

The background of the slide is a vibrant underwater photograph of several salmon swimming over a rocky riverbed. The water is a clear, bright green, and the rocks are various shades of grey and brown. The salmon have silvery scales with prominent red and black spots. One salmon in the center is swimming towards the left, while others are positioned above and to the right.

CNL(24)69 Drafting NASCO's Draft Strategy and Action Plan

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WGFON Special Session

3 June 2024

WGFON – The Genesis

In the 2023 Annual Meeting, Council discussed what the third performance review offered for NASCO and decided that it offered the following:

- the opportunity to take stock of the achievements of NASCO and also its constraints
- the chance to refocus NASCO's work to respond more effectively to the pressures salmon face
- to consider NASCO's priorities given its unique role
- to relaunch NASCO's focus on restoring and conserving wild Atlantic salmon
- to reinvigorate NASCO, with a special focus on restoration and conservation
- the vital importance of outreach and embedding this in the way NASCO works in future

WGFON – The Decisions

Council then established the Working Group on the Future of NASCO (WGFON) at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

The ToRs for WGFON charged the Group to:

- develop a '**Strategy** and supporting **Action Plan**' directed at the urgent need to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage wild Atlantic salmon in the context of the climate change emergency

and consider:

- the recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel, including the considerations as laid out in document CNL(23)18, as well as the Tromsø Symposium, Theme-based Special Sessions (including the 2023 TBSS on climate change), observations from the 2023 Special Session on Indigenous perspectives and other relevant recommendations and information'

and

- the Strategy and Action Plan in the context of developing the fourth reporting cycle and develop Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Future Reporting

WGFON – The Charge

The ToRs for WGFON further stated:

*‘The **Strategy** will, among other things, describe the state of salmon and the key pressures they face, outcomes that need to be delivered to restore and conserve salmon populations and NASCO’s key focus areas’*

and

*‘The **Action Plan** would identify specific and measurable actions that NASCO can take to advance the key focus areas of the strategy.’*

In addition, the ToRs charged the WGFON to:

*‘Establish a process to monitor delivery of the NASCO **Action Plan**, on an annual basis.’*

WGFON – The Headlines

- Clearly defined NASCO's Unique Role
- Identified succinct and updated vision and mission statements
- Developed a strategic goal for the first time that outlines what NASCO will do over the next ten years to prioritise and drive meaningful actions for wild Atlantic salmon
- Identified five clear objectives which form the framework for the draft action plan to address the 83 recommendations that we have from the various processes we have undertaken since 2019

WGFON I Workshop - Brussels – 3-5 October 2023

- participants were charged with a pivotal role in shaping the future direction of NASCO in the face of the ongoing climate change emergency
- the workshop comprised eight facilitator-guided activities to respond to the opportunities identified by the Council for NASCO to explore:
 - taking stock of the achievements of NASCO and also its constraints
 - how to refocus NASCO's work to respond more effectively to the pressures salmon face
 - the consideration of NASCO's priorities given its unique role
 - how to reinvigorate NASCO, with a special focus on restoration and conservation; and
 - the vital importance of outreach and embedding this in the way NASCO works in future
- the aim was to enable a strategy to be identified that leads to the articulation of specific, measurable actions that NASCO can undertake to further the objectives of the strategy
- the workshop resulted in the development of a draft unique role, draft mission and vision statements, and draft objectives

IN 10 YRS / *Reimaging Stepwise of 2022*

- Members Returned + FR 3 ICL
- Indigenous Youth + Broad engagement
- We ARE BETTER known
- More efficient + effective in ANNUAL MEETINGS
- MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS
- SALMON RIVER DATABASE ONLINE
- Better use of Internal Resources
- PR: People understand Salmon Situation ♥ SALMON

- Progress Towards Restoration

- Helped People through Helping salmon

- THE FORTH

- Communities engaged

POST WGFON I – NASCO's Preliminary Strategies



The initial **desired outcomes** then were for NASCO to:

- be recognised as the premier global authority on wild Atlantic salmon
- use appropriate expertise to create / update and share Best Management Practices
- provide the framework for decision making / management / influencing
- create North Atlantic-wide information to educate and inform public and political awareness
- foster and improve collaboration with other IGOs and other relevant entities and
- work in an efficient, effective, inclusive, and transparent manner

WGFON II Copenhagen – 7-9 February 2024 - A Ten Year (Draft) Strategy for NASCO



NASCO's 'Unique Role, Vision and Mission' were refined at WGFON II to produce a revised:

- **Vision:** The decline of wild Atlantic salmon has reversed and populations are recovering to healthy and resilient levels across their range
and
- **Mission:** NASCO will support and promote urgent and transformative actions directed at the protection, conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon throughout the species' range
and, for the first time, a
- **Strategic Goal:** Within the next 10 years, NASCO's goal is to **prioritise and drive actions** necessary to slow the decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations and demonstrate that restoration is possible

WGFON II – Objectives to achieve NASCO's Strategic Goal



NASCO will:

1. Ensure the best evidence-based information is compiled and accessible to address the critical challenges and threats to wild Atlantic salmon at the North Atlantic scale, which are amplified by the climate crisis
2. Use the information gathered through Objective 1 to ensure that guidance reflecting best management practice is produced and readily available to those seeking to take action to protect wild Atlantic salmon
3. Actively promote sustainable conservation and management practices by sharing best practice and holding Parties and jurisdictions accountable in implementing NASCO recommendations and guidance
4. Raise awareness and foster broad collaborative efforts with other international organizations and civil society to encourage decision-makers, the public, private sector and the scientific community to work towards solutions that overcome the challenges wild Atlantic salmon face and
5. Improve its organizational practices and work in an efficient, effective, inclusive, and transparent manner

ACTION PLAN

WGFON I – Drafting an Action Plan for NASCO



- Recommendations were grouped under four key pressures and prioritised

CLIMATE CHANGE	RELEVANCE	IMPACT	TIMING
EPR8 NASCO considers 4 recs from EPR on CC	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
T1 NASCO identifies strategic activities to deal with CC and its cascading effects on salmon and salmon habitat	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS1(1) NASCO sets up Working Group for 3 years to co-ordinate its CC activities with WG with ToRs	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS1(2) NASCO produces an overarching statement setting out its commitment to consider CC impacts.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS1(3) NASCO incorporates best practice related to CC and salmon management into its relevant Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS1(4) NASCO recognises CC research and facilitates funding.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS2(3) Parties / jurisdictions consider incorporating 6 identified best practices as part of their climate adaptive management strategy	2 3 4 (FOR PARTIES)	2 3 4	2 3 4
IVS2 RFMOs share a common challenge in responding to CC and can benefit by co-ordinating their efforts.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES			
EPR1 NASCO investigates the reasons for the continuing decreasing PFAs in the NEAC	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR2 NASCO ensures no unreported catches in the NAC and estimates effect of mortality/lower reproductive success associated with release of fish in rec fisheries.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR4 NASCO arranges review of most appropriate basis to set CLs for stock complexes and for individual river stocks.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR5 NASCO requests ICES to ensure that its catch statistics on catch and release fisheries acknowledge the fact that some of the released salmon will die.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR6 NASCO commissions an assessment of bycatch in large-scale small pelagic fisheries in the North-East Atlantic.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR10 NASCO should be updated regularly on coastal, estuarine, in river MSF operations and the justification for their continued prosecution.	2 3 4 ALREADY BEING DONE.	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR11 NASCO considers developing innovative approaches re: biodiversity and assessment of genetic introgression deploying available technologies.	2 3 4 (FOR PARTIES)	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR12 NASCO addresses the absence of reliable data on bycatch of salmon in pelagic fisheries.	2 3 4 EPR 6	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR14 NASCO to operationalise paragraph 5 of the 1998 Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach (CNL98)46 for the by-catch of salmon in other fisheries.	2 3 4 EPR 6 + 12	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR24 The Panel concurs with and endorses Recommendations EPR 63 and 64 from the second PR and encourages NASCO to continue its associated implementation actions.	2 3 4	2 3 4 ALREADY DONE ANNUALLY	2 3 4
EPR25 NASCO and its Parties strengthen their efforts to decrease unreported catches in all salmon fisheries conducted by NASCO Parties.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
EPR26 NASCO considers adopting port State measures if there are indications of significant IUU fishing for salmon	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS2(2)/IP14 Parties / jurisdictions consider undergoing an aligned exercise to assess which stressors to wild Atlantic salmon would be the most relevant to them (like Norway's).	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
TBSS2(5) Parties / jurisdictions implement management to reduce anthropogenic stressors on salmon populations.	2 3 4 (FOR PARTIES)	2 3 4	2 3 4
IP11 Jurisdictions provide information on co-operative approaches to the management of salmon catchments that are shared with other jurisdictions.	2 3 4	2 3 4	2 3 4
	2 3 4 ALIGNED & RELEVANT 2 3 4 STILL ACTIONABLE 2 3 4 NOT RELEVANT	2 3 4 HIGH 2 3 4 MEDIUM 2 3 4 LOW	2 3 4 1 Reporting cycle 2 3 4 1 Reporting cycle 2 3 4 1 Reporting cycle

POST WGFON I – Drafting an Action Plan for NASCO



Following the workshop, the President and Secretary then:

- considered all recommendations
- identified proposed actions and linked them to the corresponding recommendation(s)
- consolidated the recommendations where possible under related proposed actions
- identified the priority (as it relates to the proposed action) informed by the discussion during the WGFON I meeting and subsequent comments
- suggested a lead body ultimately responsible for carrying out the action(s) and
- identified current status where possible

This led to the production of the ‘First Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO’, WGFON(24)03, which was circulated to WGFON members for wider discussion within their delegations

If any Party disagreed substantively with the document, it was asked to come prepared to the WGFON II meeting with a fully fleshed out alternative

No alternatives were provided so it was this first draft that was then discussed at the second WGFON meeting to produce the agreed ‘Draft of An Action Plan for NASCO’, CNL(24)14

WGFON II – Drafting an Action Plan for NASCO



- in the ‘Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO’, CNL(24)14, the **five Objectives** group and address a total of **83 Recommendations** from 6 processes:
 - the 2023 External Performance Review (EPR)
 - the 2023 Theme-based Special Session on climate change (TBSS)
 - the 2023 / 2024 Working Group on the Future of NASCO (WGFON)
 - the 2022 International Year of the Salmon Symposium (IYS)
 - the 2019 Tromsø Symposium (T)
 - the 2019-2023 Implementation Plan review process (IP)
- through a total of **32 Actions**, of which 22 were deemed ‘high priority’, seven ‘medium priority’ and three ‘not relevant’.

NASCO's High Level Actions - 2024



Objective	Timing	Action	Fisheries	Habitat	AITT	Status	Commentary
(1) Understand & share	2024	Share pink salmon knowledge			x	✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	Ongoing	Monitor pink salmon			x	➡	Pink salmon WG being set up at 2024 AM
	Ongoing	Continue to manage G. salaris risk			x	➡	GS working group ongoing & taking fwd GS recommendations
	2024/25	Parties do & share stressor analysis to direct future action	x	x	x	➡	Will start after 2024 AM
	2024/25	Parties populate Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA) to give global picture of salmon situation	x	x	x	➡	Will start after 2024 AM
	2025	Publish study on aquaculture impacts on wild salmon			x	➡	Work in progress
	2026	Publish "State of the Salmon" report based on WASA data	x	x	x	⌛	Future action

NASCO's High Level Actions - 2024



Objective	Timing	Action	Fisheries	Habitat	AITT	Status	Commentary
(2) Guide	2024	Agree Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA) data needs	x	x	x	✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	2024	Update stocking guidelines			x	✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	2024/25	Prioritise guideline review work, to reflect climate change adaptation & latest science	x	x	x	✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM - update action plan to reflect what's agreed

NASCO's High Level Actions - 2024



- Heads of Delegation undertook a review of the existing resolutions/agreements/guidelines after discussion at the Heads of Delegation meeting on Saturday to determine which ones should be updated and when.
- They recommended that the guidelines associated with habitat, aquaculture and fisheries (the three key theme areas) should be considered as the top priorities for updating and that climate impacts need to be incorporated into each of these.
- They are exploring the feasibility of doing one update a year if feasible given the need to take transformative action urgently.

NASCO's High Level Actions - 2024



Objective	Timing	Action	Fisheries	Habitat	AITT	Status	Commentary
(3) Deliver	2024	Agree continued closure of Faroese salmon fishery	x			✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	Ongoing	Monitor WG & Labrador fisheries	x			➡	Through WG commission & NA Commission
	2024/25	Develop next reporting cycle, for Parties to plan domestic actions and demonstrate progress	x	x	x	➡	Will start after 2024 AM
	2025/26	Parties plan/document next round of salmon actions	x	x	x	➡	Will start after 2024 AM
	2026	Negotiate new regulatory measure for West Greenland fishery	x			⌚	Future action
	2027+	Parties report on delivery progress	x	x	x	⌚	Future action
	2027+	Monitor delivery of salmon actions, by parties	x	x	x	⌚	Future action

NASCO's High Level Actions - 2024



Objective	Timing	Action	Fisheries	Habitat	AITT	Status	Commentary
(4) Collaboration	2024	Agree to allow indigenous observers at NASCO	x	x	x	✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	2024+	Parties to make stronger links with other RFMOs and IGOs and report back at annual meeting	x	x	x	✓	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	2025	ICES deliver simplified fisheries advice	x			➡	Work in progress
	2027	Review observer process	x	x	x	⌚	Future action
	TBC	Develop communications & outreach strategy (e.g. running symposia, public & political engagement, industry engagement, certification agencies, improvement to website, etc.)	x	x	x		Timing subject to budget discussions at 2024 AM

NASCO's High Level Actions - 2024



Objective	Timing	Action	Fisheries	Habitat	AITT	Status	Commentary
(5) Organisational excellence	2024	Agree fair & transparent remuneration of NASCO staff				☑	Expect to agree at 2024 AM
	2024	Increase transparency (e.g., daily reports from HoD meetings, considering streamlining plenary where possible to free up time for more discussion on floor)				➡	Work in progress
	2025	Agree modernised Terms & conditions for NASCO staff				➡	Work in progress
	2025	Present position paper on changing NASCO convention				➡	Draft paper produced, to be developed further for discussion at 2025 AM
	2025	Publish NASCO Secretariat environmental policy				➡	Work in progress, Secretariat to complete
Cross cutting	2024/25	Review & prioritise outstanding recommendations, for inclusion in action plan	x	x	x	➡	Will start after 2024 AM, by subgroup of WGFON

FOURTH REPORTING CYCLE

WGFON II – The Fourth Reporting Cycle



WGFON II was also tasked to discuss the **fourth reporting cycle** and to propose ToRs for a Future Reporting Working Group for approval by Council in 2024, taking the outcome of the WGFON into consideration.

Recognising that wild Atlantic salmon is in crisis, WGFON members discussed that an **improved, more appropriate process** is needed that:

- simplifies accountability by focusing on specific outcomes and clear metrics demonstrating progress towards goals
- is flexible especially regarding the stressor analysis
- has clear actions and guidelines
- balances simplicity with effectiveness
- uses longer timeframes for reporting changes and
- selects the right baselines for measurement.

Concerns were raised on:

- capacity and resources for stressor analysis and
- resourcing four theme-based working groups.

PAUSE TO DISCUSS STRESSOR ANALYSES

WGFON II – Stressor Analyses - background



- the IP / APR Review Group has recommended, most recently in 2023, that the development of a NASCO standardised risk assessment tool capturing the main threats to wild Atlantic salmon, such as presented in recent years by Norway, should be considered to inform an assessment of the highest priority threats / challenges to populate the IPs for all of NASCO's Parties / jurisdictions
- in the 2023 Theme-based Special Session on Climate Change, the Steering Committee recommended that 'Parties / jurisdictions consider undergoing an aligned exercise to assess which stressors to wild Atlantic salmon would be the most relevant for the Parties / jurisdictions'
- NASCO's current objective is 'to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through international co-operation, **taking account of best available scientific information**'
- an evidence-based, objective analysis of the key threats and pressures (the stressors) to wild Atlantic salmon experienced in each jurisdiction under NASCO's umbrella would provide a solid basis for actions under the fourth reporting cycle, to address the issues of greatest risk to the restoration and conservation of salmon

WGFON II – Stressor Analyses - discussion



- WGFON members were concerned that not all jurisdictions would be able to carry out a risk assessment as detailed as that of Norway – having neither the staff, time nor money
- it was made clear that a Norway-style approach was not essential. However, a clear, evidence-based, objective assessment of the pressures and threats to identify the key stressors was felt to be important to ensure that Parties / jurisdictions will undertake the highest priority effective actions required over the next ten years to achieve NASCO's Strategic Goal
- timelines were discussed to see how a jurisdiction-level stressor analysis might then inform the actions for the fourth reporting cycle

FOURTH REPORTING CYCLE

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WGFON SS – The Fourth Reporting Cycle



‘Draft Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Future Reporting’ CNL(24)15 were then agreed by the WGFON for consideration by Council

- they task the WGFR with:
 - ‘considering *the basis for, and structure of, a **fourth reporting cycle** that **will build on some objective analysis of stressors** by each Party / jurisdiction, to enable a reporting cycle that balances simplicity with effectiveness and transparency*’
- and
 - ‘aligning the reporting process with the **Action Plan** agreed by the Council in 2024’
- while considering
 - ‘the focus of the fourth reporting cycle needs to be related clearly to **reducing stressors** to wild Atlantic salmon, with a clear baseline against which progress can be measured.’

WGFON SS – The Fourth Reporting Cycle



The WGFON considered that:

- the fourth reporting cycle should show easily demonstrable progress towards NASCO's **Strategic Goal** that can be measured clearly against a tangible outcome for wild Atlantic salmon
- this requires consideration and **analysis of threats**, or stressors, that both directly impact Atlantic salmon productivity and indirectly intensify the impacts of other pressures across the species' life cycle, such as climate
- an initial objective analysis of key threats to Atlantic salmon, or 'stressor analysis', is proposed to take place between July 2024 and April 2025 with a Special Session on stressors at the 2025 Annual Meeting

Thank You