

## **SAG(04)5**

### ***Report of the Second Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Group of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board***

***6 June 2004, Radisson SAS Saga Hotel, Reykjavik, Iceland***

#### **1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), Mr David Meerburg (Canada), opened the meeting and welcomed members of the group to Reykjavik. He indicated that the NGO representative to the group, Dr Dick Shelton, had been invited to participate in the meeting but was unable to attend. Dr Shelton had, however, indicated to the Chairman that he fully supported the research priorities identified by the group and he had made some suggestions for research on migration and distribution of salmon at sea which the Chairman conveyed to the group
- 1.2 Dr Malcolm Windsor, Secretary of NASCO, referred to the importance of the work of the SAG in developing recommendations for improved coordination of research so that existing resources are used as effectively as possible. He indicated that it would be very helpful to the Chairman of the Board and the Secretary in their fund-raising activities if the SAG could develop some costed research proposals so that potential sponsors could see how their contributions might be spent.
- 1.3 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

#### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

- 2.1 The SAG adopted its agenda, SAG(04)4 (Annex 2).

#### **3. Review of the updated inventory of research and recommendations for enhanced coordination of research**

- 3.1 The SAG reviewed the inventory of research relating to salmon mortality in the sea, ICR(04)3. Each member of the SAG provided a brief overview of the projects included in the inventory for their Party. At its first meeting the SAG had welcomed the development of the inventory and had noted the many on-going projects on topics related to research on mortality of salmon at sea. However, the SAG had been advised that there may be research at universities and other non-government institutions that was not included in the inventory. Members of the Board had, therefore, been requested to seek details of any such research projects for inclusion in the updated inventory. The SAG noted that of the six new projects included in the inventory since last year, one was a collaborative project between the Canadian government and a non-government organization but the other five projects were entirely government-funded. Members of the Board and their scientific advisors would be aware of any

major research initiatives being undertaken by non-governmental institutions so it was felt unlikely that many significant projects had been omitted. Also, seeking further information from universities and other institutions this year would be a major undertaking and much of the focus of their research would, in any case, be in freshwater. However, the attention of the group was drawn to one project undertaken by the Sir Alister Hardy Foundation which was relevant to the inventory and which should have been included.

- 3.2 The SAG agreed that it would be useful if costing information was included in Table 2 of the inventory and if a summary table showing costs by research topic area for each Party was developed. The SAG noted that for a number of projects no summary of progress or costings had been provided, that a number of projects had not been updated since last year and that a number of changes of an editorial nature were required. The SAG therefore recommends that before the inventory is made available on the Board's website, the Members of the Board be given the opportunity to update the information which should be provided to the Secretariat no later than 30 June. After that date the inventory should be made available on the web. The SAG also recommends that e-mail addresses of the coordinating scientists be included for each project.
- 3.3 The SAG recommends that, when the Members of the Board are requested to update the inventory in 2005, the Secretariat provide some guidance notes making it clear that the information sought is details of any changes to on-going projects, a brief summary of progress for each of these projects, details of any projects completed since the last notification and details of any new projects for which funding has been confirmed. For all projects full economic costs (including staff costs, equipment costs and overheads) are sought.
- 3.4 The SAG had previously recommended to the Board that it could play an important role in enhancing coordination and collaboration among scientists by, for example, facilitating an exchange of scientists or by organizing relevant workshops and symposia. The SAG discussed the role of the Board in improving coordination of research and agreed that there is a need for enhanced coordination so as to ensure that new research on a particular topic is undertaken at the most appropriate facilities and drawing on the best available scientific expertise. It was noted that data storage tags (DSTs) are very expensive and that the recovery rate is generally low so the objective should be to select a facility with the highest chance of recovering the tags. For example, in the Pacific, DSTs are being applied principally to Japanese chum salmon since there is a higher chance of recovering the tags and the valuable information they contain because all fish returning to homewaters are either caught in fisheries or used in hatchery programmes. The SAG reiterated that the Board could stimulate enhanced coordination through organizing workshops which should be small and clearly focused. One possibility would be for the Board to facilitate relevant workshops by hosting them and offering travel and subsistence costs to participants. It was noted that there are no projects in the inventory concerned with electronic tag technology and the development of such technology and its application would benefit from international cooperation. The SAG recommends that a workshop, focused on development and application of DSTs and other electronic tags in

investigating the distribution and migration of salmon at sea, be supported by the Board. Such a workshop should be held at or close to a laboratory where there are on-going studies utilising these tag technologies. Consideration might be given to inviting one or two scientists from the Pacific area to participate in the workshop. The SAG anticipated that the cost of a five-day workshop might be in the region of £15,000 - £20,000 if no more than two representatives from each NASCO Party and one representative of the NGOs were funded. This would not preclude additional representation at national expense.

#### **4. Development of research priorities**

- 4.1 To understand the causes of increased mortality of salmon at sea, the Board's first research priority should be to investigate the migration and distribution of salmon at sea in relation to feeding opportunities and predation. The Board has also agreed that studies on by-catch of salmon in pelagic fisheries should also be afforded a high priority. The SAG confirmed that it continued to endorse these research priorities identified by the Board.

#### **5. Progress report on the SALSEA project**

- 5.1 A report on the SALSEA project proposal was made available to the group, SAG(04)2. This project proposal, which had been a direct result of the Board's initiatives to improve coordination of research, had been developed at a workshop held in Bergen, Norway in October 2003 and outlined a major multi-disciplinary programme of research into the mortality of salmon at sea. It includes three major work packages dealing with the theoretical and technical framework for a survey of salmon at sea, investigating the distribution and migration of salmon at sea (including overlap with commercial fisheries) and dissemination of information from the project. This project was the first attempt to develop a highly coordinated international research proposal in relation to mortality of salmon at sea in the North-East Atlantic. The project had been presented to the Directors of Fisheries Research Institutes in Europe by the EU Board Member, Dr Ken Whelan, and it had been positively received. The project has not so far been formally presented for funding but it was anticipated that funds might be sought from the EU or alternatively from the Board if its pilot fund-raising initiative is successful.
- 5.2 The SAG welcomed the development of the SALSEA project which provided a comprehensive proposal for research which, if undertaken, should greatly improve understanding of the migration and distribution of salmon at sea. The proposal should also be useful in describing to potential sponsors the nature of the research the Board wishes to fund. The SAG noted that there had been no North American scientists involved in the development of the SALSEA project. Furthermore, some European countries had not contributed to its development. The SAG therefore recommended that the Board consider supporting the further development of a major proposal for a programme of research on salmon at sea drawing on the SALSEA project but involving scientists from North America and more widely in Europe. This work might

best be achieved through a workshop supported by the Board, with anticipated costs similar to those identified for the tagging workshop.

## **6. Further development of a Call for Research Proposals**

- 6.1 The SAG had previously developed a call for proposals which sought applications for practical studies of the distribution and migration of salmon in the sea and studies of biological processes relating to the marine phase of the life-cycle. This call for proposals had been developed for use in competitive bids for research funds from the Board but the SAG felt that such an approach might not foster collaboration between researchers. An alternative approach would be to expand on the SALSEA project so that it covers the entire North Atlantic and involves all Parties. The SAG recommends that the Board considers which approach it wishes to use in the future. If further development of the SALSEA project is considered desirable by the Board then it may wish to proceed with the workshop envisaged in paragraph 5.2 above.

## **7. Proposals for Workshops/Symposia**

- 7.1 As indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5 above, the SAG recommends that the Board considers supporting two workshops if its resources permit. The need for a workshop in relation to further development of the SALSEA proposal would, of course, depend on the Board's decision in relation to its future direction.

## **8. Other business**

- 8.1 The representative of the EU referred to a meeting between Keith Stoodley of Lotek Wireless Inc. and the NASCO Secretary in which he had also participated. CEFAS and Lotek have been cooperating on the development (CEFAS) and marketing (Lotek) of tags and it would be useful to Lotek and other tag manufacturers in planning their product development if there could be a coordinated view from scientists working on Atlantic salmon with regard to their requirements for the future development of electronic tags. The SAG felt that it would be useful to involve representatives of tag manufacturers (such as Lotek, Starr-Oddi, and Vemco) in the workshop referred to in paragraphs 4 and 7 above although such participation would be at the companies' expense.

## **9. Report of the meeting**

- 9.1 The SAG agreed a report of its meeting.

## **10. Date and place of next meeting**

- 10.1 The SAG decided not to set a date and place for its next meeting. The Chairman would liaise with members of the SAG on the arrangements for the next meeting in the light of any decisions of the Board concerning the work of the group.

*List of Participants*

**Canada**

Mr David Meerburg (Chairman)

**Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)**

Dr Jan Arge Jacobsen

**European Union**

Mr Ted Potter

**Iceland**

Mr Gudni Gudbergsson

**Norway**

Dr Lars Petter Hansen

**USA**

Mr Tim Sheehan

**Secretariat**

Dr Malcolm Windsor

Dr Peter Hutchinson

**SAG(04)4**

**Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Group of the  
International Atlantic Salmon Research Board**

**Radisson SAS Saga Hotel, Reykjavik, Iceland  
09.30 hrs Sunday, 6 June, 2004**

*Agenda*

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Review of the updated inventory of research and recommendations for enhanced coordination of research
4. Development of research priorities
5. Progress report on the SALSEA project
6. Further development of a Call for Research Proposals
7. Proposals for Workshops/Symposia
8. Other business
9. Report of the meeting
10. Date and place of next meeting