

	<p>Council</p> <p><i>Report on Progress in Implementing the ‘Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, CNL(13)38</i></p>	<p>CNL(21)20</p> <p>Agenda Item 5e</p>
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Report on Progress in Implementing the ‘Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, CNL(13)38

In 2013, the Council adopted an ‘Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, [CNL\(13\)38](#), (hereinafter referred to as the Action Plan). Comprehensive progress reports on the recommendations contained in the Action Plan have been submitted to the Council each year since 2014 ([CNL\(14\)14](#), [CNL\(15\)15](#), [CNL\(16\)16](#), [CNL\(17\)16](#), [CNL\(18\)16](#), [CNL\(19\)17](#) and [CNL\(20\)23](#)). The following tables present an update for 2021 for all the recommendations contained in the Action Plan.

Due to the virtual format of the Annual Meeting in 2021, and preceding period of inter-sessional correspondence, the 2021 update is being issued earlier than in other years. As a result, some of the information usually referred to is not available at the time of writing. Where possible, we have added links to where any forthcoming relevant information will be posted.

Section One contains recommendations which had been implemented or planned at the time the Action Plan was developed in 2013 but for which there was a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. This year, to simplify the document and avoid repetition, we have split this section into two parts. Section One (A) contains an update on the Implementation Plan Process, and Section One (B) contains all other updates usually contained in Section One.

Section Two contains recommendations for which further action was required for their implementation. For ease of reference, in this report we have allocated numbers to the nine decisions contained in the Action Plan.

Section Three contains actions to strengthen NASCO’s work on the management of salmon fisheries.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
16 April 2021

Section 1: Recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel (EPR) and ‘Next Steps’ Review Group (NS) that have been implemented or are planned and for which there may be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes

A The Implementation Plan Process

At the time the Action Plan was agreed, the first Implementation Plan (IP) cycle (covering the period 2007 – 2012) had just been completed and NASCO was about to embark on the second cycle of IPs, covering the period 2013 – 2018. NASCO has now entered its third cycle of reporting, with the 2019 – 2024 IPs currently subject to review by the IP / APR Review Group and Annual Progress Reports (APRs) on these IPs submitted in both 2020 and 2021.

The Second Implementation Plan Cycle (2013 – 2018)

The Review Group responsible for reviewing the 2013 – 2018 Implementation Plans noted in its final report on the second reporting cycle, [CNL\(19\)12](#), the considerable progress made by Parties / jurisdictions in many areas covered under NASCO’s theme areas, especially in ‘Management of salmon fisheries’ and in ‘Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat’. The Review Group noted that it considered that the APRs have been the primary vehicle for demonstrating progress towards the achievement of NASCO’s goals for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of wild Atlantic salmon, providing a vehicle for the sharing of good practice among the Parties / jurisdictions and steering the direction for NASCO’s Theme-based Special Sessions (TBSS). However, the Review Group also noted that it considered that much work was still required under NASCO’s third theme area ‘Management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics’, particularly in the attainment of the international NASCO / ISFA goals for sea lice and containment.

The Review Group highlighted a number of issues relating to the second reporting cycle including:

- not all Parties / jurisdictions provided an IP and / or APRs;
- some actions in the IP were unclear and read like progress reports making assessment of progress challenging;
- timeliness of reporting had improved but some APRs were still submitted after the deadline;
- the most common fault with APRs in the second round of reporting was a lack of quantitative information to assess progress on each action.

The Third Implementation Plan Process

The Council expressed a wish to strengthen the IP / APR process further through the third reporting cycle (covering the period 2019 – 2024). In 2018, Council agreed ‘Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress’, [CNL\(18\)49](#), a template for the 2019 – 2024 IPs ([CNL\(18\)50](#)) and a template for the APRs submitted under these IPs ([CNL\(18\)51](#)).

The IP Guidelines for the third cycle of reporting state that the IPs should: include actions contained within the first and second cycle of IPs where they are still relevant in addressing a threat or challenge identified in the IPs in the third reporting cycle; be prepared with NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and industries; contain at least one action related to the management of mixed-stock fisheries for Parties / jurisdictions that prosecute them; and contain at least one action related to NASCO and ISFA's goal for sea lice and containment for Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farms.

The actions are the key element of the 2019 – 2024 IPs and these should be SMART, that is, contain the following elements: Specific, Measurable, Ambitious yet achievable, Relevant and Timely activities that a Party or jurisdiction intends to undertake during the IP period.

The 2019 – 2024 IPs have been submitted and are currently subject to review by the IP / APR Review Group.

At the 2020 September Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council, Parties confirmed their commitment to a strengthened IP process in the third reporting cycle and acknowledged that some revision to the process was needed to enable it to work better. Council agreed that 'Enhanced Guidance from the Council of NASCO for the Review of Implementation Plans', [CNL\(20\)55](#), be developed. This document has three sections:

- the first section confirms the decision by the Council regarding its commitment to the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines under the third reporting cycle (2019 – 2024). This includes (among other things) the agreement that the President will send letters to the relevant Minister, or other nominated official, of all Parties / jurisdictions about the strengthened IP process and the importance of demonstrating progress towards the attainment of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines;
- the second section provides enhanced guidance for the IP / APR Review Group confirming that where a Party / jurisdiction does not submit a revised IP, the most recent revision of their IP would form the basis for review in November 2020. It includes (among other things) that there will be no overall classification of an IP as 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable'. Instead, sections / areas of the IP should be categorised as either 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. It also confirms that the IP / APR Review Group has the flexibility to review IPs to consider if the actions contained within them provide a basis for Parties / jurisdictions to make progress in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines; and
- the third section sets out a process for ongoing follow up in future years.

The IP / APR Review Group met for a third time to review the 2019 – 2024 IPs in November / December 2020, taking into account the Enhanced Guidance from Council referred to above. The report of its meeting is available as document [CNL\(21\)07](#). Of the 21 IPs evaluated, one was considered to be satisfactory in each section / area. However, for the other 20, the Review Group considered that further work is still needed for them to be in line with the IP Guidelines and the Enhanced Guidance and to demonstrate progress towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. In accordance with the Enhanced Guidance, the President of NASCO has written to the relevant Minister, or other nominated official, including the outcome of the November review and requesting a response to include how the Party / jurisdiction will demonstrate progress towards the attainment of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines in areas where deficiencies have been identified. The intention is that responses will be available prior to the 2021 IP Special Session webinar. The letters and their responses are being posted on the [NASCO website](#). In addition to the

feedback provided to individual Parties / jurisdictions, the Review Group also provided general feedback to the Council. Full details can be found in the Review Group's report.

The Special Session planned for the 2020 Annual Meeting on the evaluations of the 2019 – 2024 IPs was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was subsequently agreed that an inter-sessional Special Session would be held by webinar to discuss the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans fully, on Wednesday, 5 May 2021. The outcome of the webinar will be presented to Council at its 2021 Annual Meeting.

The APRs submitted in 2020 were not reviewed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the APRs submitted in 2021 will be the first APRs submitted under the 2019 – 2024 IPs to be reviewed. The IP / APR Review Group will meet virtually in April to conduct its work and its report will be available on the [NASCO website](#). There will be Special Session at the 2021 Annual Meeting to discuss the APRs.

B Other relevant updates

NASCO's 'Next Steps' Process	
EPR1	The 'Next Steps' process has succeeded in undertaking a comprehensive and critical review of the work of the Organization to date and in enhancing efforts on the current areas of focus of the Organization. This progress should continue, based on the Strategic Approach, which has provided a comprehensive framework for the work to be undertaken and for improvements to be made in the implementation of NASCO Agreements.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: The Council has agreed to proceed with a new cycle of Implementation Plans (IPs) covering the period 2013 – 2018 and Annual Progress Reports (APRs). The 'Next Steps' review process proposed only minor changes to the Strategic Approach.</p> <p>The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has agreed that a third performance review of the work of NASCO will take place, reporting in 2023 for consideration at the 2023 Annual Meeting. The Review Panel will be composed of three external experts who are 'not directly affiliated' with NASCO, and who, together, have expertise in the three categories: fisheries science, salmon management and conservation, and marine / fisheries law. Terms of Reference for the third performance review have been developed, CNL(21)22. Council will be updated on progress made with planning for the third performance review at the 2021 Annual Meeting. • See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process. The IP template for the third reporting cycle (CNL(18)50) again covers the main elements of the Strategic Approach. 	
EPR2	In the next reporting cycle, the Parties should continue their efforts to implement the decisions and to address the issues identified in the Strategic Approach. It will be important for the second cycle to address areas identified in the first cycle of the 'Next Steps' process for additional action. Consideration should be given to convening an FAR special session on this topic. Progress on the socio-economic aspects of Atlantic salmon and initiatives for endangered populations is also encouraged.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template adopted in 2012, CNL(12)42, indicates that jurisdictions should take into account the specific issues on which action was recommended in the first cycle of reporting. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. An initial assessment of the IPs will be undertaken to ensure the information requested in this template has been provided and where there are gaps the IPs will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. The IPs will then be evaluated by a Review Group. The findings of the evaluation will be considered at the 2013 Annual Meeting. A Special Session on socio-economics is to be held during the 2014 Annual Meeting. The IP template seeks information on social and economic aspects and on how threatened and endangered stocks are identified and of actions to address threats to them so these issues should be addressed in the new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process. The IP template for the third reporting cycle (CNL(18)50) again covers the main elements of the Strategic Approach and seeks information on social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon and on initiatives for endangered salmon stocks. • On the recommendation of the Socio-economics Sub-Group, a TBSS was held in 2014 on the management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits, including how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions. The 2014 TBSS Steering Committee noted inter alia that the reporting on what constitutes over-riding socio-economic considerations in permitting fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit was not always clear. The report of this TBSS was published and well received and can be found here. 	

- To support the production of the ‘State of North Atlantic Salmon’ report, specifically the values section, a review of the literature for the period 2009 – 2019 and an assessment of changes in values was commissioned by NASCO. ‘The Social, Economic and Cultural values of wild Atlantic salmon’ report, produced by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA), was published in December 2019 and can be found [here](#).
- The focal year of the IYS, entitled ‘Salmon and People in a Changing World’, was 2019. The IYS seeks, inter alia, to improve understanding and awareness of the social and economic values of salmon. The IYS Closing Symposium will take place in September (or October at the latest) 2022.
- Parties / jurisdictions have again been requested to provide details of any new studies relating to the socio-economic values of the wild Atlantic salmon. Details of any studies provided will be posted on the [NASCO website](#).

EPR3	In terms of reporting, the next cycle should focus on assessing the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Parties. The IPs should contain clearly described identifiable, measurable outcomes and timescales. The Parties are encouraged to prepare IPs and FARs in a timely fashion, including through the possibility of electronic filing.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(12)44, indicate that IPs should specify the actions to be taken, the timescales for these actions, the expected outcomes and the approach to monitoring and enforcement so that progress can be subject to critical evaluation. The IP template, CNL(12)42, has been structured to ensure that, for each action, information is provided on the expected outcome and timescale and guidance has been provided on what constitutes an action and a measurable outcome. An initial assessment of the IPs will be undertaken to ensure the information requested in this template has been provided and where there are gaps the IPs will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. The IPs will then be evaluated by a Review Group. The findings of the evaluation will be considered at the 2013 Annual Meeting. In the next cycle of reporting, FARs are to be replaced by APRs that will be reviewed. Timetables for submission of IPs and APRs have been developed. The APRs will be requested in early January each year and the Secretariat will send out reminders in early March, one month before the deadline for submission (1 April). Both the IP and APR templates will be available electronically. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

- See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. The IP Guidelines for the third reporting cycle specify the timetable for the submission of IPs and APRs.
- The templates were again issued electronically for completion by Parties / jurisdictions.
- A total of 21 IPs for the period 2019 – 2024 have been submitted. Nineteen IPs were submitted for the period 2013 – 2018.
- 15 of the 21 IPs for the third reporting cycle were submitted by the due date for the first round of review, which was a significant improvement over the second cycle of reporting, when only seven were submitted on time. However, of the 15 submitted on time, six were either draft versions, incomplete or developed using the incorrect template meaning that they were referred back to the relevant Party / jurisdiction for correction. Consequently, resubmission took place after the deadline.
- 17 out of 18 APRs were submitted by the deadline of 1 April in 2021. One further APR was submitted by this date in draft form, for review by the Review Group. However, at the time of writing this report the draft has not yet been validated. All APRs submitted to-date will be reviewed by the Review Group at its April meeting and the Group’s report will be made available on the [NASCO website](#). Two jurisdictions have not yet submitted an APR at the time of writing this report.

EPR4	In the long-term, the ‘Next Steps’ process should consider cross-cutting issues, such as climate change. It should also consider conducting a review of the functions and role of the Council including the possibility of vesting it with binding decision-making authority.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The Council has agreed that theme-based Special Sessions could be helpful to NASCO and procedures for planning and organising these Special Sessions agreed (see CNL(12)12 for details). A number of priority topics have been identified including management of mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs), managing salmon under a changing climate and fish passage at hydro-electric facilities. It has been agreed that there will be a Special Session on socio-economics at the 2014 Annual Meeting and a focus on MSFs in NEAC in 2013. Information on climate change impacts on salmon was presented at the ‘Salmon Summit’ and should be taken into account in

developing future research needs. ICES has been requested to report on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.

The actions relating to modernizing and strengthening the work of NASCO are detailed in sections 2 and 3 below.

- *The IYS, entitled ‘Salmon and People in a Changing World’, seeks, inter alia, to improve understanding and awareness of the social and economic values of salmon. The focal year of the IYS was 2019. One of the themes of the IYS is ‘Salmon in a changing salmosphere’ in order to understand and quantify the effects of natural environmental variability and anthropogenic factors affecting salmon distribution and abundance. Climate change is considered under this theme. The IYS Closing Symposium will take place in September (or October at the latest) 2022.*
- *As part of the IYS, a two-day Symposium entitled ‘Managing the Atlantic Salmon in a Rapidly Changing Environment’ was held immediately prior to the 2019 Annual Meeting of NASCO. The Symposium focused on the challenges facing Atlantic salmon and possible responses that can help conserve the resource in a rapidly changing environment. The Chair of the Symposium Steering Committee presented its report to Council which contained recommendations to address future management challenges ([CNL\(19\)16](#)). These recommendations have been incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the third performance review of NASCO.*
- *The 2019 ICES ACOM Report highlighted the predicted threats resulting from climate change, such as higher temperatures, wetter winters, drier summers and more extreme flooding and drought events and noted that in 2018 a number of jurisdictions reported exceptionally warm and dry conditions over the summer period, resulting in low flows and above-average temperatures. It was noted that river flow is a key factor affecting river entry and upstream migration of returning salmon and that higher temperatures can affect the survival of salmon subject to catch-and-release.*
- *To support the production of the ‘State of North Atlantic Salmon’ report, specifically the values section, a review of the literature for the period 2009 – 2019 and an assessment of changes in values was commissioned by NASCO. ‘The Social, Economic and Cultural values of wild Atlantic salmon’ report, produced by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA), was published in December 2019 and can be found [here](#).*
- *Parties / jurisdictions have again been requested to provide details of any new studies relating to the socio-economic values of the wild Atlantic salmon. Details of any studies provided will be posted on the [NASCO website](#).*
- *On the recommendation of the Socio-economics Sub-Group, a TBSS was held in 2014 on the management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits, including how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions. The 2014 TBSS Steering Committee noted inter alia that the reporting on what constitutes over-riding socio-economic considerations in permitting fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit was not always clear. The report of this TBSS was published and well received and can be found [here](#).*
- *Further Theme-based Special Sessions were held in [2015](#) (impacts of hydropower), [2016](#) (Aquaculture) and [2017](#) (Stocking). A virtual TBSS entitled ‘Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment’ will be held immediately prior to the 2021 Annual Meeting.*
- *Since 2015, an item has been included on the agendas for each Commission to allow for a focus on MSFs still operating in the Commission area. This item has been replaced on the West Greenland Commission 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda with an item entitled ‘Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin’.*

Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean	
EPR 24	The institutional structure should be reviewed and amended as appropriate to include subsidiary bodies and a Secretariat, as well as rules for appointment of a Secretary and the duties of the Secretary. Authority and procedures for the establishment of <i>ad hoc</i> bodies should be provided.
Decision / Agreed Action: Article 12 of the Convention states that the Council shall appoint a Secretary and describes the functions of the Secretary. Rule 28 of the Council's Rules of Procedure states that the Council may establish such other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary and shall determine their composition and terms of reference.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A procedure for the appointment of a Secretary was agreed in 2012 as were details of the duties of the post. This procedure was used for the appointment of the new Secretary in 2017.</i> • <i>No further action needed.</i> 	
EPR 27	It is recommended that, as appropriate, consideration be given to adoption of rules relating to the establishment of NASCO subsidiary and <i>ad hoc</i> bodies.
Decision / Agreed Action: Rule 28 of the Council's Rules of Procedure states that the Council may establish such other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary and shall determine their composition and terms of reference.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No action necessary.</i> 	
EPR 32	The description of the functions of the Secretary in article 12 should be reviewed, expanded and modernized to reflect actual practice. This can be elaborated in rules of procedure.
Decision / Agreed Action: Article 12.2 states that the functions of the Secretary include performing such functions as follow from other provisions of the Convention or as the Council may determine. This provides the flexibility for the Council to determine the functions of the Secretary adaptively in response to the work of the Organization.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A procedure for the appointment of a Secretary was agreed in 2012 as were details of the duties of the post. This procedure was used for the appointment of the new Secretary in 2017.</i> • <i>No further action necessary</i> 	
EPR 33	The regulatory and other measures reflecting the scientific advice should continue to be set and, in this regard, efforts to develop a risk framework for the Faroese fishery are encouraged.
Decision / Agreed Action: Multi-annual regulatory measures or decisions were agreed for both the West Greenland and Faroese fisheries in 2012. The development of a risk framework is underway for the Faroese fishery.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In 2018, a multi-annual regulatory measure was agreed for the West Greenland salmon fishery, WGC(18)11, under which Greenland agreed to restrict the total allowable catch for all components of the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery to 30 t. An Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission was held during 8 – 12 March 2021 to begin negotiations on a new regulatory measure to apply to the fishery from 2021. The report of the meeting can be found here.</i> • <i>In 2018, a multi-annual 'Decision regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2018 / 2019 , 2019 / 2020 and 2020 / 2021', NEA(18)12rev final, was agreed. This decision did not set a quota but acknowledges that Faroese management decisions will be made with due consideration to the advice of ICES concerning the biological situation and the status of the stocks contributing to the fishery. Negotiations will be held during the 2021 Annual Meeting on a new Decision to apply to the fishery from 2021 / 2022. There has been no salmon fishery at the Faroe Islands since 2000.</i> 	

- *The development of a risk framework for the Faroese fishery has not been progressed although ICES uses a risk framework to provide catch options. In 2019, the North-East Atlantic Commission [agreed](#) that this matter be postponed and revisited by the Commission when Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) has prepared a discussion document on the matter to be considered by the Parties.*

EPR 36	Obligations for Parties to provide information should be reviewed and updated, consistent with the recommendations of the ‘Next Steps’ Review Group and the Working Group on Future Reporting. The type of information required by the Organization to meet the challenges identified in the ‘Next Steps’ process should be prioritized and identified, and information requirements concerning outcomes of actions taken to implement NASCO programmes or decisions should be required.
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Decision / Agreed Action: In 2012, the Council adopted all of the recommendations of the Working Group on Future Reporting, CNL(12)12 and templates for both IPs and APRs were agreed that specify the information sought, including details of monitoring programmes and expected outcomes of actions developed to address threats. The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the three main ‘focus areas’ of management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and aquaculture and related activities (including *G. salaris* and transgenics). Information is sought on how socio-economic factors are included under management decisions and on how threatened and endangered stocks are identified.

- *See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. The IP template for the third reporting cycle ([CNL\(18\)50](#)) again covers the three main ‘focus’ areas (management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities, including *G. salaris* and transgenics). The template also seeks information on social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon and on initiatives for endangered salmon stocks.*

Conservation and Management

EPR 41	NASCO should ensure that the precautionary approach is used to the same extent in managing all impacts of human activity on the full life-cycle of salmon in rivers, estuaries, coastal areas and the open ocean.
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Decision / Agreed Action: NASCO’s agreements developed under the Precautionary Approach relate to management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities. Guidelines both on incorporating socio-economic factors in decisions under the Precautionary Approach and on stock rebuilding programmes have also been developed. The IP template, CNL(12)42, requests that jurisdictions take account of the specific actions identified in the first reporting cycle to ensure consistency with these agreements (see EPR 2 and EPR43). There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

By-catch of salmon in pelagic fisheries for other species is referred to in the Agreement on the Adoption of a Precautionary Approach (see EPR10 below).

- *The IP template for the third reporting cycle ([CNL\(18\)50](#)) again covers the main areas of management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities and seeks information on social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon and on initiatives for endangered salmon stocks. See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process.*
- *While there has been no update to the Stock Rebuilding Programme Guidelines, a TBSS on hatchery and stocking activities was held in 2017. The Steering Committee’s Report on that TBSS can be found [here](#).*

EPR 42	NASCO should ensure that the WSSD-JPOI commitment to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield with the aim of achieving these goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis, where possible not later than 2015, is taken into account, including in the context of the ‘Next Steps’ process.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: NASCO’s Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach, CNL(98)46, states that stocks should be maintained above conservation limits (CLs) by the use of management targets (MTs) and that stock rebuilding programmes should be undertaken for stocks that are below these CLs. ICES advises that conservation limits should be set at a level that will achieve long-term maximum sustainable yield. Progress towards establishment and attainment of these CLs and MTs will be evaluated in the next cycle of IPs and APRs. The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on stock status relative to reference points (conservation limits, management targets or other measures of abundance) so as to provide a baseline for future comparison. The IP template also seeks information on any fisheries permitted to operate on stocks that are below their reference point and the approach to managing them to promote stock rebuilding. A major factor influencing salmon abundance is mortality at sea and this is constraining the ability to achieve stock rebuilding goals.</p>	
<p>Currently, the stated management objectives for Atlantic salmon stocks in the US and the Scotia-Fundy Region of Canada are a 25% increase in returns of 2SW salmon from the average returns in 1992-1996. This rebuilding objective was established in light of the extremely depleted state of these endangered populations. However, selection of this management objective is inconsistent with NASCO’s Agreement on the Adoption of the Precautionary Approach, Action Plan for the Application of the Precautionary Approach, NASCO Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries, and scientific advice from ICES. The North American Commission has, therefore, agreed to review these management objectives.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The IP template for the third reporting cycle covering the period 2019 – 2024 (CNL(18)50) again seeks information on stock status and on fisheries permitted on stocks that are below their reference point and the approach to managing them so as to promote rebuilding. See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process.</i> • <i>ICES has been asked to update the time series of the number of river stocks with established CLs by jurisdiction, and the time series of trends in the number of rivers stocks meeting CLs by jurisdiction in both the North American and North-East Atlantic Commission areas.</i> • <i>At its 2020 Annual Meeting, the Board reaffirmed that survival at sea is still a principle focus for the Board’s work.</i> • <i>The SALSEA-Track programme aimed to provide insights into the causes of mortality at sea. In 2019, the Board recognised that the 12 projects identified under the SALSEA-Track Programme had had mixed success coming to fruition, and that new tracking technology and methods had been developed in the lifetime of SALSEA-Track. The Board established a Working Group to Review the SALSEA-Track Programme and the Inventory of Research Relating to Salmon Mortality in the Sea, which reported to the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Board. On the recommendation of the Working Group, the Board agreed at its 2020 Annual Meeting that the SALSEA-Track Programme, in its current form, should be closed. A final report on the Programme, ICR(21)04, has been circulated as requested at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Board.</i> • <i>The Board seeks a successor to the SALSEA-Track Programme which should have the following attributes: be problem focused with a clearly defined internationally relevant question, which is not solely developed based on the newest technology available; have clear SMART objectives; have clear timelines; have a clear budget; be at the basin-scale; and have an identified owner / co-ordinator. Additionally, it should address issues such as: data gaps / climate change / commonalities across the jurisdictions / mechanisms for supporting new technologies.</i> • <i>An agenda item entitled ‘Projects of Interest to the Board and its Work’ has been added to the Draft Agenda of the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Board. This will allow the Board to be kept updated relevant projects that would have been considered under SALSEA-Track, such as the EU grant-funded projects on smolt mortality.</i> • <i>In 2017, a presentation was made to the Board on a new approach to tracking based on a technique for sub-surface oceanographic monitoring (ROAM). While this technique may not be suitable for nearshore waters, it offers potential for tracking salmon throughout the North Atlantic area at reasonable cost. This programme has been identified as a potential successor to SALSEA-Track. However, the Board has recognised that the process of considering a new programme can happen alongside developments of the ROAM programme.</i> 	

- The EU has provided funding to NASCO to support the following projects:
 - Understanding and comparing early mortality of European salmon populations at sea (complete);
 - Sea lice model for the sustainable development of Atlantic salmon fisheries and aquaculture (complete);
 - Comparing mortality of European salmon populations at sea using multiple -method telemetry studies (complete);
 - Quantifying smolt survival from source to sea: informing management to optimise returns; and
 - Quantifying salmon survival from river exit to return as adult: Collecting thermal and behavioural data to refine smolt to adult survival indices.
 Progress reports for these projects are also included in document [ICR\(21\)08](#).
- The Board contributed £5,000 in 2017 to support a ‘Likely Suspects Framework’ being developed by the Atlantic Salmon Trust. This is a framework for conceptualising survival issues impacting Atlantic salmon during the freshwater migration phase and subsequent marine phases and to provide coherent guidance on how future research on survival can be identified and prioritised. The Board will consider an update on the ‘Likely Suspects Framework’ at its 2021 Annual Meeting.
- New management objectives for Atlantic salmon in the US were established in 2014 (4,549 2SW returns).
- The [ICES ACOM report for 2020](#) indicated that the management objective for Scotia-Fundy remains a 25% increase in regional returns of 2SW salmon relative to a baseline period (average returns in 1992–1996).
- The 2014 TBSS Steering Committee noted, inter alia, that the reporting on what constitutes over-riding socio-economic considerations in permitting fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit was not always clear. The report of the session can be found [here](#).

EPR 43	Noting that NASCO has, in the SALSEA Programme, addressed the problem of estimating sea mortality, it is important to cover the sea areas stretching from estuaries to the high seas, the phase of the life cycle where the salmon leaves natal waters, to the same extent as other phases of the life cycle.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The SALSEA Programme was a comprehensive programme involving freshwater, estuarine, in-shore and high seas elements, although the marine surveys were focused on post-smolts and on improving understanding of distribution and migration at sea. A Sub-Group of the SAG has met and provided recommendations to the IASRB for future research for consideration during the 2013 Annual Meeting.

- The first phase of the SALSEA Programme delivered new insights into the marine phase of salmon and new tools to support management.
- In 2019, the Board recognised that the 12 projects identified under the SALSEA-Track Programme had had mixed success coming to fruition, and that new tracking technology and methods had been developed in the lifetime of SALSEA-Track. The Board established a Working Group to Review the SALSEA-Track Programme and the Inventory of Research Relating to Salmon Mortality in the Sea, which [reported](#) to the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Board. On the recommendation of the Working Group, the Board agreed at its [2020 Annual Meeting](#) that the SALSEA-Track Programme, in its current form, should be closed. A final report on the Programme, [ICR\(21\)04](#), has been circulated as requested at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Board.
- The Board seeks a successor to the SALSEA-Track Programme which should have the following attributes: be problem focused with a clearly defined internationally relevant question, which is not solely developed based on the newest technology available; have clear SMART objectives; have clear timelines; have a clear budget; be at the basin-scale; and have an identified owner / co-ordinator. Additionally, it should address issues such as: data gaps / climate change / commonalities across the jurisdictions / mechanisms for supporting new technologies.
- An agenda item entitled ‘Projects of Interest to the Board and its Work’ has been added to the Draft Agenda of the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Board. This will allow the Board to be kept updated relevant projects that would have been considered under SALSEA-Track, such as the EU grant-funded projects on smolt mortality below.
- The EU has provided funding to NASCO to support the following projects:
 - Understanding and comparing early mortality of European salmon populations at sea (complete);
 - Sea lice model for the sustainable development of Atlantic salmon fisheries and aquaculture (complete);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Comparing mortality of European salmon populations at sea using multiple -method telemetry studies (complete). – Quantifying smolt survival from source to sea: informing management to optimise returns – Quantifying salmon survival from river exit to return as adult: Collecting thermal and behavioural data to refine smolt to adult survival indices <p>Progress reports for these projects are also included in document ICR(21)08.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board contributed £5,000 in 2017 to support a 'Likely Suspects Framework' being developed by the Atlantic Salmon Trust. This is a framework for conceptualising survival issues impacting Atlantic salmon during the freshwater migration phase and subsequent marine phases and to provide coherent guidance on how future research on survival can be identified and prioritised. The Board will consider an update on the 'Likely Suspects Framework' at its 2021 Annual Meeting.
EPR 46	<p>Through the 'Next Steps' process, NASCO has addressed some of the ambiguities or inconsistencies in its instruments relating to fisheries management. In future reporting, information should be provided by the Parties on the interplay between stock conservation needs and incorporation of social and economic factors in decision-making, for both single and mixed-stock fisheries. In particular, clear indications should be given of how decisions were taken to permit exploitation of stocks known to be below their reference points, where information on stock status was lacking, and the consequences of these decisions for stock rebuilding.</p>
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, requests that jurisdictions identify any fisheries permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point and describe the approach taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding. Jurisdictions are also requested to describe how socio-economic factors are taken into account in making decisions on fisheries management. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreed template for the third cycle of IPs requests that jurisdictions identify any fisheries permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point and describe the approach taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding. Jurisdictions are also requested to describe how socio-economic factors are taken into account in making decisions on fisheries management. See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process. • On the recommendation of the Socio-economics Sub-Group, a TBSS was held in 2014 on the management of single and mixed-stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits, including how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions. The 2014 TBSS Steering Committee noted, inter alia, that the reporting on what constitutes over-riding socio-economic considerations in permitting fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit was not always clear. The report of the session can be found here. 	
EPR 47	<p>The Parties are encouraged to report on issues relating to the management of salmon fisheries in a prompt and timely fashion.</p>
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, specify the timetable for submission of IPs and APRs. Reminders will be issued. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process. The IP Guidelines for the third reporting cycle specify the timetable for the submission of IPS and APRs. • A total of 21 IPs for the period 2019 – 2024 have been submitted. Nineteen IPs were submitted for the period 2013 – 2018. • 15 of the 21 IPs for the third reporting cycle were submitted by the due date for the first round of review, which was a significant improvement over the second cycle of reporting, when only seven were submitted on time. However, of the 15 submitted on time, six were either draft versions, incomplete or developed using the incorrect template meaning that they were referred back to the relevant Party / jurisdiction for correction. Consequently, resubmission took place after the deadline. • 17 out of 18 APRs were submitted by the deadline of 1 April in 2021. One further APR was submitted by this date in draft form, for review by the Review Group. However, at the time of writing this report the draft has not yet been validated. All APRs submitted to-date will be reviewed by the Review Group at its April meeting and the Group's report will be made available on the NASCO website. Two jurisdictions have not yet submitted an APR at the time of writing this report. 	

EPR 48	As recommended by the ‘Next Steps’ Review Group, there is a need for further progress to be made in the management of salmon fisheries as part of the next cycle of the ‘Next Steps’ process.
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to fisheries and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. The 2019 – 2024 IP template again seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to fisheries and the actions to address each threat. 	
EPR 49	The Parties are encouraged to report on issues relating to the protection and restoration of salmon habitat in a timely fashion.
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, specify the timetable for submission of IPs and APRs. Reminders will be issued. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. The IP Guidelines for the third reporting cycle specify the timetable for the submission of IPS and APRS. • A total of 21 IPs for the period 2019 – 2024 have been submitted. Nineteen IPs were submitted for the period 2013 – 2018. • 15 of the 21 IPs for the third reporting cycle were submitted by the due date for the first round of review, which was a significant improvement over the second cycle of reporting, when only seven were submitted on time. However, of the 15 submitted on time, six were either draft versions, incomplete or developed using the incorrect template meaning that they were referred back to the relevant Party / jurisdiction for correction. Consequently, resubmission took place after the deadline. • 17 out of 18 APRs were submitted by the deadline of 1 April in 2021. One further APR was submitted by this date in draft form, for review by the Review Group. However, at the time of writing this report the draft has not yet been validated. All APRs submitted to-date will be reviewed by the Review Group at its April meeting and the Group’s report will be made available on the NASCO website. Two jurisdictions have not yet submitted an APR at the time of writing this report. 	
EPR 50	As recommended by the ‘Next Steps’ Review Group, there is a need for further progress to be made in the protection and preservation of salmon habitat as part of the next cycle of the ‘Next Steps’ process.
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to habitat protection and restoration, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. The 2019 – 2024 IP template again seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to habitat protection and restoration and the actions to address each threat. 	
EPR 51	If there is to be a balance between measures aimed at ending mixed-stock fisheries in the areas beyond fisheries jurisdiction and measures ending mixed-stock fisheries within fisheries jurisdiction, NASCO should aim at managing mixed-stock fisheries in the North Atlantic to protect the weakest of the contributing stocks.
Decision / Agreed Action: The NASCO Convention does not permit salmon fishing beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction and no activity by vessels from non-NASCO Parties has been detected in international waters since the early 1990s (see EPR6). Under the IP template, CNL(12)42, jurisdictions are requested to describe how MSFs are defined, indicate the mean catch in these fisheries over the last 5 years and describe how they are managed to ensure that all contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	

- The IP template for the third cycle of IPs ([CNL\(18\)50](#)) again requests identification of any mixed-stock salmon fisheries and an explanation of how they are managed to ensure that all the contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives. See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process.
- Since 2015, an item has been included on the agendas for each Commission to allow for a focus on MSFs still operating in the Commission area. Reporting has provided an update on MSFs still operating, recent catch data and any new management measures. The reporting does not indicate how they are managed to ensure that all contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives. This item has been replaced on the West Greenland Commission 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda with an item entitled *‘Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin’*.

EPR 52 | Additional progress is needed towards achieving the international goals for sea lice and containment.

Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

- See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. Council has expressed a wish to strengthen the IP / APR process in the third cycle of reporting, including a greater emphasis on Parties / jurisdictions working toward the achievement of the goals for sea lice and containment by the end of the reporting period. The 2019 – 2024 IP template seeks much more information on the threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, with more specific questions asked of jurisdictions. Information is also sought on research on, and monitoring of, aquaculture and related activities. The template also states that quantitative data should be provided in the APRs, where possible, to demonstrate progress towards the achievement of NASCO’s goals.
- In the second interim report of the IP / APR Review Group for the review of the 2019 – 2024 IPs (see document [CNL\(20\)17](#) for details), the Review Group noted concern over the failure by some Parties / jurisdictions to adopt actions specifically aimed at protecting wild salmonids from the adverse impacts of aquaculture escapes and sea lice - in line with the International Goals agreed by NASCO and ISFA.
- At the third meeting of the IP / APR Review Group ([CNL\(21\)07](#)), the Review Group recommended that the Parties / jurisdictions with responsibility to regulate salmon farming industries need to adhere specifically to NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines directed at the protection of wild salmon.
- A TBSS entitled *‘Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment’* will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting.
- In 2016 a TBSS was held entitled *‘Addressing impacts of salmon farming on wild Atlantic salmon: challenges to, and developments supporting, achievement of NASCO’s international goals.’* Following the session, the Steering Committee concluded that there is an urgent need for all Parties / jurisdictions to adopt stronger measures if their international responsibilities are to be met and reiterated that the agreed international goals are that:
 - there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms; and
 - 100% of farmed fish are retained in all production facilities.
 The report of the 2016 TBSS can be found [here](#).
- In the second cycle of reporting, the Review Group [recognised that](#), for jurisdictions with salmon farming, providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment was challenging. The Group expressed the opinion that the IPs for all Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress made over the period of the IP towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place.

EPR 53	As recommended by the FAR Review Group, there is a need for further progress to address the impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics as part of the next cycle of the ‘Next Steps’ process.
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to the impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics, and the actions to address each threat (consistent with the Williamsburg Resolution and the BMP Guidance), including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. Council has expressed a wish to strengthen the IP / APR process in the third cycle of reporting, including a greater emphasis on Parties / jurisdictions working toward the achievement of the goals for sea lice and containment by the end of the reporting period. The 2019 – 2024 IP template seeks much more information on the threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, with more specific questions asked of jurisdictions. Information is also sought on research on, and monitoring of, aquaculture and related activities. The template also requests that jurisdictions with salmon farming should, where possible, provide quantitative data in the APRs to demonstrate progress towards NASCO’s goals. • In the second interim report of the IP / APR Review Group for the review of the 2019 – 2024 IPs (see document CNL(20)17 for details), the Review Group noted concern over the failure by some Parties / jurisdictions to adopt actions specifically aimed at protecting wild salmonids from the adverse impacts of aquaculture escapes and sea lice - in line with the International Goals agreed by NASCO and ISFA. • At the third meeting of the IP / APR Review Group (CNL(21)07), the Review Group recommended that the Parties / jurisdictions with responsibility to regulate salmon farming industries need to adhere specifically to NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines directed at the protection of wild salmon. • A TBSS entitled ‘Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment’ will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting. • A TBSS on hatchery and stocking activities was held in 2017. The Steering Committee’s Report on that TBSS can be found here. • In 2016 a TBSS was held entitled ‘Addressing impacts of salmon farming on wild Atlantic salmon: challenges to, and developments supporting, achievement of NASCO’s international goals.’ Following the session, the Steering Committee concluded that there is an urgent need for all Parties / jurisdictions to adopt stronger measures if their international responsibilities are to be met and reiterated that the agreed international goals are that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms; and – 100% of farmed fish are retained in all production facilities. The report of the 2016 TBSS can be found here. • In the second cycle of reporting, the Review Group recognised that, for jurisdictions with salmon farming, providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment was challenging. The Group expressed the opinion that the IPs for all Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress made over the period of the IP towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place. 	
EPR 54	The Parties are encouraged to report on issues relating to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics in a full and timely fashion.
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, specify the timetable for submission of IPs and APRs. Reminders will be issued. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. The IP Guidelines for the third reporting cycle specify the timetable for the submission of IPS and APRS. • A total of 21 IPs for the period 2019 – 2024 have been submitted. Nineteen IPs were submitted for the period 2013 – 2018. 	

- 15 of the 21 IPs for the third reporting cycle were submitted by the due date for the first round of review, which was a significant improvement over the second cycle of reporting, when only seven were submitted on time. However, of the 15 submitted on time, six were either draft versions, incomplete or developed using the incorrect template meaning that they were referred back to the relevant Party / jurisdiction for correction. Consequently, resubmission took place after the deadline.
- 17 out of 18 APRs were submitted by the deadline of 1 April in 2021. One further APR was submitted by this date in draft form, for review by the Review Group. However, at the time of writing this report the draft has not yet been validated. All APRs submitted to-date will be reviewed by the Review Group at its April meeting and the Group's report will be made available on the [NASCO website](#). Two jurisdictions have not yet submitted an APR at the time of writing this report.

EPR 57 | It is recommended that further efforts be made to address the issue of *Gyrodactylus salaris* in the context of the NASCO 'Next Steps' process.

Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to *G. salaris* and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

- At its 2018 Annual Meeting, the North-East Atlantic Commission adopted a revised 'Road Map' to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of *G. salaris* and eradicate it if introduced ([NEA\(18\)08](#)).
- The Working Group on *G. salaris*, which meets every three years, met on 17 – 18 March 2021 and its report, [NEA\(21\)05](#), will be considered at the Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission.
- The 2019 – 2024 IP template seeks information on the measures in place, or planned, to implement the eleven recommendations contained in the 'Road Map' to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of *G. salaris* and eradicate it if introduced, including the development and testing of contingency plans. See '[The Implementation Plan Process](#)' for updates on the IP process.

EPR 58 | Further exchange of information among the jurisdictions through the development of IPs and FARs, as appropriate, should be welcomed.

Decision / Agreed Action: The Council has agreed that the next cycle of IPs and APRs should commence in 2013 and that theme-based Special Sessions will be held on a range of topics. The first theme-based Special Session will be on mixed-stock fisheries.

- See '[The Implementation Plan Process](#)' for updates on the IP process.
- A TBSS entitled 'Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment' will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting. Previous TBSS were held in [2014](#) (mixed-stock fisheries), [2015](#) (impacts of hydropower), [2016](#) (aquaculture) and [2017](#) (stocking). These sessions were well-received and have provided for further exchange of information including on best management practices.

Compliance and Enforcement

EPR 59 | The 'Next Steps' process has been an effective mechanism to improve compliance and enforcement in NASCO, in large part due to the expanding and evolving role of the Council. The Organization is encouraged to continue these efforts to further improve compliance and enforcement and promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks.

Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template CNL(12)42, seeks details of the expected outcome, the approach for monitoring effectiveness and enforcement. Progress will be reported through the APRs for each specified action. The new reporting cycle has greater focus on enforcement than the first cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

- See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. The 2019 – 2024 IP template again seeks details of the expected outcome and approach for monitoring effectiveness and enforcement of actions to be taken by Parties / jurisdictions during the IP period.

EPR 61	The Parties are encouraged to continue to report on these matters in the next cycle of the ‘Next Steps’ process. Implementation plans should include reporting on estimates of unreported catches and measures taken to reduce such catches. Timely reporting is essential so that all relevant information is available during assessments.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the current level of unreported catch and the measures being taken to reduce this. The APR template, CNL(12)43, seeks details of the estimated unreported catch from in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries. A schedule for reporting has been agreed and reminders will be issued to the Parties. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines, progress and evaluate outcomes.

- See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. The 2019 – 2024 IP template again seeks information on the level of unreported catch and measures being taken to reduce this.
- The APR template again seeks details of the estimate unreported catch from in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries.
- At the request of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), an item has been added to the 2021 West Greenland Commission Agenda to consider changing the timing and frequency of reporting on the Greenland salmon fishery. See [WGC\(21\)06](#) for details of the proposal.
- The fishery at Greenland has been reviewed using Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery and a new monitoring and control plan developed. In 2016, the other Members of the West Greenland Commission (with the exception of EU – Sweden and EU – Finland) were asked to complete self-assessments of their Atlantic salmon fisheries using the Six Tenets matrix. Self-assessments were completed by Canada, the European Union (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and UK) and the United States. These self-assessments were reviewed at the 2017 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission (see [WGCIS\(17\)14](#) for details).
- The 2019 – 2024 IP template asks Parties / jurisdictions whether a six tenets assessment has been conducted and, if so, if the assessment has been provided to the Secretariat. If the six tenets have not been applied, information on the timescale for doing so is requested. European Union – Denmark and European Union – Finland have submitted self-assessments of their Atlantic salmon fisheries using the six tenets in 2021 and these are contained in document CNL(21)23, which can be found on the [NASCO website](#).

International Cooperation	
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EPR 69	The NASCO website should show active NGOs, or explain why an NGO is referred to as ‘suspended’.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The website has been amended in accordance with this recommendation.

- No further action necessary.

EPR 73	Iceland should be encouraged to re-accede to the Convention.
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Decision / Agreed Action: In accordance with this recommendation a letter was sent to the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 May 2012 inviting Iceland to re-accede to the Convention. The Council has agreed that the President and Secretary should keep Iceland informed of NASCO’s work. The Parties are also encouraged to raise the issue bilaterally.

- At its [2020 Annual Meeting](#), Council agreed to encourage Parties to continue bilateral discussions with Iceland, with a view to them rejoining the Convention. At the [2020 September Inter-Sessional Meeting](#) of the Council, the United States indicated that it had made contact with Iceland on this matter.
- The President of NASCO most recently wrote to the Icelandic Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture on 5 March 2019 encouraging Iceland to re-accede to the NASCO Convention and stating NASCO’s desire to see Iceland rejoin in 2019, the focal year of the International Year of the Salmon.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretary had an informal meeting with a representative of the Icelandic authorities in the fringes of the NASF summit in March 2018 and briefed him on the IYS and other NASCO activities.
EPR 74	Dialogue with St. Pierre and Miquelon should be increased in order to agree upon targets and a method for making decisions on their salmon fishery and also to improve data collection.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: A letter was sent to the French Secrétariat Général de la Mer by the President in 2010 encouraging France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to accede to the Convention. Welcome improvements have been made to the sampling programme of the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery including genetic analyses. In accordance with this recommendation and as agreed by the Council a follow-up letter will be sent by the President. The Parties are encouraged to raise the issue bilaterally.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2013, the President wrote to encourage France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to accede to the Convention. The response from the Secrétariat générale de la mer received in 2014 indicated that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) wished to retain observer status at that stage. However it noted that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) remained committed to close cooperation with NASCO and would pursue scientific cooperation with NASCO Parties. In July 2017, the President of NASCO wrote to the French Minister for Agriculture and Food, noting NASCO's concerns about the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon, urging them to further enhance co-operation with NASCO by introducing effective measures to limit catches to the lowest possible level and once again asking France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to become a full Member of NASCO. A response to this letter was received on 22 May 2017. The French authorities indicated that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) wishes to maintain observer status to NASCO. The response also notes France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon)'s commitment to providing NASCO with as much information as possible and taking NASCO recommendations on catch taken by communities dependent on fishing into account. At the 2016 Annual Meeting of the North American Commission, the US and Canada noted support for extending the six tenets evaluations for the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon and Canada urged France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to join the Commission. Canada met with France (in respect of Saint Pierre and Miquelon) in 2017 and discussed potential membership in NASCO (see CNL(18)28rev). Canada advised that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) will continue as an observer and participate at NASCO Annual Meetings as it has in the past. During the Inter-Sessional Correspondence Period in advance of the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Council, France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) reiterated its wish to retain its observer status to NASCO and its commitment to co-operate with NASCO, its members and the scientific community. 	
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: NASCO should continue to cooperate with EIFAAC and OSPAR on issues of common interest.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OSPAR Commission and EIFAAC are core partners of NASCO in the International Year of the Salmon (IYS). The Chair of EIFAAC attended the 2020 NASCO Annual Meeting and the Secretariats of both Organizations have been invited to the 2021 Annual Meeting of NASCO. The MoU with OSPAR continues to work well, with improved exchanges of information over the last few years. The Secretary has been in contact with the Executive Secretary of the OSPAR Commission regarding issues of mutual interest and the intention is that an update will be provided to the Finance and Administration Committee in document FAC(21)06. 	
	'Strategic Approach'
NS1	While the five key issues relating to management of salmon fisheries remain valid, the Group recognised the need for further progress to address the additional actions highlighted by the FAR Review Group. The 2009 fisheries management guidelines should assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and with future reporting.

Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to fisheries and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

- See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. The 2019 – 2024 IP template also seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to fisheries and the actions to address each threat.

NS2	NASCO could provide a useful forum for exchange of information on how different jurisdictions are incorporating social and economic factors in managing their salmon resource. Proposals for a Special Session are being developed by a Sub-Group of the Socio-Economics Working Group. It would be valuable to consider not only case studies on how social and economic factors are included in decisions relating to each of the three focus areas but to have discussions on the value of NASCO’s social and economic guidelines and what NASCO’s future role on this topic might be.
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Decision / Agreed Action: A Special Session on socio-economics is planned for 2014. The Council has agreed that this should include case studies, consideration of the usefulness of NASCO’s socio-economic guidelines and NASCO’s future work on this topic. The IP template, CNL(12)42, also seeks information relating to social and economic aspects and how these are incorporated in management decisions.

- Parties / jurisdictions have again been requested to provide details of any new studies relating to the socio-economic values of the wild Atlantic salmon. Details of any studies provided will be posted on the [NASCO website](#).
- To support the production of the ‘State of North Atlantic Salmon’ report, specifically the values section, a review of the literature for the period 2009 – 2019 and an assessment of changes in values was commissioned by NASCO. ‘The Social, Economic and Cultural values of wild Atlantic salmon’ report, produced by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA), was published in December 2019 and can be found [here](#).
- The focal year of the IYS, entitled ‘Salmon and People in a Changing World’, was 2019. The IYS seeks, inter alia, to improve understanding and awareness of the social and economic values of salmon. The IYS Closing Symposium will take place in September (or October at the latest) 2022.
- The IP template for the third reporting cycle ([CNL\(18\)50](#)) again seeks information on social and economic aspects of Atlantic salmon and on how these are incorporated into management decisions. See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process.
- On the recommendation of the Socio-economics Sub-Group, a TBSS was held in 2014 on the management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limits, including how socio-economic issues are included in management decisions. The 2014 TBSS Steering Committee noted, inter alia, that the reporting on what constitutes over-riding socio-economic considerations in permitting fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit was not always clear. The report of this TBSS was published and well received and can be found [here](#).

NS4	NASCO’s Habitat Plan of Action is vague and most habitat issues are a matter for the jurisdictions. The 2010 habitat guidelines may assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO’s agreements and with future reporting.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to habitat protection and restoration, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

- See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process. The 2019 – 2024 IP template also seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to habitat protection and restoration and the actions to address each threat.
- A TBSS was held in 2015 entitled ‘Maintaining and improving river connectivity with particular focus on impacts of hydropower’. The report of this session was published and can be found [here](#).

NS5	The 2009 BMP Guidance on sea lice and containment may assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and with future reporting but there might also be improved guidance on other aspects of reporting e.g. in relation to transgenic salmon. Key issue 7 ('Consider the consequences of aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in countries that are not parties to NASCO') may not be required if the Strategic Approach is revised in future.
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Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. The IP template seeks specific information on the policy/strategy in the case of transgenic salmon. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.

- See ['The Implementation Plan Process'](#) for updates on the IP process. Council has expressed a wish to strengthen the IP / APR process in the third cycle of reporting, including a greater emphasis on Parties / jurisdictions working toward the achievement of the goals for sea lice and containment by the end of the reporting period. The 2019 – 2024 IP template seeks much more information on the threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, with more specific questions asked of jurisdictions. The template continues to seek information on the policy / strategy on use of transgenic salmon. Information is also sought on research on, and monitoring of, aquaculture and related activities and the template also requests that jurisdictions with salmon farming should, where possible, provide quantitative data in the APRs to demonstrate progress in relation to achieving NASCO's goals.
- The 2019 – 2024 IPs have now been submitted. In the second interim report of the IP / APR Review Group for the review of the 2019 – 2024 IPs (see document [CNL\(20\)17](#) for details), the Review Group noted concern over the failure by some Parties / jurisdictions to adopt actions specifically aimed at protecting wild salmonids from the adverse impacts of aquaculture escapes and sea lice - in line with the International Goals agreed by NASCO and ISFA.
- The IP / APR Review Group met for a third time to review the 2019 – 2024 IPs in November / December 2020. In the report of that meeting, [CNL\(21\)07](#), the Review Group recommended that Parties / jurisdictions with responsibility to regulate salmon farming industries need to adhere specifically to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines directed at the protection of wild salmon.
- A TBSS entitled 'Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment' will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting.
- In 2016 a TBSS was held entitled 'Addressing impacts of salmon farming on wild Atlantic salmon: challenges to, and developments supporting, achievement of NASCO's international goals.' Following the session, the Steering Committee concluded that there is an urgent need for all Parties / jurisdictions to adopt stronger measures if their international responsibilities are to be met and reiterated that the agreed international goals are that:
 - there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms; and
 - 100% of farmed fish are retained in all production facilities.
 The report of the 2016 TBSS can be found [here](#)
- In the second cycle of reporting, the Review Group [recognised that](#), for jurisdictions with salmon farming, providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment was challenging. The Group expressed the opinion that the IPs for all Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress made over the period of the IP towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place.

NS6	Given the risks posed by the spread of <i>G. salaris</i> , further exchange of information among the jurisdictions is important and future reporting under Implementation Plans may be the most appropriate way to facilitate this exchange. It was recognised that <i>G. salaris</i> is a specific issue that was highlighted in the Strategic Approach, but in the event that the Strategic Approach is revised in the future, the goal and key issue relating to <i>G. salaris</i> could be incorporated in Challenge 5 (Aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics).
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on measures in place to prevent the spread of <i>G. salaris</i>. The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At its 2018 Annual Meeting, the North-East Atlantic Commission adopted a revised 'Road Map' to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of G. salaris and eradicate it if introduced (NEA(18)08).</i> • <i>The Working Group on G. salaris, which meets every three years, met on 17 – 18 March 2021 and its report, NEA(21)05, will be considered at the Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission.</i> • <i>The 2019 – 2024 IP template seeks information on the measures in place, or planned, to implement the eleven recommendations contained in the 'Road Map' to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of G. salaris and eradicate it if introduced, including the development and testing of contingency plans. See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process.</i> 	
Reporting and evaluation	
NS8	The second round of reporting under Implementation Plans should be streamlined so as to reduce the reporting burden, avoid duplication and focus the reports and reviews on information and analysis to further NASCO's objectives of conserving, restoring, enhancing and rationally managing salmon stocks in the North Atlantic. It would assist the streamlining of future reporting if templates were developed to facilitate the development of consistent plans and reports and the possibility of electronic reporting should be considered.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: Templates for both IPs (CNL(12)42) and APRs (CNL(12)43) have been developed. The IP template has been made available electronically for completion.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process.</i> • <i>The template for the 2019 – 2024 IPs (CNL(18)50) was again issued electronically for completion by Parties / jurisdictions. Partially completed electronic templates for the APRs submitted under these IPs will be issued each year.</i> 	
NS9	The second round of reporting under Implementation Plans should place greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of activities and describe clearly identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks details of the actions to be taken, the timescales for these actions, the expected outcomes and the approach to monitoring and enforcement so that progress can be evaluated. An initial assessment will be undertaken to ensure such information is presented and where there are gaps the IPs will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. They will then be evaluated by a Review Group. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>See 'The Implementation Plan Process' for updates on the IP process.</i> 	
NS10	In developing updated Implementation Plans it is envisaged that jurisdictions will use their existing plans as a starting point and involvement of NGOs and other stakeholders is encouraged.

Decision / Agreed Action: The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, state that IPs should draw on information contained in the first IPs and be prepared in consultation with other NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and industries. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. • The IP template seeks information on the process used to consult NGOs and other stakeholders and industries in the development of the IP. • There are two NGO representatives on the Review Group charged with evaluating the IPs and APRs. 	
NS11	The findings from the first round of reviews should be taken into account in developing updated Implementation Plans.
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP template, CNL(12)42, requests that jurisdictions take into account the specific issues on which action was recommended in the first cycle of reporting. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. 	
NS12	Updated Implementation Plans should be subjected to a critical review since these plans will set the stage for activities and reporting for a five year period. The Group recommends that any plan that is not sufficiently specific should be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting
Decision / Agreed Action: The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, state that there will be an initial assessment of IPs and where IPs do not provide answers to all questions, list threats and provide actions to address threats they will be returned for further drafting. Similarly, after a full evaluation, IPs that are unsatisfactory will be returned for further drafting. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. 	
NS13	Each year the jurisdictions should provide a report identifying the status of actions within their plan as well as available data on monitoring the effectiveness of those actions. A review of the Annual Reports should be conducted to assess if the commitments in the plan have been fulfilled and whether progress has been made towards achievement of the stated objectives.
Decision / Agreed Action: A template for APRs, CNL(12)43, has been developed that seeks a progress report on each action, the results of monitoring and enforcement and whether the objective has been achieved. These APRs will be reviewed in order to ensure that jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions in their IPs (see CNL(12)44). There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ‘The Implementation Plan Process’ for updates on the IP process. 	
NS14	There should be a new cycle of Focus Area Reports but developed around specific themes e.g. during the year when habitat protection and restoration is considered the theme might be an exchange of information on fish passage issues. Reports may be solicited from jurisdictions and could be presented during the Special Session.
Decision / Agreed Action: The Council has agreed that FARs will be replaced by theme-based Special Sessions and procedures have been agreed for planning and organising these sessions. Priority themes have been agreed (See CNL(12)12). The first theme-based Special Session will be on mixed-stock fisheries.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A virtual TBSS entitled <i>‘Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment’</i> will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting. 	

- Previous TBSS were held in [2014](#) (mixed-stock fisheries), [2015](#) (impacts of hydropower), [2016](#) (Aquaculture) and [2017](#) (Stocking) and have been well-received. The reports can be found by clicking on the relevant year above.

Additional areas to be addressed in meeting NASCO's challenges

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| NS15 | Climate change poses real challenges for salmon management that may require management approaches to be more flexible and adaptive to changes that may be difficult to predict. The Council might, in the first instance, consider holding a Special Session on this topic in the future to allow for information exchange. |
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Decision / Agreed Action: The Council has agreed that theme-based Special Sessions could be helpful to NASCO and procedures for planning and organising these Special Sessions agreed (see CNL(12)12 for details). A number of priority topics have been identified including management of mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs), managing salmon under a changing climate and fish passage at hydro-electric facilities. It has been agreed that there will be a Special Session on socio-economics at the 2014 Annual Meeting and a focus on MSFs in NEAC in 2013. Information on climate change impacts on salmon was presented at the 'Salmon Summit' and should be taken into account in developing future research needs. ICES has been requested to report on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.

- The 2019 – 2024 IP template seeks information on what management measures are planned to protect wild Atlantic salmon and its habitats from climate change. See [‘The Implementation Plan Process’](#) for updates on the IP process.
- The [2019 ICES ACOM Report](#) highlighted the predicted threats resulting from climate change, such as higher temperatures, wetter winters, drier summers and more extreme flooding and drought events and noted that in 2018 a number of jurisdictions reported exceptionally warm and dry conditions over the summer period, resulting in low flows and above-average temperatures. It was noted that river flow is a key factor affecting river entry and upstream migration of returning salmon and that higher temperatures can affect the survival of salmon subject to catch-and-release.
- The focal year of the IYS, entitled ‘Salmon and People in a Changing World’, was 2019. The IYS seeks, inter alia, to improve understanding and awareness of the social and economic values of salmon.
- One of the themes of the IYS is ‘Salmon in a changing salmosphere’ in order to understand and quantify the effects of natural environmental variability and anthropogenic factors affecting salmon distribution and abundance. Climate change is considered under this theme. The IYS Closing Symposium will take place in September (or October at the latest) 2022.
- As part of the IYS, a two-day Symposium entitled ‘Managing the Atlantic Salmon in a Rapidly Changing Environment’ was held immediately prior to the 2019 Annual Meeting of NASCO. The Symposium focused on the challenges facing Atlantic salmon and possible responses that can help conserve the resource in a rapidly changing environment. The Chair of the Symposium Steering Committee presented its report to Council which contained recommendations to address future management challenges ([CNL\(19\)16](#)). Addressing these recommendations has been incorporated into the [Terms of Reference](#) for the third performance review of NASCO.
- A virtual TBSS Special Session entitled ‘Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment’ will be held immediately prior to the 2021 Annual Meeting. Previous TBSS Special Sessions were held in [2014](#) (mixed-stock fisheries), [2015](#) (impacts of hydropower), [2016](#) (Aquaculture) and [2017](#) (Stocking) and have been well-received. The reports can be found by clicking on the relevant year above.
- To support the production of the ‘State of North Atlantic Salmon’ report, specifically the values section, a review of the literature for the period 2009 – 2019 and an assessment of changes in values was commissioned by NASCO. ‘The Social, Economic and Cultural values of wild Atlantic salmon’ report, produced by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA), was published in December 2019 and can be found [here](#).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parties / jurisdictions have again been requested to provide details of any new studies relating to the socio-economic values of the wild Atlantic salmon. Details of any studies provided will be posted on the NASCO website.</i> • <i>Since 2015, an item has been included on the agendas for each Commission to allow for a focus on MSFs still operating in the Commission area. This item has been replaced on the West Greenland Commission 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda with an item entitled ‘Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin’.</i> 	
NS16	The President and Secretary should engage in discussions with the former Head of Delegation for Iceland to keep him informed of the work of NASCO.
<p>Decision / Agreed Action: A letter was sent to the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 May 2012 inviting Iceland to re-accede to the Convention. Efforts will continue to be made to keep Iceland informed of NASCO’s work (see EPR 73).</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At its 2020 Annual Meeting, Council agreed to encourage Parties to continue bilateral discussions with Iceland, with a view to them rejoining the Convention. At the 2020 September Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council, the United States indicated that it had made contact with Iceland on this matter.</i> • <i>The President of NASCO most recently wrote to the Icelandic Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture on 5 March 2019 encouraging Iceland to re-accede to the NASCO Convention and stating NASCO’s desire to see Iceland rejoin in 2019, the focal year of the International Year of the Salmon.</i> • <i>The Secretary had an informal meeting with a representative of the Icelandic authorities in the fringes of the NASF summit in March 2018 and briefed him on the IYS and other NASCO activities.</i> 	

Section 2: Recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel (EPR) and ‘Next Steps’ Review Group (NS) that require further action for their implementation

2.1	IUU Fishing by non-NASCO Parties
EPR 6	If IUU fishing by vessels registered to non-Parties becomes an issue in the future, NASCO should consider taking measures consistent with the Port State Measures Agreement.
EPR 7	Any strategy would have to take account of the existing NEAFC port control system and EU Regulation 1005/2008.
EPR 8	The need for measures or a mechanism to combat IUU fishing in the NASCO area of application should be monitored and as appropriate developed, including through cooperation with relevant RFMOs which already have in place MCS systems, in which case the IPOA-IUU should serve as a basis for such measures or mechanism.
EPR 63	NASCO should consider enhancing its current surveillance efforts by requesting the cooperation of NEAFC and NAFO in reporting on any suspected IUU fishing activities for salmon in the area of the Convention that may be detected in their MCS operations.
EPR 64	If IUU fishing activities for salmon in the area of the Convention are discovered, the Organization should take appropriate and proportionate measures to address the problem, including strengthening the NASCO surveillance programme, as appropriate.
EPR 72	If IUU fishing is detected in the future, NASCO should consider whether relationships could be forged with non-Parties to address the issue. Other areas of its mandate could also be the subject of such discussions, such as enhancement and restoration. A strategy could be considered involving action in accordance with international law to address and deter the undermining of the objective of the Convention.
<p>Decision: A problem of fishing for salmon by vessels registered to non-NASCO Parties occurred in the North-East Atlantic in the late 1980s and early 1990s. NASCO took diplomatic action to address the problem and there have been no sightings of vessels registered to non-NASCO Parties fishing for salmon in international waters in the North-East Atlantic since the early 1990s. However, it is recognised that airborne surveillance of this area is limited, particularly during winter months. The Secretariat should continue to liaise with the Parties and the coastguard authorities. It should also seek cooperation from NEAFC and NAFO to use their MCS to identify any activity by vessels in their areas of competence that may be fishing for salmon in international waters and to compile information in accordance with the Council’s Resolution on Fishing for Salmon on the High Seas, CNL(92)54. The Parties should coordinate with their delegations to NAFO and NEAFC, as appropriate, on this issue. In the event that there is evidence of such activity, it will be drawn to the Council’s attention so that appropriate measures can be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Secretariat has contacted the Norwegian and Icelandic coastguards to obtain details of any surveillance operations in the area of international waters north of the Faroe Islands since 1 March 2020. The Icelandic coastguard did not conduct any surveillance flights in the area during this period, however an Icelandic patrol vessel was active in the area and did not report any salmon fisheries. The Norwegian coastguard did not conduct any surveillance flights in international waters in 2020, but did conduct seven surveillance patrols using vessels in the Norwegian and Barents sea areas. No salmon fishing was observed.</i> 	

- The Secretariat contacted the European Union regarding its surveillance operations in the ‘Banana Hole’ area for the first time in 2021. EU – Germany had deployed a patrol vessel over the area during 15 August – 1 September 2020 and EU – Sweden had conducted 4 surveillance flights on 21 – 22 July and 12 – 13 August 2020. There were no sightings of vessels targeting salmon.
- Liaison with NAFO, NEAFC and ICCAT on IUU fishing has continued:
 - NAFO has advised that there is no evidence of IUU fishing activity in the NAFO Regulatory Area in 2020;
 - At the time of writing this update, we have not yet had a response from NEAFC or ICCAT on this matter.
- The [report on the salmon fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon in 2019](#) indicates that the measures in place for that fishery mean that unreported salmon catch there is unlikely.

2.2	IUU Fishing – NASCO Parties
EPR 60	Despite progress in addressing illegal and unreported fishing within areas of fisheries jurisdiction, high levels continue to be reported. Further efforts are encouraged to address this issue, including through enhanced reporting procedures and logbook schemes.
EPR 62	Since difficulties in minimising and estimating unreported catches remain a common challenge for the Parties, consideration should be given to convening a technical meeting to exchange information and best practices on the methods used to calculate unreported catches. It would also be useful, given the range of approaches by the Parties to addressing illegal and unreported catches, to consider the development of best practices and consolidated guidelines.

Decision: In response to requests from NASCO, ICES has advised that over recent years efforts have been made to reduce the level of unreported catch in a number of countries through improved reporting procedures, carcass tagging and logbook schemes. Consistent with the 1993 Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics, CNL(93)51, jurisdictions should continue to take measures to reduce the level of unreported catches. The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the current level of unreported catch and the measures being taken to reduce this. The APR template, CNL(12)43, seeks details of the estimated unreported catch from in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. A Special Session was held on this topic in 2007 to review approaches to estimating and minimise such catches. The need for the development of guidelines on approaches to minimising unreported catches and for a Special Session on this topic could be considered in the light of the information provided in the next reporting cycle. ICES has reviewed the methods used to calculate unreported catches and has provided suggestions for how estimates of unreported catch should be included in regional, national and international assessments. Best practice guidelines have not, however, been developed by the Council and in the first instance, the Secretariat should review FAO’s IUU IPOA with regard to any guidance the IPOA may include on best practice in minimising unreported catches and report back to the Council.

- The multi-annual regulatory measure for the West Greenland salmon fishery agreed in 2018, [WGC\(18\)11](#), required all salmon fishers, both professional and private, to hold a license and to report their catch, including zero catch reports. Fishers who do not provide catch reports will not be granted a license the following year. This measure applied to the salmon fisheries in 2018, 2019 and 2020. This is the first time that private fishers (in any fishery) have required a license in Greenland. There will be negotiations for a new regulatory measure for the West Greenland Salmon Fishery, to apply from 2021, at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission.
- The 2019 – 2024 IP template, [CNL\(18\)50](#), seeks information on the level of unreported catch and measures being taken to reduce this. The IP template also seeks information on whether an assessment under the ‘Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery’ has been conducted and, if so, whether the assessment has been made available to the Secretariat and what actions are planned to improve the monitoring and control of the fishery. For those jurisdictions that have not completed a six tenets assessment, the IP template seeks information on the timescale for doing so. European Union – Denmark and European Union – Finland have submitted self-assessments of their Atlantic salmon fisheries using the six tenets in 2021 and these are contained in document CNL(21)23, which can be found on the [NASCO website](#)
- The 2019 – 2024 APR template, [CNL\(18\)51](#), seeks details of the estimated unreported catch from in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries. However, not all Parties / jurisdictions provide an estimate of unreported catch in their APRs.

- *The salmon fishery at West Greenland has been reviewed using Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery and a new monitoring and control plan developed. In 2016, the other Members of the West Greenland Commission (with the exception of EU – Sweden and EU – Finland) were asked to complete self-assessments of their Atlantic salmon fisheries using the Six Tenets matrix. Self-assessments were completed by Canada, the European Union (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and UK) and the United States. These self-assessments were reviewed at the 2017 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission (see [WGCIS\(17\)14](#) for details).*
- *The Secretariat has previously reviewed the FAO’s IUU IPOA (see page 6 of [CNL\(15\)15](#)), however, best practice guidelines on minimising unreported catches have not yet been developed.*

2.3 Ecosystem Approach

EPR 9 Review the Technical Guidelines on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries with a view to determining whether EAF management plans are needed.

Decision: ICES has advised that the current salmon fisheries in both the NEAC and NAC areas probably have no or only minor influence on the marine ecosystem. Furthermore, the Plan of Action for Habitat Protection and Restoration requires that each jurisdiction should prepare a comprehensive salmon habitat protection and restoration plan in order to identify risks to productive capacity. Progress in this regard is being assessed through IPs and APRs. Given that the issue of EAF is broad, the Secretariat should review these Technical Guidelines and report to the Council on any implications for NASCO.

- *The Secretariat reviewed the Technical Guidelines (see [CNL\(14\)14](#)) and it was noted that much of the information which would be included in an EAF management plan is already being provided by NASCO Parties / jurisdictions in their IPs.*
- *[ICES advice for 2019](#) confirmed that salmon fisheries have no, or only minor, influence on the marine ecosystem. The exploitation of salmon in freshwater may affect the riverine ecosystem through changes in species composition but there is limited knowledge of the magnitude of these effects.*

2.4 Rivers database

EPR 40 The information in the rivers database should be compared with other information on the state of the river systems, for example, the annual ICES advice and the information on habitat estimates.

NS7 The stock categories used in the NASCO rivers database are out-dated and consideration should be given to reviewing these in the future. Consideration might be given to including the goals and key issues relating to initiatives for endangered salmon populations under the other challenges if the Strategic Approach is revised in the future.

Decision: All jurisdictions have contributed to the database and the information is available on the NASCO website. This information has already been used in research projects and is a valuable PR tool. The Council will convene a Working Group, to work by correspondence or at the Annual Meeting, to develop recommendations for revisions to the stock categories that are used in the database that better reflect status of stocks relative to attainment of conservation limits. The Parties would then be requested to update the stock category information held in the database and provide information on threats to those stocks. With the available information, the NASCO Secretariat should be requested to prepare an overview of the status of stocks around the North Atlantic and the threats to them using the information contained in the rivers database. The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.

- *The Council had previously recognised the value of a consistent and uniform approach to presenting information on stock status for use with the rivers database and in 2016 [a new stock classification system was agreed by the Council](#). The new system comprises seven categories: Lost, Unknown, Artificially Sustained, High Risk, Moderate Risk, Low Risk and Not at Risk. The four categories of risk are assigned by the use of a Stock Classification Score which is calculated by summing two scores: a ‘Conservation Limit Attainment Score’ (CAS) and an ‘Impacts Assessment Score’ (IAS). Parties / jurisdictions were asked to update the information in the Rivers Database*

<p>by 31 December 2017. While all Parties / jurisdictions have now provided some data on the status of their rivers, the information provided was not always consistent with the agreed stock classification system and many have still not provided all the requested data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The river status information contained in the Rivers Database provided data used in the 'State of North Atlantic Salmon' report. This major NASCO output for the IYS was published in December 2019 and can be found here. • At the 2020 Annual Meeting, Council discussed using the Rivers Database as the basis for the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report. Council agreed that the Secretary should work with the Parties / jurisdictions to explore why they had not used the Rivers Database as had been agreed in 2016. 	
2.5	ICES Advice
EPR 44	WGNAS should heed the advice given by the ICES Review Group, especially to estimate post-smolt survival.
EPR 45	The issues and recommendations raised by WGNAS in 2011 should be addressed when it meets in 2012.
<p>Decision: EPR 44 relates to an issue concerning the forecasts of stock abundance and the EPR has noted that in 2011 the ICES Review Group recommended that environmental indices should be included in the model used by the ICES WGNAS. This matter should be considered by NASCO's SSC to determine if a request should be made to ICES in relation to this issue. For EPR45, it is assumed that the ICES WGNAS will have acted on the issues and recommendations it raised in 2011.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>These are issues for ICES. No further action required from NASCO.</i> 	
2.6	Research on Salmon at Sea (including bycatch)
EPR 10	Review the International Guidelines on By-catch Management and Reduction of Discards with a view to developing a strategy to promote the application of by-catch measures in NASCO, including through all of its Commissions.
EPR 55	Sea mortality should be further investigated in relation to all phases from the time the salmon leaves natal waters.
EPR 56	Observer programs on and screening of landings of pelagic vessels fishing in seasons and areas where salmon make feeding migrations should be continued.
NS3	The key issues in the Strategic Approach relating to research on salmon at sea have been implemented and the SALSEA Programme has been a highly successful public/private initiative that allowed important research on salmon at sea to be conducted. The research inventory relating to mortality of salmon at sea that is maintained by the IASRB is a very useful initiative and the Board might consider if NASCO might play a broader role in providing a forum for coordination of research of relevance to NASCO's work.
<p>Decision: The annual request to ICES seeks information on bycatch in new and existing fisheries. ICES has advised that the current salmon fisheries in both the NEAC and NAC areas probably have no or only minor influence on the marine ecosystem. For the WGC area ICES has indicated that there is no information on by-catch of other species in the salmon fishery that is practiced with nearshore surface gillnets. This fishery has been restricted to an internal-use fishery (~20 tonnes) since 1998 by NASCO agreements. The need for a by-catch strategy in NASCO might be considered if the ICES advice on this issue changed. If that was the case, the Secretariat could be requested to prepare a review of the International Guidelines on Bycatch/Discards. NASCO's Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries, CNL(09)43, indicate that information should be sought on the by-catch of salmon in fisheries for other species and efforts made to identify their river of origin. Such information should be reported to NASCO. Concern was raised about bycatch of salmon in pelagic fisheries (e.g. for herring and mackerel) in the NEAC area. In the light of the new information and tools developed through the SALSEA Programme, the Council recommends that jurisdictions undertake further studies to assess by-catch in pelagic fisheries such as those recently undertaken by Russia, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Further liaison with the pelagic RAC is also encouraged. The Secretariat might also liaise with NAFO and NEAFC regarding availability of information on by-catch of salmon obtained through their observer programmes. The Board's role is to promote collaboration and cooperation on research into the causes of</p>	

mortality of salmon at sea and the opportunities to counteract it. It has agreed to review its working methods in 2013; its TORs require that it maintain an inventory of research relating to mortality of salmon at sea. This includes information on long-term monitoring programmes in freshwater. It will be a matter for the Council to decide if it wishes to have a broader inventory of research relating to other aspects of NASCO's work. The Parties considered that theme-based Special Sessions might allow for a further exchange on research priorities and needs. A Sub-Group of the SAG has met and provided recommendations to the IASRB for future research for consideration during the 2013 Annual Meeting.

- *The Board adopted new Terms of Reference in 2020 (see document [ICR\(20\)03](#)). These new Terms of Reference also require that the Board maintain an inventory of relevant research projects related to mortality of salmon at sea.*
- *The SALSEA-Track programme aimed to provide insights into the causes of mortality at sea. In 2019, the Board recognised that the 12 projects identified under the SALSEA-Track Programme had had mixed success coming to fruition, and that new tracking technology and methods had been developed in the lifetime of SALSEA-Track. The Board established a Working Group to Review the SALSEA-Track Programme and the Inventory of Research Relating to Salmon Mortality in the Sea, which [reported](#) to the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Board. On the recommendation of the Working Group, the Board agreed at its [2020 Annual Meeting](#) that the SALSEA-Track Programme, in its current form, should be closed. A final report on the Programme, [ICR\(21\)04](#), has been circulated as requested at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Board. Further recommendations regarding the usability and prominence of the research inventory were also agreed.*
- *The Board seeks a successor to the SALSEA-Track Programme which should have the following attributes: be problem focused with a clearly defined internationally relevant question, which is not solely developed based on the newest technology available; have clear SMART objectives; have clear timelines; have a clear budget; be at the basin-scale; and have an identified owner / co-ordinator. Additionally, it should address issues such as: data gaps / climate change / commonalities across the jurisdictions / mechanisms for supporting new technologies.*
- *In 2017, a presentation was made to the Board on a new approach to tracking based on a technique for sub-surface oceanographic monitoring (ROAM). While this technique may not be suitable for nearshore waters, it offers potential for tracking salmon throughout the North Atlantic area at reasonable cost. This programme has been identified as a potential successor to SALSEA-Track. However, the Board has recognised that the process of considering a new programme can happen alongside developments of the ROAM programme.*
- *An agenda item entitled 'Projects of Interest to the Board and its Work' has been added to the Draft Agenda of the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Board. This will allow the Board to be kept updated relevant projects that would have been considered under SALSEA-Track, such as the EU grant-funded projects on smolt mortality below.*
- *The EU has provided funding to NASCO to support the following projects:*
 - *Understanding and comparing early mortality of European salmon populations at sea (complete);*
 - *Sea lice model for the sustainable development of Atlantic salmon fisheries and aquaculture (complete);*
 - *Comparing mortality of European salmon populations at sea using multiple -method telemetry studies (complete).*
 - *Quantifying smolt survival from source to sea: informing management to optimise returns*
 - *Quantifying salmon survival from river exit to return as adult: Collecting thermal and behavioural data to refine smolt to adult survival indices**Progress reports for these projects are also included in document [ICR\(21\)08](#).*
- *The Board contributed £5,000 in 2017 to support a 'Likely Suspects Framework' being developed by the Atlantic Salmon Trust. This is a framework for conceptualising survival issues impacting Atlantic salmon during the freshwater migration phase and subsequent marine phases and to provide coherent guidance on how future research on survival can be identified and prioritised. The Board will consider an update on the 'Likely Suspects Framework' at its 2021 Annual Meeting.*
- *In [2017](#), [2018](#) and [2019](#) ICES provided information on bycatch derived from the International Ecosystem Summer Survey of the Nordic Seas and for the Icelandic mackerel fishery and the fishery for blue whiting.*

- *The 2019 ICES advice indicated that it is now possible to screen by-catch of salmon at factories processing pelagic fish, using automatic screening of PIT tags. Screening of commercial landings was taking place at 23 European factories processing pelagic fish. 339 unknown tags, as of September 2018, had been distributed to countries with PIT tagging programmes and salmon post-smolts have been identified in catches. ICES advised that identification of the origin of detected PIT tagged salmon would be more efficient if lists of individual PIT tag numbers or codes were made available in a public database.*
- *Liaison with NAFO, NEAFC and ICCAT on bycatch of salmon obtained through their observer programmes has continued:*
 - *NAFO has advised that there is no evidence of NAFO authorised vessels having salmon bycatch in 2020;*
 - *At the time of writing this update, we have not yet had a response from NEAFC or ICCAT on this matter.*

2.7	Public relations
EPR 68	The Council should consider whether it wishes to hold further stakeholder dialogue meetings in the jurisdictions of all relevant Members, <i>inter alia</i> , to report on developments, to consider or monitor the IPs and FARs and to discuss the implementation of the recommendations in the present report.
EPR 70	NASCO should take further steps to consider, develop and implement a clear public relations strategy, <i>inter alia</i> , through a revitalization and strengthening of the Public Relations Group, continued regularized cooperation with the NGOs expert in media relations and the Parties communications experts.
EPR 71	The Public Relations Group could build on the work already begun and develop a medium-term proactive communications strategy that sets out objectives, tasks and the responsibilities of NASCO and its partners. Some components of such a strategy should include the ‘State of the Salmon’ report, progress made under IPs and FARs, development of additional reports on NASCO’s achievements, educational tools and further development of the “newsroom” site.

Decision: The IPs and APRs in the second cycle of reporting will be made available on the NASCO website. NASCO has 35 accredited NGOs which now participate in most of the meetings and improvements have been made to the website. Stakeholder consultation meetings are a tool to be considered when a specific need for seeking broad input is identified. The Council has agreed that its initial priorities in Public Relations are its websites and the Salmon Rivers database. The work to enhance the website is ongoing and should continue. The Council believes that NASCO should be the source of information on salmon stock status around the North Atlantic and has agreed to develop a State of the Salmon report using the updated stock categories in the rivers database (see above). The Council should keep its PR approach under review and consider if further actions are needed.

- *The redesign of the NASCO and Board websites is now complete and the websites are live. The IYS twitter feed has now been re-purposed as a NASCO twitter feed.*
- *NASCO now has 45 accredited NGOs. The 2012 External Performance Review Panel had commended NASCO for its approach towards inclusive participation in meetings and for its transparency in proceedings.*
- *The NGO Co-Chairs participated in the Working Group for Future Reporting under Implementation Plans and Evaluation of Reports, which developed the 2019 – 2024 IP template, CNL(18)50. The IP Guidelines state that the IPs should be prepared in consultation with NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and industries, and the IP template seeks information on the process used to do so. There are two NGO representatives on the Review Group charged with evaluating the IPs and APRs.*
- *The Council had previously recognised the value of a consistent and uniform approach to presenting information on stock status for use with the rivers database and in 2016 a new stock classification system was agreed by the Council. The new system comprises seven categories: Lost, Unknown, Artificially Sustained, High Risk, Moderate Risk, Low Risk and Not at Risk. The four categories of risk are assigned by the use of a Stock Classification Score which is calculated by summing two scores: a ‘Conservation Limit Attainment Score’ (CAS) and an ‘Impacts Assessment Score’ (IAS). Parties / jurisdictions were asked to update the information in the Rivers Database by 31 December 2017. While all Parties / jurisdictions have now provided some data on the status of their rivers, the information provided was not always consistent with the agreed stock classification system and many have still not provided all the requested data.*

- The river status information contained in the Rivers Database provided data used in the 'State of North Atlantic Salmon' report. This major NASCO output for the IYS was published in December 2019 and can be found [here](#).
- At the [2020 Annual Meeting](#), Council discussed using the Rivers Database as the basis for the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report. Council agreed that the Secretary should work with the Parties / jurisdictions to explore why they had not used the Rivers Database as had been agreed in 2016.
- 2019 was the focal year for the IYS and many public relations activities were carried out under the IYS banner. Further details can be found in document [CNL\(20\)21](#).
- NASCO funded the production of a video on the IYS, narrated by Sir David Attenborough. The video is available for viewing on the NASCO website [here](#).
- The Council recognised the enormous potential of the film 'Atlantic salmon - Lost at Sea' to raise awareness of the challenges facing the Atlantic salmon, the wide range of conservation measures that have been taken to conserve and restore the species and the research being undertaken to improve understanding of the factors affecting them, including at sea, and provided £15,000 in funding to the project. The film is now completed.
- The Public Relations Group has not met since it reported to the Council in 2007.

2.8	Future role for NASCO on aquaculture
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NS17	The Council should resolve the future role envisaged for NASCO on aquaculture, taking into account the findings of the external performance review.
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Decision: Aquaculture remains a focus area for NASCO in terms of concerns over impacts on wild Atlantic salmon. In general, NASCO has established the goal to minimise adverse impacts to wild stocks from aquaculture activities. However, it is for the Parties and jurisdictions to identify and implement appropriate measures to meet this goal. Progress will be tracked as implementation plans and annual reports are submitted. Some more specific measures are contained in the NAC Protocols, appended to the Williamsburg Resolution. The Review Group has recognised that, for jurisdictions with salmon farming, providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment has been challenging. The Group had expressed the opinion that the IPs for all Parties/jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress made over the period of the IP towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place.

- Council has expressed a wish to strengthen the IP / APR process in the third cycle of reporting, including a greater emphasis on Parties / jurisdictions working toward the achievement of the goals for sea lice and containment by the end of the reporting period. The IP Guidelines, [CNL\(18\)49](#), state that the IPs should include actions contained within the first and second cycle of IPs where they are still relevant in addressing a threat or challenge identified in the third reporting cycle. The 2019 – 2024 IP template, [CNL\(18\)50](#), seeks much more information on the threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, with more specific questions asked of jurisdictions. Information is also sought on research on, and monitoring of, aquaculture and related activities. The template also requests that jurisdictions with salmon farming should include at least one action relating to sea lice management and one relating to containment, providing quantitative data in the APRs to demonstrate progress. The actions are the key element of the 2019 – 2024 IPs, and these should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Ambitious yet achievable, Relevant and Timely activities that a Party or jurisdiction intends to undertake during the IP period.
- At the [2020 September Inter-Sessional Meeting](#) of the Council, Parties confirmed their commitment to a strengthened IP process in the third reporting cycle and acknowledged that some revision to the process was needed to enable it to work better. Council agreed that 'Enhanced Guidance from the Council of NASCO for the Review of Implementation Plans', [CNL\(20\)55](#), be developed.
- The IP / APR Review Group met for a third time to review the 2019 – 2024 IPs in November / December 2020, taking into account the 'Enhanced Guidance' from Council referred to above. In the report of this meeting ([CNL\(21\)07](#)), the Review Group recommended that the Parties / jurisdictions with responsibility to regulate salmon farming industries need to adhere specifically to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines directed at the protection of wild salmon.

- In the second interim report of the IP / APR Review Group for the review of the 2019 – 2024 IPs (see document [CNL\(20\)17](#) for details), the Review Group noted concern over the failure by some Parties / jurisdictions to adopt actions specifically aimed at protecting wild salmonids from the adverse impacts of aquaculture escapes and sea lice - in line with the International Goals agreed by NASCO and ISFA.
- The Special Session planned for the 2020 Annual Meeting on the evaluations of the 2019 – 2024 IPs was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was subsequently agreed that an inter-sessional Special Session would be held by webinar to discuss the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans fully, on Wednesday, 5 May 2021. The outcome of the webinar will be presented to Council at its 2021 Annual Meeting.
- A TBSS entitled ‘Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment’ will be held at the 2021 Annual Meeting.
- A TBSS on hatchery and stocking activities was held in 2017. The Steering Committee’s Report on that TBSS can be found [here](#).
- In 2016 the Council held a TBSS entitled ‘Addressing impacts of salmon farming on wild Atlantic salmon: Challenges to, and developments supporting, achievement of NASCO’s international goals’. The report of this TBSS was published and can be found [here](#).
- [In 2013](#), the Council agreed that an item should be retained on the Council’s agenda entitled ‘Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry’, during which a representative of the International Salmon Farmers’ Association (ISFA) could be invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon. The regular meetings of the Liaison Group would not be continued, but, if a specific need arose, consideration could be given to convening a joint ad hoc group. A representative of ISFA has been invited to participate in the 2020 NASCO Annual Meeting.

2.9	Meeting schedule and structure
NS18	Options for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO’s Annual Meetings to achieve efficiency gains is a complex matter and there would be a need to consider the costs and benefits of different meeting options and changes to the agenda taking into account the findings of the external performance review.

Decision: The Parties are invited to submit proposals for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings to the Secretariat who will prepare a paper, based on these submissions, for consideration by the Council at its 2013 Annual Meeting. The intention is to explore options for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings with a view to ensuring the most effective use of the time available and expertise present. The Parties may choose to communicate with each other during the development of these papers and Canada committed to circulate its draft to the other Parties.

- At its [2020 Annual Meeting](#), Council agreed to add an item to the agenda of its next face-to-face meeting to discuss the use of alternative procedures for NASCO’s business, drawing on experience gained working virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- [In 2013](#), the Council agreed not to change the frequency of its Annual Meetings but to change the structure of the Annual Meeting on a trial basis to include full-day Theme-based Special Sessions in years when there are no negotiations on regulatory measures. To date this arrangement has been very successful.

Section 3: Strengthening the work of NASCO

Following a comprehensive discussion among the Parties in relation to the options for strengthening the work of NASCO (see FVN(13)12) it was agreed that in addition to the actions in sections 1 and 2, the priority area for special focus is in the area of fisheries management. The Parties renewed their commitment to the following actions:

Recommendation	Action taken
<p>3.1 During the 2013 Council meeting, critically review the new 5-year Implementation Plans which include the following sections:</p> <p>(a) information on reference points used to assess the status of stocks;</p> <p>(b) the decision-making process for fisheries management, including predetermined decisions taken under different stock conditions (e.g. the stock level at which fisheries are closed);</p> <p>(c) identification of whether fisheries are permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point and, if so, how many fisheries there are and what approach is taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding; and</p> <p>(d) identification of any mixed-stock salmon fisheries and an explanation of how they are managed to ensure that all the contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Review Group responsible for reviewing the 2013 – 2018 Implementation Plans highlighted a number of issues relating to the second reporting cycle including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>not all Parties / jurisdictions provided an IP and / or APRs;</i> – <i>some actions in the IP were unclear and read like progress reports making assessment of progress challenging;</i> – <i>timeliness of reporting had improved but some APRs were still submitted after the deadline;</i> – <i>the most common fault with APRs in the second round of reporting was a lack of quantitative information to assess progress on each action.</i> • <i>The Council expressed a wish to strengthen the IP / APR process further through the third reporting cycle (covering the period 2019 – 2024). The IP Guidelines for the third cycle of reporting, CNL(18)49, state that the IPs should include actions contained within the first and second cycle of IPs where they are still relevant in addressing a threat or challenge identified in the IPs in the third reporting cycle. The actions are the key element of the 2019 – 2024 IPs and these should be SMART, that is, contain the following elements: Specific, Measurable, Ambitious yet achievable, Relevant and Timely activities that a Party or jurisdiction intends to undertake during the IP period.</i> • <i>The IP template for the third cycle of IPs, CNL(18)50, again covers the main elements of the Strategic Approach and requests information: on reference points used to assess the status of stocks; the decision-making process for fisheries management, including predetermined decisions taken under different stock conditions; identification of whether fisheries are permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point and, if so, how many fisheries there are and what approach is taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding; and identification of any mixed-stock salmon fisheries and an explanation of how they are managed to ensure that all the contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives.</i> • <i>The 2019 – 2024 IPs have been submitted and are currently subject to review by the IP / APR Review Group.</i> • <i>At the 2020 September Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council, Parties confirmed their commitment to a strengthened IP process in the third reporting cycle and acknowledged that some revision to the process was needed to enable it to work better. Council agreed that ‘Enhanced Guidance from the Council of NASCO for the Review of Implementation Plans’, CNL(20)55, be developed. This document has three sections:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>the first section confirms the decision by the Council regarding its commitment to the implementation of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines under the third reporting cycle (2019 – 2024). This includes (among other things) the agreement that the President will send letters to the relevant Minister, or other nominated official, of all Parties /</i>

	<p><i>jurisdictions about the strengthened IP process and the importance of demonstrating progress towards the attainment of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>– the second section provides enhanced guidance for the IP / APR Review Group confirming that where a Party / jurisdiction does not submit a revised IP, the most recent revision of their IP would form the basis for review in November 2020. It includes (among other things) that there will be no overall classification of an IP as 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable'. Instead, sections / areas of the IP should be categorised as either 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. It also confirms that the IP / APR Review Group has the flexibility to review IPs to consider if the actions contained within them provide a basis for Parties / jurisdictions to make progress in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines; and</i> <i>– the third section sets out a process for ongoing follow up in future years.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The IP / APR Review Group met for a third time to review the 2019 – 2024 IPs in November / December 2020, taking into account the 'Enhanced Guidance' from Council referred to above. The report of its meeting is available as document CNL(21)07. Of the 21 IPs evaluated, one was considered to be satisfactory in each section / area. However, for the other 20, the Review Group considered that further work is still needed for them to be in line with the IP Guidelines and the Enhanced Guidance and to demonstrate progress towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. In accordance with the Enhanced Guidance, the President of NASCO has written to the relevant Minister, or other nominated official, including the outcome of the November review and requesting a response to include how the Party / jurisdiction will demonstrate progress towards the attainment of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines in areas where deficiencies have been identified. The intention is that responses will be available prior to the 2021 IP Special Session webinar. The letters and their responses are being posted on the NASCO website. In addition to the feedback provided to individual Parties / jurisdictions, the Review Group also provided general feedback to the Council. Full details can be found in the Review Group's report.</i> • <i>The Special Session planned for the 2020 Annual Meeting on the evaluations of the 2019 – 2024 IPs was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was subsequently agreed that an inter-sessional Special Session would be held by webinar to discuss the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans fully, on Wednesday, 5 May 2021. The outcome of the webinar will be presented to Council at its 2021 Annual Meeting.</i>
<p>3.2 During each annual Council meeting, critically review the annual progress reports from each Party, paying particular attention to progress against actions relating to the management of salmon fisheries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Review Group <u>indicated that</u> the most common fault with APRs in the second cycle of reporting was a lack of quantitative information to assess progress on each action.</i> • <i>The <u>agreed template for APRs</u> in the third cycle again covers the main elements of the Strategic Approach. Subsequent APRs will also be evaluated critically, with these evaluations being the subject of a Special Session at the Annual Meeting of the Council each year.</i> • <i>The APRs submitted in 2020 were not reviewed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the APRs submitted in 2021 will be the first APRs submitted under the 2019 – 2024 IPs to be reviewed. The IP / APR Review Group will meet virtually in April to conduct its work and its report will be available on the NASCO website. There will be a Special Session at the 2021 Annual Meeting to discuss the APRs.</i>
<p>3.3 Ensure there are agenda items in each of the Commissions to allow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Since 2015, an item has been included on the agendas for each Commission to allow for a focus on MSFs still operating in the Commission area. This additional annual reporting has provided an update on MSFs still operating, recent catch data and any</i>

<p>for a focus on mixed-stock fisheries.</p>	<p><i>new management measures. This reporting does not indicate how they are managed to ensure that all contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives. This item has been replaced on the West Greenland Commission 2021 Annual Meeting Agenda with an item entitled ‘Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin’.</i></p>
<p>3.4 Focus the first Council new theme-based Special Session on mixed-stock fisheries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The topic of the first TBSS was ‘Management of single and mixed stock fisheries, with particular focus on fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit’. The Steering Committee noted, inter alia, that the reporting on what constitutes over-riding socio-economic considerations in permitting fisheries on stocks below their conservation limit was not always clear. The report of the session can be found here.</i>
<p>In addition, the Parties agreed to explore opportunities to strengthen their commitment to implement the NASCO Guidelines on Management of Salmon Fisheries <i>inter alia</i> by the use of a Protocol or Resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A new agreement between Finland and Norway was signed in September 2016 on the Teno / Tana river system. This agreement came into effect in 2017. Under this agreement, fishing times will be reduced with all gear types used. The aim is to reduce fishing mortality by 30%, in order to enable recovery of weak salmon stocks, especially in the upper reaches of the river system. The APR submitted by Finland in 2021 indicates that while the estimated exploitation rates have shown a decrease for all individual salmon stocks in the mixed-stock fishery in the Tana / Teno mainstem since the agreement came into force, there are indications that other, natural mortality factors have increased at the same time. It is uncertain whether the reduced exploitation rates for all stocks in need of recovery are sufficient to allow recovery over two generations of Tana salmon stocks. Therefore, new measures to reduce fishing mortality for the 2021 season are under preparation.</i> • <i>A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning co-operation on management and monitoring of, and research on, wild salmon stocks in Finnmark County and the Murmansk region was signed by Norway and the Russian Federation in Autumn 2015. The APR submitted by the Russian Federation in 2021 indicates that the meeting of the Working Group on Atlantic Salmon in Finnmark County and the Murmansk Region, scheduled for August 2020, was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and will meet instead in August 2021. The ‘Joint Statement on behalf of Norway and Russia on Coastal Fisheries Issues’, document NEA(21)07 which can be found on the NASCO website, indicates that, due to the serious situation facing salmon stocks in the River Tana / Teno, a proposal to ban all salmon fisheries at sea between Nordkapp and Berlevåg is under consideration.</i> • <i>The ‘Joint statement on behalf of European Union and Norway regarding the management of the Fisheries in the Teno Watercourse’, document NEA(21)08, which can be found on the NASCO website, also indicates the parlous state of the salmon stocks in the River Tana / Teno, with the likelihood of stronger fishing regulations for the period 2022 – 2028, with the aim to ensure the recovery of the weak salmon stocks.</i>