



Council

*Report of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Council
of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization*

CNL(22)53

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Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

Dalmahoy Hotel & Country Club, Edinburgh, Scotland

6 – 9 June 2022

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The President, Arnaud Peyronnet (EU), opened the meeting and made a Statement on behalf of the Organization (Annex X).
- 1.2 The representatives of Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (EU), Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States made Opening Statements (Annex X).
- 1.3 Opening Statements were made by the following Inter-Governmental Organizations: the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) (Annex X).
- 1.4 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Annex X).
- 1.5 A list of participants at the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Council of NASCO is given in Annex X.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its Agenda, CNL(22)42 (Annex X).

3. Financial and Administrative Issues

a) Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

- 3.1 The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Kim Blankenbeker (USA), introduced the Report of the FAC Meeting, CNL(22)05.
- 3.2 On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council agreed:
 - to adopt the Audited Accounts for 2021;
 - to adopt a Budget for 2023 and the Forecast Budget for 2024, CNL(22)54 (Annex XX);
 - to adopt the ‘Proposed Interim Policy on the Interpretation and Application of NASCO Staff Fund Rule 3.2 and Staff Rule 8.2(b) Concerning the Lump Sum Entitlement’, CNL(22)44 (Annex XX); and
 - to adopt the report of the Finance and Administration Committee, CNL(22)05.

4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

a) Secretary’s Report

4.1 The President referred the Council to the Secretary's Report, [CNL\(22\)06](#), and asked the Secretary to speak to the paper. The Secretary noted that the report would be taken as read but that she wished to highlight section 9. This section provided information on work that had been undertaken to enable the production of a high-impact scientific review paper on the impact of salmon farming (sea lice and escapes) on wild Atlantic salmon. This followed the Council's adoption of the draft recommendation from the 2021 Theme-based Special Session (TBSS) Steering Committee, [CNL\(21\)62](#) (paragraph 5.10):

'... to establish a Working Group to draft a NASCO report which provides the latest scientific knowledge on the impacts of sea lice and escaped farmed salmon on wild salmon.'

4.2 The Secretary noted that an accompanying paper, CNL(22)07, laid out a proposal to Council to enable this innovative research to be carried out and the high-impact scientific review paper to be produced. The Secretary noted that in 2021 the Parties had wanted such a report to 'be scientifically robust and peer reviewed'; 'that ICES should be involved, noting that the report needs scientific credibility'; 'the report needs to be perceived as independent and scientific'; and 'representatives on the Working Group should be chosen due to their expertise'. The Secretariat was asked to work with the TBSS Steering Committee to identify experts to be invited to serve on the Working Group and to liaise with ICES. The Secretary informed the Council that she had liaised with ICES to determine whether an ICES Working Group or Workshop could be convened to draft such a report for NASCO. However, it emerged that ICES Workshops were fully open to the public for registration and Working Groups relied on nominations from ICES member countries. Additionally, it was acknowledged that, to have the degree of impact that the Council wanted, the output of any convened group of experts would need to be submitted as a manuscript for consideration in a high-impact peer-reviewed scientific journal, rather than as an ICES or NASCO report in the grey literature.

4.3 The Secretary said that in discussion with the President and the Chair of the 2021 TBSS Steering Committee, an alternative proposed approach was developed, whereby a suitably qualified scientist could co-ordinate a small group of experts, initially to discuss their interest in the production of a manuscript for submission in a high-impact scientific journal.

4.4 The Secretary referred to the 'Proposal for the Production of a Systematic Review of the Effect of Salmon Aquaculture on Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations', CNL(22)07. This paper proposed to apply a systematic review to the research on the two most extensively researched routes of interaction between aquaculture and wild fish, namely the impact of sea lice and escapees. The objective was to use a weight of evidence approach to explore the presence and magnitude of any impact of salmon aquaculture. The Secretary informed the Council that if the systematic review provided sufficient quantitative data the study would continue to do a meta-analysis on the effect of these factors on the populations of wild fish. She noted that earlier studies had not used such a systematic or quantitative approach.

4.5 The President opened the floor for comments. The representative of Canada stated that it was supportive of the proposal for a meta-analysis leading to (if possible) a paper in a peer-reviewed journal. He noted that the remit of the Expert Group might be too narrow and some element of disease pathogens might also be considered, as this was becoming a very important issue.

- 4.6 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) echoed the comments from Canada and supported this approach and expanding the scope of the paper to include disease pathogens. She noted that in order for NASCO to have more impact and be proactive, this type of initiative was important. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that NASCO must get its extensive knowledge into the wider public domain.
- 4.7 The representative of the EU supported the previous comments made. The representative of the UK agreed with Canada and noted support for the work and the expansion of the remit. She asked about the next steps needed to enable the proposed paper to be successful in achieving its objectives. The President noted that if the proposed paper was published in a high ranking journal, that in itself would be confirmation that it was impartial and robust.
- 4.8 The representative of Norway asked how the proposed paper might be financed. The Secretary responded that the Periodic Projects Special Fund was established:
- 'to help avoid large swings in NASCO's budget from year-to-year where monies are needed to support necessary and higher cost intermittent activities, such as future performance reviews, International Year of the Salmon (IYS) legacy activities such as those agreed by Council in 2019 (i.e. the updates to the State of North Atlantic Salmon report and follow up Symposia), and other costly special projects.'* (CNL(20)51rev, paragraph 4.3)
- 4.9 The Secretary said that this appeared to cover the needs of the proposed paper. She also informed the Council that the Periodic Projects Special Fund had a ceiling of £100,000 and, when used, is built back up from the budget surplus. The representative of the United States asked whether the cost of the proposed paper might be spread over two years. This proposal was supported by the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland).
- 4.10 The representative of the NGOs noted that the idea of producing a paper reviewing the effect of salmon aquaculture on wild Atlantic salmon populations originated from the NGO representative on the TBSS Steering Committee. He noted that the NGOs are keen that all relevant evidence is reviewed and included. The representative of the NGOs asked that the Parties did not allow the work to produce the paper to mean that they do nothing on fish farming for the years that the paper is in production. He also supported the proposal that the paper be extended to cover disease pathogens.
- 4.11 In light of this discussion, the Council agreed to ask the Secretary to liaise with the co-ordinator of the Expert Group to request:
- the feasibility of including the impact of disease pathogens from farmed fish in their analysis;
 - the provision of any resulting additional costs;
 - the provision of a timetable to illustrate how the funding from NASCO could be provided over two financial years; and
 - that a representative of the Expert Group present an update to the Council during the 2023 Annual Meeting.
- 4.12 Council also agreed to:
- consider the responses from the Expert Group to the requests inter-sessionally; and

- to fund this initiative from the Periodic Projects Special Fund.

b) The Third Performance Review: Presentation to the Council from the Chair of the Performance Review Panel

- 4.13 The President noted that the third performance review of NASCO would take place in 2022. He welcomed the Chair of the Review Panel, Erik Molenaar, to the Annual Meeting. The President encouraged delegates to engage with Dr Molenaar over the coming days. Dr Molenaar made a presentation to the Council to introduce the Review Panel and present its working methods. His presentation is contained in document CNL(22)XX (Annex X).
- 4.14 The representative of Norway asked if the Review Panel had discussed how and when they would seek inputs from those that are not Parties to NASCO, from IGOs and others. Dr Molenaar replied that to some extent the Review Panel had already sought input from those groups through the invitation to submit comments. He added that the Review Panel intended to consider the wealth of NASCO documentation and then determine whether additional material was needed.
- 4.15 The representative of the United States asked whether it was possible to have an extension to the deadline for submitting views. Dr Molenaar thought that would be acceptable but would consult with colleagues before confirming a one-month extension to 1 August 2022.
- 4.16 The representative of the NGOs welcomed the third performance review of NASCO and noted that the NGOs would also appreciate an extension to the deadline for submitting views.

c) Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2021

- 4.17 The President noted that under Article 5, paragraph 6, of the Convention ‘The Council shall submit to the Parties an annual report of the activities of the Organization.’ Due to time constraints, there was no presentation on the Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2021, [CNL\(22\)08](#). The President asked the Parties if there were any comments.
- 4.18 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the report was largely a summary of the previous year’s reports. She questioned whether the Report on the Activities of the Organization and the Secretary’s Report could be merged and show all of NASCO’s work. She referred to the NAFO Report, which is an outreach document. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) suggested that a combined document would be an opportunity to showcase NASCO’s work.
- 4.19 The President informed the Council that this suggestion would be considered under Agenda item 4g).

d) Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

- 4.20 The President noted that NASCO operates a Tag Return Incentive Scheme. Each year, a Grand Prize of £1,500 is awarded together with three prizes of £1,000, one in each of NASCO’s three Commission areas.
- 4.21 The President announced that the Grand Prize winner for 2022 is William Walsh from Canada. The tag was placed on a large salmon returning to the Northwest Miramichi River (New Brunswick, Canada) in 2020. The fish was captured on 1 October 2020 at the estuary trap net in Cassilis operated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as part of the

assessment programme for Atlantic salmon in the Miramichi River. The fish was sampled for length, sex identification, scale sampled and externally marked with a light blue Carlin tag prior to release back to the river. It measured 81.7 cm fork length and the salmon was identified as a wild female, based on external characteristics. It was recaptured during the black salmon (kelt) recreational fishery on 19 April 2021 in the Southwest Miramichi River at Gray Rapids. It was subsequently released by the angler as there have been mandatory catch and release measures in place for large Atlantic salmon since 1984.

e) Scientific Advice from ICES

4.22 The President reminded delegates that the ICES advice for North Atlantic Salmon Stocks was published on 6 May 2022, [CNL\(22\)09](#).

4.23 The representative of ICES, Dennis Ensing, presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM). The ICES presentation is available in document CNL(22)XX (Annex X).

f) Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

4.24 The President congratulated Martha Robertson (Canada) on being elected Chair of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board), inter-sessionally. The report of the Meeting of the Board, CNL(22)10, was introduced by Dr Robertson.

4.25 Dr Robertson reported on the main items considered at the meeting of the Board. She said that the Board met on 5 and 7 June. It agreed to an inter-sessional meeting, when NASCO business allows and preferably in advance of the 2023 Annual Meeting, to consider the overall vision, scope and purpose of the Board following recommendations arising from the review of the Board's Metadatabase. The Board agreed not to continue to maintain its Metadatabase. However, the Secretariat will request a final update of the Metadatabase from each Party prior to posting a final copy online. The Board considered a number of projects and was given a presentation on the ROAM project. The Board also agreed to endorse the concept of composing a new North-East Atlantic salmon genetic baseline for the purpose of assigning salmon samples from Greenland to region of origin following a proposal from the UK.

4.26 The Council agreed to adopt the report of the Board.

g) Consideration of Alternative Ways of Conducting NASCO Business Following the Covid-19 Pandemic

4.27 The President noted that as result of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020, for the first time ever, and again in 2021 the NASCO Annual Meeting could not be conducted face-to-face. Alternative arrangements were put in place. He informed the Council that this Agenda item provided an opportunity to explore whether procedures developed during the pandemic might be incorporated into NASCO's future operations. He referred delegates to paper, CNL(22)11, Alternative Ways of Conducting NASCO Business.

4.28 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) proposed that most meetings be held virtually, and if there was a need to meet face-to-face, there should be a hybrid option. She proposed that the Annual Meeting should include a hybrid element, recognising environmental impacts. The representative of the United States agreed that substantive meetings may need to be face-to-face. She agreed that climate change considerations were important. The representative of the EU agreed that some meetings should be held virtually, and the meeting Chair should decide what was appropriate. The representative of Norway supported hybrid meetings and

highlighted the cost of travel as well as environmental impacts. He questioned whether there may be a more cost-effective option for hybrid meetings. The representative of Canada supported colleagues and highlighted the environmental costs of large in-person meetings. The President suggested that flexibility should be provided so that the Chair of inter-sessional meetings could determine the format that would be most appropriate. He noted that a hybrid option should be standard if there was a face-to-face meeting.

- 4.29 The representative of the NGOs highlighted the conservation role of NASCO. The NGOs were in support of hybrid meetings, although they agreed that the Annual Meeting should be held face-to face.
- 4.30 The President asked about inter-sessional correspondence. The representative of UK proposed that there should be no inter-sessional correspondence in general, but that a process should be initiated whereby questions might be submitted in advance or at the start of the meeting to the relevant Party, to enable a comprehensive answer to be provided during the meeting. The representatives of the United States and the EU agreed.
- 4.31 The President noted that the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA) had shown no real engagement with NASCO for a number of years. The representative of the EU suggested that NASCO should continue inviting ISFA to the Annual Meeting and it was up to ISFA if they wished to attend. The representative of the United States proposed that the Secretariat send ISFA an invitation to attend the Annual Meeting and submit a statement. Canada suggested that if ISFA did not show interest in engaging with NASCO into the future, NASCO may decide not to continue seeking engagement. The representative of the NGOs agreed with these suggestions. The representative of the United States suggested that ISFA be taken off the Council Agenda unless they accept the invitation to attend the Annual Meeting.
- 4.32 The President asked about reports provided prior to the Annual Meeting. He asked whether there was scope to streamline the reports and to use them as a communications tool. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) suggested that the Report on the Activities of the Organization and the Secretary's Report be merged to act as a showcase for NASCO's work. She highlighted the NAFO report as a good example. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also proposed that reports of the meetings should be more concise. This was supported by the representatives of UK and the United States.
- 4.33 The representative of Canada discussed the ICES report and suggested that a single report be made to the NASCO Annual Meeting at Council with all components of the Advice. The President also suggested that the ICES Advice document might be shorter and more focused. The representative of the EU supported both suggestions. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed, noting that the ICES advice for other stocks was much more focused. If additional information was needed, delegates could consult the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) report.
- 4.34 The President asked about the value of the Annotated Agendas and Explanatory Memoranda provided prior to the Annual Meeting by the Secretariat. The representative of the EU said the Annotated Agendas are extremely useful but that perhaps the Explanatory Memorandum was not required.
- 4.35 Council agreed:

- that NASCO Annual Meetings should be organised to be face-to-face for participants, with a simple, cost-efficient virtual option for some delegates;
- by default, consideration would be given for inter-sessional meetings to be virtual, but the Chair and the Secretary, in consultation with the members would determine the exact format. Where a face-to-face meeting was selected, a hybrid option would be available;
- that there should be no inter-sessional correspondence prior to NASCO face-to-face Annual Meetings, but that if Parties / NGOs have questions on Agenda items, they should be invited to submit them in advance to the relevant Party, to enable an answer to be provided during the meeting;
- to take ‘Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry’ off the Agenda (unless ISFA was participating) and to request the Secretary to continue to send ISFA an invitation to attend the Annual Meeting and submit a statement;
- that the Report on the Activities of the Organization and the Secretary’s Report be merged to be a showcase for NASCO’s work;
- to ask the Secretary to approach ICES to investigate a more streamlined approach / presentation of the ICES Advice;
- that the full ICES Advice should be presented in Council only in future; and
- to ask the Secretariat to provide Annotated Agendas prior to the Annual Meetings for the Council, Commissions, FAC and Board, but not to provide the Explanatory Memorandum.

h) Report of the Rivers Database Working Group

- 4.36 The President informed the Council that following decisions made by Council in 2021, the NASCO Rivers Database is now on the website: [NASCO Rivers Database – NASCO](#). At that time, the Council agreed to establish a Working Group to address high-level issues with respect to the Rivers Database, and to report back to the Annual Meeting in 2022. The Rivers Database Working Group met by video conference in November and December 2021.
- 4.37 The Chair of the Working Group, Livia Goodbrand (Canada), presented the Report of the Meeting of the Rivers Database Working Group, CNL(22)12 (Annex XX).
- 4.38 The representative of Canada thanked the Working Group and said that Canada had no objections to any of the recommendations. The representative of the United States noted that the Rivers Database would form the basis of the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report. She suggested that the Periodic Projects Special Fund could be used to bring someone on board to work on this. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) supported the recommendations and noted that this would be a good outreach project. She particularly welcomed the recommendation about translating the Rivers Database into different languages. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that if the Rivers Database was to be used in Greenland, translation may be needed. The representative of the UK fully supported the recommendations and particularly welcomed the recommendation seeking to clarify the purpose of the Rivers Database.
- 4.39 The representative of Norway also supported the recommendations. He noted Norway’s view that it would be important to include information about the pressures that are

affecting salmon in the rivers. He stated that the provision of this type of information should be mandatory for Parties / jurisdictions. The representative of the NGOs supported Norway's comments. The NGOs were also supportive of the public outreach purpose for the Rivers Database.

4.40 The representative of the United States proposed that the spreadsheet holding information on rivers, which Parties are requested to complete, includes a drop-down list, including general broad categories of threats to make it easier to input information and ensure consistency. The representative of Canada also noted that IT specialists would need to be contracted for this work. The representative of the UK noted that the Steering Committee would provide oversight, but that the Parties should have the opportunity to agree the final plans for the 'Atlas' and agree the final product before it goes live. The representative of Canada said that the Steering Committee should have the opportunity to consider their membership, such that members could reaffirm their participation.

4.41 Council agreed:

- to accept the recommendations of the Rivers Database Working Group (noting that it should focus on useability and being intuitive, and that Parties should be urged to complete the sections on threats);
- to ask the Rivers Database Working Group to act as the Steering Committee for the development of the 'Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas' and progress this work in line with the discussion recorded in paragraph 4.38 - 4.40 of this report;
- to ask the Secretary to work with that Steering Committee to develop the online 'Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas'; and
- to use the Periodic Projects Special Fund to fund this work over two years.

i) Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

4.42 The President informed the Council that Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention require NASCO to take into account the best scientific evidence and establish working arrangements with ICES. During the Annual Meeting, the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC), which assists the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES, met to develop a Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES for consideration by the Commissions and the Council. The Co-ordinator of the SSC, Livia Goodbrand (Canada), presented the draft request to ICES for scientific advice.

4.43 The Council agreed to adopted the 'Request for Scientific Advice from ICES', CNL(22)13, (Annex XX).

5. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach

a) Report from the Tromsø Symposium on the Recommendations to Address Future Management Challenges

(i) Special Session: Report from the Tromsø Symposium on the Recommendations to Address Future Management Challenges

5.1 The President reminded delegates that, to mark the International Year of the Salmon (IYS), a two-day symposium titled 'Managing the Atlantic salmon in a rapidly changing environment – management challenges and possible responses' was held immediately prior to the 2019 NASCO Annual Meeting. The IYS Symposium Steering Committee

made a number of recommendations to NASCO in its report. He invited the Chair of the Symposium Steering Committee, Eva Thorstad (Norway) to present the report and its recommendations. Her presentation is available as document CNL(22)XX (Annex X).

5.2 The discussions held during the Special Session are contained in CNL(22)XX (Annex XX).

(ii) ***Decisions taken in light of the Special Session on the Report from the Tromsø Symposium on the Recommendations to Address Future Management Challenges***

5.3 The President informed delegates that this Agenda item allowed for decisions to be taken in light of the Special Session. Whilst considering the recommendations of the Tromsø Symposium Steering Committee, he said that Council may wish to note that the third performance review of NASCO would take place in 2022 and would report to the 2023 Annual Meeting. The Terms of Reference for the performance review, [CNL\(21\)22](#), state that:

'In carrying out this work special attention should be given to [...] The 'Recommendations to NASCO to Address Future Management Challenges in the Report from the Tromsø Steering Committee', CNL(19)16, [...] including the Council's responses to these recommendations....

5.4 He acknowledged, therefore, that work resulting from the Tromsø Symposium Steering Committee recommendations and the forthcoming third performance review would likely interact.

5.5 The President noted that the Parties had engaged in good discussion on the recommendations and had conducted analysis of the NASCO work in progress, planned or completed in the relevant areas. He stated that work on eight of the recommendations was in progress. Work on a further three had not yet started – these concerned recommendations to update NASCO Guidelines. Plans for four activities which related to the recommendations are underway and an additional activity was being scoped out. The President said that this initial mapping exercise could be shared with the Chair of the third performance review.

5.6 The President informed delegates that important discussions on the Stocking Guidelines had taken place. The Parties had agreed to update these Guidelines urgently. A Working Group would be established to update the Guidelines, immediately, without waiting for the outcome of the Performance Review Panel Report.

5.7 The President said that Recommendation 8 on aquaculture was particularly important. He highlighted the range of NASCO initiatives that addressed this recommendation. These included:

- development of 'Enhanced Guidance for the Review of Implementation Plans', CNL(20)55, to strengthen the review of the Implementation Plans in the third reporting cycle;
- the 2021 Theme-based Special Session on Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon, CNL(21)65;
- consideration of an Aquaculture Statement which would urge action to address this issue; and
- work to publish a high impact scientific paper on the effect of salmon aquaculture

on wild Atlantic salmon populations.

- 5.8 The President informed delegates that NASCO would prioritise work to enhance the participation of indigenous people in NASCO. Parties would take urgent action to enhance the participation indigenous people in NASCO. The representative of Canada supported this and requested that there be a Special Session at the Annual Meeting in 2023 on indigenous perspectives on Atlantic salmon. The representative of the United States asked if Canada would make a presentation and whether it would expect other Parties to present on this topic. The representative of Canada said he would consider these issues further.
- 5.9 The representative of the NGOs asked that the Council invite a representative of the NGOs onto any working group established to update the Stocking Guidelines. He noted that he was happy to hear of the NASCO initiatives on aquaculture and was also happy that the Council was not waiting until the report of the Third Performance Review Panel before taking action.
- 5.10 The Council agreed that:
- work on updating the Stocking Guidelines would take place inter-sessionally;
 - an NGO representative would be invited to sit on the Stocking Guidelines Working Group; and
 - there would be a Special Session on indigenous people during the 2023 Annual Meeting. Canada would liaise with the Secretariat and other interested Parties on this.
- b) Evaluation of Implementation Plans Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)**
- (i) Special Session: Evaluation of Implementation Plans Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)*
- 5.11 The President reminded delegates that NASCO had adopted Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines that address the Organization’s principal areas of concern for the management of salmon stocks. In 2005 it was agreed that ‘NASCO will be committed to the measures and agreements it develops and actively review progress with implementation plans’, CNL(05)49. Parties’ / jurisdictions’ revised Implementation Plans (IPs) under the third reporting cycle (2019 – 2024) were reviewed by the IP / APR Review Group in November 2021.
- 5.12 The Chair of the IP / APR Review Group, Cathal Gallagher (EU), presented the report of the 2021 Meeting of the IP / APR Review Group to review the IPs, [CNL\(22\)15 \(Annex XX\)](#).
- 5.13 The discussions held during the Special Session are contained in CNL(22)XX (Annex XX).
- (ii) Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Implementation Plans Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)*
- 5.14 The President informed delegates that this Agenda item allowed for decisions to be taken in light of the Special Session: Evaluation of Implementation Plans Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024).
- 5.15 The Council agreed to:

- request that the Chair and Secretary of the IP / APR Review Group arrange a meeting in November 2022 to review any revised IPs.
- c) **Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans**
- (i) *Special Session: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans*
- 5.16 The President noted that Parties / jurisdictions submit an Annual Progress Report (APR) to NASCO each year. APRs are the primary medium through which NASCO assesses Parties' / jurisdictions' progress towards the achievement of its Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. Additionally, under Article 15 of the NASCO Convention, Parties are required to report catch statistics and other information to Council annually. This is achieved through the submission of APRs.
- 5.17 The Chair of the IP / APR Review Group, Cathal Gallagher (EU), presented the report of the IP / APR Review Group for the review of Annual Progress Reports, [CNL\(22\)16](#) (Annex XX).
- 5.18 The discussions held during the Special Session are contained in CNL(22)XX (Annex XX).
- (ii) *Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans*
- 5.19 The President informed delegates that this Agenda item allowed for decisions to be taken in light of the Special Session: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans.
- 5.20 The Council agreed to:
- the minor changes to the APR template requested by the Review Group; and
 - request that the Chair and Secretary of the IP / APR Review Group arrange a meeting in April 2023 to review the 2022 APRs.
- 5.21 The representative of the United States asked whether, if the IP / APR Review Group meeting in 2023 was in-person, the Review Group would review all actions, or just satisfactory actions. The representative of the NGOs asked if a hybrid meeting could be arranged if necessary. In response to both questions, the President said that it was for the Secretary and the Chair make an appropriate decision at the time. He also noted that would be a relevant discussion on this under Agenda item 4g).
- d) **International Year of the Salmon Legacy Activities**
- 5.22 The President reminded delegates that in 2016, the Council decided to hold an International Year of the Salmon (IYS) in partnership with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). The focal year for the IYS was 2019 with some efforts continuing to 2022. The aim was to raise awareness of the factors driving salmon abundance, the environmental and anthropogenic challenges they face, and the measures being taken to address these.
- 5.23 The Secretary reported that the IYS Synthesis Symposium: 'Salmon in a Rapidly Changing World: Synthesis of the International Year of the Salmon and a Roadmap to 2030' would take place in Vancouver, Canada, from 4 – 6 October 2022.
- 5.24 The Secretary noted that NASCO's first State of North Atlantic Salmon Report was

published in 2019. At the 2021 Annual Meeting the Secretariat was asked to consider the timing and structure of the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report, once the Rivers Database Working Group had reported. The Secretary referred delegates to a paper on the International Year of the Salmon Legacy Activities, CNL(22)18.

- 5.25 The representative of the UK noted that the State of North Atlantic Salmon Report was a key tool in strengthening NASCO's outreach work. She stated that there was a need to see more detail of the revised Rivers Database before it was possible to say what the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report would look like. The two initiatives needed to be taken in parallel. She noted that there were limitations to paper-based reports and thought that a more interactive product might be useful. The representative of the United States agreed. The representative of the Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed that the 2019 State of North Atlantic Salmon Report was an important outreach tool and stated that it was important to see what the Rivers Database could provide before making decisions about the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report.
- 5.26 The representative of the NPAFC stated that the NPAFC was very interested in the Rivers Database / Atlas concept and would be interested in exploring how Atlantic salmon and Pacific salmon could be portrayed as they redistribute into the Arctic.
- 5.27 The Council agreed to postpone the discussion on the next State of North Atlantic Salmon Report until the Rivers Database is agreed.
- e) **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**
- 5.28 The President noted that 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. Comprehensive progress reports on the recommendations contained in the Action Plan have been submitted to the Council each year since 2014. The 2022 Report on Progress in Implementing the Action Plan, CNL(22)19, was circulated in advance of the meeting.
- 5.29 The President also noted the relevance of the third performance review since the purpose of the review, as set out in its Terms of Reference, CNL(21)22, was to assess the 'performance of NASCO since its previous review in 2012...' The report of NASCO's Third Performance Review Panel would be published prior to the 2023 Annual Meeting and considered at that meeting. Therefore, this Agenda item may not be required in 2023.
- 5.30 Council agreed that the Agenda item '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' would not be required in 2023.
- f) **Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry**
- 5.31 The President informed delegates that in 2013, the Council discontinued the regular meetings of the ISFA / NASCO Liaison Group. An item on the Agenda was retained, during which a representative of ISFA was invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon. ISFA was invited to send a representative to attend the 2022 Annual Meeting and to contribute a paper / written statement. It did neither.

g) New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management

- 5.32 The President noted that a representative of ICES, Dennis Ensing, presented the advice relevant to this Agenda item. The ICES presentation is contained in Annex X.
- 5.33 The President informed delegates about discussions in the North-East Atlantic Commission on addressing the issue of Pink Salmon. He noted that the magnitude of pink salmon entering many Atlantic salmon rivers was very concerning and that work had been conducted to develop a Statement on Pink Salmon from the NASCO Council.
- 5.34 The representative of Norway noted that it would be valuable to have a standard approach to pink salmon across the NASCO Parties. Therefore, the Statement on Pink Salmon from Council should refer to Guidelines and Resolutions in place as well as the ICES advice. The Statement should include areas of co-operation between the Parties that would address this threat. The representative of Norway said that this was a serious development and other Parties / jurisdictions could face the same situation.
- 5.35 The President noted that a Statement on pink salmon from the Council of NASCO should urge the Parties to take actions consistent with the Williamsburg Resolution to co-operate to minimise adverse effects of pink salmon on wild Atlantic salmon. He tabled a Draft Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area, CNL(22)43, which included the establishment of a Standing NASCO Working Group on pink salmon. The President asked for comments on the draft Statement. The representative of the EU said this was a very important issue and that the EU would work towards the adoption of a monitoring programme with the intention of developing an action plan. The representative of the UK noted that the UK had some pink salmon with evidence of successful reproduction and were keen to work with the Parties to better understand and address the issue. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed and noted increasing numbers of pink salmon in Greenland and evidence of pink salmon in their one salmon river. The representative of Canada also supported this initiative and said Canada would contribute where it could. The representative of the Russian Federation fully supported the NASCO Standing Working Group on Pink Salmon.
- 5.36 The NPAFC informed the Council that it would host a meeting of Atlantic and Pacific pink salmon experts on 2 – 3 October in Vancouver, to discuss co-operative research into the re-distribution of pink salmon.
- 5.37 The representative of Norway offered to provide an update on pink salmon during the Annual Meeting in 2023. The President suggested that other Parties should also be encouraged to provide updates when appropriate. The representative of the NGOs asked that the NGOs be included on the Working Group.
- 5.38 The Council agreed:
- to adopt the ‘Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area’, CNL(22)47 (Annex XX). This included agreement to establish a Standing NASCO Working Group on Pink Salmon.

h) Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

- 5.39 The President noted that the Council and the North American Commission were concerned about catches of salmon at St Pierre and Miquelon which, although low, occur at a time when there are serious concerns about the abundance of North American

stocks and when strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North American Commission area.

- 5.40 The President noted that France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) was an observer to NASCO. In 2021, the Council agreed to write to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to invite it to join NASCO. The President's letter on 31 January 2022, emphasised how NASCO's Implementation Plan process would enable France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to highlight their positive actions for salmon management. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) replied on 22 April 2022 stating, among other things, that:

'France has, therefore, decided to strengthen the framework around the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon, shortening the fishing season to 1 May – 21 July and capping the number of recreational licenses issued at 80 in 2021 ... France therefore wishes to retain its status as observer to NASCO.'

- 5.41 The President noted that the 'Report on the 2021 Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon', [CNL\(22\)20rev](#), was submitted by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon). The report would also be considered in the North American Commission. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), Camille Servetto, presented highlights of the report.
- 5.42 Both the representatives of the United States and Canada expressed their appreciation for France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon)'s management of their fishery and the provision of catch statistics. They said detailed questions would be asked in the North Atlantic Commission.
- 5.43 The representative of the NGOs noted that the report showed the vast majority of fish were caught by recreational fishers (around 594 caught by around 80 recreational fishers). He noted that this was greater than any other recreational fishery in any other location in North America. He asked if there was scope in the management plan to reduce the number of fish taken per recreational fisher. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) said that France is working with the recreational fishers to reduce the number of fish taken. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) understood that the catch is high and France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) is also concerned. She noted that the local administrative authorities are engaged in the process of trying to address this.

i) Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions

- 5.44 The activities of the three Commissions were reported to the Council by their Chairs.

6. Other Business

- 6.1 The President informed delegates that there were two items of 'Other Business'.

Proposal for NASCO Statements on Salmon Farming

- 6.2 The President reminded delegates that NASCO held a TBSS, on aquaculture in 2021. The overarching objective was to stimulate urgent action to implement further measures to protect wild salmon from the impacts of salmon farming, and to ensure demonstrable progress by Parties / jurisdictions towards achievement of the international goals for sea lice and escaped farmed salmon, taking into account the recommendations from the Steering Committees of the 2016 TBSS and the 2019 IYS Symposium, CNL(19)16. The 2021 TBSS Steering Committee made recommendations to the Council of NASCO. One of them was that:

'A NASCO statement be issued to:

promote adoption of innovative and alternative technologies, at sea and on land, to help achieve 100% containment of farmed fish and for 100% of farms to have effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads, or lice-induced mortality attributed to the farms, for the protection of wild salmon and sea trout; and

state that any increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality on wild salmon smolts or genetic introgression of salmon stocks caused by salmon farming is unacceptable when referenced as part of an Implementation Plan action and cannot be considered, under the review process, as progressing the relevant party or jurisdiction towards achieving the international goals.'

- 6.3 The President noted that there was discussion last year regarding the text of a statement, but no agreement. Work had taken place inter-sessionally. The Secretary prepared a draft statement and discussions were held between Heads of Delegations, the Secretary and the President. A number of versions of draft statements had been considered.
- 6.4 The Council considered a 'Draft Statement on Salmon Farming from the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization', CNL(22)45 and a 'Draft Statement from the Council of NASCO to Parties / jurisdictions with Salmon Farming Following the IP Reviews in November 2021', CNL(22)46.
- 6.5 The representative of Norway suggested removing 'sometimes significant' from the 'Draft Statement on Salmon Farming from the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization', CNL(22)45. The President noted that these words should not have been included and would be removed. The representative of the NGOs supported the statement.
- 6.6 The representative of the NGOs noted frustration that the IPs often did not include positive action with respect to aquaculture and the APRs did not show strong progress. The representative of the NGOs welcomed the 'Draft Statement from the Council of NASCO to Parties / jurisdictions with Salmon Farming Following the IP Reviews in November 2021', CNL(22)46.
- 6.7 The Council agreed:
- to adopt the 'Statement on Salmon Farming from the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization', CNL(22)49; and
 - to adopt the 'Statement from the Council of NASCO to Parties / jurisdictions with Salmon Farming Following the IP Reviews in November 2021', CNL(22)50.

Invitation to join NASCO

- 6.8 The representative of the United States thanked France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for its continued interest in NASCO and ICES. She proposed that it should again, be invited to join NASCO. The representative of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) answered that any request to join NASCO would be discussed with appropriate Ministers. The representative of Canada agreed and suggested that Iceland should also be invited to re-join NASCO. The representative of the NGOs pointed out that there was an accredited NGO from Iceland, but not Iceland itself. The NGOs fully supported inviting Iceland.

- 6.9 The Council agreed to write to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) and to Iceland to invite them to join NASCO.
- 6.10. A closing statement was provided by the Russian Federation (Annex XX).
- 6.11 A closing statement was provided by NPAFC (Annex XX).

7. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 7.1 The representative of Canada offered to host NASCO's Annual Meeting during 6 – 9 June 2023. The President asked that Canada liaise with the Secretariat on this matter. He noted that contingency arrangements would need to be considered in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.2 Council confirmed the tentative dates for its Forty-first Annual Meeting as 4 – 7 June 2024. The representative of the EU informed the Council that it was exploring the possibility of offering to host the 2024 Annual Meeting.

8. Press Release

- 8.1 The Council agreed a Press Release, CNL(22)52 (Annex XX).

9. Report of the Meeting

- 9.1 The Council agreed the report of its Meeting.

10. Close of the Meeting

- 10.1 The President thanked the Parties and observers for their contributions and closed the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting of NASCO.