



NASCO News 2023

CONSERVING AND
RESTORING WILD
ATLANTIC SALMON

1 MARCH 2022 – 28 FEBRUARY 2023

Welcome from the Secretary

Welcome to the first edition of our new NASCO News Publication! We are very excited to be sharing this with you and hope you find it enjoyable and accessible.

In it we highlight NASCO's ground-breaking work to conserve wild Atlantic salmon. I was delighted with the innovative approach used in 2022 to negotiate the new regulatory measure for the salmon fishery at West Greenland. I am also pleased that NASCO is now working to address the threat of Pacific pink salmon that is spreading alarmingly throughout the North Atlantic. We also report on progress on our many actions and initiatives to conserve wild Atlantic salmon and provide some background information on Atlantic salmon and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, for those of you unfamiliar with us.



Dr Emma Hatfield, Secretary

What a year it has been. NASCO finally got to meet face to face again in 2022 following the Covid-19 pandemic and it was great to see so many of you in person again. For me, the experience over the last three years has shown the importance of building personal relationships and working together, in person. However, I am also very glad that we can now offer virtual and hybrid meetings, reducing the environmental and financial impact of travelling to meetings wherever possible.

The Secretariat has been very busy since the 2022 Annual Meetings, working with NPAFC to organise the International Year of the Salmon Synthesis Symposium, facilitating the third Performance Review of NASCO, hosting various inter-sessional and working group meetings and, of course, preparing for the 2023 Annual Meetings. I would like to thank colleagues for engaging so positively with the Secretariat to progress this work.

So please, read about NASCO's work over the past year, share the articles on social media and let us know what you think of the NASCO News!

The Atlantic Salmon



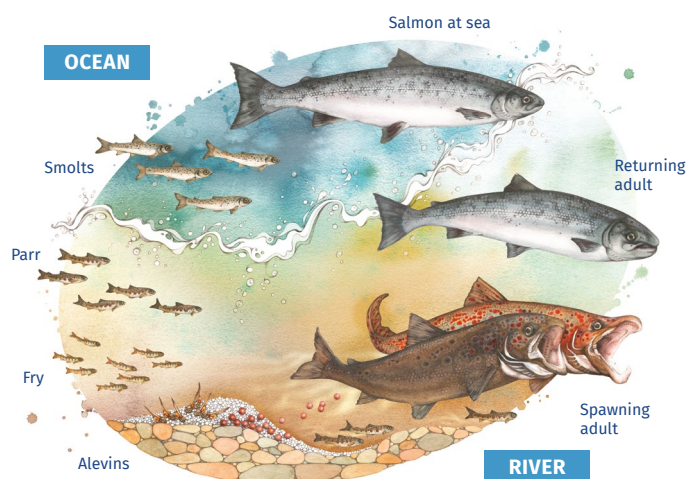
The Atlantic salmon is an iconic and fascinating species, capturing the hearts and imaginations of the communities around it for thousands of years. The extraordinary sight of this magnificent fish leaping over obstacles on its epic homeward migration is truly awe-inspiring and it is of little wonder that the 'King of Fish' features in social ceremonies, art and folklore across the North Atlantic.

The Atlantic salmon leaves its river of birth, travels huge distances across the Atlantic Ocean to its feeding grounds and then finds its way back home to the exact river of its birth to spawn, so completing its unique life cycle. In doing so, it brings essential marine nutrients to the river systems in which it lives.

However, this King of Fish is now threatened. In some areas, it is critically endangered. For example, the number of North American salmon, prior to any fisheries taking place (PFA), has fallen dramatically from around 1.7 million fish in 1975 to approximately 560,000 fish in 2019 (source: [CNL\(22\)09](#)).

There are many [reasons](#) for this decline, several of which are caused, in some way, by the actions of humans. These include overfishing, habitat degradation and aquaculture and related activities. Of course, climate change is also a major contributing factor and will be the topic of a Theme-based Special Session at the 2023 NASCO Annual Meeting.

Governments around the North Atlantic work together through the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization to try to prevent the loss of this amazing species.



--- Migration routes

Who We Are

NASCO - The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

NASCO is an inter-governmental organization whose members are the Contracting Parties of the 1982 Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean.

There are currently seven Contracting Parties: Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Our [vision](#) is to

‘pursue the restoration of abundant Atlantic salmon stocks throughout the species’ range with the aim of providing the greatest possible benefit to society and individuals’.

Under the Convention, no salmon fishing is allowed beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction and, in most areas of the North Atlantic, beyond 12 nautical miles from the coasts. **This has created an enormous area free from directed salmon fishing across the North Atlantic.**

The Contracting Parties work together through NASCO’s four main bodies (the Council and three regional Commissions) and other subsidiary bodies such as the Finance and Administration Committee and the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board.

The Contracting Parties and Regional Commissions



Canada



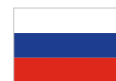
Denmark
(in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)



European Union



Norway



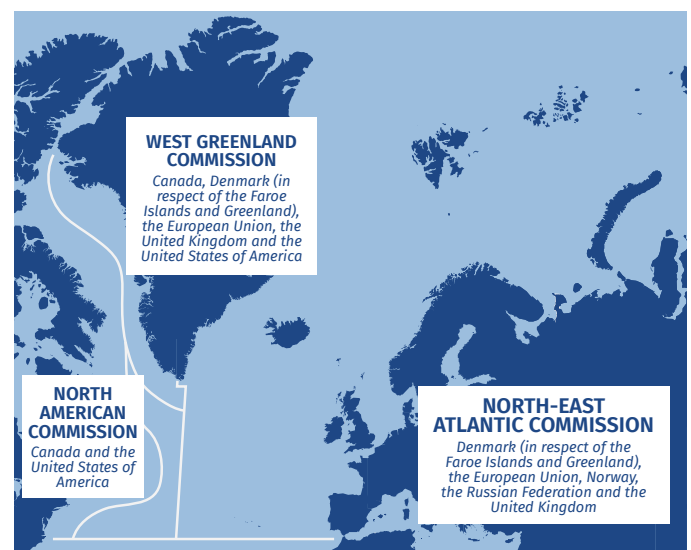
Russian Federation



United Kingdom



United States of America



The Council

The Council is the Organization's overarching body, responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Commissions and providing a space for information exchange across the whole of the North Atlantic. The [Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines](#) adopted by Council guide the work of the Organization in its three key areas of concern: Fisheries Management, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics.

The Commissions

NASCO has three regional Commissions: the North American Commission (NAC), the North-East Atlantic Commission (NEA) and the West Greenland Commission (WGC). It is through the Commissions that agreements are reached on salmon fisheries in the waters of one Contracting Party that catch salmon from rivers in another Contracting Party, such as for the salmon fishery at West Greenland.

Salmon born in rivers on both sides of the North Atlantic are caught in the salmon fishery at West Greenland, and many are from critically endangered stocks. A binding 'regulatory measure' has been agreed for the West Greenland salmon fishery for the period 2022 – 2025, restricting the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) to 27 t (see pg 6 for details), far below the record levels of almost 2,700 t in the 1970s.

A 'Decision' has also been reached in the NEA for the salmon fishery in Faroese waters ([see NEA\(21\)16](#)), covering the 2021 / 22 – 2023 / 24 salmon fishing seasons. Under this Decision, the Faroe Islands agrees to manage any salmon fishery on the basis of advice from the [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea](#) (ICES – which provides NASCO's scientific advice). A similar Decision has been reached for each year since 2001, and as a result **no salmon fishery has taken place at the Faroe Islands since the year 2000.**

At its 2022 Annual Meeting, the NEA recognised the conservation measures taken by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) in the last few decades to better protect Atlantic salmon stocks.

Other NASCO Bodies

The Finance and Administration Committee

The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) deals with the financial and administrative matters related to the running of the Organization. Each Party to NASCO has one member on the FAC and it elects its own Chair from among the Parties. It usually holds its Annual Meeting the day before the main Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO begin.

The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board



The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) was set-up to promote collaboration and co-operation on research into the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality.

Each Party to NASCO has one member on the Board and there is also an NGO representative. The Chair of the Board is elected from among its members.

Over the years, the Board has funded, endorsed and / or developed a number of research programmes, including the flagship SALSEA Programme. It also maintains an inventory of research projects relating to salmon mortality at sea on its website. It usually holds its Annual Meeting the day before the Council and Commission meetings begin.

The Scientific Advisory Group

The Board's Scientific Advisory Group (or SAG) helps the Board to carry out its activities. Each Party to NASCO has a representative on the SAG and there is also an NGO representative. The SAG elects its Chair from among its members.

The SAG meets to carry out specific tasks as and when asked to do so by the Board.

Our Elected Officers



Arnaud Peyronnet

President of NASCO



Kim Damon-Randall

Vice-President of NASCO



Isabelle Morisset

North American Commission Chair
(Photo: David Innes)



Pat Keliher

North American Commission Vice-Chair



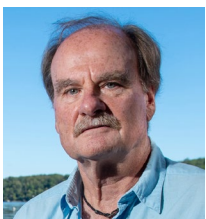
Alexander Kinninmonth,

North-East Atlantic Commission Chair



Helge Dyrendal

North-East Atlantic Commission Vice-Chair



Stephen Gephard

West Greenland Commission Chair (Photo: Cloe Poisson)



Katrine Kærgaard

West Greenland Commission Vice-Chair



Seamus Connor

Finance and Administration Committee Chair



Heidi Hansen

Finance and Administration Committee Vice-Chair



Martha Robertson

International Atlantic Salmon Research Board Chair



Peder Fiske

Scientific Advisory Group Chair

Our Accredited NGOs

As part of our efforts to be inclusive and transparent, we work closely with a number of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) who have been given 'observer status' to the Organization.

These NGOs are invited to attend NASCO's Annual Meetings and, through the NGO Co-Chairs (currently Paul Knight (WildFish) and Steve Sutton (Atlantic Salmon Federation)), the NGOs can make interventions on most of the topics discussed at the Annual Meetings. The NGOs are also invited to provide representatives on many of NASCO's Working Groups and have two permanent members on the Implementation Plan / Annual Progress Report Review Group (see page 12 for details). In return, NASCO benefits from a wide range of expertise and experience from within our NGO community.

Here are just a few of NASCO's accredited NGOs:



For a full list of the NGOs accredited by NASCO, please see our [website](https://www.nasco.int).

Organizations interested in becoming accredited NGOs should contact the Secretary of NASCO (hq@nasco.int).

Our Work

Innovation in the Regulation of the West Greenland Salmon Fishery

Following protracted negotiations in the West Greenland Commission in 2021 which led to the agreement of the 'Interim Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland in 2021', [WGC\(21\)18](#), focus in the Commission once again turned towards agreeing a multi-year measure to apply to the fishery from 2022.

The main sticking points for the homewater members of the Commission remained the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) to be included in the measure and the inclusion of provision to reduce the TAC in one year if the previous year's quota had been overfished.

Three inter-sessional meetings of the Commission were held in advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting and the reports of these meetings, [WGC\(21\)22](#), [WGC\(22\)04](#) and [WGC\(22\)06](#), are available.

To make progress, two Working Groups were established during the June Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission; one to consider the data and percentages related to the closure of the fishery in the past and the other to work on the text of a draft

regulatory measure. The outputs from these Working Groups were considered at the Commission's 2022 Annual Meeting.

Following the Commission's consideration of the Working Groups' deliverables, a new and innovative approach to the regulation of the salmon fishery was agreed. The new measure would be multi-annual, include a TAC of 27 tonnes and, for the first year of its implementation, the West Greenland salmon fishery would be closed when the registered catch reached no more than 49 % of the overall TAC. This is a dynamic process that will incorporate future fishery data and information to allow the closure limit to be refined for each year of the measure.

The 'Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland', [WGC\(22\)10](#), was implemented in 2022 and a report on the fishery, [WGC\(23\)03rev](#), will be considered at the Commission's 2023 Annual Meeting.

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Mark Ives (Cefas Lowestoft Laboratory, UK(E&W)) - Maniitsoq fishing boat (2003)

Header photo - Pekka Tuuri.

Pink Salmon



Pink Salmon, by Panu Orell

Pink salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, are native to the Pacific Ocean but have been introduced to the North Atlantic Ocean. Although stocking of pink salmon has stopped, they have established self-sustaining populations in some regions of the North Atlantic and catches have been reported in all three of NASCO's Commission areas.

ICES has advised that both the number and geographical spread of pink salmon in the North Atlantic has dramatically increased since 2017. In 2017, over 230,000 pink salmon observations were reported to the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS). In 2021 this had more than doubled to over 500,000. Climate change is possibly the driving force behind this explosion in pink salmon numbers and it is very likely that pink salmon will continue to spread, increasing their range and abundance (source: [CNL\(22\)64](#)).

Furthermore, the ICES advice states that pink salmon may pose a number of threats to wild Atlantic salmon in both the freshwater and marine ecosystems, such as competition for food, spawning sites, diseases and aggression.

At its 2022 Annual Meeting, NASCO recognised that pink salmon can pose threats to wild Atlantic salmon and its ecosystems and noted that the explosive growth and

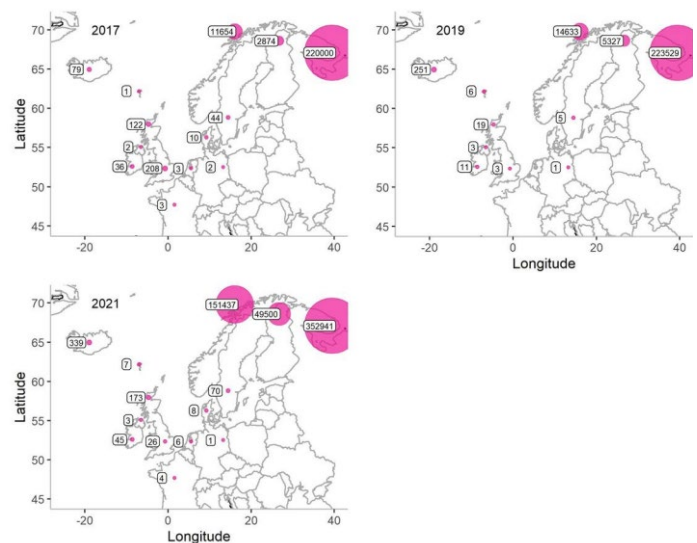


Figure 1. Numbers of pink salmon observed and reported by jurisdiction in the North-East Atlantic Commission area (2017, 2019, and 2021). Source: [CNL\(22\)64](#)

spread of pink salmon numbers from 2019 to 2021 led to pink salmon becoming the most numerous fish species in some rivers, increasing the risk of adverse impacts on wild Atlantic salmon.

In response to these threats, NASCO issued a 'Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area', [CNL\(22\)47](#), as follows:

Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area

RECOGNISING that the pink salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area is an introduced species native to the Pacific Ocean;

AWARE that ICES advised in 2018 ([CNL\(18\)08rev](#)) that introductions to the White Sea basin in northern Russia in the mid-1980s led to the rapid establishment of self-sustaining, odd-year populations in the White Sea rivers in the Murmansk and Archangelsk regions of Russia and that, despite cessation of these introductions, catches of pink salmon, at previously unrecorded levels, were reported in 2017 in various countries around the North Atlantic over a wide geographical area including all three NASCO Commission areas;

RECOGNISING that ICES advised in 2013 ([ICES CM 2013/ACOM:09](#)) that pink salmon can pose threats to wild Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*, and ecosystems in a number of ways and potential threats were either not evidenced and unlikely or occurred for short periods of time, an explosive increase in numbers and spread over a wider geographical area may have the potential to increase the risk of adverse impacts on wild Atlantic salmon in some rivers;

NOTING that, in an increasing number of rivers in the Convention area, self-sustaining populations of pink salmon have become established and there was explosive population growth and geographic spread from 2019 to 2021 to the extent that pink salmon have become the most numerous fish species in some rivers, increasing the risk of adverse impacts in the Convention area;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Steering Committee of the International Year of the Salmon Symposium held in Tromsø in 2019 recommended that NASCO should facilitate co-operation between Parties when there is a need for international collaboration to prevent or reduce the threat to wild Atlantic salmon stocks from invasive species;

RECOGNISING the provisions of the Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean To Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks, [CNL\(06\)48](#), the 'Williamsburg Resolution';

The Council of NASCO urges each Party to take the following actions, consistent with the Williamsburg Resolution:

- ***co-operate to minimise adverse effects of pink salmon on wild Atlantic salmon. Such co-operation could include data sharing and exchange of information on monitoring and surveillance programmes, scientific understanding of impacts and best practice on methods to prevent the spread and establishment of populations of pink salmon without damage to wild Atlantic salmon stocks;***
- ***initiate corrective measures, without delay, when significant adverse effects on wild Atlantic salmon stocks are identified, and that these should be designed to achieve their purpose promptly;***
- ***encourage research and data collection in relation to pink salmon in the Convention area;***

- *develop and distribute educational materials to increase awareness of the risks that pink salmon pose to wild Atlantic salmon and the need for the measures to control their spread; and*

The Council of NASCO agrees to establish a Standing NASCO Working Group on the threat of pink salmon with the aim to agree Terms of Reference for this Group at the Annual Meeting in 2023, taking into consideration the advice from ICES on pink salmon, expected in September 2022, and relevant recommendations of the External Performance Review.

Work has been progressing to develop Terms of Reference for the Working Group and Council will consider 'Draft Terms of Reference for the NASCO Working Group on Pink Salmon', [CNL\(23\)26](#), at its 2023 Annual Meeting.

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The International Year of the Salmon



2022 saw the conclusion of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) initiative, a five-year programme of co-operation, collaboration and outreach across the 'salmosphere', governed by NASCO and its sister organization, the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) in the North Pacific.

Reports on IYS activities can be found on the [NASCO](#) and [IYS](#) websites.

IYS Synthesis Symposium

Salmon in a Rapidly Changing World: Syntheses of the International Year of the Salmon and a Roadmap to 2030

The final year of the IYS was marked by a world-class symposium, held in Vancouver, Canada during 4 – 6 October 2022 to report on and synthesise the accomplishments of the IYS and consider its legacy and recommendations for the future.

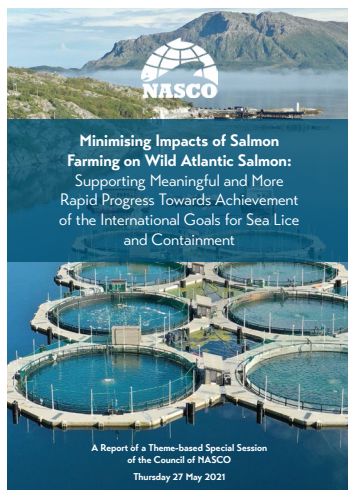
The Symposium welcomed over 200 participants from at least 10 countries across the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Ocean regions who came together to explore the conditions necessary for the resilience of salmon and people in a rapidly changing world.

The NASCO members of the IYS Synthesis Symposium Steering Committee, Livia Goodbrand, Emma Hatfield and Alan Walker, have noted their reflections on the key messages from the Symposium in NASCO document [CNL\(23\)25](#), which will be made available on the [NASCO website](#).

The Impacts of Salmon Farming

NASCO makes statements on salmon farming

In 2021, NASCO held a Theme-based Special Session (TBSS) on 'Minimising the Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon'. A number of presentations were made at the session by invited experts, NASCO Parties, the accredited NGOs and the salmon farming industry. The report of that session can be found by clicking this thumbnail image.



Following the session, its Steering Committee concluded that it considered:

‘that there is now overwhelming evidence across the Northern Hemisphere of the adverse impact of traditional salmon farming methods on wild salmon populations’

The Steering Committee also made a number of recommendations to the Council, including that NASCO issue a statement on aquaculture, promoting the adoption of innovative and alternative technologies. Work on producing a statement in line with this recommendation began at the 2021 Annual Meeting and continued inter-sessionally. At its 2022 Annual Meeting, NASCO agreed a statement, [CNL\(22\)49](#), in relation to salmon farming as follows:

Statement on Salmon Farming from the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) has recognised the adverse impacts of some salmon farming practices and operations on wild Atlantic salmon populations since 1988. Since the early 1980s, salmon farming around the North Atlantic has increased dramatically, from an industry in its infancy producing around five million farmed salmon per annum to over 360 million farmed salmon in 2020. Meanwhile, the abundance of adult wild Atlantic salmon has plummeted from seven million fish in the early 1980s to some 2.8 million fish in 2019 due to a complex variety of stressors caused by human activity affecting both rivers and the marine environment.

In 2006, NASCO adopted a 'Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks', [CNL\(06\)48](#), also known as the 'Williamsburg Resolution'. Under this Resolution, NASCO Parties have agreed to co-operate to minimise the adverse effects to the wild salmon stocks from aquaculture, including:

- minimising escapes of farmed salmon to a level that is as close as practicable to zero; and
- minimising the risk of disease and parasite transmission between aquaculture activities and wild salmon stocks.

Further, NASCO has worked with the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA), to develop 'Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks', [SLG\(09\)5](#). The international goals of this Guidance, agreed jointly by NASCO and ISFA, are:

- 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; and
- 100% farmed fish to be retained in all production facilities.

Despite these efforts, an increasing body of evidence continues to point to the adverse impacts of salmon farming practices and operations on wild Atlantic salmon, both from sea lice and escaped farmed salmon. This message was reinforced in the recent NASCO Theme-based Special Session on 'Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon', held at NASCO's Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting in June 2021.

Following that Theme-based Special Session, the Council of NASCO has agreed that:

Highlighting the conservation needs of wild Atlantic salmon, NASCO urges the development of innovative salmon farming technologies, both at sea and on land, and, where those technologies provide additional environmental protections, encourages their use, or the use of equally effective alternative approaches, to enable further progress toward the attainment of the international goals on effective sea lice management and containment agreed by ISFA and NASCO in 2009. One possible strategy for implementation, should a Party deem it appropriate, would be to prioritise this approach initially in sensitive areas, such as in areas where wild salmon stocks are already severely weakened or threatened, the estuaries of NASCO Class I¹ salmon rivers or salmon rivers and other areas designated by Parties and jurisdictions for conservation and / or protection, and along salmon migration routes. NASCO recognises the importance of Atlantic salmon, both wild and farmed, especially in coastal and rural areas and notes the need for careful continuance and development of farming practices to attain the mutually agreed upon international goals.

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The Steering Committee had also recommended that the statement should affirm 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 and cannot be considered as progress towards the international goals of 100 % containment of farmed fish and 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. Council agreed a second statement at its 2022 Annual Meeting in line with this recommendation. This 'Statement from the Council of NASCO to Parties / jurisdictions with Salmon Farming Following the IP Reviews in November 2021', [CNL\(22\)50](#), was referred to in the letters sent

by the President to each relevant Party / jurisdiction following the November 2022 IP reviews. These letters can be found [here](#).

Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry

In 2022, Council agreed that it would continue to invite the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA) to its Annual Meetings but that if ISFA did not attend, 'Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry' would be removed from the Agenda for that year. ISFA did not respond to the invitation to the 2023 Annual Meeting and, therefore, the item has been removed from the 2023 [Agenda](#).

¹ Rivers are classified as Class I when they are pristine. Class I rivers have no significant human-induced habitat alterations, and neither any history of introductions or transfers of fish into the watersheds nor any fish-rearing operations in the watersheds, and no aquaculture has been conducted in marine cage culture within a specified distance of the river.



Gyrodactylus salaris

The NEA's Working Group on the parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* met in October 2022. This parasite poses a major risk to Atlantic salmon populations. Up to 98 % of salmon parr have been killed by the parasite in infected Norwegian rivers, and a single parasite can rapidly lead to an outbreak. While the parasite prefers Atlantic salmon, it is also found on other species such as farmed rainbow trout, grayling and Arctic char. However, it has a much lower impact on these species and may not be detected without careful monitoring and surveillance. [The Working Group's report](#) will be considered at the NEA's 2023 Annual Meeting.

Citizen Sampling

Citizen sampling in the West Greenland salmon fishery is increasing, with 67 samples provided by citizens in the 2021 fishery and plans to further incentivise its use in 2022. The WGC will receive an update on the 2022 sampling programme during the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Commission. Citizen sampling was first included in the 2020 'Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Sampling Programme' as an alternative to international samplers travelling to Greenland during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tag Winners

The 2022 winners of NASCO's Tag Return Incentive Scheme prizes were announced as William Walsh (Canada – Grand Prize winner of £1,500), John McCarthy (Canada – NAC prize winner of £1,000), Morten Trøbråten (Norway – NEA prize winner of £1,000) and Isboseth Jensen (Greenland – WGC prize winner of £1,000). NASCO operates this scheme to encourage the return of tags and improve recapture information. Around 185 returned tags were entered into the 2022 draws. The winners of the 2023 draws will be announced at the Fortieth Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions.

NASCO's Implementation Plan Process

Over the years, NASCO has adopted a number of Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines that address the Organization's three key areas of concern. In 2005, it was agreed that each Party and jurisdiction should develop an 'Implementation Plan' for meeting the objectives of these agreements and report on the steps taken under their Plans (see [CNL\(05\)49](#) for full details). This was the beginning of NASCO's Implementation Plan Process, one of the most valuable mechanisms that NASCO has developed, of vital importance in strengthening implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Implementation Plans

Under this process, each jurisdiction of NASCO develops a five-year plan, detailing the measures to be taken in relation to:

- the management of salmon fisheries;
- the protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat; and
- the management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics.

These Implementation Plans (IPs) are evaluated by a Review Group comprising representatives of the Parties and NGOs. The Review Group provides feedback on the IPs, including whether it considers each section and area of the IP to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

NASCO is now in its third round of IPs, with the current plans covering the period from 2019 – 2024. The most recent review of the IPs took place in November 2022.

In summary, of the 21 IPs that have been submitted under the third round of review, five have been assessed as satisfactory in each section / area.

Annual Progress Reports

Each year, the Parties and jurisdictions provide a report on the progress made in implementing the measures contained in their IP through an Annual Progress Report (APR). These APRs are also evaluated by the Review Group and feedback is provided to the Parties and jurisdictions. The Review Group meets each April to evaluate the APRs submitted each year. It provides its report to Council, to be considered at a Special Session during the NASCO Annual Meeting.

When published, the reports of the Review Group meetings can be found [here](#), along with further details on the IP Process, the IPs and APRs.

Recap: the 2022 Annual Meetings



Delegates at the 2022 NASCO Annual Meeting

2022 saw NASCO's first ever hybrid Annual Meetings of its Council, Commissions, Finance and Administration Committee and International Atlantic Salmon Research Board. Representatives of the Parties and observers from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), five Inter-Governmental Organizations and 15 NGOs attended the meeting, with 80 delegates meeting in person in Edinburgh and around 30 more joining virtually. It was also the first time delegates have met face to face at a NASCO Annual Meeting since the 2019 Annual Meeting held in Tromsø, Norway.

As such, there was a lot of business to be carried out and the Meetings were very productive. Full details of each can be found in the Annual Reports of the [Council](#), [North American Commission](#), [North-East Atlantic Commission](#), [West Greenland Commission](#), [Finance and Administration Committee](#) and [International Atlantic Salmon Research Board](#) Meetings. The key outcomes of these Meetings are listed below:

- a regulatory measure was agreed for the West Greenland Salmon Fishery in 2022, [WGC\(22\)10](#) (see page 6 for details);
- the NEA confirmed that the Decision on the Faroese salmon fishery adopted in 2021, [NEA\(21\)16](#), would continue to apply in the 2022 / 2023 salmon fishing season;
- a number of statements were agreed:
 - a statement on the threat posed by pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) to wild Atlantic salmon, [CNL\(22\)47](#) (see page 7 for full details); and
 - statements on salmon farming ([CNL\(22\)49](#) and [CNL\(22\)50](#)). Full details can be found on page 10;
- enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples in NASCO was identified as a potential priority area for NASCO. The Parties agreed to hold a Special Session on indigenous perspectives on Atlantic salmon during the 2023 Annual Meeting;
- agreement was reached on funding an independent high-impact, peer-reviewed, scientific review paper on the impact of salmon farming on wild Atlantic salmon;
- a [Special Session](#) was held to consider the recommendations made by the Tromsø Symposium Steering Committee in its Report of the 2019 IYS Symposium. Following the Special Session, NASCO also agreed to update its Stocking Guidelines;



- a number of improvements will be made to enhance the user experience of NASCO's [Rivers Database](#) (see [CNL\(22\)12](#) for full details). The database will provide a map-based overview of the state of Atlantic salmon populations across the North Atlantic with detailed information available for each mapped river and region. Once the revamp is complete, the database will be translated into the official languages of NASCO's Parties;
- alternative ways of working in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic were agreed. See the [Council Report](#) for full details;
- the Board agreed to hold an inter-sessional meeting to consider its vision, scope and purpose. This meeting was held on 24 and 25 January 2023 and the report of that meeting, [ICR\(23\)02](#), will be considered at the Board's 2023 Annual Meeting;
- Council agreed that the President should write to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) and Iceland to invite them to join NASCO. Letters were sent to [France \(in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon\)](#) on 16 December 2022 and [Iceland](#) on 19 December 2022. At the time of writing this report there have been no official responses. However, we understand that responses may be forthcoming. Any further details will be made available in due course; and
- elections were held in each of the Commissions and in the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC). Isabelle Morriset was elected as NAC Chair with Pat Keliher elected as Vice-Chair. NEA elected Alexander Kinninmonth (UK – Scotland) as Chair and Helge Dyrendal (Norway) as Vice-Chair. Stephen Gephard (USA) was re-elected as Chair of the WGC with Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) as Vice Chair and Seamus Connor (UK) was elected Chair of the FAC with Heidi Hansen (Norway) re-elected as FAC Vice-Chair. All have been elected to serve for a two-year period from the close of the 2022 Annual Meetings.

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Roundup from the Secretariat



Administrative News from the Secretariat

We welcomed our newest member of the Secretariat to NASCO HQ in December 2022. Martha Swan is our Administration Assistant and is already proving herself an invaluable part of the team. We hope you all get a chance to meet and welcome her in person at the Annual Meeting!

Financial Status Update

NASCO was in a sound financial position at the end of 2021, with both the Contractual Obligation Fund and Recruitment Fund at their ceilings. Budgetary savings had been made in both 2020 and 2021, mostly due to the lack of in-person meetings and travel.

The 2022 Budget, [CNL\(22\)54rev](#), was set at £663,180. Details on actual expenditure are available in document [FAC\(23\)02](#). A voluntary contribution of £34,842.83 was received from the European Union in 2022 towards the cost of the Performance Review, in addition to £64,410.67 as final payments for the IYS projects. We are very grateful to the European Union for these voluntary contributions.

At the time of writing, contributions have been received from all but two Parties. Administrative issues, which we are trying to resolve, have led to the delay in payments.

Fishing for Salmon in International Waters

Each year, the NASCO Secretariat asks the EU, the NEAFC, NAFO and ICCAT Secretariats and the Icelandic and Norwegian coastguards for any information they may hold on fishing activities on the high seas of the North Atlantic that may undermine the conservation

measures adopted by NASCO. At the time of writing, responses have been received from the EU, NEAFC, NAFO, ICCAT and the Icelandic Coastguard. None had received any reports of such fishing taking place. The last known incidences of fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties were in the early 1990s.

Website and Twitter Account

NASCO's twitter account ([@NASCO_Sec](#)) has over 1,320 followers, 150 more than at the same time last year. You may have noticed that we are becoming more active on Twitter and frequently use it to issue reminders of deadlines and notice of papers of interest. Please make sure you follow us – and let the Secretariat know your twitter handle so we can follow you! It would also be great if you could tag us in any relevant tweets so that we can increase NASCO's reach.

In the period 1 March 2022 – 28 February 2023, the NASCO website saw 14,000 users and 22,000 sessions, with over 52,200 page views. The average session duration was 2 minutes 18 seconds, with 2.36 pages viewed per session. This is an increase in users, sessions and page views from the period 25 April 2021 – 24 April 2022, when there were over 11,000 users and 18,000 sessions on the NASCO website, with over 47,000 page views. Detailed information on the Board's website can be found in document [ICR\(23\)08](#). We hope you are enjoying our website and find it easy to use. If you have any suggestions or feedback please do let us know.

Conferences and Events

Members of the Secretariat attended a number of conferences and events over the course of the year, including:

Fisheries Management Scotland Workshop, 27 July 2022

The Secretary was delighted to attend the River Catchment Biodiversity Improvement Workshop held by Fisheries Management Scotland in July 2022 and had the opportunity to visit the 'Salmon School' art installation at Balmoral Castle. This beautiful piece of performative art was created for the COP26 summit in Glasgow in 2021. The display was brought together by the artist Joseph Rossano and a consortium of wild salmon NGOs.

ICES – Wksalmon2, 30 August – 1 September 2022

The Secretary and Assistant Secretary participated virtually in the second ICES workshop for North Atlantic Salmon At-Sea Mortality (Wksalmon2).

Secretariat Tour of the Forth River Catchment, 6 September 2022

As the Secretariat staff were unable to attend the post-NASCO Annual Meeting tour to the Forth River catchment, we were thrilled to get our own tour in September 2022. We were able to see the habitat improvement works taking place in our local area, including the UK's largest rock ramp fish pass. We would like to thank the Forth Rivers Trust and Alison Baker once again for arranging this for us.

Northern Hemisphere Pink Salmon Expert Meeting, 2 – 3 October 2022

The Secretary and Assistant Secretary took advantage of the IYS Symposium in Vancouver in October 2022 to attend a meeting of northern hemisphere pink salmon experts. This interesting meeting provided an opportunity for some excellent interactions between Pacific and Atlantic scientists working on pink salmon.

International Gathering of Indigenous Salmon Peoples, 3 October 2022

The Secretary was honoured to be invited to attend the third day of this gathering, entitled 'Indigenous Knowledge and Science to Empower Salmon and Salmon Peoples'. This Indigenous-led event convened Indigenous representatives from the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic basins in the spirit of sharing and collaboration and to reaffirm Indigenous rights, as well as to support and strengthen Indigenous roles in salmon management at international and national scales.



'Salmon School', Balmoral Castle



Secretariat Tour of the Forth River Catchment

SAMARCH Workshop, 8 – 9 November (virtual)

The Secretary attended virtually the SAMARCH (Salmonid Management Round the Channel) project's workshop entitled 'Protecting Wild Salmon and Sea Trout in Estuarine, Coasts and Marine Waters: Evidence and Management' on 8 and 9 November 2022.

Scottish Parliament Screening of 'Riverwoods', 10 January 2023

The Assistant Secretary attended a screening of the film 'Riverwoods' at the Scottish Parliament on 10 January 2023. This feature length film, narrated by Peter Capaldi, tells the story of Scotland's Atlantic salmon. Further information on the film can be found [here](#).

Liaison with other RFMOs

The Secretary attended, in person, the Ninth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariat's Network (RSN) in Rome, Italy during 2 – 3 September and virtually on 9 September 2022. The Secretariat also contributed to the RSN magazine issued in December 2022. The magazine, including NASCO's contributions, can be found [here](#).

The Secretary has remained in close contact with other RFMOs, including NAFO, NEAFC, NPAFC, ICCAT, CCAMLR, PSC, SPRFMO and IWC. The Secretariats of these organizations share information about conducting business in the context of a global pandemic and other world events. This has allowed NASCO to learn from other RFMOs to improve practices and allowed other RFMOs to learn from NASCO.

UN-related Activities, including the FAO

The Secretariat contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, as mandated by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/72 of 9 December 2021.



Dr Emma Hatfield at the FAO buildings in Rome

Coming Up

A Brief Look at the Major Issues Coming Up in the Next 12 months

The Fortieth Annual Meeting of NASCO

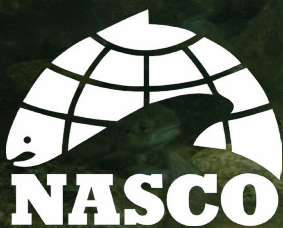
The Fortieth Annual Meeting will be held in Moncton, Canada during 5 – 8 June 2023, with virtual participation for some delegates. There will be a busy schedule this year, including special sessions on indigenous perspectives on Atlantic salmon, the third performance review, the IPs and APRs and a Theme-based Special Session on Climate Change! The Board will also need to make decisions on its future vision, scope and purpose based on the outcomes of its [Inter-Sessional Meeting](#).

Follow Up on the Third Performance Review of NASCO

A panel of independent experts was tasked with conducting the third performance review of the work of NASCO in 2022. Council will consider its [final report](#) in a Special Session at its 2023 Annual Meeting.

Preparations for the Fourth Reporting Cycle

The current cycle of reporting under Implementations Plans comes to an end in 2024. Council will need to consider the process for the next reporting cycle.



NASCO News 2023

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