

	<p>Council</p> <p><i>Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2023 EU – Germany</i></p>	<p>CNL(24)30</p>
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Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2023

The Annual Progress Reports allow NASCO to evaluate progress on actions taken by Parties / jurisdictions to implement its internationally agreed Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and, consequently, the achievement of their objectives and actions taken in accordance with the Convention. The following information should be provided through the Annual Progress Reports:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plan;
- actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

*In completing this Annual Progress Report please refer to the **Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(18)49.***

These reports will be reviewed by the Council. Please complete this form and return it to the Secretariat **no later than 1 April 2024.**

Party:	European Union
Jurisdiction / Region:	Germany

1: Changes to the Implementation Plan
1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan (<i>Where changes are proposed, the revised Implementation Plans should be submitted to the Secretariat by 1 November.</i>)
1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.
<p>From 10 to 12 May, a salmon conference was held at the Landau campus of the Rhineland-Palatinate Technical University of Kaiserslautern-Landau. Experts from Denmark, Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands presented the status of the reintroduction of Atlantic salmon in the Rhine and other German rivers and discussed the prospects and challenges. The event was part of the GeMoLaR project - Genetic Monitoring for the reintroduction of Atlantic Salmon in the Rhine Basin - a project funded by the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The aim of the conference was to promote salmon recovery projects in the Rhine basin and to improve networking between stakeholders. Overall, the conference offered a wide range of information to a broad spectrum of people from science, authorities and practice. The focus was on salmon in the Rhine, but the many references to other topics and to the international level provided a very suitable framework for bundling and supporting efforts to reintroduce salmon in the Rhine.</p>

2: Stock status and catches.				
2.1 Provide a description of any new factors that may affect the abundance of salmon stocks significantly and, if there has been any significant change in stock status since the development of the Implementation Plan, provide a brief (200 word max) summary of these changes.				
<p>1. Rhine catchment area The trend of fewer detections of salmon returns observed since 2015 continued in 2023 (177 salmon in total), although the numbers were slightly better than in 2021 and 2022 (even significantly better on the River Sieg). However, it is important to know that the monitoring in 2023 was restricted due to technical problems at some monitoring stations and due to the high discharges in November 2023. The number of detected salmon should not be equated with the actual total number of returnees (which is supposed to be much higher). In 2023, there was less stocking overall due to technical problems in some breeding facilities. Overall 1.430.144 young salmon have been stocked.</p> <p>2. Weser catchment Area There were no significant changes in the status of salmon stocks in the Weser catchment. Two pink salmon have been reported for the Weser basin. These are the only two known records of pink salmon for Germany in 2023.</p> <p>3. Elbe catchment area There have been no significant changes in the status of salmon stocks in the Elbe river and in the respective tributaries. One piece of good news from the Lower Elbe region, however, is the detection of approximately 30 juvenile salmon in a tributary of the Schwinge (a tributary of the tidal Elbe) in 2023, suggesting small-scale natural reproduction in the autumn of 2022, especially as no salmon stocking introduced there. Remarkable news came from the Upper Elbe. Here the salmon migration in the 2023 spawning season was 4-6 weeks later than in the last 20 years, despite no changes in stock management.</p>				
2.2 Provide the following information on catches: (nominal catch equals reported quantity of salmon caught and retained in tonnes ‘round fresh weight’ (i.e. weight of whole, ungutted, unfrozen fish) or ‘round fresh weight equivalent’).				
(a) provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2023 (tonnes)	In-river	Estuarine	Coastal	Total
	0,075 t by recreational fisheries in Lower Saxony			
(b) confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2022 (tonnes)	0,05t by recreational fisheries in Lower Saxony			
(c) estimated unreported catch for 2023 (tonnes)	No estimates provided for unreported catches			
(d) number and percentage of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2023	Targeted catch and release in recreational salmon fisheries does not exist in Germany.			

3: Implementation Plan Actions.

3.1 Provide an update on progress on actions relating to the Management of Salmon Fisheries (section 2.9 of the Implementation Plan).

*Note: the reports under 'Progress on action to date' should provide a **brief overview** of each action. Please report in relation to the reporting year only or the most relevant recent year. For all actions, provide **clear and concise quantitative** information to demonstrate progress. In circumstances where quantitative information cannot be provided for a particular action because of its nature, a clear rationale must be given for not providing quantitative information and other information should be provided to enable progress with that action to be evaluated. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.*

Action F1:	Description of action (as submitted in the IP)	A targeted and monitored attempt to build up a self-sustaining salmon stock is under implementation in the Agger river system. River Agger is a tributary of the river Sieg in the Rhine catchment area. The productive capacity of the Agger river system is sufficient to carry a vital salmon population. The aim of the project is to examine whether it is possible to develop a self-sustaining salmon stock under the current framework conditions in a tributary of the Rhine.
	Expected outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Development and verification of a vital salmon population in the Agger river system. The objective is to generate an average fry density of one individual/m ² in early summer, and an average output of 9.000 downstream migrating smolts.
	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement (as submitted in the IP)	Experts of the North Rhine-Westphalia State Agency for Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection (LANUV NRW) and the Fish Migration Program NRW annually evaluate the results of the monitoring (rotary screw trap, electro fishing) in the Agger river system and decide on further measures. Restocking measures in the main stream, corresponding to natural reproduction rate, no restocking in the tributaries. Comparison of the development of natural reproduction and verification with genetic analyses.
	Progress on action to date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)	Electro fishing campaigns resulted in zero fry density (born 2022/2023). The results reflect the persistently low number of returning adult salmon in the Agger system: Due to low outflows during the migration period, only six were recorded in 2022, and only four in 2021. It was decided to support the lacking natural brood in the rivers Agger and Sülz (tributary) through a restocking experiment with young descendants of Skjern Å parent fish (122,500 summer parrs, produced from imported eyed ova from Denmark). No restocking in all other tributaries. Due to technical problems, monitoring of downstream migrating smolts (born 2021/2022) leaving the Agger system allowed no estimate of the number of individuals migrating in 2023. According to conservative estimates from genetic studies in previous years, the proportion of natural brood in the smolt population in the Agger is around 5 %.
	Current status of action	Ongoing

	<i>(Please note: 'Completed' means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as 'Ongoing')</i>	
	If 'Completed', has the action achieved its objective?	
Action F2:	Description of action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	The Nahe river is the last major salmon project river in the middle section of the Rhine, where no fishing ban zone has yet been established at his mouth into the Rhine. There is a great need for action to designate a fishing ban zone in this sensitive area to protect migrating salmon during the salmon run.
	Expected outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Avoidance of illegal catches at the Nahe river mouth.
	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	The fisheries surveillance authority of Rhineland-Palatinate will supervise the implementation of the measure.
	Progress on action to date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)</i>	According to the authority responsible for the designation of the closed area, efforts to implement measure F2 are still ongoing. It has been assured that the implementation of the measure is underway and will be implemented as soon as possible.
	Current status of action <i>(Please note: 'Completed' means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as 'Ongoing')</i>	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the action achieved its objective?	

3.2 Provide an update on progress on actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration (section 3.5 of the Implementation Plan).

*Note: the reports under ‘Progress on action to date’ should provide a **brief overview** of each action. Please report in relation to the reporting year only or the most relevant recent year. For all actions, provide **clear and concise** quantitative information to demonstrate progress. In circumstances where quantitative information cannot be provided for a particular action because of its nature, a clear rationale must be given for not providing quantitative information and other information should be provided to enable progress with that action to be evaluated. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.*

Action H1:	Description of action (as submitted in the IP)	The German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development launched the program “Ecological Connectivity in Federal Waterways” in 2012. It’s objective is to preserve and restore the ecological connectivity at about 250 barrages in German federal waterways to improve fish migration. Many of the proposed measures in the catchments of Rhine, Ems, Weser and Elbe are located in the migration routes to current or potential salmon reintroduction rivers. Hence, these activities have a high priority for reintroduction of salmon in Germany.
	Expected outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Increased accessibility of spawning and juvenile habitats.
	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement (as submitted in the IP)	For all the implemented measures, monitoring is provided. Here, the functioning of the fish passes will be tested for all relevant fish species.
	Progress on action to date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)	<p>The construction works of a fish pass at the barrage of Kostheim/River Main have been successfully finished in 2023. Additionally, the measure at the barrage Steinhavel/Havel was continued in 2023. Construction works are expected to be finished in summer 2024.</p> <p>Due to safety risks, the southern fishway at the barrage of Geesthacht (Elbe) had to be closed in 2019. After four years of restoration, the fish pass was successfully reopened in 2023 for migrating fish.</p> <p>The other more than 50 measures prioritized in German waterways were supported by ongoing and extensive consultation</p>
	Current status of action (Please note: ‘Completed’ means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as ‘Ongoing’)	Ongoing
	If ‘Completed’, has the action achieved its objective?	

Action H2:	Description of action (as submitted in the IP)	Restoring of up- and downstream river connectivity and habitat quality is highly relevant for a successful salmon reintroduction in the German Rhine catchment area. In this context, many efforts are needed to reopen parts of the former salmon distribution area in order to establish stable salmon stocks on it.
	Expected outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Increased accessibility of spawning and juvenile habitats, increased habitat quality and decreased mortality due to barrages and hydropower plants.
	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement (as submitted in the IP)	For all the implemented measures, monitoring is provided. Here, especially the functioning of the fish passes will be tested for all relevant fish species. The enforcement of the measures is reviewed and evaluated a six-year cycle in the River Basin Management Plans management plans generated according to the EU Water Framework Directive.
	Progress on action to date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)	The construction of fish passes at the barrages in Rhinau and Marckolsheim began in autumn 2022 and June 2023 respectively. Ecological continuity at 3 sills in the loops at Gerstheim and Rhinau in the Upper Rhine will be restored until 2026 within a French-German Interreg-project. In the Netherlands, construction work on the fish migration river in the Afsluitdijk is making progress and in Switzerland, work is continuing on measures in the catchment area that will take effect after the restoration of river continuity in the Upper Rhine. Two fish ladders in the Sauer in Luxembourg (tributary of Moselle) have been completed. Further measures in the whole catchment are ongoing and a new inventory on the state of implementation is currently carried out at ICPR.
	Current status of action (Please note: 'Completed' means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as 'Ongoing')	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the action achieved its objective?	
Action H3:	Description of action (as submitted in the IP)	One of the central tasks in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in the Elbe catchment area is to establish river connectivity for fish. The coordination of this important water management issue takes place in the so-called supra-regional priority water network. The fulfilment of these tasks is of paramount importance for the reintroduction of salmon in the Elbe and its tributaries.
	Expected outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Improved access to spawning grounds and decreased mortality due to barrages and hydropower plants.

	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	For all the implemented measures, monitoring is provided. Here, the functioning of the fish passes will be tested for all relevant fish species. The enforcement of the measures is reviewed and evaluated a six-year cycle in the River Basin Management Plans management plans generated according to the EU Water Framework Directive.
	Progress on action to date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)</i>	In 2023, the planning and implementation of measures prioritised for the third implementation period (2022-2027) of the International River Basin Management Plan for the Elbe river basin district continued. The most important measure in 2023 for the Elbe river was the reopening of the southern fishway at the barrage of Geesthacht (see also H1). The weir is the only transverse structure in Germany that hinders salmon migration in the main stem of the River Elbe.
	Current status of action <i>(Please note: 'Completed' means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as 'Ongoing')</i>	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the action achieved its objective?	
Action H4:	Description of action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	The German Ministry for Food and agriculture is funding a project, which is dealing with food web manipulation as a tool for the restoration of the hyporheic zone in eutrophicated rivers. <u>Inter alia</u> , this project is addressing the regulation of avian predation, as a central issue. The spatial transferability and thus the potential nationwide applicability of the project results is to be achieved by an experiment in 5 sections of two rivers (one of them is a salmon project river), in which an increased fish stock is created by a combination of stocking and cormorant deterrence. Cormorant predation will be quantified and the direct top-down effects is going to predicted using a model. A user's guide will be drawn up which presents the measure, describes its possible implementation and presents the effects and limits of the measure. This will be accompanied by intensive public relations work (press, scientific publications, training events, public lectures), which will mainly focus on the applicability and potential impacts of food web manipulation as an innovative measure to protect biodiversity.
	Expected outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	For the first time, this project generates scientifically reliable data relating to a sustainable cormorant management in

		Germany. Therefore, the project is among others also relevant for the reintroduction of Atlantic salmon.
	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement (as submitted in the IP)	Monitoring of the effectiveness and enforcement of the measure is laid down in the project contract and is implemented by the contractor within the framework of the project.
	Progress on action to date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)	Action H4 was completed on schedule at the end of 2022. (See APR 2022
	Current status of action (Please note: 'Completed' means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as 'Ongoing')	Completed
	If 'Completed', has the action achieved its objective?	Yes

3.3 Provide an update on progress on actions relating to Aquaculture, Introductions and Transgenics (section 4.11 of the Implementation Plan).

*Note: the reports under 'Progress on action to date' should provide a **brief overview** of each action. Please report in relation to the reporting year only or the most relevant recent year. For all actions, provide **clear and concise** quantitative information to demonstrate progress. In circumstances where quantitative information cannot be provided for a particular action because of its nature, a clear rationale must be given for not providing quantitative information and other information should be provided to enable progress with that action to be evaluated. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.*

Action A1:	Description of action (as submitted in the IP)	Undertake a co-ordinated genetic monitoring in the entire Rhine catchment area.
	Expected outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Find out the most successful genetic management and stocking strategies for a successful reintroduction of salmon in the Rhine catchment area. Genetic monitoring will allow assessing 1. the efficiency of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stocking measures performed;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different strains that are stocked; • different stocking strategies (age, parents used, the origin of broodstock etc.) <p>the relative importance for stocking of the different streams of the Rhine catchment.</p>
	Approach for monitoring effectiveness & enforcement <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Experts annually exchange information within the ICPR EG FISH about the genetic monitoring of salmon and optimize the genetic management of salmon in the Rhine catchment area.
	Progress on action to date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure, or other justified evaluation, of progress. If sub-actions are completed during the reporting year, this should be made clear. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)</i>	<p>The genetic analysis of samples that are taken during control fishing show that most salmon (0+, 1+) originate from stocking measures. However, a small number of parrs/smolts in several German rivers cannot be assigned to any hatchery and might originate from natural spawning.</p> <p>In May 2023 a conference has been organized in Landau including workshops and presentations from various national as well as international experts on salmon.</p> <p>The effects of stocking time/size on survival and condition of (pre-)smolts was investigated in several rivers in Baden-Wuerttemberg using parentage assignment. Findings suggest that early stocking could increase body-size at migration stage at some locations and will be further investigated.</p> <p>An intensified and coordinated sampling of returning salmon has been coordinated between countries and is conducted from 2021 to 2024. Unfortunately, the number of returners was low and not many samples were available for the genetic analysis. However, from about 50% of the returners the parents could be identified in a hatchery. The returning salmon from 2023/24 (the season with highest returning rates since 2021) have been sampled and analysis is ongoing.</p>
	Current status of action <i>(Please note: 'Completed' means that the overall action is complete for the lifetime of the third reporting cycle. If it is an ongoing action that is reported on annually, it should be marked as 'Ongoing')</i>	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the action achieved its objective?	
4: Additional information required under the Convention		
4.1 Details of any laws, regulations and programmes that have been adopted or repealed since the last notification.		
4.2 Details of any new commitments concerning the adoption or maintenance in force for specified periods of time of conservation, restoration, and other management measures.		

4.3 Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.
4.4 Details of any new actions to invite the attention of States not party to the Convention to matters relating to the activities of its vessels which could adversely affect salmon stocks subject to the Convention.
4.5 Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.
North American Commission Members only:
4.6 Details of any new measures to minimise bycatches of salmon originating in the rivers of the other member.
4.7 Details of any alteration to fishing patterns that result in the initiation of fishing or increase in catches of salmon originating in the rivers of another Party except with the consent of the latter.