



CNL40.2196

18 December 2023

[REDACTED]

### **Status of the Implementation Plan from the United States**

Dear [REDACTED]

In the context of the persisting decline of Atlantic salmon populations across the North Atlantic, NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines are essential for ensuring that the objectives of the NASCO Convention 'to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon' can be met.

As you are aware, the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines by the NASCO Parties is achieved through the preparation and submission of Implementation Plans, together with Annual Progress Reports. Although the United States did not submit a revised Implementation Plan for review in either 2022 or 2023, I write to remind you of the outcome of the review carried out in 2021.

In 2021, the Review Group found the Implementation Plan from the United States to be substantially improved and requiring little further work for it to become fully satisfactory. However, the sections requiring further work all relate to the Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics. I attach the detailed outcome of the review of the Implementation Plan from the United States, along with a summary.

As you know, NASCO is highly concerned by the impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon stocks, and this has led over the years to the adoption of a number of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines specifically seeking to minimise these impacts. These concerns were expressed again in 2022 when the NASCO Council agreed a statement on salmon farming, [CNL\(22\)49](#), which states:

*'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 I<sup>1</sup> 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.'*

The Council also agreed a NASCO statement to Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farming, [CNL\(22\)50](#), which states:

*'all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should produce SMART actions in their Implementation Plans (IPs) for the management of sea lice and escapes from aquaculture facilities. These actions should reflect sustained progress towards meeting the international goals of 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 of wild salmonids attributable to the farms. Monitoring of sea lice of farmed fish and escapes should be a secondary activity to help better assess the effectiveness of the SMART management actions with the primary objective being the assessment and mitigation of impacts on wild fish';*

and

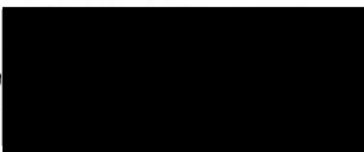
*'IPs where such management actions are not forthcoming will not be considered under the review process as progressing the relevant Party or jurisdiction towards achieving the international goals'.*

In light of these Statements and of the shortcomings identified by the 2021 Review, the United States may wish to revise its Implementation Plan further. If so, please inform me (via the Secretariat) and submit it by 1 November of any year during this third reporting cycle. However, work to begin deliberations around the fourth reporting cycle will likely begin around that time and the Review Group may not, therefore, have the time to carry out any further reviews of IPs under the third reporting cycle.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the deadline for the submission of the Annual Progress Report from the United States, based on its Implementation Plan, by 1 April 2024.

This letter will be posted on the NASCO website shortly.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> 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.