada presented its programme on studies on predation on salmon in the marine environment and concluded that such studies may be part of the proposed project. The President (Einar Lemche) noted that the task force on the project description will work based on an overview of relevant ongoing work. He mentioned ICES as an effective organisation that could help in preparing such a background document.

NASCO was informed that at least two groups in North American (one in Canada and one in USA) work on or have serious plans to work on producing transgenic salmon. NASCO noted its discussion and recommendations on this issue in 1995 and found that the considerations made then were still relevant. NASCO will follow the development closely.

The Council decided to hold its next annual meeting 4-8 June 2001. EU invited NASCO to come to Galicia in Spain, the town will be decided later. 4 June was set aside to meeting in the Liaison group on aquaculture issues and working groups.

The Council elected P. Robichaud (Canada) as President and Arni Gudnason (Iceland) as Vice-President.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL (NAFO)

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

The meeting was held on June 10 2000, in Halifax, Canada. The NAFO Scientific Council discussed the possible involvement of ICES in a Elasmobranch symposium scheduled for September 2002. Paddy Walker (chair of the ICES Elasmobranch SG) was afterwards approached to co-chair this symposium.

NAFO scientific Council finalised its plans for the workshop on assessment methods to be held in September 2000.

NAFO Scientific Council further developed the plans for the Deep water symposium co-sponsored by ICES to be held in September 2001.

On the *Harmonisation of the PA terminology* there were no progress to report on either organisations. Both organisations continued to work on their framework for implementing a PA approach and would keep each other informed. NAFO will discuss this further at their Annual Meeting and will report these discussion to ICES to allow further evaluation.

ICES had raised the issue of a *Joint ICES/NAFO Pandalus Assessment Group* on the background of a Norwegian request for advice on shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) fished in the Barents Sea. This request has been deferred to the AFWG that deals with the fisheries in the Northeast Arctic (Barents Sea). Advice on East Greenland shrimp is at present dealt by NAFO Sc.C. ICES has a Pandalus WG dealing with shrimp fisheries in Skagerrak and eastern North Sea, the Flade Ground and the Farn Deep. The ICES community on shrimp assessment is small and therefore, it would be desirable to establish a joint ICES/NAFO Shrimp Assessment WG. The meeting recognised that joint working groups also including working groups under ACFM auspices have previously been established and that these arrangements have worked smoothly to the satisfaction of both ICES and NAFO, e.g. the Harp and Hooded Seal group.

A Joint Group would deal with: Flemish Cap shrimp, Shrimp in the Davis Strait (Subareas 0+1), Shrimp at East Greenland (ICES Division XIV), Shrimp in the Barents Sea, Shrimp Skagerrak and the eastern North Sea (Norwegian Trench), Shrimp at the Fladen Ground, Shrimp on the Farn Deep

It would be difficult, because of the working schedule at the Greenland institute and timing of the survey, to move the West Greenland assessment to late September as would be required to meet the 15 October deadline for release of the advice. The earliest possible time when a possible joint working group could meet and have all relevant data available would be after mid October. ICES faces similar problems with the surveys in the Norwegian Trench.

The Fisheries Adviser and the Ass Executive Secretary reviewed the development of the Statistics project to produce a CD-ROM on North Atlantic Fisheries Statistics. This project was found to develop satisfactory.

## REPORT OF THE 26<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BALTIC SEA FISHERY COMMITTEE (IBSFC)

by

Hans Lassen, ICES Fisheries Adviser

The IBSFC held its 26<sup>th</sup> Session on 4–8 September in Tallinn, Estonia. ICES was presented by the General Secretary (4 September 2000 only), the chair of ACFM (Tore Jakobsen) and the ICES Fisheries Adviser (Hans Lassen).

Tore Jakobsen presented the ACFM advice on Baltic Cod, herring, sprat, flounder, salmon and sea trout stocks. In the discussion that followed, herring in the central Baltic (Subdivisions 25-29S+32) was very much debated based on a paper presented by Latvia. This herring is heavily exploited, but the stock complex includes components, notably the herring in the Gulf of Riga that are in better shape than the rest of the complex and more lightly exploited. Severe cuts in TAC were therefore considered unfair by those involved in fisheries exploiting these stock components. The agreed TACs are presented in Annex III. Estonia and Latvia reserved their position vis-à-vis the herring TAC in Management Unit I.

The results of the BACOMA project were presented. These results had been studied in details by a special working group that met in July 2000, Brussels. This project concluded on the desirability of improving the selectivity in the cod fishery. The project presented a specific proposal for a design of the trawl (window with square meshes inserted in the top panel of the cod-end) and this proposal was tabled. While everybody agreed on the need to improve the selectivity and decrease discard there were also considerations of the effects on individual fisheries. Access to fishing zones differs between fisheries and while the overall result from a mesh increase would improve stock status, some fisheries may not be able to gain from such improvement.

IBSFC adopted a long-term management strategy for the sprat stock in the Baltic Sea. This strategy is based on the ICES proposal of reference points on  $F_{pa}$  (= 0.4),  $B_{lim}$  (200,000 t) and  $B_{pa}$  (275,000 t). IBSFC has in previous years developed and adopted long-term strategies for salmon (The Salmon Action Plan) and for cod.

The request for management advice for 2002 to be provided by ICES was agreed. The request is given in Annex II. This included the usual range of advice plus a request to investigate the selectivity properties of thickness of twine in the window of the cod-end. The request furthermore asks ICES to revisit the cod TAC (2001) with a deadline of 15 June. The Fisheries Adviser informed IBSFC that ICES will calculate the cod TAC (2001) based on  $F=1.0$  for the western cod stock and  $F=0.47$  for the eastern cod. This latter value is calculated based on a catch split of the total TAC of 48,600:56,400 between the western and eastern cod stocks.

IBSFC agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting in the second half of January 2001. The agenda for this meeting is focused on the IBSFC fishing rules for the cod fishery, notably the introduction of the BACOMA window in the fishing rules.

Concerning the GEF Baltic Project, IBSFC adopted a statement, see Annex I. In the discussions it was stressed that the GEF Baltic Project is to help countries in transition to work more efficiently with HELCOM, ICES and IBSFC, not an attempt to create a new organisation. IBSFC has received very little information from the project although many topics discussed in the Project proposal are relevant to fisheries management. IBSFC would seek a more active role in the future. This will be done through the appointment of an IBSFC representative who shall work actively within the GEF project and who will keep in contact with the IBSFC member states to be able to communicate points of view to the project. The person should also report on the GEF Baltic Project to the annual IBSFC sessions.

IBSFC agreed "Rules for Observers Participation" to invite Non-Government Organisations to attend IBSFC sessions and to make statements at the Opening Session.

The Baltic Fishermen Association circulated a statement at the fringe of the meeting. This statement is included in a letter to the IBSFC secretariat. The document states with reference to the ACFM report for stocks in the Baltic from June 2000 that "..... the biological advice is out of line with that of previous years". Furthermore it is claimed that "the lack of knowledge on certain stocks is alarming...". Finally the statement calls for "increase the scientific effort on the pelagic stocks". The letter was not officially tabled.



## Statement adopted at the IBSFC meeting 4-8 September 2000

IBSFC as the competent intergovernmental fishery organisation for the Baltic Sea and as lead party for fisheries under the "Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region";

- takes note of the preparation for the GEF Project and its goal to support the development of the ecosystem approach for the Baltic Sea and in particular strengthen the capacity of the countries in transition to fulfil their obligations in ICES , IBSFC and HELCOM.
- is prepared to cooperate with the GEF project and to strengthen its cooperation with ICES, and HELCOM to reach this goal;
- expects regular information on the development of the Project and planned activities and will appoint an IBSFC-GEF Representative to coordinate the work and to report to IBSFC and its Contracting Parties;
- reserves its position concerning any decision on Future Coordinated Regional Management of the Baltic Sea.

The Contracting Parties shall nominate their Contact Persons for the GEF Project and inform the IBSFC Secretariat by 31 December 2000. The Contact persons will propose an IBSFC-GEF Representative for the appointment by the Commission.