



***Report of the Forty-First Annual Meeting of the Council of the
North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The President, Kim Damon-Randall (USA), opened the meeting. She introduced the Director of the Inland Fisheries Division of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Philip Nugent, who welcomed delegates to Westport (Annex 1). She also introduced Denis Maher from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and Cathal Gallagher from Inland Fisheries Ireland, who both made Opening Statements (Annexes 2 and 3). The President made an Opening Statement (Annex 4).
- 1.2 Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (EU), Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States made Opening Statements (Annex 5).
- 1.3 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) (Annex 6).
- 1.4 An Opening Statement was made on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Annex 7).
- 1.5 A list of participants at the Forty-First Annual Meeting of the Council of NASCO is given in Annex 8.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its Agenda, CNL(24)54.

3. Financial and Administrative Issues

a) Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

- 3.1 The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), Seamus Connor (UK), first introduced the work of the FAC through two inter-sessional meetings in February and April 2024.
- 3.2 The Council considered issues related to NASCO's Staff Fund Rule 3.2 and Staff Rule 8.2(b), as detailed in the reports of the inter-sessional FAC meetings, FAC(24)03 and FAC(24)04.
- 3.3 The Council considered the process and timeline for a full review of the NASCO Staff Fund Rule and Staff Rules, in which the FAC proposed to:
 - work inter-sessionally, through a small working group and by correspondence to revise the full Staff Rules and Staff Fund Rules by the end of November 2024;
 - direct the Secretary to engage Gunnercooke to provide legal counsel to ensure consistency with relevant employment law and modern working practice, to be provided by the end of January 2025; and
 - meet provisionally on 18, 19 and 20 March 2025 to finalise and agree the revised staff rules to enable them to be recommended to Council for their adoption at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

- 3.4 The Council then considered the review of its observer rules, in two papers that had been recommended by the FAC.
- 3.5 Canada proposed further revisions to the ‘Proposed Revised Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings’, FACIS(24)15.
- 3.6 The Council agreed:
- to adopt the revised ‘NASCO Staff Fund Rules’, CNL(24)XX (Annex 9);
 - to adopt the revised ‘NASCO Staff Rules’, CNL(24)XX (Annex 10);
 - the process and timeline for the full review of NASCO’s Staff Fund Rules and Staff Rules;
 - to adopt the ‘Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings’, CNL(24)XX (Annex 11); and
 - to adopt the ‘Conditions for Media at NASCO Meetings’, CNL(24)XX (Annex 12);
- 3.7 The FAC Chair then introduced the Report of the FAC’s Annual Meeting, CNL(24)04.
- 3.8 On the recommendation of the Committee, the Council agreed to:
- accept the Audited Accounts for 2023;
 - agree Saffery LLP, Edinburgh, as auditors of NASCO’s accounts for 2024 / 2025 / 2026; and
 - discontinue NASCO’s Tag Return Incentive Scheme.
- 3.9 In view of Agenda Item 6.b) below, under which Council agreed to produce an outreach and communications strategy, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) suggested that the tag prize money be repurposed for outreach in the future. The Secretary noted it would be moved to the ‘Communications, professional support and design’ section of the Budget.
- 3.10 The Council agreed to:
- remove the ‘Tag Return Incentive Scheme’ funds from future budgets and that the £4,500 previously allocated be moved to the ‘Communications, professional support and design’ section of the Budget;
 - approve the ‘Budget for 2025 and the Forecast Budget for 2026’, CNL(24)XX; and
 - adopt the Report of the FAC, CNL(24)04).

b) NASCO Calendar and Working Group Membership

- 3.11 The Council agreed to the membership of Working Groups agreed during the Meeting CNL(24)65, Annex XX.
- 3.12 Council noted that the first step in including Indigenous Peoples’ representatives and institutions into NASCO’s work would be for them to apply for accreditation and encouraged this as soon as possible.
- 3.13 The Council agreed to a calendar of inter-sessional meetings CNL(24)66, Annex XX.

4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

a) NASCO News 2024

- 4.1 The President noted that, in 2022, the Council had agreed that the ‘Report on the

Activities of the Organization’ and the ‘Secretary’s Report’ would be merged to be a showcase for NASCO’s work. She referred the Council to the ‘NASCO News 2024’, CNL(24)05.

- 4.2 The President announced that since the publication of the ‘NASCO News 2024’, there has been a new accredited NGO, The Rivers Trust.

b) Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize

- 4.3 The President noted that NASCO operates a Tag Return Incentive Scheme. External tags that are returned to the appropriate authorities in the country of capture are eligible for inclusion in the draw. Each year, a Grand Prize of £1,500 is awarded.

- 4.4 The President announced that the Grand Prize winner for 2024 was Gerald Walters from the UK. The 53.7cm salmon was initially caught and tagged in the Chester Weir fish trap on the Welsh River Dee (Afon Dyfrdwy, in Welsh), UK, on 11 July 2023. As part of the Dee Stock Assessment Programme, salmon caught in the trap are tagged using Floy tags to help estimate run size from the ratio of tagged to untagged fish caught in the fishery. The fish was subsequently caught on rod and line on the River Dee a month later. The fish was released and the tag number reported to Natural Resources Wales through their log book scheme.

c) Scientific Advice from ICES

(i) Scientific Advice from ICES

- 4.5 The President reminded delegates that the ICES advice for North Atlantic salmon stocks was published on 10 May 2024, [CNL\(24\)06](#). She noted that, in 2022, the Council had agreed that all ICES Advice should be presented only in Council.
- 4.6 The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker (UK), presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM). The ICES presentation is available as document CNL(24)XX on the NASCO website
- 4.7 The Russian Federation noted its regret that it was unable to contribute to the ICES database due to its suspension from participation in ICES.

(ii) A new approach / presentation of the ICES Advice

- 4.8 The President noted that at its 2022 Annual Meeting, the Council of NASCO had asked the Secretary to approach ICES to investigate a more streamlined approach / presentation of the ICES Advice. She stated that the Secretary had been working with ICES as requested. Additionally, in 2024, the stock assessment model for Atlantic salmon had changed following a benchmarking exercise. The ICES ACOM Vice-Chair, Joanne Morgan, provided information about ICES benchmark assessments, and an update on the work on a new streamlined approach to the presentation of the ICES Advice on Atlantic salmon. Her presentation is available as CNL(24)XX (Annex X).

d) Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

- 4.9 The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) met on 2 and 4 June. The Report of the Meeting of the Board, CNL(24)08, was introduced by its Chair, Martha Robertson (Canada). She stated that during an Inter-sessional Meeting, the Board had agreed its research priorities and issued a statement to publicise that decision, [ICR\(24\)01](#).
- 4.10 The main topics for the Board’s meetings in June were the consideration of a number of unresolved issues arising from the review of its vision, scope and purpose, including

a draft project outline being developed by the SAG as a response to the inter-sessional agreement of the Board's research priorities.

4.11 On the recommendation of the Board, the Council agreed:

- the Report of the Meeting of the Board, CNL(24)08.

e) Report of the Standing Scientific Committee

4.12 The President informed the Council that Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention require NASCO to take into account the best scientific evidence and establish working arrangements with ICES. During the Annual Meeting, the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC), which assists the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES, met to develop a draft request for scientific advice from ICES for consideration by the Commissions and the Council.

4.13 The Co-ordinator of the SSC, Livia Goodbrand (Canada), presented the draft request to ICES for scientific advice. She noted that the level of understanding, transparency and scope of the SSC is not well understood both within and outside the Committee. She hoped for discussion on how the SSC may define its role in supporting NASCO's work into the future more clearly.

4.14 Norway noted that the SSC might have included questions to ICES on how ICES could support NASCO's review of its Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. The Secretary agreed to start this conversation with ICES as how best to enable this work.

4.15 The Council agreed to adopt the 'Request for Scientific Advice from ICES', CNL(24)XX (Annex XX).

f) Report of the Stocking Guidelines Working Group

4.16 The President noted that, in 2022, it was agreed that work could begin inter-sessionally on updating the Stocking Guidelines. She stated that the Council had agreed the 'Terms of Reference for the Stocking Guidelines Working Group', [CNL\(23\)15](#), in 2023 and members of the Working Group had been nominated.

4.17 The President informed the Council that the Working Group held six virtual meetings in 2023 and 2024 to draft revised guidelines for stocking Atlantic salmon.

4.18 The Chair of the Stocking Guidelines Working Group (SGWG) presented the updated guidelines to the Council.

4.19 Canada asked if any education and outreach with the updated guidelines had been considered. The SGWG Chair responded that there were no specific plans in place. However, they should be shared with relevant stakeholders within all the Parties and jurisdictions.

4.20 The Council agreed 'Guidelines for Stocking Atlantic Salmon', CNL(24)XX.

4.21 In relation to discussions held under agenda item 6.b)(ii) below – on NASCO's high-level actions for 2024, in particular updating the 'Guidelines on the Use of Stock Rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks', CNL(04)55, and considering guidelines related to gene banking, Council agreed that the SGWG would reconvene to work on these aspects of NASCO's work.

4.22 To enable this, 'Terms of Reference for the Stocking Guidelines Working Group', CNL(24)XX, were agreed.

g) The Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas

- 4.23 The President noted that in 2022 the Council agreed to the recommendations made by the [Rivers Database Working Group](#), and asked the Secretary to work with the Steering Committee to develop a Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#). She further noted it was also agreed that ‘the Steering Committee would provide oversight, but that the Parties should have the opportunity to agree the final plans for the ‘Atlas’ and agree the final product before it goes live.’
- 4.24 The President informed Council that in 2023, following consideration of a selection of mapping websites by the Steering Committee, the ArcGIS Esri platform was selected and an ArcGIS expert contracted to develop the ‘Atlas’. Prior to the 2024 Annual Meeting, the Atlas development had been completed.
- 4.25 The Chair of the Steering Committee presented the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas, requirements for new data from the Parties, and proposed timeline, CNL(24)XX, of publication of the ‘Atlas’.
- 4.26 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the ‘Atlas’ would be a valuable tool for NASCO especially in terms of outreach. The EU agreed and noted that with respect to the timeline it would be important to have an information session with the jurisdictions to understand what the requirements and challenges of providing data would be.
- 4.27 Canada suggested that if Parties had access to ArcGIS, they would be able to input the data themselves, and Iceland asked how often data would be required. The Chair of the Steering Committee responded that an update would be preferable every five years. However, significant changes may be able to be facilitated in shorter time scales.
- 4.28 Norway noted that the ‘Atlas’ would be valuable in making NASCO a primary source of information.
- 4.29 The UK asked when the data request would be sent out; the Chair of the Steering Group responded that the proposed timeline suggested that it would be as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting.
- 4.30 The President noted that the decisions on the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas would be taken under agenda item 6.b)(ii).

h) Update on the Review of the Effect of Salmon Aquaculture on Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations

- 4.31 The President reminded the Council that, in 2022, the Council had considered a ‘Proposal for the Production of a Systematic Review of the Effect of Salmon Aquaculture on Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations’, [CNL\(22\)07](#), and asked the Secretary to liaise with the Co-ordinator of the Expert Group to progress this work inter-sessionally.
- 4.32 The President informed the Council that the co-ordinator of the Expert Group, Paddy Gargan, was not available to provide an update on this work, [CNL\(24\)12](#). However, any questions could be relayed to the Group via the Secretariat.
- 4.33 Canada asked about the timeline to have papers published in credible journals. The Secretary responded that both groups planned to have draft papers ready for the autumn, but that timing of publication would depend on the peer-review process. In addition, a short paper would be produced for Council.

6. The Working Group on the Future of NASCO

a) Special Session: The Working Group on the Future of NASCO

- 6.1 The President reminded the Council that in 2023, following various recommendations from its third performance review, [CNL\(23\)17rev](#), Council agreed that it had been offered an opportunity to take stock of the achievements of NASCO and also of its constraints, giving a chance to refocus NASCO's work to respond more effectively to the pressures salmon face. However, before responding to the extensive recommendations, the Parties felt it was important to first consider NASCO's priorities in the light of its unique role. Council had agreed, therefore, to:
- establish a Working Group on the Future of NASCO (WGFON) with the Terms of Reference as set out in document [CNL\(23\)70](#);
 - hold a Special Session during the 2024 Annual Meeting to enable WGFON to present its draft strategy and draft action plan to Council; and
 - request that the Secretary work with the Working Group Chair to establish a schedule of meetings of the WGFON, in consultation with the Parties and NGO Co-Chairs and to identify suitable venues.
- 6.2 The President informed delegates that the WGFON met inter-sessionally to develop 'The Future of NASCO – a Ten Year (Draft) Strategy', [CNL\(24\)13](#), and the 'Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO', [CNL\(24\)14](#). Both were published on 3 April 2024. In advance of the Annual Meeting, the 'Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO' was further amended to produce a working document 'NASCO's high-level actions – 2024'.
- 6.3 The President, as Chair of the WGFON, presented the Draft Strategy and high-level actions documents. The Draft Strategy included a ten-year strategic goal for NASCO, as well as mission and vision statements and five clear objectives.
- 6.4 The Secretary, as a member of the WGFON, spoke to the fourth reporting cycle and stressor analysis. The presentation is available as document CNL(24)XX.
- 6.5 The discussions held during the Special Session are contained in CNL(24)XX (Annex XX).

b) Decisions Taken on the Future of NASCO

- 6.6 The President informed the Council that this Agenda item allowed for decisions to be taken in light of the Special Session of the Working Group on the Future of NASCO, with regard to 'The Future of NASCO – a Ten Year (Draft) Strategy', [CNL\(24\)13](#), and 'NASCO's high-level actions – 2024', as laid out in the presentation for WGFON Special Session, CNL(24)XX.
- 6.7 Stressor analyses were discussed. The President reminded delegates that stressor analyses would not be part of the next reporting cycle but would inform it. Several Parties expressed support for conducting stressor analyses, with Norway and the UK stating they had processes in place that they could share with others. The EU raised that it wanted to ensure a stressor analysis would not diminish the IP / APR process.
- 6.8 Council discussed a process and timeline for all Parties / jurisdictions to carry out a stressor analysis, documenting the key threats and challenges in each jurisdiction. In addition to the stressor analysis, Council also discussed whether or not it would be beneficial for the Parties / jurisdictions also to undertake a baseline analysis. Council discussed the baseline as effectively the starting position from which progress in implementing actions that work toward the achievement of NASCO's Strategic Goal would be measured. Council agreed that baselines were important but required further

discussion, especially in light of anticipated advice from the Future Reporting Working Group in 2025. The development of the baselines by Parties / jurisdictions would be a priority similar to the stressor analysis.

- 6.9 The process by which the recommendations to NASCO would be addressed was refined during the Annual Meeting. The proposed Theme-based Working Group (TBWG) concept presented in the ‘The Future of NASCO – a Ten Year (Draft) Strategy’, [CNL\(24\)13](#), was modified. Rather than the TBWGs prioritising recommendations, the Parties considered that this could be started during the Annual Meeting and that the WGFON might be reconvened to continue the remainder of that work. Council also discussed the need to update, and consolidate as appropriate, NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, the priority order and the timing for this work.
- 6.10 The Council also considered that the presentation of NASCO’s work for the next ten years would best be done by having its strategy and action plan in a single document, with text linking the two.
- 6.11 In light of these discussions, the Council agreed:
- to adopt ‘The Future of NASCO – a Ten Year Strategy’, CNL(24)XX, which incorporates the high-level actions in a single document;
 - the following high-level actions were agreed:
 - that Parties / jurisdictions carry out a stressor analysis and provide a paper to NASCO by 30 April 2025;
 - that Parties / jurisdictions, after discussing what constitutes a baseline analysis, carry one out after the 2025 Annual Meeting and provide a paper to NASCO by 30 April 2026;
 - to finalise the development of the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA), including the Steering Committee’s recommendations;
 - that Parties populate the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA) to give a global picture of the status of salmon, using the agreed Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA) data metrics by December 2024;
 - that NASCO publish a ‘State of Salmon’ report based on the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA) data in 2026;
 - to update, and consolidate as appropriate, NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, incorporating climate change and other factors (see Annex 1 of ‘The Future of NASCO – a Ten Year Strategy’, CNL(24)XX) as key elements of the review with the following priority order, which may change:
 - habitat: commence 2025; plan to complete 2026;
 - aquaculture and disease: commence 2026; plan to complete 2027; and
 - fisheries commence 2027; plan to complete 2028;
 - as a future action that Parties plan / document the next round of salmon actions – linked to their key stressors;
 - that Parties make stronger links with other Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Inter-Governmental Organizations and report back at NASCO’s Annual Meetings;
 - to request that the Secretary engage with an appropriate consultant to develop a

communications and outreach strategy; and

- that the WGFON continue its work; and
- that WGFON develop a position paper on changing the NASCO Convention.

6.12 Further detail is contained in NASCO's high level actions 2024, CNL(24)XX, with the Secretariat asked to make any appropriate arrangements to undertake the work.

6.13 With regard to decisions in the 'Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO', [CNL\(24\)14](#), but not addressed in the high-level actions, Council agreed:

- to include an agenda item in each of the Commissions to allow for an annual update on coastal, estuarine and in-river mixed-stock fisheries and the justification for their continued prosecution (to address recommendation EPR10 in Objective 3);
- to request that the Secretary work with ICES to develop a request to ensure that ICES databases and web-based applications, both present and future, accommodate salmon, as they do for other assessed stocks, and to request that Atlantic salmon be placed on the ICES bycatch list (to address recommendation EPR3 in Objective 1);
- that the SGWG draft updated NASCO Guidelines on the 'Use of Stock Rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks', CNL(04)55, and scientific and management protocols for gene banking (to address recommendations EPR23 and T2 in Objective 2);
- to consider options, through inter-sessional discussions, that will facilitate increased transparency via discussions in plenary, while avoiding longer meetings (to address recommendation EPR31 in Objective 5);
- to charge the Secretariat to identify and use a Project Management tool such as SmartSheet to report progress of the Action Plan to Council at the 2025 Annual Meeting and annually thereafter (to address recommendation WGFON in Objective 5);
- that the default location for inter-sessional in-person meetings is the Secretariat in Edinburgh; and
- to remove the ISFA agenda item from Council, and to consider engagement with ISFA and other relevant industries and organizations as part of the outreach strategy.

6.14 In addition to developing a strategy and action plan, the WGFON was tasked with developing the fourth reporting cycle and Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Future Reporting. Council took the following decisions:

- to conduct a fourth reporting cycle;
- to establish a Future Reporting Working Group (WGFR) to undertake a review of the process;
- to agree the 'Terms of Reference for a Future Reporting Working Group', CNL(24)XX; and
- to direct the WGFR to meet inter-sessionally to plan the November 2024 meeting referred to in the Terms of Reference for a Future Reporting Working Group, CNL(24)XX.

7. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management

of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach

a) Theme-based Special Session: Management of Pink Salmon in the North Atlantic and Their Potential Threats to Wild Atlantic Salmon

(i) Theme-based Special Session: Management of Pink Salmon in the North Atlantic and Their Potential Threats to Wild Atlantic Salmon

- 7.1 At the 2023 Annual Meeting Council agreed to hold a Theme-based Special Session (TBSS) during the 2024 Annual Meeting on pink salmon.
- 7.2 The overarching objective for the TBSS was to provide an overview of pink salmon's distribution, biology, potential impacts on native Atlantic salmon and management actions in the North Atlantic.
- 7.3 The discussions held during the Special Session are contained in CNL(24)XX (Annex XX).
- 7.4 A report of the Theme-based Special Session will be prepared by the Steering Committee for publication.

(ii) Decisions Taken in Light of the Theme-based Special Session

- 7.5 The President informed delegates that this Agenda item allowed for decisions to be taken in light of the Theme-based Special Session.
- 7.6 The President reminded Council that it had agreed that the Parties / jurisdictions would undertake analyses of the stressors to identify the primary threats and challenges.
- 7.7 In recognition of the importance of the stressor analysis Council agreed to not have a Theme-based Special Session in 2025. However, Council agreed instead to hold a Special Session during which the Parties / jurisdictions would share the results of their stressor analyses as short, rapid fire presentations.
- 7.8 In light of the Theme-based Special Session and the first report of the Pink Salmon Working Group, Norway stated that, given the alarming developments in northern Norway in relation to pink salmon and the actions Norway has taken to eliminate the risks to Atlantic salmon and the riverine ecosystems in which it lives, it felt that there should be a follow-up to the 'Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area', CNL(22)47, agreed in 2022. Therefore, Norway introduced a draft statement regarding pink salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area.
- 7.9 Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EU, Iceland, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States issued a 'Joint Statement by Canada, Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, Iceland, EU, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*', Annex XX.
- 7.10 The Russian Federation noted that it would not be joining the statement, as its approach to pink salmon is different, and made a statement, Annex XX.

b) Evaluation of Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)

(i) Special Session: Evaluation of Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)

- 7.11 The President reminded the Council that NASCO has adopted Resolutions, Agreements

and Guidelines that address its principal areas of concern for the management of salmon stocks. It has been committed to the measures and agreements it has developed and has reviewed progress with Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports.

- 7.12 The President informed delegates that in 2023, the Council agreed to extend the third reporting cycle for one year and defer the fourth reporting cycle, [CNL\(23\)87](#). Revised Implementation Plans (IPs) under the third reporting cycle (2019 – 2024) submitted by Parties / jurisdictions were reviewed by the IP / APR Review Group in November 2023. The Annual Progress Reports (APRs) submitted by Parties / jurisdictions to NASCO were reviewed by the IP / APR Review Group in April 2024.
- 7.13 The Sixth Interim Report of the IP/ APR Review Group for the Review of IPs, [CNL\(24\)17](#), together with the Report of the IP / APR Review Group for the Review of APRs, [CNL\(24\)18](#), was presented by the Chair of the IP / APR Review Group, Cathal Gallagher (EU).

(ii) Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Implementation Plans Under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)

- 7.14 The President noted that the agreement to commence the development of the fourth reporting cycle meant that there would be no spare capacity for further reviews of any revised IPs under the third reporting cycle.
- 7.15 The Council agreed, therefore, that there would be no further reviews of revised IPs under the third reporting cycle, in 2024 and 2025.

(iii) Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports Under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans

- 7.16 The President referred to the decision that Parties / jurisdictions undertake a stressor analysis in 2024 / 2025. In recognition of the importance of the stressor analysis and the time involved to carry it out, noting that the priority for Parties / jurisdictions is the stressor analyses, the Council agreed that:
- the provision of APRs in 2025 is not mandatory;
 - the Secretariat will not create templates for any jurisdictions that may wish to submit APRs in 2025; and
 - the Secretariat will provide a catch reporting template that Parties will complete and return by 1 April 2025.
- 7.17 The President then referred to the decision that Parties / jurisdictions undertake a baseline analysis in 2025 / 2026. Noting that development of baselines by Parties / jurisdictions would be a priority similar to the stressor analysis, the Council agreed that:
- the provision of APRs in 2026 is not mandatory;
 - the Secretariat will not create templates for any jurisdictions that may wish to submit APRs in 2026;
 - the Secretariat will provide a catch reporting template that Parties will complete and return by 1 April 2026; and
 - to direct the Secretariat to circulate the list of threats previously published by NASCO.

c) Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry

- 7.18 The President reminded the Council that in 2013, the Council agreed that the regular meetings of the International Salmon Farming Association (ISFA) / NASCO Liaison Group would not continue. The Council decided to retain an item on its Agenda during which a representative of the ISFA could be invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon.
- 7.19 The President noted that in 2022, it was agreed to take ‘Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry’ off the Agenda (unless ISFA was participating) and to request the Secretary to continue to send ISFA an invitation to attend and submit a statement.
- 7.20 The President informed the Council that ISFA had been invited and had agreed to send a representative to attend the 2024 Annual Meeting and contribute a paper. The International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA) Report to NASCO 2024, [CNL\(24\)20](#). However, in the week before the meeting, ISFA declined to take part in the meeting because it was not being afforded the opportunity to make a presentation to Council. The Secretary had reminded ISFA of the wording in the invitation letter from the President of NASCO:

‘I would like to invite a representative of ISFA to participate in and contribute a paper to this Agenda item. We would welcome a contribution highlighting developments in addressing the impacts of salmon farming on the wild salmon stock. In particular, updates relating to escapes of farmed salmon and the control of sea lice would be welcomed. If you would like to table a paper, we would be happy to distribute it at, or in advance of, the meeting’.

- 7.21 The President informed the Council that ISFA considered this as very limited time to discuss the issues related to salmon farming. ISFA stated that such a discussion should be based on presentations given during the meeting and not only information provided by a paper. It sought NASCO’s understanding that it is difficult for ISFA to defend the use of resources in terms of time and money based on a contribution to the meeting in the form of likely answering questions from its paper
- 7.22 The UK stated that in light of NASCO’s draft strategy, it was important to engage with ISFA and that it would support a presentation with a clearly defined scope. The UK approach was supported by Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EU, Iceland and the United States.
- 7.23 Norway requested time to consider the request in light of the content of the submitted paper. Canada stated it was in line with Norway and stressed that it, however, welcomed collaborative discussions.
- 7.24 The NGO representative supported the Norwegian position and suggested that a Special Session should be held to look at the aquaculture industry in more depth.
- 7.25 Decisions related to Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry’ were taken under Agenda Item 6.b)(ii), in paragraph 6.13.

d) New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management

(i) New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management

- 7.26 The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker (UK), presented the advice relevant to this Agenda item. The presentation is available as document CNL(24)XX.

(ii) The NASCO Working Group on Pink Salmon

- 7.27 The President noted that, in 2022 the Council had expressed concern regarding the magnitude of pink salmon entering many Atlantic salmon rivers. The Council had adopted a ‘Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area’, [CNL\(22\)47](#). The ‘Terms of Reference for the Pink Salmon Working Group’, [CNL\(23\)69](#), were agreed in 2023 and the inaugural meeting of the Working Group took place in Galway, Ireland in March 2024. The report of the meeting had been presented in the pink salmon TBSS.
- 7.28 The President noted that one of the Pink Salmon Working Group’s Terms of Reference was to ‘propose revised Terms of Reference and a timeframe for regular meetings of NASCO’s Working Group on Pink Salmon. She invited the Chair of the Pink Salmon Working Group, Jarle Steinkjer (Norway) to present the Group’s report and updated Terms of Reference.
- 7.29 The Council agreed the ‘Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Pink Salmon’, CNL(24)XX.
- e) Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery
- 7.30 The President noted that both the Council and the North American Commission were concerned about catches of salmon at St Pierre and Miquelon which, although low, occurred at a time when there were serious concerns about the abundance of North American stocks and when harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North American Commission area.
- 7.31 The President thanked France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for submitting the 2023 report ‘Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery’, [CNL\(24\)22](#). This had been considered in the North American Commission meeting and there were no further questions in the Council meeting.
- 7.32 France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) made a statement (Annex XX).
- 7.33 Canada welcomed the sustainability charter referred to in the statement. It noted that it had expressed concerns in the North American Commission and thanked France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for its co-operation and continued participation in NASCO.

f) Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions

- 7.34 The activities of the three Commissions were reported to the Council by their Chairs.

8. Other Business

- 8.1 The United Kingdom raised two items. First, in relation to the agreed stressor analyses, it noted its keenness to ensure an information exchange among the Parties / jurisdictions and offered to share the email addresses of those individuals who will be performing the analyses. Iceland noted it would be happy to co-operate with the United Kingdom and share information.
- 8.2 Second, the United Kingdom expressed its desire to retain a Special Session on the reporting cycle in 2025 to share the actions carried out by Parties / jurisdictions that have been considered to be a success for wild Atlantic salmon. The other Parties agreed that this would be very useful in planning for the fourth reporting cycle.
- 8.3 Council agreed to retain an agenda item in 2025 on a Special Session on the reporting cycle.

9. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

9.1 The Council accepted the United Kingdom's generous offer to host the Forty-Second Annual Meeting, 3 – 5 June 2025. The intention is to hold the Meeting in Cardiff.

9.2 The Council agreed to hold its Forty-Third Annual Meeting during 2 – 5 June 2026.

10. Press Release

10.1 The Council agreed a Press Release, CNL(24)XX (Annex XX).

11. Report of the Meeting

11.1 The Council agreed its Report of the Meeting.

12. Close of the Meeting

12.1 The President thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the Meeting.