## IP(21)12\_United States

## November 2021 Evaluation of the Revised Implementation Plan under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024) from the Review Group to the United States

NASCO considers that the provision of Implementation Plans, together with annual reporting of progress on actions contained within them, is one of the most valuable mechanisms that it has developed. It is a vitally important mechanism to strengthen implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. Parties to NASCO have committed to the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon. Parties' / jurisdictions' Implementation Plans set out their planned actions and these are reviewed by an expert Review Group. Reporting is carried out annually on these Plans (see <a href="https://nasco.int/conservation/implementation-plans-and-reporting/">https://nasco.int/conservation/implementation-plans-and-reporting/</a>).

The Council agreed, in June 2021, that Parties / jurisdictions may, on a voluntary basis, submit a revised Implementation Plan for review.

The Review Group thanks the United States for revising and submitting its Implementation Plan following previous evaluations from the Review Group. It also noted the accompanying information identifying what has been changed and why. The Review Group re-assessed the responses to questions changed from the previous Implementation Plan.

In line with the 'Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress', <u>CNL(18)49</u>, (the IP Guidelines) and the 'Enhanced Guidance for the Review of Implementation Plans', <u>CNL(20)55</u>, the infographic below shows the overview of the Review Group's evaluation, in November 2021, of the United States' Implementation Plan. Sections / areas considered to be 'satisfactory' are shown in green, those which are 'partly satisfactory' are shown in orange, together with the percentage of satisfactory responses, and those which are 'unsatisfactory' are in red.

	Questions on Salmon Management			Threats / C	hallenges to Wild Salmon		SMART Actions				
	Introduction / Background	Management of Salmon Fisheries	Habitat Protection & Restoration	Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics	Management of Salmon Fisheries	Habitat Protection & Restoration	Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics	Management of Salmon Fisheries	Habitat Protection & Restoration	Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics	Mandatory Actions
United States				88						75	67

The Review Group considered that the United States' revised Implementation Plan requires minor further work to achieve a satisfactory rating across each section / area of the Plan.

**Positive Feedback from the Review Group**: The Review Group considered the answer to question 1.5 to be a comprehensive response to the question posed. The United States provides a succinct and clear picture of the current and potential quantity of salmon habitat for Maine, which includes targets necessary to support the recovery of Atlantic salmon populations. Additionally, the Review Group considered that the responses to questions 3.3 and 4.6 were some of the best examples of answers to these questions across the various Implementation Plans.

**Questions on Salmon Management**: the Review Group considered that the responses to the questions asked in three of the four sections were satisfactory. On assessment of the revised response to question 4.2, the Review Group considered that improvement was still required to the responses to questions 4.2(a) and (b) to enable all of these sections to be considered as satisfactory. The Review Group has provided detailed feedback to the responses that were considered to be unsatisfactory.

**Threats** / **Challenges to Wild Salmon**: the Review Group considered that the identified threats and challenges to the management of wild Atlantic salmon identified under each theme all related clearly to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

**SMART Actions**: all of the 'Management of Salmon Fisheries' and 'Habitat Protection and Restoration' actions within the Plan were considered to be both SMART and satisfactory, i.e. the Review Group considered that those actions move the United States clearly towards the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. Three of the four actions on 'Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics' were considered to be both SMART and satisfactory; however, Action A1 was considered to be SMART yet unsatisfactory.

**Mandatory** Actions: the Review Group considered this section to be unsatisfactory. Although the United States' Plan does contain mandatory actions on the management of sea lice and containment, the Review Group considered that the action on sea lice requires substantial revision.

In the following Evaluation Form, the Review Group has provided guidance on its recommendations for improvements.

### **Evaluation in 2021 of Revised Implementation Plans**

Under NASCO's third reporting cycle the Review Group is asked to evaluate the Implementation Plans submitted by Parties / jurisdictions in three key areas of assessment, by:

- 1. identifying whether the answers by each Party / jurisdiction to the questions posed in the Implementation Plan template are satisfactory;
- 2. *identifying clearly that the threats and challenges to the management of wild Atlantic salmon identified under each theme are related to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines; and*
- 3. assessing the description of each action to ensure that it adheres to the 'SMART' descriptors such that progress over time can be assessed objectively.

This is described in detail in the 'Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress', CNL(18)49.

- 1. Answers to each question in the Implementation Plan template, <u>CNL(18)50</u>, are to be assessed as:
  - 1. Satisfactory answers / information;
  - 2. Unsatisfactory (including unclear or incomplete answers / information or clear omissions or inadequacies).
- 2. NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines as they apply to the third cycle of reporting are listed throughout the Implementation Plan template, CNL(18)50.
- 3. The Review Group will be required to assess the description of each action using the 'SMART' criteria laid out in the new Guidelines document, CNL(18)49, thereby assessing the quality of each of the actions, not just how clearly the actions are stated.

Additionally, in 2020, the Council has provided enhanced guidance to the Review Group in their 'Enhanced Guidance for the Review of Implementation Plans' (<u>CNL(20)55</u>) whereby each section / area of the Implementation Plan will be scored as satisfactory or unsatisfactory; the actions will also be assessed on their ability to move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Through this process it will be possible to determine whether the Implementation Plan provides a fair and equitable basis for assessing the progress that the Party / jurisdiction will make in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Where a section / area is deemed by the Review Group to be unsatisfactory, the Implementation Plan will be returned to the Party / jurisdiction. The Review Group will provide a clear explanation of its decision to the Party / jurisdiction and, where feasible and appropriate, offer specific suggestions / recommendations for how it could be improved. The tables below, for each of the three main areas to be assessed, provide a template for evaluation in each case.

In 2021, Council made decisions which mean that 1) only the revised parts of any resubmitted IP need to be reviewed 2) aspects of the IP that are moving the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines should be identified, and 3) significant improvements should be identified, to be communicated on the NASCO website and social media.

Party: United States Jurisdiction/Region:

## Assessment area 1. Are the questions posed in the Implementation Plan template answered satisfactorily?

#	Question in IP Template	Assessment (1 or 2)	Draft feedback on any improvements required (for answers assessed as 2)	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
1.	Introduction			
1.1	What are the objectives for the management of wild salmon?	1		
1.2	What reference points (e.g. conservation limits, management targets or other measures of abundance) are used to assess the status of stocks?	1		
1.3	What is the current status of stocks under the new classification system outlined in CNL(16)11?	1		
1.4	How is stock diversity (e.g. genetics, age composition, run-timing, etc.) taken into account in the management of salmon stocks?	1		
1.5	To provide a baseline for future comparison, what is the current and potential quantity of salmon habitat?	1		
1.6	What is the current extent of freshwater and marine salmonid aquaculture? Append one or more maps showing the location of aquaculture facilities and aquaculture free zones in rivers and the sea.	1		
1.7	Please describe the process used to consult NGOs and other stakeholders and industries in the development of this Implementation Plan.	1		
Over	call score by Review Group for 1. Introduction		Satisfacto	ry

2.	Management of Salmon Fisheries:							
	In this section please review the management approach to each of the fisheries in your jurisdiction (i.e. commercial, recreational and other fisheries) in line with the relevant							
	NASCO Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. For Parties / jurisdictions that prosecute mixed-stock fisheries, there should be at least one action related to their management.							
2.1	What are the objectives for the management of the fisheries for wild salmon?	1						
		-						
2.2	What is the decision-making process for the management of salmon fisheries,	1						
	including predetermined decisions taken under different stock conditions (e.g. the							
	stock level at which regulations are triggered)?							
2.3		1						
	reference point (e.g. Conservation Limits)? If so, (b) how many such fisheries are							

Ove	erall score by Review Group for 2. Management of Salmon Fisheri	Satisfactor	y	
2.7	Has an assessment under the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery been conducted? If so, (a) has the assessment been made available to the Secretariat and (b) what actions are planned to improve the monitoring and control of the fishery? (c) If the six tenets have not been applied, what is the timescale for doing so?	1		
2.6	What is the current level of unreported catch and what measures are being taken to reduce this?	1	The Review Group noted in paragraph 6 of the US letter, that the US does not have data to quantify the threat of poaching. Therefore, the Review Group requested clarification as to how unreported catch is known to be 'zero tons'.	
2.5	How are socio-economic factors taken into account in making decisions on management of salmon fisheries?	1		
2.4	rebuilding? (a) Are there any mixed-stock salmon fisheries? If so, (b) how are these defined, (c) what was the mean catch in these fisheries in the last five years and (d) how are they managed to ensure that all the contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives?	1		
	there and (c) what approach is taken to managing them that still promotes stock			

3.								
	In this section please review the management approach to the protection and restoration of habitat in your jurisdiction in line with the relevant NASCO Resolutions, Agreements							
	and Guidelines.							
3.1		1						
	or lost salmon habitat prioritised, taking into account the principle of 'no net loss'							
	and the need for inventories to provide baseline data?							
3.2	How are socio-economic factors taken into account in making decisions on	1	The word count has not been adhered to. It					
	salmon habitat management?		would help the Review Group if this is					
			taken into account in future IP revisions.					
3.3	What management measures are planned to protect wild Atlantic salmon and its	1						
	habitats from (a) climate change and (b) invasive aquatic species?							
Ove	erall score by Review Group for 3. Protection and Restoration of S							
	pitat	Satisfactor	y					
Hat	Ditat			v				

4.	Management of Ac	uaculture, Introductions	and Transfers and Transgenics
			and fransiers and fransgenies

Council has requested that for Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farms, there should be a greater focus on actions to minimise impacts of salmon farming on wild salmonid stocks. Each Party / jurisdiction with salmon farming should therefore include at least one action relating to sea lice management and at least one action relating to containment, providing quantitative data in Annual Progress Reports to demonstrate progress towards the international goals agreed by NASCO and the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA):

- 100% of farms to have effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms;
- 100% farmed fish to be retained in all production facilities.

In this section please provide information on all types of aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics (including freshwater hatcheries, smolt-rearing etc.

	In this section please provide information on all types of aquaculture, introducti	ons und transfe	rs, und transgenics (including freshwater nate	neries, smoll-rearing elc.
4.1	(a) Is the current policy concerning the protection of wild salmonids consistent with the international goals on sea lice and containment agreed by NASCO and ISFA? (b) If the current policy is not consistent with these international goals, when will current policy be adapted to ensure consistency with the international goals and what management measures are planned to ensure achievement of these goals and in what timescale?	1		
4.2	(a) What quantifiable progress can be demonstrated towards the achievement of the international goals for 100% of farms to have effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads, or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to sea lice? (b) How is this progress monitored, including monitoring of wild fish? (c) If progress cannot be demonstrated, what additional measures are proposed and in what timescale?	(a) 2 (b) 2 (c) 1	<ul> <li>a) The Review Group noted that the USA is unable to demonstrate quantifiable progress towards no increase in sea lice loads, or lice induced mortality of wild salmonids at this time. It acknowledged that fish health regulations, an Integrated Pest Management Plan and farmed-based monitoring are in place though this in itself does not meet NASCO's sea lice goals for the protection of wild Atlantic salmon.</li> <li>b) The Review Group noted that work has been undertaken to monitor sea lice loads in waters associated with aquaculture facilities in the past, though to demonstrate progress in meeting NASCO's sea lice goals in full an ongoing monitoring programme is recommended.</li> <li>c) The Review Group welcomed the United States' plans to explore the efficacy, cost and resources to monitor sea</li> </ul>	(a) Yes (b) No (c) Yes

4.3	(a) What quantifiable progress can be demonstrated towards the achievement of the international goals for achieving 100% containment in all (i) freshwater and (ii) marine aquaculture production facilities? (b) How is this progress monitored, including monitoring of wild fish (genetic introgression) and proportion of escaped farmed salmon in the spawning populations? (c) If progress cannot be demonstrated, what additional measures (e.g. use of sterile salmon in fish farming) are proposed and in what timescale?	1	lice presence/abundance in waters associated with aquaculture. <b>The Review</b> <b>Group would like to see this added as an</b> <b>action in section 4.11 to enable progress</b> <b>to be followed through the Annual</b> <b>Progress Reports.</b> a) (ii) The Review Group noted that the letter received from the US did not respond to the Review Group's request for clarification on the definition of 'reportable escape events.	
4.4	What adaptive management and / or scientific research is underway that could facilitate better achievement of NASCO's international goals for sea lice and containment such that the environmental impact on wild salmonids can be minimised?	1	The Review Group acknowledged that the letter provided by the US adds some clarity on how the proposed measures may reduce risk to wild salmonids. However, it was not clear to the Review Group from the answers provided (in 4.2) that the risks to wild salmon from sea lice emanating from farms is fully understood or that the outcomes of this project will facilitate better achievement of NASCO's international goals.	
4.5	What is the approach for determining the location of aquaculture facilities in (a) freshwater and (b) marine environments to minimise the risks to wild salmonid stocks?	1		
4.6	What progress has been made to implement NASCO's guidance on introductions, transfers and stocking?	1		
4.7	Is there (a) a requirement to evaluate thoroughly risks and benefits before undertaking any stocking programme and (b) a presumption against stocking for purely socio-political / economic reasons?	1		
4.8	What is the policy / strategy on use of transgenic salmon?	1		
4.9	For Members of the North-East Atlantic Commission only: What measures are in place, or are planned, to implement the eleven recommendations contained in the 'Road Map' to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring,	1		

it if introduced, including the development and testing of contingency plans?         Overall score by Review Group for 4. Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics	Unsatisfactory
research and measures to prevent the spread of <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> and eradicate	

Assessment area 2. Are the threats and challenges to the management of wild Atlantic salmon identified under each theme related clearly to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?

2.8 Threats identified to wild salmon and challenges for management associated with their exploitation in fisheries, including bycatch of salmon in fisheries targeting other species	Assessment (yes / no)	Draft feedback on any improvements required	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
Threat / challenge F1	Yes		
Threat / challenge F2	Yes		
Threat / challenge F3	Yes		
Threat / challenge F4	Yes		
Overall score by Review Group for 2 including bycatch of salmon in fisher	Satisfactory		

Copy and paste lines to add in other challenges in the relevant Implementation Plan

3.4 Threats identified to wild salmon and challenges for management in relation to estuarine and freshwater habitat.	Assessment (yes / no)	Draft feedback on any improvements required	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
Threat / challenge H1	Yes		
Threat / challenge H2	Yes		
Threat / challenge H3	Yes		
Overall score by Review Group for 3 habitat	Satisfactory		

Copy and paste lines to add in other challenges in the relevant Implementation Plan

4.10 Threats identified to wild salmon and challenges for management in relation to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics.	Assessment (yes / no)	Draft feedback on any improvements required	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
Threat / challenge A1	Yes		
Threat / challenge A2	Yes		
Threat / challenge A3	Yes		
Threat / challenge A4	Yes		
Overall score by Review Group for 4. and transfers, and transgenics	Satisfactory		

Copy and paste lines to add in other challenges in the relevant Implementation Plan

# Assessment area 3. Does each action adhere to the 'SMART' descriptors laid out in the new Guidelines document, CNL(18)49?

As a reminder, the 'SMART' approach includes reporting on both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative information is expected wherever possible and should be presented to demonstrate progress made over the period of the plan towards NASCO's goals. This should be clear and concise. Where a deviation must be made from a quantitative metric, the reason for the deviation should be explained.

2.9	2.9 What SMART actions are planned during the period covered by this Implementation Plan (2019 – 2024) to address each of the threats and challenges identified in section 2.8 to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for the management of salmon fisheries?							
#	Action in IP Template	Is the action clearly related to stated threat / challenge?	Is it 'SMART'? (yes / no)	If 'no', which descriptor needs to be reflected more clearly in the action?	If the proposed monitoring is qualitative (as allowed in the Guidelines), is the reason and proposed non- quantitative alternative for monitoring progress acceptable?	Does the action move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?	Given the previous question, is the action considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall?	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
F1	Interception of U.S origin salmon in West Greenland, St. Pierre et Miquelon, and Canada (Labrador)	Yes	Yes			Yes. The Review Group considered that this action relates to CNL(09)43.	Satisfactory	
F2	Bycatch of salmon parr in brook trout fisheries	Yes	Yes		Yes. Based on the US letter (paragraph 7) the Review Group considered that this action can be reported on qualitatively and, therefore, that the action is SMART.	Yes. The Review Group considered that this action relates to CNL(09)43, sections 2.2b and 2.3.	Satisfactory	

F3	Poaching of adult salmon	Yes	Yes	Yes. Based on the US letter (paragraph 7) the Review Group considered that this action can be reported on qualitatively and, therefore, that the action is SMART.	action relates to	Satisfactory	
F4	Bycatch of salmon in commercial fisheries	Yes	Yes		Yes. The Review Group considered that this action relates to CNL(09)43, sections 2.3 and 2.7.	Satisfactory	
Agr obj	erall score by Revi eements and Guid ectives for the mana	Satisf	actory				

Copy and paste lines to add in other actions in the relevant Implementation Plan

3.5	challenges identified in section 3.4 to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat?							
#	Action in IP Template	Is the action clearly related to stated threat / challenge?	Is it 'SMART'? (yes / no)	If 'no', which descriptor needs to be reflected more clearly in the action?	If the proposed monitoring is qualitative (as allowed in the Guidelines), is the reason and proposed non- quantitative alternative for monitoring progress acceptable?	Does the action move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?	Given the previous question, is the action considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall?	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
H1	Lack of accessibility at small dams and road-stream crossings	Yes	Yes. However, it remains unclear how many fish passage improvements are planned in the relevant time period.			Yes. The Review Group considered that this is in line with the Habitat Guidelines, CNL(10)51, section 3.5e.	Satisfactory	
H2	Lack of accessibility at hydroelectric dams	Yes	Yes. However, it remains unclear how many fish passage improvements at hydro dams are planned in the relevant time period.			Yes. The Review Group considered that this is in line with the Habitat Guidelines, CNL(10)51, section 3.5e.	Satisfactory	

H3	Diminished productive capacity from climate change, invasive species, reduced water quality, and	Yes	Yes. However, it remains unclear what the strategies are that are	Yes. The Review Group considered that this is in line with the Habitat Guidelines, CNL(10)51, sections	Satisfactory	
	degraded physical habitat structure)		planned in the relevant time period. It may be that these are stated clearly in the Atlantic salmon Recovery Plan but no details are provided here.	3.2 and 3.10.		
Agr	rall score by Rev eements and Guid ectives for the Prote	delines and	Satisf	actory		

Copy and paste lines to add in other actions in the relevant Implementation Plan

4.11	challenges identif achievement of it Action in IP Template	ied in section s goals and ol Is the action clearly related to stated threat / challenge?	4.10 to implem bjectives for aq Is it 'SMART'? (yes / no)	ient NASCO's R	esolutions, Agreemo	ents and Guidelines a prs, and transgenics? Does the action move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?	4) to address each of th nd demonstrate progre Given the previous question, is the action considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall?	
A1	Sea lice attributable to marine net pens	Yes	Yes			No. The Review Group recognised US efforts to manage sea lice loads on farmed salmon. However, the Review Group is unable to determine whether this action is demonstrating US movement towards the goal of no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms (SLG(09)5).	Unsatisfactory	
A2	Containment of aquaculture-origin salmon	Yes	Yes. However, the Review Group still requested			Yes. The Review Group considered that this is	Satisfactory	

Agr	Overall score by Review Group for 4.11: SMART actions to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics						Unsati	sfactory
A4	Potential stocking of non-native salmonids in the freshwater range of endangered salmon	Yes	Yes		No. The Review Group considered that the action as described could be reported on quantitatively given that the action states that numbers will be reduced.	Yes. The Review Group considered that this is in line with the Williamsburg Resolution, CNL(06)48, Annex 4.	Satisfactory	
A3	Further loss of diversity of salmon populations from small effective population size, genetic introgression of aquaculture escapees, or domestication	Yes	Yes			Yes. The Review Group considered that this is in line with the Williamsburg Resolution, CNL(06)48, Article 5.	Satisfactory	
			more specific detail on the surveillance (methods, timing and duration) of the five rivers.			in line with the BMP Guidance SLG(09)5.		

Copy and paste lines to add in other actions in the relevant Implementation Plan

Mandatory action check	Is such a mandatory action required for this Party / jurisdiction?	Is such an action contained in the Implementation Plan?
For Parties / jurisdictions that prosecute mixed-stock		
fisheries, there should be at least one action related to	No	Not applicable
their management.		

Each Party / jurisdiction with salmon farming should include at least one action relating to sea lice management.	Yes	Yes, but it requires substantial revision
Each Party / jurisdiction with salmon farming should include at least one action relating to containment.	Yes	Yes
Overall score by Review Group		Unsatisfactory

#### **Positive Feedback**

Are there any aspects of the IP, *in particular*, that move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines? (*please state below*)

The Review Group considered that the following actions, in particular, move the United States clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines:

- Management of Salmon Fisheries: F1, F2, F3 and F4;
- Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat: H1, H2 and H3; and
- Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics: A2, A3 and A4.

The Review Group welcomed the United States' plans to explore the efficacy, cost and resources to monitor sea lice presence / abundance in waters associated with aquaculture. The Review Group would like to see this added as an action in section 4.11 to enable progress to be followed through the Annual Progress Reports.

Are there any significant improvements by the Party / jurisdiction that could be communicated on the NASCO website and social media? (*please state below*)