

### Salmonid Affairs in the ICES Structure

The Bureau proposes that a Diadromous Fish Committee be established (see page 3).

#### Background:

#### **2000:**

Concerns continued to be expressed that ICES lacked a clear forum for the discussion of scientific issues on salmonids, since the changes in the Science Committee structure in 1996 had eliminated the ANACAT Committee. Participants in **Theme Session Y** on “Downturn in Atlantic Salmon Stock Abundance” **recommended** that ICES should create an “Anadromous Salmonid Resource Committee” to:

- a) be a forum for the exchange of views on scientific management;
- b) stimulate international scientific cooperation on the anadromous salmonid issues;
- c) critically review the report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon;
- d) recommend theme sessions of relevance to salmonid biology and management;
- e) recommend study groups, where necessary, to deal with problems related to salmonid biology and management which are not in the scope of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon;
- f) recommend ICES symposia on salmonid management and scientific issues.

Suggestions regarding possible membership of the Committee were also made (it should be a blend of the members of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon plus up to two people from each Member Country who would represent both scientific and management concerns). The report of Theme Session Y in 2000 is attached as Annex 1.

In response to the general concern, the Delegates decided to establish a Bureau Study Group to Develop a Salmonid Science Initiative (Chair: Jóhann Sigurjónsson), which would work by correspondence to:

- a) identify the need for a salmonid science initiative in ICES by consulting with appropriate expertise in Member Countries;
- b) identify the appropriate organisational structure to stimulate salmonid scientists to participate in ICES, including the possibility of establishing a Salmonid Science Committee;

- c) consider whether such an initiative might also be needed for other research areas related to anadromous and catadromous fishes;
- d) report to the January 2001 meeting of the Bureau.

#### **2001:**

The Bureau Study Group recommended (Bureau Doc. 1235, at the **January 2001 Bureau Meeting**):

1. that a Diadromous Fish Committee be established and that it should have the following functions:
  - To be a forum for the exchange of views on scientific management of diadromous fish species.
  - To stimulate international scientific cooperation on diadromous fish issues.
  - To critically review the report of the North Atlantic Salmon Working Group.
  - To critically review the report of the Working Group on Baltic Salmon and Trout.
  - To critically review the report of the EIFAC/ICES Working Group on Eels.
  - To recommend theme sessions of relevance to diadromous fish species, particularly salmonid biology and management.
  - To recommend Study Groups, where necessary, to deal with problems related to salmonid biology and management, which are not within the scope of the North Atlantic Salmon Working Group.
  - Recommend ICES symposia on salmonid/ diadromous fish management and scientific issues.
2. that the Chair of the Diadromous Fish Committee should be an *ex-officio* member of the relevant Advisory Committees, and that he/she should accompany the Chair of the Advisory Committee when the ICES advice is presented to the client Commission.

The Bureau expressed some reservations at that time, particularly that the creation of a new Science Committee would weaken the policy of fostering linkages between the scientific specialities, hinder the development of the ecosystem approach and create an imbalance in the committee structure. It was further suggested in discussion that it would be premature to consider changing the present committee structure (which was still relatively young), and that rather than

create a new committee, the Theme Sessions should be made more relevant to salmonid and eel issues.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that the salmonid area was the only one for which scientific advice is given for North America, and that the Delegates had considered that the development of the ecosystem approach was being hindered by the *absence* of salmonid scientists from ICES. Attention was also drawn to the strategic significance of nurturing relationships with the important client Commission involved. It was further suggested that the idea of accommodating diadromous fish matters in a special group within the Living Resources Committee should be reconsidered, having been rejected during the 2000 ASC discussions.

**At the next Bureau Meeting, in June 2001**, the General Secretary suggested (Bureau Doc. 1266) that salmonid issues might be incorporated within the Mariculture Committee (following appropriate amendments to that Committee's terms of reference), on the grounds that it would be advantageous to handle scientific issues of wild salmon, and aquaculture, within a single Committee.

In discussing the General Secretary's proposal, CONC had already concluded that salmonid issues would be better served by broadening the terms of reference of the Living Resources Committee, and creating a joint session at the ASC on "salmon issues".

**The Bureau decided on a three-part course of action:**

- (i) Place a strong emphasis on salmonid affairs at the 2001 ASC, as proposed by CONC (a joint session of the Living Resources, Resource Management and Mariculture Committees on "Salmon issues", and Theme Session M on "Developing Salmon Conservation Limits").
- (ii) Take an active part in developing the Joint NASCO/IBSFC/PICES/NPAFC/ICES Symposium on the Causes of Marine Mortality of Salmon in the North Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans and the Baltic Sea [March 2002].
- (iii) In the light of the outcome of (i) and (ii), make a major effort at the 2002 ASC to achieve a viable and sustainable solution.

The Bureau requested the General Secretary to seek a statement from the NASCO and IBSFC Secretariats concerning the nature of the support they expect from ICES, and to place the matter on the agenda for the 2002 meeting of WGCOOP. The General Secretary wrote to the Commissions as instructed, but no clear response was received.

During the discussion at the Joint Session of the Living Resources, Resource Management and Mariculture

Committees **at the 2001 ASC**, the following points were raised:

- a. Marine research on salmon is relatively recent and great strides have been made in the last 10 years. However, salmon spend up to 60% of their lifecycle in freshwater, but ICES does not have a focus on freshwater. The freshwater component of the life-cycle cannot be ignored in the provision of advice as freshwater effects have a profound influence on subsequent marine survival and harvests.
- b. ICES should try to attract salmon scientists working in the freshwater area specifically as this is where the main areas of salmon research and development takes place. At present there is little scope for freshwater issues. These should include habitat quality issues and productivity. ICES should consider a Theme Session on freshwater productivity and/or its importance to salmon production. In this regard, ICES must be flexible as the existing Committees would have little interest in freshwater issues specifically and may feel that valuable time is being expended on issues that do not have a broad appeal within the existing Committees.
- c. In the context of ICES being flexible, the Marine Habitat Committee could be renamed the Habitat Committee, to allow for greater involvement of salmon scientists. While it was recognised that the initial fit might be uncomfortable, ICES must recognise that the freshwater habitat is a primary issue in salmon biology and management and in this context this was seen as the greatest challenge to ICES. If this challenge could not be met then the original proposal for a separate Committee for salmon (or all diadromous fish groups) would probably be the most convenient and workable and in this regard it should be given very serious consideration by ICES.
- d. The Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon spends a considerable amount of its time dealing with freshwater productivity issues, and S/R relationships are established mainly on the basis of the recruitment from eggs to the smolt stage (entirely freshwater stages). The suggestion of a Theme Session on the life history responses to changing environments was made to encourage a more holistic approach to describing salmon fisheries and marine fisheries in the same session, as it would cover changes in both the marine and freshwater.
- e. While it was agreed that there was no reason why salmon issues could not be dealt with in the existing Committee Work Plans, it was clear that they were not. For salmon biologists

ICES was not the only forum to work on significant biological and management issues, while for many other scientists ICES was the main forum for debate for marine fisheries and environmental concerns. This was a significant reason for the lack of involvement from salmon scientists who could do their business elsewhere.

- f. The lack of a “business” part of ICES dealing with salmon fisheries management and provision of advice was raised and discussed. The focus of this should be to assemble the appropriate expertise to deal with and solve specific issues relating to catch advice. This would provide an extra attraction to actively involved salmon scientists.
- g. The absence of salmon scientists was notable and ICES must be made aware of the specific problems outlined in the discussion. Otherwise it is unlikely that salmon scientists will involve themselves to any great degree in the overall business of ICES.

#### The main conclusions of the 2002 Joint Session were:

- (i) The need for ICES to take a strong initiative was clear.
- (ii) It was clear that there was a need to apply more of the existing ICES machinery to contribute to salmon issues.
- (iii) There was a need to increase the visibility of salmon issues in ICES and a similar meeting should be held at the ASC next year to consider progress or new strategies.
- (iv) The freshwater component of the salmon life-cycle was identified as being of extreme importance in overall assessments of fisheries biology and management. This could be progressed by changing the identity of the Marine Habitat Committee to reflect broader habitat concerns. Otherwise the establishment of a special committee for salmon/all diadromous fish issues may prove to be the simplest and most practical solution to the problem.
- (v) A final decision on how ICES would resolve the issue was necessary to maintain the impetus generated so far.

#### Proposal from the Bureau

In support of these considerations, especially points (e) and (g) from the 2001 Joint Session, and the conclusions of the same Joint Session, the Bureau recommends that a **Diadromous Fish Committee** be established with the following general terms of reference (adapted from the list in the Bureau Study Group’s report):

- (i) to be a forum for the exchange of views on scientific aspects of diadromous fish species, especially salmonids;
- (ii) to stimulate international scientific cooperation on diadromous fish issues;
- (iii) to recommend terms of reference for Working Groups and Study Groups (or, when necessary, the establishment of such groups), annual Theme Sessions or Symposia on scientific issues concerning diadromous fish, including resource management.
- (iv) The Chair of the Diadromous Fish Committee should be an *ex officio* member of ACFM and ACE.

When the Bureau discussed the report of the Bureau Study Group to Develop a Salmonid Science Initiative (June 2001), one of the considerations was that even if a Diadromous Fish Committee were to be established, the responsibility of critically reviewing the report of the North Atlantic Salmon Working Group should remain with ACFM, and not be transferred to the new Committee as proposed by the Bureau Study Group.

#### Next steps

If the Delegates adopt the Bureau’s proposal, it could be implemented without delay if appropriate preparatory actions are taken now. Otherwise a whole year may be lost, having regard to the ICES decision-making cycle. The Bureau therefore authorised the Secretariat to make arrangements as follows:

1. Immediately inform the Delegates of the Bureau’s proposal, and invite them to provisionally appoint people to the proposed new Committee before the Statutory Meeting.
2. The plans for the 2002 Statutory Meeting include a Joint Session of the Living Resources, Resource Management and Mariculture Committees on the subject of Salmonid Issues (Monday 30 September, 17:00-18:00). That session will be asked to formulate provisional terms of reference for the new Committee. This has been discussed with the Chair of the Consultative Committee, who will be chairing the Joint Session.
3. The Bureau proposal (this paper) will be tabled at the Delegates meeting on Wednesday 2 October (13:30-18:00). If the Council does not agree to it, then no further action is taken. If the Council endorses the proposal, then Step 4 follows.
4. The already-appointed members of the new Committee will be convened on Saturday 5 October (10:30-12:30). During that session they will elect a Chair to take office on 1 January 2003, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

### **Addendum to Proposal for Establishment of a Diadromous Fish Committee**

The informal meeting of individuals interested in establishment of a Diadromous Fish Committee, held from 17:00 – 18:00 on 30 September, attracted 34 attendees, from 15 countries, plus the Faroes and ICES Secretariat. All supported establishment of the Committee, as proposed in CM2002/Del:03. The draft Terms of Reference contained in that document, and the letter from the General Secretary of 1 July, were discussed. There was unanimous support for three changes to the proposed Terms of Reference:

From draft Term i) delete the phrase “especially salmonids”. Several participants felt that issues related to eels and other diadromous species were important, as well as salmonid issues, and that the proposed phrasing suggested an inappropriate lack of attention to non-salmonid diadromous species.

To draft i) add “management, conservation, and restoration” following “scientific”. Concern was expressed that referring exclusively to “scientific aspects” could be interpreted in some quarters as excluding consideration of aspects of the management and restoration of diadromous species.

To draft iii) add the phrase “and review Reports from” to follow “recommend Terms of

Reference for”. The role of Science Committees in reviewing Working Group Reports is important within ICES, and should be explicitly included here.

With these revisions the proposed Terms of Reference would be:

- i) to be a forum for the exchange of views on scientific, management, conservation, and restoration aspects of diadromous fish species.
- ii) to stimulate international scientific cooperation on diadromous fish issues
- iii) to recommend Terms of Reference for , and review Reports from, Working Groups and Study Groups (or when necessary recommend the establishment of such groups), annual Theme Sessions, or Symposia on scientific issues concerning diadromous fish, including resource management.

There was a thorough discussion of how this Committee could interact with existing Science and Advisory Committees. There was strong consensus that this Committee could interact constructively, and without redundancy, with the existing Committees of ICES.

### Salmonid Affairs in the ICES Structure

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Suggestions regarding possible membership of the Committee were also made (it should be a blend of the members of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon plus up to two people from each Member Country who would represent both scientific and management concerns). The report of Theme Session Y in 2000 is attached as Annex 1.

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