

*Question and Answer Session held during the Special Session of the Council:
Evaluation of Implementation Plans Under the Third Reporting Cycle
(2019 – 2024)*

Arnaud Peyronnet (President): thank you very much, Cathal. That was a great presentation. Some of it, I think, some people were familiar with, but I think what was interesting also, was to see the evolution, not only of the rules, the guidelines, but also, in terms of all the Parties who were responding to those. I would like to acknowledge your work and the work of the Review Group over the last few years. It is quite amazing what you have been able to achieve, in particular, again, during the context of having virtual meetings.

I'm also aware of the role of the Secretariat there, in supporting those meetings and participating. I really would like to thank you all, because this is, as we said, a crucial element of the work of NASCO, and one of the most important processes. So, thank you very much for that.

And also, I sympathise because it is true that we have revisited those guidelines. It was a bit of an intuitive process, in a way. We were trying to find the right balance between making sure that what was not being addressed by the Parties would be and, I think we can see clearly, and Paul will probably point to that, that there are still some issues, in particular with aquaculture. There's no doubt that this shows in what you're presenting. But we're also trying to find a balance, as I said, with what was being achieved, because there was a lot of good work there. We wanted to make sure that that would be shown as well, during the review. Yes, it took a bit of time to get there, but I think, hopefully, we'll have a bit of stability on that.

Dale Marsden (Canada): thanks, President and thanks, Cathal, for the presentation. It's helpful, for me, as I feel like a new person at NASCO. As somebody relatively new to NASCO, it's helpful to have the presentation, to go back to the history and see how the process has evolved over many years. So I appreciate that reminder.

I guess my comment is just to note that one of the innovations in the last round of the process that was really especially helpful for us, was that informal dialogue that we had in September. One of the struggles that we've had in working on our IP in recent years has been understanding a lot of the nuance that exists in the process, in the IP, and trying to reflect a really broad set of work and a deep set of work in the very restricted space that we have in the IP template. And so, what we found a challenge in the past was reading the response from the Review Group and not quite having the understanding of what was being sought in the different questions. So, what the dialogue allowed us to do, you'll remember, was to talk through some of the particular challenges that we had, get a better understanding of what the Review Group was looking for, and what they weren't seeing. And then, when we developed our response, that was actually really helpful for us, to make what, in some cases, turned out to be relatively, I would say, small changes: the information was the same, but it was presented in the way that the Review Group was looking for. It's really especially helpful for us. I suppose it's something for the Council to consider, going forward. I'm not going to try to propose putting something else on the Review Group's plate, because I think actually the dialogues that happened last year gave us what we needed to better understand that. But I guess, it's something for us to consider collectively, or I guess, for the Council to consider, going forward: will there be a point at which, maybe allowing for that degree of interaction, might be helpful again for the Parties to fine-tune what they present? Thanks.

Elvar Örn Fridriksson (NASF Iceland): my question is more for the Parties than the Review Group, and my question is on aquaculture. I'm wondering specifically about the use of cleaner fish in aquaculture. Something that you start hearing more and more about. This is, in a lot of places, being promoted as some sort of a sustainable solution when the fact is that, just as an example, in Norway it's estimated that about 150,000 cleaner fish die in the pens every day.

My question is, does NASCO have an IP or a specific action on this? And if not, is there intent to do so?

Arnaud Peyronnet (President): thank you. I'll try to answer your question. Maybe some of the Parties present might have additional elements to bring. I just verified there with the Chair, we don't have any IPs at the moment that include particular measures concerning cleaner fish. But it's important also to keep in mind that, as reflected in the presentation from the Chair, the Parties have some latitude to choose which action they want to have, in order to meet a particular objective. And while they may not use those fish, they may actually have other actions. So, it would be difficult, I think, to actually push in a particular direction and to make a compulsory use. It may not be adapted to all the situations either. So, I'm not too sure if this is something that could go forward, but maybe some Parties would have different views. And I look, in particular, at the colleagues who have a lot of salmon farming around, if they want to intervene.

Raoul Bierach (Norway): I think in general, the cleaner fish is one possibility to control sea lice. And so, it's a method which is used within aquaculture. And I think we look at whether these cleaner fish, or other measures, are giving the result we want, in relation to wild salmon. We don't have any opinion on how the aquaculture industry is solving their problems. And the IPs are not designed to have any judgement on this and more general questions about sustainable methods of aquaculture. That's a different area, which NASCO in general is not so involved in. It's just one possibility, so we just look at the output it delivers. It's up for others to consider whether it's a good method or whether it's sustainable, in other respects. Thank you.

Cathal Gallagher (Chair of the IP / APR Review Group): thank you. Probably in agreement with the Review Group, I think the issue of cleaner fish in the aquaculture facility would need to address how that is going to ensure, or mitigate, or move towards 100 % protection of the wild salmon. And there's always a bit of a jump between any of those problems, where you're trying to control lice on a farm. What we're really interested in doing is ensuring that the wild fish pick up no lice at all and moving in that direction in a progressive way. So, while it could be an action, I don't think we've seen one as a Review Group. We'd be looking at the impacts on wild fish, so there'd have to be a close relation to that. Thank you.

Steve Sutton (Atlantic Salmon Federation): I have a question for Canada on the aquaculture part of their Implementation Plan. A lot has been said about aquaculture and the impacts on wild salmon over the last couple of days. Last year we had a Special Session on salmon farming. And one of the conclusions of the Steering Committee for that session is that there is now overwhelming evidence across the northern hemisphere of the adverse impacts of traditional salmon farming methods on wild salmon. And, also, that there is now an urgent need for all Parties to adopt stronger measures if their international responsibilities are to be met.

In Canada's most recent Implementation Plan, their mandatory actions on sea lice and escapes were not accepted because Canada is proposing to do research, rather than take management actions. And so, I guess, I'm trying to understand from Canada, why we're still proposing research, in light of everything we know, and in light of the conclusions from the Special Session last year?

I guess my question is in two parts. Does Canada not accept the conclusions from the Special Session last year, about the overwhelming evidence and the need for urgent actions? And when might we see Canada proposing actions to address sea lice and escapes?

Doug Bliss (Canada): thank you very much for your question, Steve. Two questions, actually. Your first question was in response to Canada's reaction to the recommendations from the Special Session last year. And we are participating with Council, in terms of the development of a statement for that. Our support will be reflected in the statement that comes out. On the second issue, which is a very difficult question to answer, in terms of saying, why aren't you doing something? There is lots of progress going on. And, as you know, various regulators in Canada have different approaches to this. They're at different timescales in doing things. You are probably aware, at the federal level, that we are undertaking quite an extensive discussion with your organization, amongst others, about the development of a more comprehensive Canadian salmon conservation strategy. And these kinds of discussions are also included in that. Thank you.

Dave Meerburg (Atlantic Salmon Federation): Doug mentioned there's many different regulatory authorities dealing with aquaculture in Canada. And I'm wondering why we have only one IP for Canada, which is complex because of all these different jurisdictions and yet I see for the country of Spain, five different IPs for a very small geographic area.

So, I'm wondering if a solution to that in the future may well be to have Canada submit different IPs for different areas, some of which have no aquaculture, and may well score very well on their IPs. And the ones that do have aquaculture are at different levels of progress in solving some of the problems they do have with the aquaculture situation. Thank you.

Doug Bliss (Canada): thank you for your suggestion, Dave. We'll take that under advisement. And recognising also that ups the level of work, but that's not an excuse for not doing the right thing. We will consider the proposition. Thank you.

Alan Wells (Fisheries Management Scotland): thank you. This is a question for UK – Scotland. With regard to the impacts of fish farming, a Scottish parliamentary enquiry published its recommendations in November 2018, concluding that the *status quo*, in terms of regulation and enforcement is not acceptable. Subsequently, the Scottish Government's Salmon Interactions Working Group published 41 recommendations to manage wild / farmed interactions in May 2020. As yet, these recommendations have not been implemented in full.

Is the Scottish Government committed to introducing a fit-for-purpose regulatory regime for fish farming, which protects wild salmonids? And if so, can you confirm that the reformed regulatory regime will protect wild migratory salmonids and meet the international goals on salmon farming in full? Thank you.

Alexander Kinninmonth (UK): thanks, Alan. I'd also like to thank the Review Group for the detailed feedback on the UK – Scotland IP and APR. I can confirm that Scottish Ministers are committed to moving beyond the *status quo* and ensuring that the aquaculture regulatory framework in Scotland is as efficient and effective as it can be.

As you know, the Shared Policy Programme published last year, between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party (which is known as the Bute House Agreement) commits to a step change in how we manage the marine environment, including reform to the aquaculture regulatory framework. And that's alongside a comprehensive programme of work to better protect wildlife and the environment, which is described in the Scottish Government's response to the Interactions Working Group that you mentioned.

As is clearly stated in that response, Scottish Ministers are committed to the implementation of

the Williamsburg Resolution to minimise the impact and risks presented by aquaculture to wild salmon. Government is also committed to continued progress towards the achievement of the international goals, described in the guidelines. We are currently progressing a new risk-based sea lice framework, alongside the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, and we are also taking action to strengthen the controls on fish escapes, including exploring the introduction of penalties, with the ultimate aim of redistributing the money to support wild salmon conservation and research. And just finally, I know you'll be aware, Alan, but Scottish Ministers have also announced a new Scottish Aquaculture Council. I very much hope Fisheries Management Scotland will take the invite to represent the wild salmon interests on that Council. Thank you.

John Murphy (Salmon Watch Ireland): a question for the Irish delegation. What is the Irish response to the statement about salmon farming, made by the head of the EU delegation at the last NASCO conference?

I'm asking this question in the light of what are obviously very divergent views on the continuation of open cage farming in Ireland, revealed recently in correspondence obtained under Freedom of Information laws between the two ministers with primary responsibility in the area.

Denis Maher (European Union): thank you John, for the question. You're quite right. Our Minister, who is the Minister with responsibility for wild salmonids, has written in fairly robust terms to his counterpart, who has statutory responsibility for aquaculture licensing and regulation. I think I have outlined to this group before, on a number of occasions, that we are not the authority for aquaculture. But that correspondence was issued, and I think we've shared it with you, John, at this stage, so you know the direction of travel. Our Minister is very anxious to engage with his counterpart on the aquaculture side, in the sense that he would like both sectors to coexist and there's no reason why impacts from the aquaculture industry should be so stark, in terms of the wild fish.

That letter, and the impending conversation between the Ministers, is concentrating on the sea lice issue, but also on potential escapes and introgression, and the issue, I know it was raised here earlier in a different context, of the use of feeder fish. So, it'll be a broad discussion, but I think our Minister's adamant that some level of mitigation, or a high level of mitigation, is brought to bear, in terms of the impacts of aquaculture. Thanks.

Nigel Milner (Institute of Fisheries Management): the background to my question is an apparent increase in the focus and intensity of marine pelagic fisheries, coincident with the smolt migration corridor off the western British Isles. So, it's a question, I guess, for the UK delegation. I wonder what their opinion is, of the impact of any marine bycatch in the pelagic fishery on smolt mortality at sea. That's the first part.

And I wanted to know whether they felt the monitoring of that bycatch was adequate to make a reliable assessment of mortality. And if not, are there any plans to do so? In other words, might that be featured in future IPs? Thank you.

Simon Toms (United Kingdom): thank you very much. Yes, it's a very good question, Nigel. And one that we are looking into. In terms of bycatch, the real issue seems to be for gill net fisheries, particularly in the western coast of England, and we have undertaken some research there with Game Wildlife Conservancy Trust. And that has identified that sea trout, in particular, and salmon are both susceptible to bycatch mortality.

We are working with the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities to implement new bylaws to actually protect salmon and sea trout whilst they migrate through inshore coastal areas. In terms of smolt migration, that isn't something we're looking into at the moment, but there

clearly are developing pelagic fisheries, particularly for pilchards, which are an increasingly important catch in the western approaches at the current time. Thank you.

Torfinn Evensen (Norske Lakseelver): I have a question for Norway. It's about habitat protection and restoration and the revision of terms for hydropower production licences. We are now on the doorstep of a revision of approximately 85 salmon rivers which need more water. And we need some more ambitious action, actually. We have an example of this last year; the two revisions were fulfilled.

Revision of terms of the Aura hydropower licence was completed in June 2021. Environmental flow was not implemented due to high cost compared to potential benefits. New terms were implemented and will allow other environmental improvements to be implemented. In the report to NASCO the following is reported as achieved: "Both revisions (Aura / Surna) are completed and are expected to improve conditions for salmon."

To this we must ask, what are the improved conditions specifically for the river Aura? With no environmental flow agreed in the new hydropower regime, salmon are extinct from 8 km of the river system. Furthermore, salmon are attracted to enter Aura on occasionally high waterflows, and so the effect is even worse as both adult salmon and parr are killed when the water stops. This revision of the hydro power regime is valid for the next 30 years under Norwegian law and ESA has now opened a separate investigation to evaluate if this is in accordance with the rules of the water directive.

Raoul Bierach (Norway): yes. Thank you for the question. Well, I think our delegation is well aware of what you just said about this specific case. Although we are aware of it, it's not really in the area of our expertise and, unfortunately, we will have to answer this question in writing at a later stage, if that's acceptable, because we have to involve the responsible authorities in answering this question, and it's not possible just now¹.

Paul Knight (Salmon & Trout Conservation UK²): thank you very much. Just following up, first of all, what Elvar said about cleaner fish. And this is one of the points the NGOs have been trying to put forward for a long time. There can never be any solution. If you think about it logically, you have a problem with fish farming producing lice, which impact wild migratory salmonids, so part of the solution to that is to take fish from the wild, lumpfish, wrasse, to eat the lice. They then get harvested with the salmon, because they can't be used again, for health reasons, they're killed. So, to solve one environmental problem, you're causing another one. It's just ridiculous. Anyway, that's just a bit of a statement, really.

Following on from what Simon Toms just said, about the coastal zone and what Eva was saying earlier on. It's such an important part. We feel that with most jurisdictions, what happens in fresh water is generally covered by legislation. The regulation of that legislation leaves a lot to be desired, in many cases. And the high seas fisheries, the marine zone, as far as we know, is pretty well covered albeit, as Nigel Milner just said, bycatch of post smolts in pelagic fisheries – I think a lot more needs to be known about that. But what we do know is, and what we're increasingly knowing in the UK, is that the coastal zone is so important, particularly from a potential bycatch.

So, my question really is to the UK Government. As we know more and more, from the SAMARCH work (many of you will be familiar with it: SAMARCH is a cross-Channel work between UK and France to find out what happens in estuaries in the coastal zones to our migratory fish), we are increasingly, year on year, finding out that gill nets are causing

¹ The response provided by Norway, in writing, following the Special Session can be found [here](#).

² Salmon & Trout Conservation UK is now known as Wildfish

potentially extreme issues as bycatch, not only with adult fish but actually, gill nets with meshes that should allow juveniles to pass through are catching the smolts as well, because they're rolling up and getting caught and obviously getting killed. That's rather a garbled way of saying, how quickly can we turn in the scientific evidence from projects such as SAMARCH, which have EU and government backing, into action, i.e. in England, Defra does not have complete control, bizarrely, over the inshore coastal area.

So, I guess, to Simon, when will the research from SAMARCH be turned into policy that protects wild salmonids from supposedly unintentional bycatch from other commercial fisheries? Thank you.

Simon Toms (United Kingdom): thanks for the question again, Paul. Yes. We are working closely with GWCT to actually develop the evidence base, first and foremost. It's actually the evidence that you need to be able to influence management within the inshore zone. We are also engaging with the new fisheries management plans that the UK government is developing and we are inputting to that the risk of bycatch as part of that management activity, to try and find the best solution to actually overcome the risks that gill netting, in particular, play. It's been known about for quite some time, but it is very difficult to actually influence the activity on the ground, as you know. It does take time and it does take additional evidence, but we are getting there, I think.

Noel Carr (Federation of Irish Salmon and Sea-Trout Anglers): I direct this question to Norway. What has been done to monitor and prevent the hydro power companies following the terms for production and rules of operation? What action has been taken in salmon rivers where terms and rules have not been followed? Thank you.

Raoul Bierach (Norway): again, unfortunately, I'm not able to answer this question at the moment, but we will try to answer that in writing as fast as possible. Of course there are some enforcement mechanisms in place, but I don't know the details well enough to give a good answer to that question³.

Charlotte Middleton (Fisheries Management Scotland): I have a question for the Norwegian delegation as well, with regards to fish farming and, specifically, the implementation of the Traffic Light System. How could the Norwegian government accept 30 % mortality in wild salmon stocks, particularly in rivers failing to meet their conservation limit, in production areas for farmed salmon?

Raoul Bierach (Norway): unfortunately, I can't answer this question either, because we have not the right persons with us at present, but I promise that we'll answer also this question in writing as fast as we are able⁴. But it's a good question.

Dave Meerburg (Atlantic Salmon Federation): it may be directed at Cathal or it may be directed to Denmark (in respect of the Faroes and Greenland). I sit as the NGO representative in the West Greenland Commission. Cathal has indicated that Greenland has done very good in their IP, and I certainly would congratulate Greenland in recent years on their greatly improved management and control of their fishery.

In their fisheries management plan, they've identified separate quotas for various parts of the fishery, including for East Greenland. In the past, in our West Greenland Commission, in the negotiation of quotas it was inferred that East Greenland was included. It's a very small fishery. In recent negotiations it's very clear that it's a West Greenland Commission dealing with the West Greenland fishery only. And hence, we now have an East Greenland fishery that's

³ The response provided by Norway, in writing, following the Special Session can be found [here](#).

⁴ The response provided by Norway, in writing, following the Special Session can be found [here](#).

somewhat of an orphan. It's not included in the West Greenland Commission. It's not on the Agenda for the North-East Atlantic Commission to discuss.

So, this is a question concerning the IPs, how should the East Greenland fishery be addressed? And for the external performance review, alternatively, is this something that should be discussed in terms of changing the boundaries of the Greenland Commission, from being West Greenland to all of Greenland as a suggestion? And so, I guess I'd like a response, either from Cathal, or maybe from Greenland themselves.

Cathal Gallagher (Chair of the IP / APR Review Group): well, I think that's something that needs a broader discussion because we're in the boundaries of what we can and can't do.

It's not the role of the IP Review Group to question any of the information that's provided to us. We base it on the information that's provided. They might not present on the East Greenland fishery for example, there might not be an action. We just wouldn't have any information to be able to make judgements on that. So, it's a broader discussion that maybe has to go through Council, I think, to understand what should be included or not included.

Steve Sutton (Atlantic Salmon Federation): I have a question that is relevant to both Canada and the United States. It's an aquaculture question, and it concerns reporting of escapes. Both the United States, and at least one part of Canada, have a policy of not requiring the industry to report escapes from salmon farms of less than 50 fish. But in their IPs, both Canada and the US also say that their policy on escapes is consistent with the NASCO goal.

The NASCO goal is zero escapes. So, I'm not sure how you can have, on the one hand, a policy of having zero escapes, and on the other hand, tell the industry that we're not going to worry about any escapes less than 50 fish. I'm wondering if Canada or the United States or both would help me understand their thinking here, in terms of how they're answering the question around whether their policy is consistent with the goal of zero escapes.

Arnaud Peyronnet (President): at the moment we don't have any representatives here, but if they come back, I will get back to that question⁵.

Ken Whelan (Atlantic Salmon Trust): thank you, Mr President. This is more by way of a suggestion than it is a question. I've been struck over recent months in relation to this question of bycatch, in terms of awareness. I stand to be corrected in this, but from memory, we had a wonderful meeting of the SAMARCH group a few weeks ago, in Brittany. I don't think there was a single sea trout recorded for scientific purposes, outside of the fish that were released and tagged along the French coast.

We're also extraordinarily short of information in other areas in France as well, just by way of example, because I do some work on the Loire. In the Loire basin, we are aware of very extensive small traditional fisheries that are really important, in terms of keeping them alive. We know that there are interceptions, but our problem is, at the moment, in terms of the point that Simon made, to try and get changes, we need the data. We need the information.

We had discussions some years ago through the Atlantic Salmon Trust with the Pelagic Advisory Committee, and the skippers of the major pelagic boats were very keen to get some idea of the actual transitory routes of the smolts. Without any regulation, they were willing to actually look at the situation where, in their wheelhouse, if they had a map showing at least potentially where smolts might be at a particular time of the year, then at least a proportion of the boats could be encouraged to stay clear of that particular zone. It does strike me that we're sitting here today, and we all know that in May the red flag should be up, but how many

⁵ A written response was submitted by the United States following the Special Session and can be found [here](#).

fishermen actually know that? How many IFCA's (Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities), in terms of what Simon is now doing? The IFCA's are now becoming aware. But this idea of the use of the NASCO website, I do think there's a lot we could do in raising awareness about the key times, in terms of the transitory movement of our salmon and our salmon smolts, that would help greatly in actually making people aware that they're in a particular area, potentially at a particular time, but most importantly, that any information that they gather, in terms of individual fish or small numbers of fish, could be so valuable to us, in terms of understanding how these bycatches are taken, and where they're taken. So, I do think that there's a public relations component to this, outside of the time we have to wait for the scientific results. And I'm greatly encouraged by the response we got in our discussions with the pelagic fishermen in this regard.

Arnaud Peyronnet (President): thank you very much, Ken, for that insightful comment, as always. I think you're absolutely right. I would agree that there is scope to do much better out there, in terms of raising awareness. And I've seen similar initiatives for other bycatch issues where, if you talk to fishermen and you start engaging them on sensitive bycatch issues, they are willing to participate and to help. So, certainly I presume this is something we should really consider. And thank you for the comment. I see that Doug is back. We had a question from Steve. Steve, would you mind reintroducing your question there, now that the Canadian delegate is there?

Steve Sutton (Atlantic Salmon Federation): it revolves around the reporting of escapes, particularly in New Brunswick: the policy of not requiring the industry to report escapes of less than 50 fish. But, in the Canadian IP, Canada says that their policy on escapes is consistent with NASCO's international goal, which is zero escapes. So, I'm trying to understand how, on the one hand you can say you have a policy of zero escapes, while on the other hand, telling the industry that we're not going to worry about escapes of less than 50 fish.

Doug Bliss (Canada): what I would say is Canada doesn't have a policy. We're trying to summarise the policies of various other jurisdictions. And I guess, the best answer I have to your question is that Dave brought up an earlier question about how come we don't have five IPs. And I think that's something we have to think about. Thank you.

Dave Meerburg (Atlantic Salmon Federation): I'll try to make this shorter, in that I guess the record will show my earlier question in more detail, but basically the issue was, we're seeming to forget about East Greenland in the future, in terms of any NASCO involvement in the regulation of that fishery. It's not on the North-East Atlantic Commission to discuss. It's very clear in the West Greenland Commission that we're only talking about the West Greenland fishery.

Admittedly, it's a very small fishery, but it's something that may have to be addressed by the external performance review, in terms of suggesting a change in boundaries for Greenland, to make Greenland all one, rather than separating West Greenland and East Greenland not being considered at all. Or it may be something that could be taken up with the North-East Atlantic Commission. And I asked the question of Cathal originally, because Greenland was getting a very good score on their IP. And I said, yes, but they're not considering East Greenland anymore. Greenland's certainly considering it. They have a very defined quota. They have a good management plan for it etc. But it's something that's an orphan to NASCO now.

Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): I think, from the point of view of being a very small administration, we would prefer to be in one Commission, instead of two, certainly. But as you point out, we have a management plan that covers all of Greenland, including East Greenland. We have always managed the fishery for

all of Greenland. I think we should also wait for what we get from ICES, because there's a question about East Greenland. Hopefully we will know more by the time we get the answer in, I think, October.

I also want to point out, actually, that last year we continued the citizens sampling programme that we started during the pandemic. And for the first time ever, there were actually samples from salmon caught in East Greenland. So, that is also another point where we get more information. And I think we should wait on making any conclusions until we have more information. And then, we'll see. Thank you.

Responses Received in Writing from the Parties to Questions Posed During the Special Session

Response from Norway to a [Question](#) from Torfinn Evensen

In Aura there is a potential to improve conditions for anadromous fish by physically altering parts of the river stretch from Eikesdalsvatnet and up to a distance above Litlevatnet, especially with regard to migration for sea trout and small salmon. In this part of the river Aura there is always some water, though sometimes low. When implementing only physical measures, however, there may be periods in the winter where low water flows will affect the survival of the fish, and the recruitment of salmon can be expected to vary annually on this stretch. Statkraft has been instructed by the Norwegian Environment Agency to conduct an environmental design study in Aura, and based on the results from this study prepare a plan for mitigation measures to increase production of salmon and sea trout. Relevant physical measures in accordance with the plan may be imposed by the Norwegian Energy Regulatory Authority (NVE) pursuant to conditions regarding thresholds etc.

Response from Norway to a [Question](#) from Noel Carr

In the operational phase, the focus is on the plant being operated within the law and the requirements stipulated in the license. The hydro power companies must establish and apply an internal control system for the facility.

NVE perform physical controls to ensure that the hydropower companies has established an internal control system which secure that requirements following the law, regulations, licenses and orders are complied with. In addition, specific control are made of the water level in the reservoir and the release of the minimum water flow.

In situations where terms and rules are somehow broken, NVE has means for action. Following an accidental breach of the maneuvering regulations for the Alta power plant in the river Alta in January 2017, NVE imposed a violation fee of NOK 200,000 on Statkraft. Violation fees has also been imposed for a few other salmon rivers, but overall, the hydropower owners put a lot of effort in running their powerplants in accordance with rules and regulations.

Response from Norway to a [Question](#) from Charlotte Middleton

The traffic light system is implemented to provide support in determining the aquaculture industry's production capacity on the production area level. In production areas where the sea lice-induced mortality on the wild salmon population is more than 30 %, the production capacity will be reduced by 6 %. In the traffic light system, sea lice induced mortality is measured on a regional level, not on a stock level.

The traffic light system is only one of several measures to preserve the wild salmon, and is not intended to be the sole course of action. The main regulatory framework for preserving wild Atlantic salmon stocks is the quality standard for wild salmon. In addition, there are sea lice regulations for each site, water management plans and national salmon watercourses and fjords.

Response from the United States to a [Question](#) from Steve Sutton

Although U.S. policy has not attained NASCO's goals of 0 escapes, we believe U.S. policies demonstrate clear and considerable progress towards meeting that goal. The Aquaculture industry in areas proximate to endangered Atlantic salmon is held accountable for any escapes that exceed the required reportable levels, or for any aquaculture fish that are found in State of

Maine salmon rivers. As mentioned in the question that was posed to the U.S., any escape event that occurs from a commercial aquaculture facility that exceeds 50 fish 2 Kg or greater, or 25% of biomass for smaller fish is considered a reportable event. It is in the best interest of industry to report escape events as failing to do so would violate the conditions of the operators' permits that could lead to additional restrictive measures imposed on the operator and possibly fines. The reportable level of escapes imposed on the industry was established recognizing that there is a minimum level of escapees that can be reasonably detected by site managers, either through routine inspections and/or changes in food consumption. In addition to the reporting requirement, the U.S. requires genetic marking of all aquaculture salmon, which allows us to track escaped fish back to the company and site from which it originated. When an escaped salmon is captured, the origin of that fish is identified, and a third party audit is triggered to identify operational procedures or equipment deficiencies that may have resulted in the escape event, which also triggers a requirement for the company to rectify any identified problems. In 2021, this third party audit requirement was initiated when four aquaculture origin fish were trapped in the Union River, Maine. As a result of the audit process, it was concluded that the fish likely escaped when the net pens were being depopulated following a low dissolved oxygen mass mortality event. Based on these findings, the responsible aquaculture company identified and modified standard operating procedures with additional precautionary measures to help prevent similar escapes from happening in the future.