

## **NASF Memorandum produced immediately after the Feb 11 meeting:**

Subject of the meeting: **To discuss the request of the NASF Coalition for substantial rights to share in determining measures – such as the total allowable catches (TACs) – to protect their stocks while they are in Irish coastal waters.”**

*Present: John Browne, TD., George O’Doherty of the Inland Fisheries Division and Orri Vigfússon from NASF.*

1. The NASF Chairman made a presentation on behalf of the NASF Coalition (see package of relevant papers). He offered the Coalition’s cooperation in achieving better salmon management in line with conservation needs, determining the technical aspects of fully effective regulations and refocusing the administration on measures that will lead to a recovery of stocks and the development and promotion of angling tourism in Ireland.

Citing Ireland’s international obligations under Article 66 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the EU Habitat Directive and the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals he also requested a substantial degree of participation in the management regime, including the setting of TACs, regional and the individual quota process

2. The various documents accompanying the presentation were reviewed and explained in view of the current conflicts between the scientific advice and the recommendations of the National Salmon Commission in the quota-setting process.
3. The Minister accepted that Ireland had this responsibility and invited the NASF Coalition to make a formal claim to ensure their interests. He was prepared to wait for NASF’s views until the beginning of March as he was due to decide on the 2003 quotas in March.
4. While the Minister and his adviser accepted that they had a responsibility to work with the Coalition they felt that the quality of the Irish scientific advice might be superior to that from other sources and suggested their Marine Institute was best qualified to advise on conservation needs. The NASF Chairman maintained that Ireland needed to fully respect the scientific assessments and advice of England, Wales, France, Spain, Germany and Northern Ireland as most of these nations were both Ireland’s EU partners and neighbours. He also maintained that attention had to be paid to the ICES assessment and the recommendations contained in ICES papers submitted to the Minister.
5. The Minister said he was personally in favour of the buyout route but that he had some doubts about how many of the professional fishermen would accept buyout offers. The NASF Chairman referred the Minister to previous NASF documents and told him that NASF believed that more than 90% of the fishermen would accept either a buyout offer or a set-aside offer. The remaining few would simply have to stick to the limits of conservation and science-based salmon quotas which had to be individual and non-transferrable except for conservation reasons.
6. The Minister asked several technical questions about buyouts and agreements and the NASF Chairman emphasised the implications of human right issues, competition Law and EU regulations. We expressed deep concern for insufficient quality of the work carried out by the National Salmon Commission as well as the technical work of the regional fisheries boards and suggested more expertise and professionalism.
7. The individual non-transferrable quotas were discussed and the NASF Chairman urged the Minister to act strongly and decisively this year. He pointed out that this had been one of the

main election promises the Minister's party had suggested last year yet it had failed to implement the quotas in 2002.

8. The NASF Chairman suggested that the Minister could either use
  - (1) A system of equal quotas for everyone in both the drift and draft net fisheries or
  - (2) The NASF formula. He explained that the NASF formula took account of the following elements:
    - (a) Individual rights
    - (b) Subsistence value
    - (c) Historic register - Days at sea
    - (d) Declared catches (1994-98) and equipment employed (boat, gear, motor, etc) and
    - (e) Timing bands - Time spent fishing and the period remaining before the netsman's normal retirement age

The NASF Chairman suggested that individual quotas should also be issued to those fishermen whose vessels were currently improperly registered because the boats did not comply with the regulations. However, he said that in the interests of conservation, these individuals should not be permitted to exercise the quotas until their vessels were upgraded and they complied with the regulations.
9. The Minister invited NASF to work with the Irish agencies -- the fisheries boards, the Economic Institute, etc. -- in assessing the economic valuation and drafting a development plan for the salmon resource. He said he intended to prepare this plan during 2003 and implement it during his term in office.
10. The Minister said NASF should realise that it was difficult for the Irish people to accept that they did not have total say in the management of their fisheries, particularly in view of the difficulties they had met for many years in dealing with absent landowners and in the Common Fisheries Policy.
11. Finally there was an informal discussion on the cost of the set-aside/buyout programmes and how best to implement the scheme in a fair manner.

Orri Vigfússon