



## *A Draft Strategy for NASCO*

The wild Atlantic salmon is an iconic symbol of resilience and is facing an unprecedented threat to its existence. From the rushing rivers of its birth to the vast expanse of the open ocean, the journey of the wild Atlantic salmon is one of endurance and wonder. However, this journey is now perilously endangered by a combination of human activities causing biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, overfishing and climate change. Climate change is an overarching threat that is both directly impacting the productivity of wild Atlantic salmon and indirectly intensifying the impacts of other stressors across the species' entire life cycle.

The decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations is not merely a concern for conservationists; it is a wake-up call for all of us to recognise the interconnectedness of our actions with the health of our planet. This strategy proposes the urgent need for collective action to safeguard the future of this extraordinary species.

### **NASCO's Unique Role**

NASCO is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in addressing the range of threats to wild Atlantic salmon and support its conservation and recovery. It is the only inter-governmental organization with regulatory competency for wild Atlantic salmon fisheries and it is the pre-eminent convener of the wild Atlantic salmon community throughout the North Atlantic Ocean, including governments, Indigenous peoples, the non-governmental organizations, fishers, environmental organizations and other relevant actors.

Key aspects of NASCO's role include:

- compiling and sharing information on wild Atlantic salmon, including its status and the threats it is facing;
- identifying information and research needs and promoting and supporting international co-operation to carry out such research;
- producing authoritative guidelines to inform best management practices to promote the conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon;
- encouraging effective implementation by Parties and jurisdictions of NASCO's binding and non-binding measures through transparent review and reporting processes;
- building and supporting global awareness and understanding of the plight of wild Atlantic salmon and its unique migratory lifecycle; and
- connecting governments, organizations and people across the range of wild Atlantic salmon to educate and encourage effective action to help address the challenges facing the species.

In light of this, NASCO has developed Vision and Mission statements as follows:

### **NASCO's Vision**

The decline of wild Atlantic salmon has reversed and populations are recovering to healthy and resilient levels across their range.

## **NASCO's Mission**

NASCO will support and promote urgent and transformative actions directed at the protection, conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon throughout the species' range.

## **NASCO's Strategic Goal**

Within the next 10 years, NASCO's goal is to prioritise and drive actions necessary to slow the decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations and demonstrate that restoration is possible.

## **NASCO's Objectives**

### **NASCO will:**

1. Ensure the best evidence-based information is compiled and accessible to address the critical challenges and threats to wild Atlantic salmon at the North Atlantic scale, which are amplified by the climate crisis.
2. Use the information gathered through Objective 1 to ensure that guidance reflecting best management practice is produced and readily available to those seeking to take action to protect wild Atlantic salmon.
3. Actively promote sustainable conservation and management practices by sharing best practice and holding Parties and jurisdictions accountable in implementing NASCO recommendations and guidance.
4. Raise awareness and foster broad collaborative efforts with other international organizations and civil society to encourage decision-makers, the public, private sector and the scientific community to work towards solutions that overcome the challenges wild Atlantic salmon face.
5. Improve its organizational practices and work in an efficient, effective, inclusive, and transparent manner.

## ***Linking the Strategy and Action Plan***

While the threats and challenges to wild Atlantic salmon vary widely across jurisdictions, since 2007, when NASCO first implemented its series of reporting cycles, NASCO has identified three major theme areas that affect wild Atlantic salmon throughout their range. They are:

- **management of salmon fisheries:** to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks and maintain all stocks above their conservation limits;
- **protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat:** to maintain and, where possible, increase the current productive capacity of Atlantic salmon habitat; and
- **management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics:** to minimise the possible adverse impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics on the wild stocks of Atlantic salmon, including working with industry stakeholders, where appropriate.

These theme areas were considered and reaffirmed as continuing to be the key pressures for wild Atlantic salmon with all of them exacerbated by a fourth pressure that is the climate change crisis. As such, the Working Group on the Future of NASCO recommends establishing four Theme-based Working Groups (TBWGs) that will focus on the four primary theme areas NASCO has

identified, i.e. ‘Climate Change’, ‘Management of Salmon Fisheries’, ‘Protection and Restoration of Salmon Habitat’ and Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics’.

{Text if WGFON process agreed by Council}

[These theme areas were considered and reaffirmed by NASCO as continuing to be the key pressures for wild Atlantic salmon with all of them exacerbated by a fourth pressure that is the climate change crisis. As such, the Council agreed to establish four Theme-based Working Groups (TBWGs) that will focus on the four primary theme areas NASCO has identified, i.e. ‘Climate Change’, ‘Management of Salmon Fisheries’, ‘Protection and Restoration of Salmon Habitat’ and Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics’.]

The TBWGs will be tasked, in the first instance, to review all of the recommendations in the Action Plan under each theme area, for each of the five objectives. They will then identify and prioritise the actions required to meet NASCO’s Strategic Goal, for Council’s agreement in 2025.