

ICR(16)5

Draft Report of the Fifteenth Meeting of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

Steigenberger Hotel, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany

6 June 2016

1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 The Chairman, Mr Rory Saunders (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed members of the Board, their scientific advisers and observers to Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler.

1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

2.1 The Board adopted its Agenda, ICR(16)6 (Annex 2).

3. Report of the Scientific Advisory Group

3.1 The Chairman of the Board's Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), Dr Niall Ó Maoiléidigh, presented a report on the Group's meeting, SAG(16)6 (Annex 3). During its meeting the SAG had:

- reviewed the updated inventory of marine research which will be uploaded to the website by the end of July. Three new projects, two involving the application of telemetry in Ireland and one which aims to acoustically tag smolts in Middle River, Cape Breton, Canada, have been included since last year. The Parties/jurisdictions were asked to take steps to increase awareness of the inventory;
- reviewed the metadatabase of salmon survey data and sample collections, which currently contains 11 entries. In 2015, the SAG had discussed the high value of archival scale collections that, as a result of advances in analytical methods, can now be used for genetic, stable isotope and further growth studies. The SAG had noted that these collections may be lost when individual scientists retire unless appropriate arrangements are in place to archive them and ensure their safe storage so that they may be available for analysis. The SAG considered that the Board could play a role in identifying such scale collections, raising their profile with a view to safeguarding them for future use. The Board agreed that information on these scale collections should, as a first step, be included in the metadatabase and asked that the Secretary contact Parties/jurisdictions in order to seek the relevant information.
- discussed the proposed International Year of the Salmon (see item 4 below);
- discussed developments in relation to SALSEA - Track (see item 5 below);

- noted that since last year's Annual Meeting, the United States had made a contribution to the IASRB to support an extension of the study undertaken in 2014/15 (see SAG(15)4) entitled 'Enhancement of a North American Atlantic salmon genetic baseline for individual and stock identification and application of the baseline to historical scales collected at West Greenland'. The study will proceed later in the year following completion of the necessary documentation;
- considered an application to the Board for partial funding by Professor Christopher Todd, Scottish Oceans Institute, St Andrews, Scotland, for a study entitled 'Effects of recent ocean warming on growth and migration of Southern NEAC 1SW salmon', ICR(16)4. The SAG endorsed the proposed research project but, given the limited funds available to it and the Board's current research priority, it did not recommend that the funds sought should be approved by the Board. The SAG noted that previous financial support from the Board had assisted in securing funding from other sources for projects such as the Greenland and Faroes GSI projects. These projects had generated valuable new information of relevance to management with limited financial support from the Board. The SAG highlighted the importance of the Board having resources available to support similar studies in future.

3.2 In the light of the recommendations from the SAG, the Board decided:

- to ask the Parties to provide to the Secretariat, by 1 July, any changes or updates for the inventory, prior to it being uploaded to the IASRB website;
- to endorse the study entitled 'Effects of recent ocean warming on growth and migration of Southern NEAC 1SW salmon';
- to ask the Secretary to contact Parties/jurisdictions in order to seek relevant information about scale collections for inclusion in the IASRB metadatabase.

4. Update on the proposed International Year of the Salmon

4.1 Last year, the IASRB had recognised that there are some synergies between NPAFC's proposed International Year of the Salmon (IYS) and SALSEA - Track. The Board noted that at its 2016 Annual Meeting the Council will be considering an Outline Proposal for the IYS (see CNL(16)7) with aims which include the following:

- improving scientific understanding of the factors driving salmon abundance;
- increasing public and political awareness of the challenges facing the resource and the measures being taken to conserve and restore salmon; and
- generating further support for strategies to conserve, restore and rationally manage salmon.

4.2 Mr Dan Morris (United States) made a presentation on the proposed International Year of the Salmon. He referred to Council document CNL(16)7 and indicated that he would be seeking support for the Outline Proposal contained in that document from the Council. Clarification was sought as to whether the SALSEA - Track Programme would fit within the research themes and it was confirmed that it was relevant to at least three themes – Status of Stocks; Salmon in a changing salmosphere; and New Frontiers. It was noted that the IYS is scalable, depending on the resources available. Reference was made to a new initiative in the United States, Species in the Spotlight,

which had resulted in increased awareness and support for salmon conservation and research and the IYS might deliver the same benefit. In response to a question about goals for fundraising, it was noted that in the North Pacific, a figure of \$50million was proposed. The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission had endorsed the IYS and made budgetary provision of \$65,000 in each of the next two years and the IYS had been incorporated into the North Pacific Science Plan. Reference was made to joint opportunities for cooperation. It was recognised that the SAG and IASRB could play valuable roles in relation to closer cooperation on issues in relation to closer cooperation and information exchange between scientists in the Pacific and Atlantic, including through the proposed international symposium.

- 4.3 While it is a matter for the Council to decide on NASCO's involvement in the IYS, the IASRB recognises that salmon face many challenges and uncertainties not least those associated with climate change and that the IYS is a timely initiative. The Board has agreed that its research priority is studies to partition mortality of salmon along marine migration routes through telemetry projects (SALSEA - Track) and that this fits within the research themes identified in the Outline Proposal, particularly 'Status of Stocks' and 'Salmon in a Changing Salmosphere'. The Board recognised that the proposed IYS could be supportive of fund-raising initiatives under SALSEA - Track by increasing awareness of the proposed research and through IYS endorsements. The Board also welcomes the opportunity for closer cooperation and collaboration with scientists in the North Pacific and other parts of the salmosphere and the proposed international symposium.

5. Developments in relation to SALSEA - Track

- 5.1 In 2014, the Board had endorsed the need for an international acoustic tracking programme and adopted a Resolution (ICR(14)10) encouraging Parties to continue the development of local collaborative telemetry projects, encouraging the development of large international collaborative projects building on local efforts and encouraging Parties to make efforts to identify funding sources. The Board had noted that the telemetry programme should build on the success and identity of the SALSEA Programme.
- 5.2 In 2015, through a Telemetry Workshop, 12 outline project proposals had been developed. The Board recognised that if the international telemetry programme is to proceed, it would be important to liaise with the outline project leaders with a view to following progress and, where appropriate, to provide support to assist with their implementation.
- 5.3 Last year, the Board recognised that there were some clear synergies between NPAFC's proposed IYS and the Board's international telemetry programme. The Board recognised the high value of the SALSEA brand and the strong impact of NASCO as the international forum for consultation and cooperation on wild Atlantic salmon. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to an international telemetry project under the SALSEA brand, named 'SALSEA-Track'. Specifically the Board will support SALSEA-Track as a continuing commitment to understanding the factors affecting mortality of salmon at sea, to make funds available to prepare a vision statement for SALSEA-Track and to advance existing initiatives towards an integrated collaborative telemetry programme. Last year, the Board had recognised that in order

to support fund-raising it would need to provide some ‘seed corn’ funding. This had not been done because it had been decided to wait until the findings of the Telemetry Workshop were available, and their implications for the Board were known. In the case of the SALSEA Programme, several million pounds had been raised with ‘seed corn’ funding of £30,000. It was recognised that with relatively small sums, the Board had been able to support research projects that had provided important information to support management.

- 5.4 The Chairman introduced document ICR(16)3 and indicated that a brochure on SALSEA - Track had now been prepared and progress reports had been requested on these projects. He highlighted a number of areas where the Board could play a role in taking the project forward including supporting fund-raising, funding research, endorsements, providing a forum for information exchange and collaboration and coordination. It was noted that for the first phase of the SALSEA Programme, the Board had developed an outline programme and that the SALSEA-Merge project had then been developed for funding under the EUFP7 programme and SALSEA-North America had been implemented. Private funding had been secured from the TOTAL Foundation. The challenge now was to support the 12 outline projects and the Board agreed that these could be considered to have been endorsed. It was recognised that there might be scope to combine some of these projects into large projects within the NAC and NEAC areas.
- 5.5 Mr David Meerburg made a presentation on the Atlantic Salmon Federation’s tracking projects (SAG(16)XX).

6. Finance and administrative issues

- 6.1 The Secretary introduced document ICR(16)2 presenting the Board’s accounts for 2015. The decision had been taken not to have the 2015 accounts audited because of the limited funds held and the small number of transactions in the year. At the end of 2015, the balance of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund was £35,235. Since the last meeting of the Board, the USA had contributed £16,900 to support the project entitled ‘*Enhancement of a North American Atlantic salmon genetic baseline for individual and stock identification and application of the baseline to historical scales collected at West Greenland*’ and Norway had contributed approximately £6,000. The Chairman thanked the representatives of the US and Norway for these generous contributions. The Board had asked that the Chairman contact the Parties with a view to seeing if additional funds could be contributed and this has been done. It was recognised that with relatively modest funding, the Board could support projects that could provide valuable management information, but implementation of SALSEA - Track would require more substantial funding.
- 6.2 The Board decided that it would not have its 2016 accounts audited, unless significant additional funds were contributed before the end of the year. In the event that this was not the case, the Secretariat was asked to provide income and expenditure statements.
- 6.3 The representative of the European Union indicated that the intention was to make a voluntary contribution to NASCO to support two projects, one relating to SALSEA – Track and the other aquaculture impacts. The funding would be for Euro 300,000 per

project representing 80% of the costs with the balance of funding requiring to be found from third parties (Member States). There would be a need to consider how these funds would be managed and what the role of the IASRB might be. The representative of the European Union indicated that the role of the IASRB might evaluate the proposals. The arrangements would need to be finalised by the end of 2016.

7. Other business

- 7.1 The Board was advised of a new research initiative in Canada that will allocate \$40million to ocean science.

8. Report of the meeting

- 8.1 [The Board agreed a report of its meeting.]

9. Date and Place of next meeting

- 9.1 The Board agreed to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting of NASCO during 6 - 10 June 2017.
- 9.2 The Chairman thanked participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.