



Finance and Administration Committee

FAC(19)05

MoU with the OSPAR Commission

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The operation of the MoU between NASCO and the OSPAR Commission, which came into effect on 5 August 2013, continues to work well, with improved exchanges of information in the last few years.

OSPAR Recommendation on Salmon: OSPAR Recommendation 2016/3 on furthering the protection and conservation of the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) in Regions I, II, III and IV of the OSPAR maritime area became effective on 24 June 2016. The recommendation reflected comments and edits provided by NASCO, although NASCO did not endorse or take a policy position on the recommendation. Under the recommendation, the Contracting Parties of the OSPAR Commission are to report on the implementation of the Recommendation by 31 December 2019 and every six years thereafter. Once the Contracting Parties to OSPAR make their reports to the OSPAR Secretariat, NASCO will receive, per the terms of our MoU, any relevant information from OSPAR, most likely in time for the 2020 NASCO Annual Meeting.

Possible designation of a new Marine Protected Area in the North-East Atlantic: The OSPAR Secretariat has informed NASCO that a discussion begun in OSPAR in 2018 on the possibility of establishing a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the central Atlantic Ocean has continued after collecting relevant technical and scientific data and information to help evaluate the possible utility of an MPA. The proposed MPA is called the 'North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount Marine Protected Area' (NACES MPA). The site is located in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) of the OSPAR Maritime Area. It has been identified as an important foraging area for many species of seabirds in the OSPAR Maritime Area. Some of the seabird species identified as using the proposed site are wide ranging and also occur in waters of non-OSPAR states, and such states may be able to provide information not readily available to OSPAR. There is a need to increase information on which human activities occur at the site and how they may impact the seabirds' use of the site.

In 2018, the FAC asked the NASCO Secretary to continue to liaise with the OSPAR Executive Secretary with respect to the proposed Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the central Atlantic Ocean and, if needed, provide or direct OSPAR to any relevant information on distribution and fishing activities for salmon in the Atlantic Ocean, given the distribution of Atlantic salmon and the potential limitations on fishing and / or other activities in any MPA that might be established,

OSPAR's proposal went out to consultation between July and October 2018, to seek information on human activities that would assist OSPAR to improve the decision basis for any designation from competent authorities regulating human activities in ABNJ. NASCO responded to the three questions in the consultation and these are shown in Annex 1.

In March 2019 the annual OSPAR Biodiversity Committee meeting recognised that the information on human activities would benefit from further input from competent authorities and this will be included during the 5th meeting under the Collective Arrangement between OSPAR and the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission, in Gothenburg, 28 / 29 May 2019. The NASCO Secretariat was invited to attend but was unable to do so given the timing of the 2019 NASCO Annual Meeting.

It is expected that OSPAR's proposal will be put forward for consideration at the OSPAR Commission's Annual Meeting from 24 – 28 June, 2019.

NASCO's response to the OSPAR Commission's questions in relation to the draft nomination proforma in support of a possible designation of a new Marine Protected Area in the North-East Atlantic – regarding human activities at the-North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount MPA and how they may impact seabird's use of the site

i) Can you provide any additional information of relevance on the 22 species of seabirds and habitats and ecosystems that support the seabird species present in the proposed MPA?

NASCO has no information of relevance in answer to this question.

(ii) Can you provide any additional information on current and/or potential future human activities at the site, including their intensity, type and timing?

Under the terms of the NASCO Convention, fishing for Atlantic salmon is prohibited in the identified site, among other areas of the North Atlantic. In addition, information provided to NASCO regularly from surveillance flights and other MCS operations shows that no IUU fishing for Atlantic salmon in the identified site or elsewhere on the high seas in recent years has been detected. The last time IUU fishing for Atlantic salmon was known to occur in the North Atlantic was in the early 1990s, and NASCO took decisive action to eliminate it.

(iii) Can you provide additional indicative information about potential future management actions within the site to deliver the proposed conservation objectives for the site?

As in (ii), the NASCO Convention prohibits fishing for Atlantic salmon in most of the North Atlantic, including the identified site.