



**REPORT OF THE
FORTY-FIRST
ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL**

Knockranny House Hotel, Westport, Ireland

3 – 7 June 2024

President: Kim Damon-Randall (United States)

Vice-President: Ruth Allin (United Kingdom)

Secretary: Emma Hatfield

CNL(24)88rev

***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 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 Rules 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

¹ Edited 16 January 2025 to provide the correct document and link for NASCO's Ten-Year Strategy, i.e. CNL(24)71rev.

² Edited 12 February 2025 to include the IP / APR Special Session Q&A in the Annexes.

- 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\(24\)57](#).
 - to adopt the revised ‘NASCO Staff Rules’, [CNL\(24\)58](#);
 - the process and timeline for the full review of NASCO’s Staff Fund Rules and Staff Rules (see paragraph 3.3);
 - to adopt ‘Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings’, [CNL\(24\)59](#); and
 - to adopt ‘Conditions for Media at NASCO Meetings’, [CNL\(24\)60](#);
- 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;
 - adopt the ‘Budget for 2025 and the Forecast Budget for 2026’, [CNL\(24\)23](#); 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 Annual Meeting, CNL(24)65, Annex 9.
- 3.12 Council noted that the first step in including Indigenous Peoples’ representatives and institutions into NASCO’s work, see [CNL\(24\)59](#), 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 10.

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. Eligible tags that are returned to the appropriate authorities in the country of capture are may be included in the draws. Each year, a Grand Prize of £1,500 is awarded together with three prizes of £1,000, one in each of NASCO’s three Commission areas.

4.4 The President announced that the Grand Prize winner for 2024 was Gerald Walters from the UK. The 53.7 cm 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\(24\)56](#) 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, since 2022, 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, [CNL\(24\)07](#). Her presentation is available as [CNL\(24\)55](#).

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 Annual Meeting 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\(24\)09](#).

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), Stephen Gephard (USA), presented the revised guidelines to the Council.

4.19 Canada asked if any education and outreach with the revised 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\(24\)61](#).

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\(24\)68](#), 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, Livia Goodbrand (Canada), presented the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas, requirements for new data from the Parties, and proposed timeline, [CNL\(24\)11](#), for 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), see paragraph 6.10.

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. The Secretary, as a member of the WGFON, spoke to the fourth reporting cycle and stressor analysis. The presentation is available as document [CNL\(24\)69](#).

6.4 The discussions held during the WGFON Special Session are contained in Annex 11.

b) Decisions Taken on the Future of NASCO

6.5 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 the WGFON Special Session, [CNL\(24\)69](#).

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

- 6.8 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.
- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 In light of these discussions, the Council agreed:
- to adopt 'The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy', [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), which incorporates the high-level actions in a single document;
 - the following high-level actions:
 - 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 in 2026 based on the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (WASA) data;
 - 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\(24\)71rev](#)) 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;
 - o that Parties make stronger links with other Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Inter-Governmental Organizations and report back at NASCO’s Annual Meetings;
 - o to request that the Secretary engage with an appropriate consultant to develop a communications and outreach strategy;
 - o that the WGFON continue its work; and
 - o that the WGFON develop a position paper on changing the NASCO Convention.
- 6.11 Further detail is contained in ‘The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy’, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#)), with the Secretariat asked to make any appropriate arrangements to undertake the work.
- 6.12 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 on 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 NASCO’s Headquarters building 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.
- 6.13 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\(24\)63](#); 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\(24\)63](#).

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 Theme-based Special Session are contained in Annex 12.

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, EU, Iceland, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*’, Annex 13.

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 14.

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).

7.14 The discussions held during the Special Session are contained in Annex 15.

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

7.15 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.

7.16 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

7.17 The President referred to the decision that Parties / jurisdictions undertake a stressor analysis in 2024 / 2025 (see paragraph 6.10). In recognition of the importance of the stressor analysis and the time involved to carry it out and 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.

7.18 The President then referred to the decision that Parties / jurisdictions undertake a baseline analysis in 2025 / 2026 (see paragraph 6.10). 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

- 7.19 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.
- 7.20 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.
- 7.21 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’.*
- 7.22 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.
- 7.23 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.
- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 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.
- 7.26 Decisions related to Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry’ were taken under Agenda Item 6.b)(ii), see paragraph 6.12.

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*

7.27 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\(24\)56](#).

(ii) *The NASCO Working Group on Pink Salmon*

7.28 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.

7.29 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 revised Terms of Reference.

7.30 The Council agreed ‘Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Pink Salmon’, [CNL\(24\)64](#).

e) Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

7.31 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.

7.32 The President thanked France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) for submitting the 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.

7.33 France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) made a statement (Annex 16).

7.34 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

7.35 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 hold a Special Session on the fourth 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 – 6 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\(24\)87](#).

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.

Compte rendu de la Quarante-et-unième Session annuelle du Conseil de l'Organisation pour la Conservation du Saumon de l'Atlantique Nord

1. Ouverture de la session

- 1.1 La Présidente, Kim Damon-Randall (USA), a ouvert la session. Elle a présenté le Directeur du Département des Pêches Intérieures de la Direction de l'Environnement, du Climat et des Communications, Philip Nugent, qui a souhaité la bienvenue aux délégués à Westport (Annexe 1). Elle a aussi présenté Denis Maher de la Direction de l'Environnement, du Climat et des Communications et Cathal Gallagher de Pêches Intérieures Irlande, qui ont tous deux fait des déclarations (Annexes 2 et 3). La Présidente a fait une Déclaration d'ouverture (Annexe 4).
- 1.2 Le Canada, le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland), l'Union européenne (UE), l'Islande, la Norvège, la Fédération de Russie, le Royaume-Uni (RU) et les États-Unis ont fait des Déclarations d'ouverture (Annexe 5).
- 1.3 Une Déclaration d'ouverture a été faite au nom de la France (pour St Pierre et Miquelon) (Annexe 6).
- 1.4 Une Déclaration d'ouverture a été faite au nom des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales (ONGs) (Annexe 7).
- 1.5 Une liste des participants à la quarante-et-unième session annuelle du Conseil de l'OCSAN est fournie en Annexe 8.

2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour

- 2.1 Le Conseil a adopté son ordre du jour, [CNL\(24\)54](#).

3. Questions financières et administratives

a) Rapport du Comité financier et administratif

- 3.1 Le président du Comité financier et administrative (CFA), Seamus Connor (RU), a tout d'abord présenté le travail du CFA lors de deux réunions inter-sessionnelles en février et avril 2024.
- 3.2 Le Conseil a pris en compte les questions relatives à la règle 3.2 du document 'règles sur le Fonds du personnel' et la règle 8.2(b) issue du document 'règles sur le Personnel', telles que détaillées dans les rapports des réunions inter-sessionnelles du CFA, [FAC\(24\)03](#) et [FAC\(24\)04](#).
- 3.3 Le Conseil a pris en compte la procédure et un calendrier pour un réexamen complet des règles sur le Fonds du personnel et des règles sur le Personnel, où le CFA proposait de:
 - travailler en inter-session, par l'intermédiaire d'un petit groupe de travail et par correspondance, pour réviser l'ensemble des règles sur le Personnel et des règles sur le Fonds du personnel d'ici à fin novembre 2024;
 - donner ordre à la Secrétaire d'engager Gunnercooke pour qu'il fournisse un conseil juridique afin d'assurer la conformité avec le droit du travail pertinent et les pratiques modernes de travail, ceci d'ici fin janvier 2025; et

- se réunir provisoirement les 18, 19 et 20 mars 2025 pour finaliser et adopter les règles révisées du personnel afin qu'elles puissent être recommandées au Conseil en vue de leur adoption à la session annuelle 2025.
- 3.4 Le Conseil a ensuite pris en compte l'examen de ses règles pour les observateurs, dans deux documents qui lui étaient recommandées par le CFA.
- 3.5 Le Canada a proposé des révisions supplémentaires pour les 'Termes et conditions proposés révisés de participation des observateurs aux sessions de l'OCSAN', FACIS(24)15.
- 3.6 Le Conseil a décidé:
- d'adopter les 'règles sur le Fonds du personnel de l'OCSAN' révisées, [CNL\(24\)57](#).
 - d'adopter les 'règles sur le personnel de l'OCSAN' révisées, [CNL\(24\)58](#);
 - la procédure et le calendrier pour le réexamen complet des règles sur le Fonds du personnel et des règles sur le personnel de l'OCSAN (voir le paragraphe 3.3);
 - d'adopter les 'Termes et Conditions de participation des observateurs aux sessions de l'OCSAN'', [CNL\(24\)59](#); et
 - les 'Conditions pour les médias aux sessions de l'OCSAN', [CNL\(24\)60](#);
- 3.7 Le président du CFA a ensuite présenté le rapport de la session annuelle du CFA, [CNL\(24\)04](#).
- 3.8 Sur la recommandation du Comité, le Conseil a décidé de:
- accepter les comptes vérifiés pour 2023;
 - accepter en tant que vérificateurs Saffery LLP, à Edimbourg, pour les comptes de l'OCSAN en 2024 / 2025 / 2026; et
 - mettre fin au Programme incitatif au renvoi des marques de l'OCSAN.
- 3.9 Eu égard au point 6.b) de l'ordre du jour ci-dessous, sous lequel le Conseil a décidé d'élaborer une stratégie de sensibilisation et de communication, le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a proposé que les fonds du prix des marques soient réaffectés à l'avenir à des actions de sensibilisation. La Secrétaire a indiqué qu'ils seraient déplacés vers la section 'Communications, soutien professionnel et conception' du Budget.
- 3.10 Le Conseil a décidé de:
- retirer les fonds pour le 'Programme incitatif au renvoi des marques' des budgets à venir et que les £4,500 qui lui étaient alloués auparavant seraient transférés à la section 'Communications, soutien professionnel et conception' du Budget;
 - adopter le 'Budget pour 2025 et le Budget prévisionnel pour 2026', [CNL\(24\)23](#); et
 - adopter le Rapport du CFA, [CNL\(24\)04](#).
- b) Calendrier de l'OCSAN et nomination des membres des Groupes de travail**
- 3.11 Le Conseil a adopté la composition des Groupes de travail décidée pendant la session annuelle CNL(24)65, Annexe 9.

3.12 Le Conseil a noté que la première étape pour faire participer les ‘Représentants et institutions des peuples autochtones’ aux travaux de l’OCSAN, voir [CNL\(24\)59](#), serait qu’ils demandent leur accréditation et les a encouragés à le faire dès que possible.

3.13 Le Conseil a adopté un calendrier de réunions en inter-session CNL(24)66, Annexe 10.

4. Informations scientifiques, techniques, juridiques et autres

a) Actualités 2024 de l’OCSAN

4.1 Le Président a indiqué qu’en 2022, le Conseil avait décidé que le ‘Rapport sur les activités de l’Organisation’ et le ‘Rapport de la Secrétaire’ seraient fusionnés pour devenir une vitrine du travail de l’OCSAN. Elle a renvoyé le Conseil aux ‘Actualités de l’OCSAN 2024’, [CNL\(24\)05](#).

4.2 La Présidente a annoncé que depuis la publication des ‘Actualités de l’OCSAN 2024’ une nouvelle ONG a été accréditée, le Rivers Trust.

b) Annonce du gagnant du Grand Prix du Programme incitatif au renvoi des marques

4.3 La Présidente a indiqué que l’OCSAN a instauré un Programme d’incitation au renvoi des marques. Les marques éligibles qui sont renvoyées aux autorités compétentes du pays de capture peuvent être incluses dans les tirages au sort. Chaque année un Grand Prix de £1,500 est décerné ainsi que trois prix de £1,000, un dans chacune des zones des trois Commissions de l’OCSAN.

4.4 La Présidente a annoncé que le gagnant du grand prix pour 2024 était Gerald Walters du RU. Le saumon de 53,7cm a été capturé initialement et marqué dans la trappe à poissons du déversoir de Chester Weir sur la rivière galloise Dee (Afon Dyfrdwy en gallois), RU, le 11 juillet 2023. Dans le cadre du Programme d’Evaluation de la Population de la Dee, les saumons pris dans la trappe sont marqués à l’aide d’étiquettes Floy pour contribuer à estimer la taille de montaison à partir du ratio entre poissons marqués et non marqués capturés dans la pêche. Le poisson a ensuite été capturé à la pêche à la ligne sur la rivière Dee, un mois plus tard. Le poisson a été relâché et le numéro de marque a été transmis à Ressources Naturelles Pays de Galles via leur programme de logbook.

c) Conseils scientifiques du CIEM

(i) *Conseils scientifiques du CIEM*

4.5 La Présidente a rappelé aux délégués que l’Avis scientifique du CIEM pour les stocks de saumon de l’Atlantique Nord a été publié le 10 mai 2024, [CNL\(24\)06](#). Elle a indiqué qu’en 2022, le Conseil avait décidé que l’Avis complet du CIEM ne serait présenté qu’au Conseil.

4.6 Le président du Groupe de travail sur le saumon de l’Atlantique Nord (WGNAS), Alan Walker (RU), a présenté le rapport du Comité d’Avis (ACOM). La présentation du CIEM est disponible en tant que document [CNL\(24\)56](#) sur le site web de l’OCSAN.

4.7 La représentante de la Fédération de Russie a fait part de son regret de n’avoir pu contribuer à la base de données du CIEM en raison de la suspension, depuis 2022, de sa participation au CIEM.

(ii) *Une nouvelle approche / présentation des Conseils scientifiques du CIEM*

4.8 La Présidente a indiqué qu’à sa session annuelle de 2022, le Conseil de l’OCSAN avait

demandé à la Secrétaire de prendre l'attache du CIEM pour rechercher une approche et une présentation plus simples de l'Avis du CIEM. Elle a déclaré que la Secrétaire avait travaillé avec le CIEM comme demandé. En outre, en 2024, le modèle d'évaluation du stock pour le saumon atlantique avait changé à la suite d'un exercice de comparaison. La vice-présidente de l'ACOM du CIEM, Joanne Morgan, a fourni des informations sur l'évaluation comparative du CIEM, ainsi qu'une mise à jour sur le travail sur une nouvelle approche simplifiée de la présentation de l'Avis du CIEM sur le saumon atlantique, [CNL\(24\)07](#). Sa présentation est disponible comme document [CNL\(24\)55](#).

d) Rapport de la Commission internationale de recherche sur le saumon atlantique

4.9 La Commission internationale de recherche sur le saumon atlantique (la Commission) s'est réunie le 2 et le 4 juin. Le compte rendu de la session de la Commission, [CNL\(24\)08](#), a été présenté par sa Présidente, Martha Robertson (Canada). Elle a déclaré que lors d'une réunion en intersession, la Commission avait adopté ses priorités de recherche et diffusé une déclaration rendant publique cette décision, [ICR\(24\)01](#).

4.10 Les principaux sujets de la session annuelle de la Commission étaient l'examen d'un certain nombre de questions non résolues soulevées par le passage en revue de sa vision, de son périmètre et de son objectif, ce qui incluait une ébauche de grandes lignes projet développée par le SAG comme réponse à la décision inter-sessionnelle concernant les priorités de recherche de la Commission.

4.11 Sur la recommandation de la Commission, le Conseil a adopté:

- le compte rendu de la session de la Commission, [CNL\(24\)08](#).

e) Compte rendu du Comité scientifique permanent

4.12 La Présidente a indiqué au Conseil que les articles 3 et 4 de la Convention imposent à l'OCSAN de tenir compte des meilleures informations scientifiques et d'établir des modalités de collaboration avec le CIEM. Le Comité scientifique permanent (CSP) assiste le Conseil et les Commissions pour formuler leurs questions au CIEM. Pendant la session annuelle, le CSP se réunit pour préparer une Demande projet de conseils scientifiques au CIEM pour examen par les Commissions et le Conseil.

4.13 La coordinatrice du CSP, Livia Goodbrand (Canada), a présenté le projet de demande de conseils scientifiques au CIEM. Elle a déclaré que le niveau de compréhension, de transparence et le périmètre du CSP ne sont pas bien appréhendés tant en interne qu'extérieurement au Comité. Elle a appelé de ses vœux un débat sur la manière dont le CSP pourrait à l'avenir définir plus clairement son rôle de soutien aux travaux de l'OCSAN.

4.14 La Norvège a fait remarquer que le CSP aurait pu inclure des questions au CIEM sur la manière dont le CIEM pouvait apporter son soutien à l'OCSAN pour réviser ses Résolutions, Accords et Directives. La Secrétaire a accepté de commencer cet échange avec le CIEM sur la meilleure façon de rendre ce travail possible.

4.15 Le Conseil a décidé d'adopter la 'Demande de conseils scientifiques au CIEM', [CNL\(24\)09](#).

f) Rapport du Groupe de travail sur les Directives sur le peuplement

4.16 La Présidente a indiqué que, en 2022, il avait été décidé qu'un travail de mise à jour des Directives sur le peuplement pouvait commencer en inter-session. Elle a déclaré que le Conseil avait adopté le 'Mandat du Groupe de travail sur les Directives sur le peuplement', [CNL\(23\)15](#), en 2023 et que les membres du Groupe de travail avaient été

nominés.

- 4.17 La Présidente a porté à la connaissance du Conseil que le Groupe de travail avait tenu six réunions virtuelles en 2023 et 2024 pour ébaucher des directives révisées sur le peuplement du saumon atlantique.
- 4.18 Le président du Groupe de travail sur les Directives de peuplement (SGWG), Stephen Gephard (USA), a présenté au Conseil les directives révisées.
- 4.19 Le Canada a demandé si l'on avait envisagé de la formation ou de la communication en accompagnement des directives révisées. Le président du SGWG a répondu qu'il n'y avait pas de projets spécifiques en place. Toutefois, elles devraient être partagées avec les parties prenantes concernées de toutes les Parties et juridictions.
- 4.20 Le Conseil a adopté les 'Directives sur le peuplement du saumon atlantique', [CNL\(24\)61](#).
- 4.21 En lien avec les discussions tenues sous le point de l'ordre du jour 6.b)(ii) ci-dessous – sur les actions de haut niveau de l'OCSAN pour 2024, en particulier la mise à jour des 'Directives sur le recours à des programmes de reconstitution des stocks dans le cadre de la gestion de précaution des stocks de saumon', [CNL\(04\)55](#), et prenant en considération des directives relatives aux banques de gènes, le Conseil a décidé que le SGWG se réunirait de nouveau pour travailler sur ces aspects des travaux de l'OCSAN.
- 4.22 Pour rendre ceci possible, un 'Mandat pour le Groupe de travail sur les Directives sur le peuplement', [CNL\(24\)68](#), a été adopté.

g) L'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage

- 4.23 La Présidente a indiqué qu'en 2022 le Conseil avait adopté les recommandations faites par le [Groupe de travail sur la base de données des rivières](#) et avait demandé à la Secrétaire de travailler avec le Comité de direction au développement d'un Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#). Elle a de plus indiqué qu'il avait aussi été décidé que 'le Comité de direction assurerait la supervision mais que les Parties auraient l'opportunité de décider du projet définitif pour l'Atlas' et d'adopter le produit final avant sa mise en service.'
- 4.24 La Présidente a informé le Conseil qu'en 2023, à la suite de l'examen d'une sélection de sites de cartographie par le Comité de direction, la plate-forme ArcGIS Esri a été sélectionnée et un expert ArcGIS a été engagé pour développer l'Atlas'. Préalablement à la session annuelle 2024, le développement de l'Atlas avait été achevé.
- 4.25 La Présidente du Comité de direction, Livia Goodbrand (Canada), a présenté l'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage ainsi que des besoins de nouvelles données de la part des Parties, et une proposition de calendrier, [CNL\(24\)11](#), pour la publication de l'Atlas'.
- 4.26 Le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a souligné que l'Atlas' serait un outil valorisant pour l'OCSAN, particulièrement en termes de sensibilisation. L'UE a approuvé et indiqué qu'en ce qui concerne le calendrier il serait important d'avoir une session d'information avec les juridictions afin de comprendre quels seraient les besoins et défis pour fournir les données.
- 4.27 Le Canada a suggéré que si les Parties avaient accès à l'ArcGIS, elles seraient en mesure d'entrer les données par elles-mêmes, et l'Islande a demandé avec quelle fréquence il y aurait besoin de données. La Présidente du Comité de direction a répondu qu'une mise à jour tous les cinq ans serait préférable. Toutefois, il serait possible de faciliter des modifications significatives à plus court terme.

- 4.28 La Norvège a indiqué que l'Atlas serait précieux pour faire de l'OCSAN une source principale d'information.
- 4.29 La représentante du RU a demandé quand la demande de données serait envoyée; la Présidente du Comité de direction a répondu que le calendrier proposé suggérait que ce serait aussi tôt que possible après la session annuelle.
- 4.30 La Présidente a indiqué que les décisions sur l'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage seraient prises sous le point 6.b)(ii) de l'ordre du jour, voir paragraphe 6.10.
- h) Mise à jour sur l'étude des impacts de l'aquaculture du saumon sur les populations de saumon sauvage de l'Atlantique**
- 4.31 La Présidente a rappelé au Conseil qu'en 2022, le Conseil avait examiné une 'Proposition pour la production d'un recensement des effets de l'aquaculture de saumon sur les populations de saumon sauvage de l'Atlantique', [CNL\(22\)07](#), et demandé à la Secrétaire de faire la liaison avec le coordinateur du Groupe d'experts pour faire avancer ce travail en inter-session.
- 4.32 La Présidente a informé le Conseil que le coordinateur du Groupe d'experts, Paddy Gargan, n'était pas disponible pour fournir une mise à jour de ce travail, [CNL\(24\)12](#). Néanmoins toute question serait relayée au Groupe par le Secrétariat.
- 4.33 Le Canada s'est enquis du calendrier pour la parution d'articles dans des revues crédibles. La Secrétaire a répondu que les deux groupes prévoyaient de disposer d'articles prêts à l'automne, mais que les délais de publication dépendraient de la procédure de lecture par un comité. De plus, un court article serait préparé pour le Conseil.

6. Le Groupe de travail sur l'avenir de l'OCSAN

a) Séance spéciale: le Groupe de travail sur l'avenir de l'OCSAN

- 6.1 La Présidente a rappelé au Conseil que, en 2023, à la suite de diverses recommandations issues de son troisième examen de performances, [CNL\(23\)17rev](#), le Conseil avait décidé qu'une opportunité lui avait été offerte de prendre acte des succès de l'OCSAN et aussi de ses limites, ce qui donnait une chance de recentrer le travail de l'OCSAN pour réagir plus efficacement aux pressions qui s'exercent sur le saumon. Toutefois, avant de réagir aux nombreuses recommandations, les Parties pensaient qu'il était important d'examiner d'abord les priorités de l'OCSAN à la lumière de son rôle unique. Le Conseil avait donc décidé de:
- créer un Groupe de travail sur l'avenir de l'OCSAN (WGFON) avec le mandat fixé dans le document [CNL\(23\)70](#);
 - tenir une Séance spéciale pendant la session annuelle 2024 pour permettre au WGFON de présenter son projet de stratégie et de plan d'action au Conseil; et
 - demander que la Secrétaire travaille avec le président du Groupe de travail à établir un calendrier de réunions du WGFON, en concertation avec les Parties et les co-présidents des ONGs, et à identifier des lieux de réunion qui conviennent.
- 6.2 La Présidente a informé les délégués que le WGFON s'était réuni en inter-session pour élaborer 'L'avenir de l'OCSAN – une Stratégie sur dix ans (projet)', [CNL\(24\)13](#), et le 'Plan d'action projet pour l'OCSAN', [CNL\(24\)14](#). Ces deux documents ont été rendus publics le 3 avril 2024. Préalablement à la session annuelle, le 'Plan d'action projet pour l'OCSAN' a encore été amendé, ce qui a abouti à un document de travail 'Actions de haut niveau de l'OCSAN – 2024'.

- 6.3 La Présidente, en tant que présidente du WGFON, a présenté les documents sur la Stratégie projet et les actions de haut niveau. La Stratégie projet comprenait un objectif stratégique sur dix ans pour l'OCSAN, ainsi que des déclarations sur sa mission et sa vision et cinq objectifs précis. La Secrétaire, en tant que membre du WGFON, a évoqué le quatrième cycle de reporting et l'analyse des facteurs de stress. La présentation est disponible en tant que document [CNL\(24\)69](#).
- 6.4 Les débats tenus lors de la Séance spéciale WGFON se trouvent en Annexe 11.
- b) Décisions prises sur l'avenir de l'OCSAN**
- 6.5 La Présidente a indiqué au Conseil que ce point de l'ordre du jour permettait de prendre des décisions à la lumière de la Séance spéciale du Groupe de travail sur l'avenir de l'OCSAN, en ce qui concernait 'L'avenir de l'OCSAN – une Stratégie sur dix ans (projet)', [CNL\(24\)13](#), et 'Actions de haut niveau de l'OCSAN – 2024', exposés dans la présentation pour la Séance spéciale du WGFON, [CNL\(24\)69](#).
- 6.6 Les analyses des facteurs de stress ont été discutées. La Présidente a rappelé aux délégués que les analyses de facteurs de stress ne feraient pas partie du prochain cycle de reporting mais qu'elles l'éclaireraient. Plusieurs Parties ont exprimé leur soutien à la conduite d'analyses de facteurs de stress, la Norvège et le RU déclarant qu'ils avaient en place des procédures qu'ils pouvaient partager avec les autres. Le représentant de l'UE a soulevé le fait qu'il voulait s'assurer qu'une analyse des facteurs de stress n'affaiblirait pas le processus des IP / APR.
- 6.7 Le Conseil a débattu d'un processus et d'un calendrier pour que toutes les Parties / juridictions mènent une analyse des facteurs de stress, documentant les menaces principales et les défis dans chaque juridiction. En plus de l'analyse des facteurs de stress, le Conseil a également discuté s'il y aurait ou non un bénéfice pour les Parties / juridictions à entreprendre aussi un état des lieux. Le Conseil a débattu sur l'état des lieux comme étant effectivement la situation de départ à partir de laquelle les progrès dans la mise en œuvre d'actions permettant d'avancer vers la réalisation de l'Objectif Stratégique seraient mesurés. Le Conseil est convenu que les états des lieux étaient importants mais qu'une discussion plus poussée était requise, particulièrement eu égard aux conseils attendus de la part du Groupe de travail sur le futur reporting en 2025. Le développement d'états des lieux par les Parties / juridictions serait de priorité équivalente à celle des analyses de facteurs de stress.
- 6.8 Le processus suivant lequel les recommandations à l'OCSAN seraient traitées a été affiné pendant la session annuelle. Le concept proposé de Groupe de travail par thématique (TBWG) présenté dans 'L'Avenir de l'OCSAN – une stratégie (projet) sur dix ans', [CNL\(24\)13](#), a été modifié. Plutôt qu'avoir une priorisation des recommandations par les TBWGs, les Parties ont jugé qu'elle pouvait commencer pendant la session annuelle et que le WGFON pourrait être à nouveau réuni pour poursuivre le restant de ce travail. Le Conseil a aussi débattu de la nécessité de mettre à jour, et de consolider le cas échéant, les Résolutions, Accords et Directives de l'OCSAN, de l'ordre de priorité et du calendrier de ce travail.
- 6.9 Le Conseil a aussi estimé que la meilleure façon de présenter le travail de l'OCSAN pour les dix années à venir serait d'avoir sa stratégie et son plan d'action dans un document unique, avec un texte de liaison entre les deux.
- 6.10 A la lumière de ces discussions, le Conseil a décidé:
- d'adopter 'L'Avenir de l'OCSAN – une Stratégie sur dix ans', [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), qui

contient aussi les actions de haut niveau en un document unique;

- les actions de haut niveau suivantes:
 - que les Parties / juridictions mèneraient une analyse des facteurs de stress et fourniraient un document à l'OCSAN pour le 30 avril 2025;
 - que les Parties / juridictions, après avoir discuté de ce qui constitue un état des lieux, en réaliseraient un après la session annuelle 2025 et feraient rapport à l'OCSAN pour le 30 avril 2026;
 - de terminer le développement de l'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage (WASA), incluant les recommandations du Comité de direction;
 - que les Parties contribueraient à l'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage (WASA) afin de donner une vue d'ensemble de l'état du saumon, en utilisant les métriques de données adoptées pour l'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage (WASA) d'ici à décembre 2024;
 - que l'OCSAN publierait en 2026 un rapport 'Etat du saumon' basé sur les données de l'Atlas du saumon atlantique sauvage (WASA);
 - de mettre à jour, et de consolider le cas échéant, les Résolutions, Accords et Directives de l'OCSAN, en incorporant le changement climatique et d'autres facteurs (voir l'Annexe 1 de 'L'Avenir de l'OCSAN – une Stratégie sur dix ans', [CNL\(24\)71rev](#)) en tant qu'éléments-clé de la révision avec l'ordre de priorité suivant, pouvant évoluer:
 - habitat: commencer en 2025; prévision de terminer en 2026;
 - aquaculture et pathologie: commencer en 2026; prévision de fin en 2027; et
 - pêcheries: commencer en 2027; prévision de terminer en 2028;
 - en tant que future action, que les Parties prévoient / documenter le prochain cycle d'actions pour le saumon – lié avec leurs facteurs de stress-clé;
 - que les Parties renforceraient les liens avec d'autres Organisations régionales de gestion des pêches et des Organisations inter-gouvernementales et en feraient rapport aux sessions annuelles de l'OCSAN;
 - de demander que la Secrétaire se rapproche d'un consultant approprié pour développer une stratégie de communication et de sensibilisation;
 - que le WGFON poursuivrait son travail; et
 - que le WGFON élaborerait un document de position sur des changements à la Convention de l'OCSAN.

6.11 Davantage de détails se trouvent dans 'L'avenir de l'OCSAN – une Stratégie sur dix ans', [CNL\(24\)71rev](#)), avec la demande au Secrétariat de prendre toutes les dispositions appropriées pour entreprendre le travail.

6.12 Concernant les décisions contenues dans le 'Plan d'action projet pour l'OCSAN', [CNL\(24\)14](#), mais non prises en compte dans les actions de haut niveau, le Conseil a décidé:

- d'inclure un point à l'ordre du jour des Commissions pour permettre une mise à jour annuelle sur les pêcheries de stocks mixtes côtières, estuariennes et de rivière et la justification de leur maintien prolongé (pour répondre à la recommandation EPR10

de l'Objectif 3);

- d'ordonner à la Secrétaire de travailler avec le CIEM au développement d'une demande visant à assurer que les bases de données et les applications en ligne du CIEM, existantes et futures, prennent en compte le saumon, comme elles le font pour les autres stocks évalués, et une demande de faire figurer le saumon atlantique dans la liste de captures accessoires du CIEM (afin de répondre à la recommandation EPR3 de l'Objectif 1);
- que le SGWG prépare un projet de Directives de l'OCSAN sur le 'Recours à des programmes de reconstitution des stocks dans le contexte de la gestion de précaution des stocks de saumon', [CNL\(04\)55](#), et de protocoles scientifiques et de gestion pour les banques de gènes (en réponse aux recommandations EPR23 et T2 de l'Objectif 2);
- de prendre en considération, par la voie de discussions en inter-session, des options de nature à faciliter une plus grande transparence lors des discussions en plénière, tout en évitant d'allonger les sessions (en réponse à la recommandation EPR31 de l'Objectif 5);
- de charger le Secrétariat d'identifier, et d'utiliser, un outil de gestion de projet tel que SmartSheet pour rendre compte au Conseil des progrès sur le Plan d'action lors de la session annuelle 2025 puis annuellement ensuite (en réponse à la recommandation du WGFON de l'Objectif 5);
- que le lieu par défaut des réunions inter-sessionnelles en présentiel est le bâtiment du siège de l'OCSAN à Edimbourg; et
- de retirer le point AIES de l'ordre du jour du Conseil, et d'envisager un dialogue avec l'AIES et d'autres industries et organisations pertinentes qui fera partie de la stratégie de communication.

6.13 En sus du développement d'une stratégie et d'un plan d'action, le WGFON a été chargé de développer le quatrième cycle de reporting et le mandat pour un Groupe de travail sur le futur reporting. Le Conseil a pris les décisions suivantes:

- de conduire un quatrième cycle de reporting ;
- de créer un Groupe de travail sur le futur reporting (WGFR) pour entreprendre une révision du processus;
- d'adopter le 'Mandat pour un Groupe de travail sur le futur reporting', [CNL\(24\)63](#); et
- de donner ordre au WGFR de se réunir en inter-session pour préparer la session de novembre 2024 mentionnée dans le 'Mandat pour un Groupe de travail sur le futur reporting', [CNL\(24\)63](#).

7. Conservation, restauration, accroissement et gestion rationnelle du Saumon atlantique dans le cadre de l'approche préventive

a) Séance spéciale thématique: Gestion du saumon rose dans l'Atlantique Nord et ses menaces potentielles pour le saumon atlantique sauvage

(i) Séance spéciale thématique: Gestion du saumon rose dans l'Atlantique Nord et ses menaces potentielles pour le saumon atlantique sauvage

7.1 Lors de la session annuelle 2023, le Conseil a décidé de tenir une Séance spéciale

thématique (SST) sur le saumon rose pendant la session annuelle 2024.

- 7.2 L'objectif général de la SST était de fournir une vue d'ensemble de la distribution du saumon rose, de sa biologie, de ses impacts potentiels sur le saumon autochtone de l'Atlantique et des actions de gestion dans l'Atlantique Nord.
- 7.3 Les débats tenus pendant la Séance spéciale thématique se trouvent en Annexe 12.
- 7.4 Un compte rendu de la Séance spéciale thématique sera préparé par le Comité de direction pour publication.

(ii) *Décisions prises eu égard à la Séance spéciale thématique*

- 7.5 La Présidente a indiqué aux délégués que ce point de l'ordre du jour permettait de prendre des décisions en vertu de la Séance spéciale thématique.
- 7.6 La Présidente a rappelé au Conseil que les Parties / juridictions entreprendraient des analyses des facteurs de stress afin d'identifier les menaces et défis principaux.
- 7.7 Reconnaissant l'importance de l'analyse des facteurs de stress, le Conseil a décidé de ne pas tenir de Séance spéciale thématique en 2025. Toutefois, le Conseil a décidé au lieu de celle-ci de tenir une Séance spéciale pendant laquelle les Parties / juridictions mettraient en commun les résultats de leurs analyses des facteurs de stress sous la forme de présentations courtes, « flash ».
- 7.8 Eu égard à la Séance spéciale thématique et au premier compte rendu du Groupe de travail sur le saumon rose, le représentant de la Norvège a déclaré que, étant donné les développements alarmants au nord de la Norvège concernant le saumon rose et les actions que la Norvège a prises pour éliminer les risques pour le saumon atlantique et pour les écosystèmes fluviaux dans lesquels il vit, il pensait qu'il devrait y avoir une suite donnée à la 'Déclaration du Conseil concernant le saumon rose, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, dans la zone de la Convention de l'OCSAN', [CNL\(22\)47](#), adoptée en 2022. En conséquence, le représentant de la Norvège a présenté une déclaration projet concernant le saumon rose, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, dans la zone de la Convention de l'OCSAN.
- 7.9 Le Canada, le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland), l'UE, l'Islande, la Norvège, le Royaume-Uni et les États-Unis ont fait une 'Déclaration commune du Canada, du Danemark pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland, de l'UE, de l'Islande, de la Norvège, du Royaume-Uni et des États-Unis concernant le saumon rose, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*', Annexe 13.
- 7.10 La représentante de la Fédération de Russie a indiqué qu'elle ne se joindrait pas à la déclaration, son approche du saumon rose étant différente, et elle a fait une déclaration, Annexe 14.

b) *Évaluation des Plans de mise en œuvre et des Rapports de progrès annuels réalisés dans le cadre du troisième cycle de reporting (2019 – 2024)*

(i) *Séance spéciale: Évaluation des Plans de mise en œuvre et des Rapports de progrès annuels réalisés dans le cadre du troisième cycle de reporting (2019 – 2024)*

- 7.11 La Présidente a rappelé au Conseil que l'OCSAN a adopté des Résolutions, Accords et Directives qui traitent de ses principaux domaines de préoccupation pour la gestion des stocks de saumon. L'organisation s'est engagée vis-à-vis des mesures et des accords qu'elle a développés et a suivi les progrès avec des Plans de mise en œuvre et des Rapports de progrès annuels.

- 7.12 La Présidente a informé les délégués qu'en 2023, le Conseil a décidé de prolonger d'un an le troisième cycle de reporting et de repousser d'une année le quatrième cycle de reporting, [CNL\(23\)87](#). Des plans de mise en œuvre (IPs) révisés dans le cadre du troisième cycle de reporting (2019 – 2024) transmis par des Parties / juridictions ont été passés en revue par le Groupe d'examen des IP / APR en novembre 2023. Les Rapports de progrès annuels (APRs) transmis par des Parties / juridictions à l'OCSAN ont été passés en revue par le Groupe d'examen des IP / APR en avril 2024.
- 7.13 Le sixième rapport intermédiaire du Groupe d'examen des IP/ APR pour l'examen des IPs, [CNL\(24\)17](#), conjointement avec le compte rendu du Groupe d'examen des IP / APR pour l'examen des APRs, [CNL\(24\)18](#), a été présenté par le Président du Groupe d'examen des IP / APR, Cathal Gallagher (UE).
- 7.14 Les débats tenus lors de la Séance spéciale se trouvent en Annexe 15.
- (ii) Décisions prises concernant l'évaluation des Plans de mise en œuvre dans le cadre du troisième cycle de reporting (2019 – 2024)**
- 7.15 La Présidente a souligné que la décision de commencer le développement du quatrième cycle de reporting signifiait qu'il n'y aurait pas de capacité résiduelle pour des examens supplémentaires d'IP révisés dans le cadre du troisième cycle de reporting.
- 7.16 Le Conseil a par conséquent décidé qu'il n'y aurait pas d'autres examens d'IPs révisés dans le cadre du troisième cycle de reporting, en 2024 et 2025.
- (iii) Décisions prises concernant l'évaluation des Rapports de progrès annuels réalisés dans le cadre des Plans de mise en œuvre de 2019 – 2024**
- 7.17 La Présidente s'est référée à la décision selon laquelle les Parties / juridictions entreprendraient une analyse des facteurs de stress en 2024 / 2025 (voir paragraphe 6.10). Reconnaissant l'importance de l'analyse des facteurs de stress et le temps que cela impliquait pour la mener, et notant que les analyses de facteurs de stress sont la priorité pour les Parties / juridictions, le Conseil a décidé que:
- la transmission d'APRs en 2025 n'est pas obligatoire;
 - le Secrétariat ne créera pas de templates pour des juridictions qui pourraient souhaiter transmettre des APRs en 2025; et
 - le Secrétariat fournira un tableur pour les déclarations de captures et les Parties le compléteront et le renverront pour le 1er avril 2025.
- 7.18 La Présidente s'est ensuite référée à la décision selon laquelle les Parties / juridictions entreprendraient un état des lieux en 2025 / 2026 (voir paragraphe 6.10). Notant que le développement d'états des lieux par les Parties / juridictions serait une priorité au même titre que l'analyse des facteurs de stress, le Conseil a décidé que:
- la transmission d'APRs en 2026 n'est pas obligatoire;
 - le Secrétariat ne créera pas de templates pour des juridictions qui pourraient souhaiter transmettre des APRs en 2026;
 - le Secrétariat fournira un tableur de déclaration de captures que les Parties compléteront et renverront pour le 1er avril 2026; et
 - il donnera ordre au Secrétariat de circulariser la liste de menaces qui a été publiée antérieurement par l'OCSAN.

c) Liaison avec l'industrie salmonicole

- 7.19 La Présidente a rappelé au Conseil qu'en 2013, le Conseil avait décidé que les réunions régulières du Groupe de liaison Association internationale des éleveurs de saumon (AIES) / OCSAN ne se poursuivraient pas. Le Conseil avait décidé de conserver un point de son ordre du jour lors duquel un représentant de l'AIES serait invité à participer à un échange d'informations sur des sujets concernant les impacts de l'aquaculture sur le saumon sauvage.
- 7.20 La Présidente a noté qu'en 2022, il avait été décidé de retirer 'Liaison avec l'industrie salmonicole' de l'ordre du jour (à moins que l'AIES ne participe) et de demander à la Secrétaire d'envoyer à l'AIES une invitation à participer et à transmettre une déclaration.
- 7.21 La Présidente a dit au conseil que l'AIES avait été invitée et avait décidé d'envoyer un représentant pour participer à la session annuelle 2024 et pour apporter une contribution écrite, 'le rapport 2024 de l'Association Internationale des Eleveurs de Saumon (AIES) à l'OCSAN', [CNL\(24\)20](#). Cependant, au cours de la semaine précédant la session, l'AIES a décliné sa participation à la session parce qu'il ne lui était pas accordé l'opportunité de faire une présentation au Conseil. La Secrétaire avait rappelé à l'AIES les termes de la lettre d'invitation de la Présidente de l'OCSAN:
- 'Je voudrais inviter un représentant de l'AIES à participer et à contribuer par écrit à ce point de l'ordre du jour. Nous accueillerions une contribution mettant en lumière des développements pour faire face aux impacts de l'élevage du saumon sur la population de saumon sauvage. En particulier, des actualisations concernant les échappements de saumon d'élevage et le contrôle du pou de mer seraient les bienvenues. Si vous souhaitez soumettre un document, nous serions heureux de le circulariser lors de la session, ou préalablement à celle-ci.'*
- 7.22 La Présidente a porté à la connaissance du Conseil que l'AIES jugeait cette durée très limitée pour discuter des questions liées à l'élevage du saumon. L'AIES avait déclaré qu'une telle discussion devrait être basée sur des présentations faites lors de la session et pas seulement sur des informations apportées par un document écrit. Elle cherchait à faire comprendre à l'OCSAN sa difficulté à justifier l'utilisation de ressources de temps et d'argent pour une contribution à la session sous la forme probable de réponses à des questions sur son document.
- 7.23 La représentante du RU a déclaré qu'à la lumière de la stratégie projet de l'OCSAN, il était important de dialoguer avec l'AIES et qu'elle serait favorable à une présentation ayant un périmètre bien défini. L'approche du RU a reçu le soutien du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland), de l'UE, l'Islande et les États-Unis
- 7.24 Le représentant de la Norvège a demandé du temps pour prendre la demande en considération eu égard au contenu du document. Le représentant du Canada a déclaré être sur la même ligne que la Norvège et il a souligné cependant qu'il était ouvert à un dialogue collaboratif.
- 7.25 Le représentant des ONG a soutenu la position norvégienne et a suggéré qu'une Session spéciale devrait être tenue pour regarder plus en profondeur l'industrie aquacole.
- 7.26 Des décisions relatives à 'Liaison avec l'industrie salmonicole' ont été prises sous le point 6.b)(ii) de l'ordre du jour, voir paragraphe 6.12.

d) Nouvelles opportunités ou opportunités naissantes pour, ou menaces contre, la conservation et la gestion du saumon

(i) *Nouvelles opportunités ou opportunités naissantes pour, ou menaces contre, la conservation et la gestion du saumon*

7.27 Le président du Groupe de travail sur le saumon de l'Atlantique Nord (WGNAS), Alan Walker (RU), a présenté l'avis pertinent pour ce point de l'ordre du jour. La présentation est disponible comme document [CNL\(24\)56](#).

(ii) *Le Groupe de travail de l'OCSAN sur le saumon rose*

7.28 La Présidente a indiqué qu'en 2022 le Conseil avait exprimé sa préoccupation concernant l'ampleur des entrées de saumon rose dans de nombreuses rivières à saumon de l'Atlantique. Le Conseil avait adopté une 'Déclaration du Conseil concernant le saumon rose, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, dans la zone de la Convention de l'OCSAN', [CNL\(22\)47](#). Le 'Mandat du Groupe de travail sur le saumon rose', [CNL\(23\)69](#), a été adopté en 2023 et la session inaugurale du Groupe de travail a eu lieu à Galway, Irlande, en mars 2024. Le compte rendu de la session a été présenté lors de la SST sur le saumon rose.

7.29 La Présidente a indiqué que le mandat du Groupe de travail sur le saumon rose incluait de 'proposer un mandat révisé et un calendrier de réunions régulières du Groupe de travail sur le saumon rose de l'OCSAN'. Elle a invité le président du Groupe de travail sur le saumon rose, Jarle Steinkjer (Norvège) à présenter le compte rendu du Groupe et son mandat révisé.

7.30 Le Conseil a adopté le 'Mandat du Groupe de travail sur le saumon rose', [CNL\(24\)64](#).

e) Pêcherie de saumons à St Pierre et Miquelon – Gestion et Échantillonnage

7.31 La Présidente a indiqué que le Conseil et la Commission Nord-Américaine étaient tous deux préoccupés par les captures de saumon à St Pierre et Miquelon qui, bien que faibles, se produisaient au moment où de graves inquiétudes portent sur l'abondance des stocks nord-américains et où des restrictions des prélèvements ont été mises en place dans la zone entière de la Commission Nord-Américaine.

7.32 La Présidente a remercié la France (pour St Pierre et Miquelon) d'avoir transmis le rapport 'Gestion et échantillonnage de la Pêcherie de saumons à St Pierre et Miquelon', [CNL\(24\)22](#). Celui-ci avait été examiné lors de la session de la Commission Nord-Américaine et il n'y a pas eu d'autres questions lors de la session du Conseil.

7.33 La représentante de la France (pour St Pierre et Miquelon) a fait une déclaration (Annexe 16).

7.34 Le représentant du Canada s'est félicité de la charte de durabilité à laquelle la déclaration faisait référence. Il a indiqué qu'il avait exprimé ses préoccupations en Commission Nord-Américaine et a remercié la France (pour St Pierre et Miquelon) pour sa coopération et le maintien de sa participation à l'OCSAN.

f) Rapports des trois Commissions régionales concernant leurs activités de conservation

7.35 Les activités des trois Commissions ont été rapportées au Conseil par leurs Présidents.

8. Divers

8.1 La représentante du Royaume-Uni a soulevé deux points. Premièrement, concernant les

analyses des facteurs de stress, elle a fait part de sa bonne volonté à assurer un échange d'informations entre les Parties / juridictions et elle a proposé d'échanger les adresses email des personnes qui réaliseront les analyses. Le représentant de l'Islande a indiqué qu'il serait heureux de coopérer avec le Royaume-Uni et de partager des informations.

8.2 Deuxièmement, la représentante du Royaume-Uni a exprimé son souhait de conserver une Séance spéciale sur le cycle de reporting en 2025 afin de mettre en commun les actions menées par les Parties / juridictions qui ont été considérées comme des réussites pour le saumon atlantique sauvage. Les autres Parties ont décidé que ce serait très utile pour préparer le quatrième cycle de reporting.

8.3 Le Conseil a décidé de tenir une Séance spéciale sur le quatrième cycle de reporting.

9. Date et lieu de la prochaine session

9.1 Le Conseil a accepté l'offre généreuse du Royaume-Uni d'accueillir la quarante-deuxième session annuelle, du 3 au 6 juin 2025. L'objectif est de tenir la session à Cardiff.

9.2 Le Conseil a décidé de tenir sa quarante-troisième session annuelle du 2 au 5 juin 2026.

10. Communiqué de presse

10.1 Le Conseil a adopté un Communiqué de presse, [CNL\(24\)87](#).

11. Compte rendu de la session

11.1 Le Conseil a adopté son compte rendu de la session.

12. Clôture de la session

12.1 La Présidente a remercié les participants pour leurs contributions et elle a clos la session.

List of Annexes

- Annex 1 Opening Statement from the President of NASCO, Kim Damon-Randall
- Annex 2 Welcoming Address by the Director of the Inland Fisheries Division of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Philip Nugent.
- Annex 3 Statement from Denis Maher, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Annex 4 Statement from Cathal Gallagher, Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Annex 5 Opening Statements Submitted by the Parties
- Annex 6 Opening Statement on behalf of France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon)
- Annex 7 Opening Statement Submitted by NASCO's Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Annex 8 List of Participants
- Annex 9 Membership of Working Groups, CNL(24)65
- Annex 10 Calendar of Inter-Sessional Meetings, CNL(24)66
- Annex 11 Question and Answer Session held during the Special Session of the Council: Working Group on the Future of NASCO
- Annex 12 Question and Answer Session held during the Theme-based Special Session of the Council: Management of Pink Salmon in the North Atlantic and Their Potential Threats to Wild Atlantic Salmon
- Annex 13 Joint Statement by Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), EU, Iceland, Norway, UK and the US Regarding Pink Salmon
- Annex 14 Statement by the Russian Federation Regarding Pink Salmon
- Annex 15 Question and Answer Session held during the IP / APR Special Session of the Council
- Annex 16 Statement given by St. Pierre and Miquelon

Opening Statement from the President of NASCO

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Kimberly Damon-Randall and I am the President of NASCO. It is my great pleasure to open the Forty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO. I not only welcome the people here in this room, but I would like to welcome our virtual delegates, especially those who are attending in the more inconvenient time zones!

We would like to acknowledge and thank the European Union and the Irish Government for hosting this year's meeting in Ireland. We hope you enjoy your visit to the historic town of Westport and the County of Mayo, here on the Atlantic's eastern edge. There are many prestigious wild Atlantic salmon fisheries located in the surrounding region, including the Moy, Corrib, Ballisodare, Erriff, Owenmore, Owenduff and Carrowmore fisheries. There are also numerous salmon rivers in the locality.

I would like to introduce the National Director of Inland Fisheries Ireland, Philip Nugent, who will be addressing us on behalf of the Environment Minister, Irish Government and the EU. Denis Maher from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and Cathal Gallager from Inland Fisheries Ireland will also be speaking briefly to share information relevant to the meeting.

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As I open the meeting, I would like to thank Inland Fisheries Ireland with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications for organizing the Annual Meeting for NASCO here in the picturesque town of Westport. This is a very appropriate place to hold a meeting about salmon, with a number of important river systems nearby and the Carrowbeg River running through the centre of Westport. The Carrowbeg River was originally a winding waterway that was straightened in the 1730s by the architect of Westport House, who added in elegant cascades as salmon leaps.

I am delighted to be able to open the meeting with some excellent news. You may recall at last year's Annual Meeting it was announced that Iceland, one of the founder members of NASCO, intended to re-join NASCO. I am delighted to be able to announce that this process was completed at the start of this calendar year and would like to extend a warm welcome to the Delegation from Iceland and its Head, Dr Guðni Magnús Eiríksson. I very much look forward to Iceland participating as a full member this year.

We have a very full schedule for our meeting this year, and I would like to highlight some of the most significant items of business that we can look forward to.

We will hear from the Working Group on the Future of NASCO (WGFON) very soon on the Ten-Year (Draft) Strategy and associated Action Plan for NASCO. It is vital for the future of wild North Atlantic salmon, and therefore NASCO, that NASCO understand the pressures both direct and indirect faced by this species and agree a process to prioritise and address them within the organization's remit. The WGFON has taken the recommendations of six separate processes into account when developing these strategic documents, from the 2019 Tromsø Symposium to the 2023 External Performance Review and Theme-based Special Session on climate change. As Chair of the WGFON, I look forward to sharing the extensive work of the Group with you. The Group has had two lengthy inter-sessional meetings, the first of which was a facilitated three-day workshop to have an in-depth dive into NASCO's unique role in

protecting the iconic species that is the wild Atlantic salmon. A further meeting built on the outcomes of the workshop to produce a succinct Strategy for the next ten years and associated Action Plan to achieve a comprehensive Strategic Goal. We are keen to hear from you on all of these. So, please, prepare your questions and comments and get ready to participate fully in the WGFON Special Session.

Talking of Special Sessions, once again we have a number of Special Sessions in one NASCO Meeting, with two on one day! I am very much looking forward to the combined Special Session on the Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports on Wednesday morning. It is an opportunity for all delegates to hold Parties / jurisdictions to account on their actions in relation to wild Atlantic salmon and also to highlight some of the excellent work that is taking place. We then have a Theme-based Special Session on the management of pink salmon in the North Atlantic, after lunch. During these Special Sessions, I encourage all delegates to get involved, ask questions, and contribute to shaping the future of NASCO.

In addition, we will consider the work of two Working Groups established in 2023, to agree to new Stocking Guidelines and the permanent Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Pink Salmon. We will also consider the proposal for a Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas.

The Commissions also have a packed schedule. There will be important negotiations in the North-East Atlantic Commission on its new regulatory measure. In each of the Commissions, there will again be an opportunity for updates to be presented on any mixed-stock fisheries, including the most recent catch data and any developments in relation to the management of these fisheries to implement NASCO agreements. The West Greenland Commission will, again, have the opportunity to consider the implementation of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland agreed in 2022. The Agendas of the North American and North-East Atlantic Commissions allow for consideration of measures to minimise risks from introductions and transfers. The North American Commission will consider the Annual Reports from the US and Canada and look at the report on the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon.

The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and the Finance and Administration Committee met yesterday, and I look forward to hearing about their deliberations later in the week.

But it's not all work... This year we can look forward to some Irish hospitality on Wednesday when Ireland hosts a reception with drinks and dinner. Our hosts are then providing a further drinks reception on the Thursday evening at Matt Molloy's, a local pub with live traditional music, owned by a former member of one of Ireland's most renowned traditional music bands, the Chieftains. Finally, there will be a tour on Friday afternoon to the National Salmonid Index Catchment on the River Erriff, a world-class applied scientific research facility at Aasleagh Falls, County Mayo, operated by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

So, these are just a few of the business and social highlights of the coming days. I am looking forward to lots of lively discussion and debate.

As President of NASCO, I know how much work goes on for the many months leading up to a meeting. This work is not only done by the Secretary and the Secretariat staff, but the host country also has to organize all the non-business elements of our meeting.

Several people from both Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications have been working with the NASCO Secretariat to make our meetings a success, and on behalf of NASCO, I would like to thank all of you for the time and hard work that you have contributed.

I would like to conclude my opening remarks with a reminder of why we are all here. NASCO's objective is *'to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through international co-operation, taking account of best available scientific information.'* And I would ask you to keep our objective at the forefront of your mind, throughout the week. I am optimistic that we can speed our progress towards achieving that objective, with the decisions taken and actions agreed at this meeting.

With that, I would like to move on to Opening Statements by Parties, Observers and the NGOs.

Thank you.

Welcoming Address by the Director of the Inland Fisheries Division of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Philip Nugent

Madam President, Heads of Delegations, national representatives, representatives from non-governmental organizations and delegates, on behalf of Minister Eamon Ryan and the Irish Government, Ireland is very proud to host the 41st Annual Meeting of NASCO here in Westport, in County Mayo. We are, of course, hosting on behalf of the European Union, of which Ireland is a proud member, having been so since the early 1970s.

And in that regard, I want to acknowledge Mr Ignacio Granell, Head of the EU Delegation, as our co-host. And to thank him for this opportunity and his consistent support. We're meeting here today on the eastern edge of our workspace, the North Atlantic Ocean. As we look out from this venue, this spectacular venue on the Wild Atlantic Way, apart from a smattering of islands off our Western Seaboard, our next stop is Greenland on the North American continent.

And this is testament to the vastness of that workspace and the critical need because of its sheer size to jointly address challenges facing our Atlantic salmon via international collaboration and partnership. Addressing threats to Atlantic salmon, including from climate change and anthropogenic impacts, including aquaculture, predation, invasive species, habitat degradation and IUU fishing is at the core of NASCO's ongoing mission and mandate.

Administrations from every part of NASCO implement policies directed at salmon protection and conservation in home waters, our own rivers, our lakes, our inshore areas. But salmon know no borders. And tackling what happens in the shared marine environment is embodied in the international framework of NASCO. Our fish run the gauntlet of these challenges under migration, beginning from estuaries to far-distant feeding grounds and back again.

And it is also often a losing battle. For Ireland's part, salmon is an iconic creature in our culture, our history and our heritage, in our legend and myth, featuring in our art, our storytelling and even in our currency. We have salmon conservation policies which are implemented and a management regime that seeks to protect salmon at the genetically unique population level in each river, with conservation and sustainable exploitation at its heart.

This is implemented by the excellent and dedicated protection, research and support colleagues of Inland Fisheries Ireland. And I want to acknowledge that in the presence this morning of their chairperson, Dr Tom Collins. From 2007, the Irish Government banned mixed-stock fisheries at sea, investing heavily in hardship payments to former fishermen who ceased fishing. Some say that this does not work because salmon populations continue to decline.

But our world-class scientists and managers point to the fact the decline would have been considerably worse had we not taken action. But getting on there for two decades, after that initiative, where is policy development in Ireland? Minister Ryan has initiated a review of policy towards a national new policy for the entire Inland Fisheries sector. To support this, a number of policy papers have been prepared to feed into that renewal.

And chief amongst these is re-evaluation of wild salmon management policy. We intend that our new policy will be more heavily weighted towards the conservation imperative, rather than even the current limited exploitation, including by recreational fishing. Additional important policy papers, among other issues, address the potential mitigation of the impacts of salmon aquaculture on our wild population, impacts of climate change, invasive species and water quality.

At the core of policy development is the primary premise that the practices must be sustainable and absolutely prioritise conservation and biodiversity. I know that at recent NASCO Annual Meetings, our NGO community have posed searching questions regarding aquaculture regulation in Ireland. And that's absolutely correct. They should do so. Our department is not the regulatory authority for aquaculture development.

Our delegates are not always, much to their regret, best positioned to respond authoritatively. But we hope that may be about to change. One of the most far-reaching and important recent policy development in Ireland concerns regulation of activity in our marine and coastal areas. Policy in relation to these activities has long-suffered from being disparate and spread through a multitude of regulatory authorities.

Last year, the Irish Government established the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority or MARA, which means sea in Irish. Now, all activity in marine and coastal areas will be unified and robustly regulated by a single, dynamic authority, with a strong legislative basis, drawing together and cross-working all strands of maritime and coastal activity and development.

I'm pleased to advise NASCO that sustainable regulation of aquaculture development will, in future, be part of MARA's mandate. And that MARA, while statutorily independent in its functions, will come under the remit of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communication and will be among my particular areas of responsibility. And I think that's a happy alignment of the regulation of maritime activity with our role in terms of policy and conservation.

While the department has not always been the regulatory authority for aquaculture development, we have always had a policy position in terms of our long-standing responsibilities for wild salmon conservation. This is and remains that we support aquaculture which is sustainable, does not impact negatively on any other sector and fully complies with domestic and international obligations. Most notably, the EU Habitats Directive and NASCO Principles.

The establishment of MARA presents the opportunity to give renewed voice to that policy position. On the international front, Ireland has long been committed to the EU and to NASCO and other inter-governmental regional fisheries bodies. Our scientists and officials collaborate with our EU and NASCO partners on and contribute to international research, sampling programmes and support initiatives, the roadmap for many of which has its genesis within the co-operative NASCO ethos.

And that's really apparent to me from the interactions that I've had so far yesterday evening and this morning. No one state, no one jurisdiction has all the answers. And there is a need to learn from each other and to collaborate because, as I mentioned, biodiversity and salmon doesn't respect borders. Ireland will remain committed to the EU and to NASCO.

And will, with the welcome support of Chairperson Tom Collins and his board, continue to make our people through Inland Fisheries Ireland, available for research projects, NASCO working groups and initiatives. In particular, we have a strong commitment to the important task of the Working Group on the Future of NASCO, which is setting up renewed, collaborative and focussed response mechanisms to issues that were not as keenly contemplated when NASCO was established.

And this is NASCO adapting to changing times on both long-standing and emerging threats to our salmon. Fundamentally, the direction of travel is no different. But via enhanced agility and responsive to NASCO in all its constituent parts, governments, scientists, NGOs and Indigenous peoples will remain the inter-governmental custodian of the wellbeing of the Atlantic salmon. In conclusion, I want to convey to you every best wish as you embark on the

road of discussions.

And with goodwill and good fortune, consensus on the range of important issues you will address this week in Westport. And as we say in Ireland, may the road rise to meet you. And before concluding, I'd like to take this opportunity to note the contribution of my colleague, Mr Denis Maher, to the work of NASCO. This is his 13th and probably final NASCO Annual Meeting. And I know, again, from speaking to many of you, that the contribution that he has made is immeasurable.

And it's the same in terms of his contribution to the work of our department. So, Denis, thank you very much for all the support you provided me and thank you for your contribution to NASCO over the years. And I'd just like to lead us all in giving Denis a round of applause. Thank you.

Statement by Denis Maher, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

That was humbling. Thank you, Philip. Madam President, Heads of Delegation, Director Philip, Chair of IFI, Heads of Delegation, as I said, delegations and friends, welcome to Westport on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way in County Mayo.

There are a few people I need to thank before we start. First and foremost, I took little advice from Doug last year when we were asked to host. And I took a little advice from Raoul when I met him in Copenhagen. Thanks to both for a few pointers. But chief among those to be thanked are Cathal Gallagher, Mick Millane, Seán Kelly, our three doctors, Lorraine, Suzanne and the absolutely remarkable Sandra Doyle, who you've met at registration.

Of course, I have to thank Pdraig and this team who worked behind the scenes to make this a reality and put on our display this morning. I hope you get a chance to go and see it. These are the guys in the front line. And I can tell you, from meeting them down the years I've been involved, that this is not a job for them. It's a vocation. I also want to thank the excellent secretariat within NASCO, particularly Vicky, Louise, Martha and, of course, Emma.

Welcome to Westport. Westport is a historic heritage town. In fact, it's one of the only planned towns in Ireland, in the west of Ireland. And it's planned around principles introduced, believe it or not, during the Norman conquest of Ireland hundreds and hundreds of years ago. It survives to this day in those, I suppose, architecture and design principles. Of course, it's synonymous with Saint Patrick because of Croagh Patrick.

I know some of you walked the Reek, as we call it locally, yesterday. I hope you enjoyed it. And in the centre of town, there is a statue to Saint Patrick. It used to contain the statue of the local lord, but for some reason, it escapes me why, they took down that statue and replaced it with Saint Patrick. The local people are known as Coveys. And this is because, for centuries, they spoke a very unique dialect of the Irish language, which none of the rest of us understood.

I think that might still be the case with Mayo people. But they are known locally as Coveys. I hope you enjoy it. There are some famous citizens in Westport, one of whom their establishment you'll visit on Thursday, which is Matt Molloy. He's a founding member of the internationally renowned Chieftains, Irish music group, which you'll visit there for an evening of culture, I'm going to call it that, on Thursday.

But you will enjoy it. I also meant to thank Philip as well. And when I was asked last year, would we host the NASCO Annual Meeting, the usual government official thing, I'd have to ring the capital. I rang Philip. And, in fairness, I got a forward response. Go for it. I said, thank you. And he supported me all the way in putting this together. Thank you. And I'd just like Cathal to say a few words in relation to our programme for this week, which I think it's important, particularly around the research centre. Thank you very much.

Statement by Cathal Gallagher, Inland Fisheries Ireland

Madam President, Heads of Delegations, National Representatives, NGO Representatives and Delegates. It gives me great pleasure on behalf of Inland Fisheries Ireland to welcome you to Westport for the 41st Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO).

It is wonderful to see you all again and I would like to extend a special welcome to those who are new to the NASCO family. I hope you have a wonderful week and get some time to enjoy the locality. Of course, the hosting of this meeting required a lot of support and focus from a range of colleagues. While being in danger of missing out in mentioning some of those involved, I would like to take this opportunity to mention some individuals. Firstly, this meeting would not have been possible without the support of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, in particular a big thank you to the Head of the Irish Delegation Denis Maher who has worked intensely on the arrangements for this meeting – he can take the plaudits for any success but is also the man to contact should you have any issue others that should be mentioned are Dr Michael Millane, Dr Seán Kelly and Sandra Doyle who have worked tirelessly over the past year – I have to say they have been very successful so far in delivery of the weather.

The importance of the wild Atlantic salmon to Irish people cannot be underestimated, it is buried deep in our culture and history. Archaeological records identify salmon being used as a food source as far back as the middle stone age. Legends and folklore recall stories like that of Fionn and the Salmon of Knowledge (*An Bradán Feasa*). Salmon in Ireland are also a ‘canary in the mine’ species, used as indicator species that helps us define good water quality. This context goes some way to explain why the rapid and recent decline of returning numbers has impacted greatly on all those in Ireland who care deeply about this iconic species of immense conservation, socio-economic and cultural importance.

IFI considers NASCO as the organization best positioned to support the conservation, sustainable management and protection of wild Atlantic salmon. We hope that the week here in Westport will result in a revitalised NASCO, supporting appropriate new structures and processes to continue with conservation efforts in this era of climate change. I encourage you all, in your work this week, to reflect in your engagements on the critical and urgent need for us to do all we can to protect our wild salmon.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir

Opening Statements Submitted by the Parties

Opening Statement to Council submitted by Canada

Madam President, Heads of Delegations, Distinguished Delegates, and Observers:

Canada is pleased to be joining fellow delegates to the 41st Annual Meeting of NASCO in Westport, Ireland, despite financial pressures increasingly limiting our ability to travel. We are grateful for Ireland's hospitality this week.

We look forward to making further progress in this pivotal stage in NASCO's history as the organization moves toward completion of its ten-year strategic planning exercise. Planning for what an organization will seek to achieve over a decade is a challenging process, but an important one. Canada believes that what the Working Group on the Future of NASCO has accomplished in the last year to develop a Strategy and Action Plan for NASCO is a major step in the right direction. Should the Council adopt the proposed ten-year strategic goal we remain hopeful that Atlantic salmon will benefit.

Besides agreeing on the Strategy and Action Plan for NASCO, Canada cannot stress enough the need and value of improving Indigenous peoples' engagement in the organization, as demonstrated last year in the Special Session on the Perspectives and Roles of Indigenous Peoples in Atlantic Salmon Conservation. This year, our hope is that NASCO will agree to have Indigenous Peoples join future meetings of NASCO Council and most of its subsidiary bodies as a separate category of accredited observers. This is why we look forward to the Council agreeing the *Proposed Revised Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings*.

We would like to thank Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for submitting a detailed report on the 2023 fishery in West Greenland and for their continued efforts to manage this mixed-stock fishery in accordance with the regulatory measure agreed in 2022. Canada hoped that the 2023 fishing season would show further improvements to those observed in 2022. However, with a reported overharvest in 2023 five tonnes more than in 2022, it is clear that, two years into a four-year regulatory measure, adjustments need to be made in order to ensure the fishery stays within the agreed harvest levels. We look forward to discussing the fishery this year, especially to examine how late reporting, which at current levels fundamentally undermines the requirements for sound management using in-season data, can be rectified.

As always, Canada appreciates France's (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) continued attendance at the NASCO Annual Meeting, and collaboration on data exchange, fisheries management, and scientific sampling. Despite having a small fishery, SPM's ongoing harvest of almost entirely Canadian-origin salmon puts pressure on some stocks which already have no or limited harvest opportunities for Canadians, including Indigenous Peoples, who harvest for food, social, and ceremonial purposes. We note that what seemed like improvements in 2022 were followed by setbacks in 2023. With new compliance and enforcement capacity implemented in SPM in 2023, and plans to move away from net fishing, we remain hopeful that the 2024 fishing season will result in a more contained harvest. Finally, as long as there is a mixed-stock salmon fishery being prosecuted in SPM, Canada will continue to strongly encourage France to join NASCO to strengthen collaboration.

Finally, we would like to wish all the delegates another successful Annual Meeting.

Thank you.

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by Denmark (in Respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honor to address you today on behalf of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). As we gather here in Westport, we celebrate NASCO's 41st Annual Meeting, marking four decades of dedicated efforts towards the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the NASCO Secretariat for their tireless work in organizing this meeting, and to our gracious Irish hosts for their warm hospitality.

We are also pleased to welcome our Icelandic friends back to NASCO. We look forward to their contributions in our shared mission to protect and preserve wild Atlantic salmon.

Despite our ongoing efforts, significant challenges remain. Threats such as climate change and habitat degradation continue to endanger the delicate balance of our marine ecosystems and the survival of Atlantic salmon.

This year, the Working Group on the Future of NASCO (WGFON) has presented a draft strategy and action plan aimed at reversing the decline of wild Atlantic salmon by focusing NASCO's efforts where they can provide the most value and improving the outreach element of NASCO's work. These documents will be crucial in guiding our future actions and ensuring accountability among all parties.

The Faroe Islands and Greenland have long been promoting a change in focus and increased actions on other factors than fisheries, which threaten the wild Atlantic salmon. Therefore, we are very supportive of the draft strategy and encourage all parties to ensure that action is taken swiftly.

On this note, I would like to emphasize three key priorities that will guide our discussions and actions during this meeting:

1. **International Collaboration:** Enhancing cooperation, sharing knowledge, and best practices are essential for managing salmon stocks effectively.
2. **Climate Resilience:** Integrating climate resilience into our conservation strategies is imperative to safeguard both salmon and the communities that depend on them.
3. **Sustainable Practices:** Promoting and enforcing sustainable fisheries management must be at the heart of NASCO's mission.

In closing, let us reaffirm our commitment to these priorities. Together, we can achieve a vision of healthy, thriving salmon populations and resilient marine ecosystems for future generations.

Thank you.

Opening statement to Council Submitted by the European Union

Ms President, Mrs Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The European Union is delighted to participate at the 41st Annual Meeting of NASCO in this beautiful and historic town of Westport, and we would like to thank the Secretariat and Ireland for all the hard work that went into the preparation of this meeting.

Meeting in Westport will help us to discuss and agree on important items that we have ahead of us in the agenda, including the adoption of a new Strategy and Action Plan to slow the decline of wild Atlantic Salmon, to adopt also good practices and lessons learnt that could reduce the negative impact of pink salmon, and to ensure that the Regulatory Measure concerning the fishery in West Greenland promotes the long-term conservation of the stocks.

In this regard, the EU is looking forward to a fruitful co-operation with all the Parties during this meeting, and we are looking forward to deciding on issues that will reinforce the conservation of wild Atlantic Salmon.

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by Iceland

It gives us great pleasure to attend this Annual Meeting of NASCO in the beautiful setting of the town of Westport. This is indeed a pleasure since this is the first time since 2009 that Iceland takes a seat at this table as a member to NASCO. We look forward to the work ahead and hope to benefit again from NASCO in our work of supporting the sustainability of wild salmon stocks. We also believe that our contribution to NASCO's work, by sharing of knowledge and participation in research, may become useful for NASCO in our common objective to conserve, restore and rationally manage Atlantic salmon.

We would like to take this opportunity to share some of the current issues concerning the stock status and potential threats to Atlantic salmon in Iceland.

The Atlantic Salmon stocks in Iceland have shown more fluctuations between years than previously seen and in general there has been a steady decline in the most recent years. There are indications that climate related changes could be affecting salmon stocks through both draught periods that lower survival of fry and parr and might cause lower smolt production, as well as through warmer winters that cause longer ice-free periods in rivers increasing access for predators. Like in other countries lower return of salmon has been met by reducing fishing pressure, shortening of the net fishing season, and mandatory catch and release of multi-sea-winter salmon and all salmon in several rivers.

We have had a rapid increase of pink salmon in Icelandic rivers in recent years as is the case in many rivers in the Northeast-Atlantic. We are concerned of the impact this may have on other salmonid species. Efforts have been made to remove pink salmon using seine netting where possible. The Marine and Freshwater Research Institute in Iceland has directed considerable efforts into documenting pink salmon reproduction in Icelandic waters and further research is now ongoing. We look forward to the special session on pink salmon at this meeting and to learn from new information that may become of value for our research and management of pink salmon in Iceland.

Sea-cage farming of Atlantic salmon in the Icelandic coastal waters has been developing at a rather slow phase for the last 10-15 years and the production is at ca. 44.000 tonnes/year in

total at present. The farmed salmon used in Iceland is of Norwegian origin, a population that has undergone selective breeding for desirable characteristics for the farming. Iceland is aware of number of risks that cage farming may impose on the wild Atlantic salmon populations, such as the genetic impact of escaped salmon migrating to rivers for spawning and the risk that sea lice may pose on the survival of wild salmon populations. Measures have been taken to reduce the risk and an important one being that when sea-cage farming was initiated, in its current form, it was not allowed in coastal waters close to the most important salmon rivers in the western and northern parts of Iceland.

To meet and reduce the negative impacts from aquaculture escapees on wild salmon stocks a framework for risk assessment has been developed in Iceland. The risk assessment sets the maximum allowed production to limit the risk of intrusion to not exceed a tolerance level of four percent intrusion of aquaculture fish to rivers hosting wild salmon stocks. A monitoring program with fish counters in selected rivers and analyses of genetic samples taken from salmon juveniles in rivers is ongoing for further development of the risk assessment. The risk assessment will also have to take into consideration the ongoing decline in the wild populations of Atlantic salmon.

An incident in 2023 demonstrated that farmed salmon escaping from a sea cage in the Westfjords of Iceland were able to distributed at an alarming rate into rivers ranging from West to North Iceland. In an operation organised by the Directorate of Fisheries with advice from the Marine Research Institute in cooperation with river owners more than 500 aquaculture salmon were caught in total in more than 50 Icelandic rivers in August- November 2023. The majority of the caught farmed fish were traced to a single cage in the Westfjords, using genetic analysis. This incident demonstrated the risk involved and has encouraged the strengthening of governmental institutions involved in surveillance, monitoring and research as well as reformation of the management of sea-cage salmonid production.

In order to provide foundation for strengthening the regulatory framework Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries asked the national audit office to perform a holistic review of sustainability issues regarding sea-based farming. A report on the matter was released in 2023. Following the review a working group was formed to address matters concerning infectious diseases and another working group directed at the risk of escaped of farmed salmon with the aim of revising action plans and responses.

At present there is a bill being discussed in the Icelandic Parliament that is aimed at reforming and improving the regulatory framework for further reducing the risk of cage farming to have negative effects on wild salmon populations. Iceland hopes to benefit from NASCO work in this respect as it can serve as a platform of knowledge sharing.

In Iceland methods aimed to enhance Atlantic salmon stocks have been carried out for decades. The methods used include stocking of juveniles and sea ranching of salmon for sport fishing purposes. We look forward to the report of Stocking Guidelines working group at this meeting as any advice and guidance of this practice may be of value to us for the management of such practice.

Finally, Madam President, we want to thank you and the NASCO Secretariat for the efficient preparation of the meeting. We also want to thank our Irish and EU hosts for their hospitality and for providing these outstanding meeting facilities and we look forward to see some of the beautiful scenery of the region after the meeting.

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by Norway

Madame President, Ms. Secretary, distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Norway is very pleased to participate in the 41st annual meeting of NASCO and it is, as always, a pleasure to meet all delegates in person. First and foremost, we would like to thank Ireland for hosting the forty-first Annual Meeting of NASCO here in Westport. We look forward to productive discussions over the next few days, and we are confident in the strong commitment of all parties to find good solutions in order to ensure the effective conservation of wild Atlantic salmon populations in the future.

In Norway, the pre-fishery abundance of wild Atlantic salmon remains low. Low sea-survival and a changing climate are two of the main underlying big scale drivers of the population decline. There are, however, still adverse human impacts that strongly influence the development and status of salmon stocks in Norway. Escaped farmed salmon and salmon lice infections continue to be the most severe anthropogenic threats to Norwegian stocks of wild Atlantic salmon.

The Tana salmon stocks have been in stark decline over several years. The latest report by the Tana Monitoring and Research Group concludes that there was still no harvestable surplus in most salmon populations in the Tana. In May, new bilateral fishing rules for the Tana River entered into force, after more than three years of negotiations. The fishing rules include a new baseline rule for salmon fishing in the river, that strikes a balance between the need to protect the salmon stocks and the right to uphold the traditional Sami fishing culture. The forecast for the 2024 salmon run is also poor and will not meet the minimum requirement in the fishing rules for allowing any limited salmon fishing. The salmon fisheries in the Tana fjord and in coastal areas in proximity to the Tana fjord have now been closed since 2021.

In 2023, more than 360 000 pink salmon were removed from Norwegian waters, either through ordinary fisheries or through targeted measures in rivers. More than 40 traps were installed in the most exposed watercourses in Finnmark in addition to other measures in a range of smaller rivers. Overall, the Norwegian efforts to combat pink salmon in 2023 were a great success.

A focus for Norway during the 2024 annual meeting will be to work collaboratively with all parties to address the potential threat pink salmon poses to Atlantic salmon stocks across the whole convention area. Based on what we have learned so far, it is plausible that pink salmon will colonize all rivers in Norway and rivers in other countries around the North Atlantic if we fail to control the spread. Last year's efforts have however, also taught us that it is possible to stop the pink salmon from spreading when we apply targeted measures.

Pink salmon still constitutes a new threat, and there are large knowledge gaps that need to be filled. There is an urgent need for both national and international coordinated research and cooperation on measures to reduce the risk of negative impacts on our native salmonids. Norway is therefore very much looking forward to this year's special session on pink salmon and the productive discussions we are sure will follow.

The work of NASCO becomes ever more relevant as the decline of Atlantic salmon stocks continue. The salmon has to adapt to a rapidly changing world, and so does NASCO. Norway therefore recognizes the need to review the organizations strategy and action plan on how to best face this uncertain future and welcomes this year's special session on the future of NASCO.

Finally, the Norwegian delegation sincerely thank the Secretariat for their hard work with all the preparations for this meeting. The organizing of these annual meetings is no small feat. We

would also like to thank the representatives from Ireland and the people of Westport for the warm welcome and we look forward to a productive meeting and the continued collaboration with all parties in working to conserve the wild Atlantic salmon.

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by the Russian Federation

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the Russian Federation and Federal Agency for Fisheries, I am honoured and pleased to greet all participants and guests of the Forty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO.

Over the period from the last Annual Meeting NASCO has addressed a number of important issues, of which the key issue is undeniably the future of NASCO. The Organization has undertaken a major effort and initiated the process of reviewing together with its NGOs its past, present and future to make its work more effective, transparent and visible and thereby to enhance the importance of conservation of Atlantic salmon. The process is demanding much effort and time on behalf of the NASCO's Contracting Parties, a number of meetings have been held inter-sessionally. The outcome from these meetings will be presented to the Council and we are looking forward to discussing this product together and deciding jointly how we shall live in NASCO in the future.

It's good to see that the Organization is at full speed coping successfully with its regular tasks as well as managing to focus on crucial decisions regarding the organization's future, the upcoming research priorities for the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board, improving the participation of indigenous people in NASCO and important administrative issues.

The first meeting of the Working Group on pink salmon is worth being noted. It has a potential to become an important forum for sharing information between the Parties on research, monitoring, distribution and abundance of pink salmon in the North Atlantic and Arctic. This year the Theme-based Special Session will also focus on pink salmon and we believe that this TBSS will facilitate the information exchange relating introduced Pacific salmon, which has existed in the North Atlantic environment for decades along with the native species, Atlantic salmon.

We continue to recognize NASCO as a joining force to conserve and restore the Atlantic salmon populations and hopefully we'll be able to do it all together. Thus, the return of Iceland to NASCO in 2024 is a particularly exciting development.

We would like to thank the Secretariat and especially the Secretary for the enormous work being done, professionalism and support.

The Russian Federation continues to be committed to the main objectives of NASCO by implementing the management measures that provide support conservation and recovery of Atlantic salmon.

We have a full Agenda ahead of us. Wish all of us good luck and fruitful work!

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by the United Kingdom

Mrs. President, Mrs Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen. The UK is pleased to be in attendance at this, the 41st Annual Meeting of NASCO, and would like to thank Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and the EU for hosting this meeting. We would also like to thank the NASCO Secretariat team for all their hard work, not only at the annual meeting, but throughout the year. We hope for a successful and collaborative meeting, and appreciate the opportunity to engage with partners, to address the decline in wild Atlantic salmon populations.

Despite NASCO's clear successes in decreasing wild Atlantic Salmon exploitation, our Atlantic salmon stocks continue to decline, with the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species re-classifying Atlantic salmon as 'near threatened' at the global level and for the first time classifying the UK's main sub-population as 'endangered'. The UK therefore supports the proposal for a new strategy for NASCO, with the clear goal to "prioritise and drive actions necessary to slow the decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations and demonstrate that restoration is possible, within the next 10 years". We feel that the proposed action plan will set us on the right track to deliver this strategy and we look forward to working collaboratively to deliver the actions that will bring back salmon.

The UK is holding a general election on 4th July 2024 and entered a pre-election period on 25th May. During this pre-election period, UK delegation members are subject to pre-election guidance to safeguard our political impartiality. UK policy decisions will therefore be limited, and all UK positions expressed will be subject to the views of a new UK government.

Thank you

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by the United States

Madam President, Madam Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States is looking forward to a productive week working together with our international partners to improve the conservation and management of wild Atlantic salmon at the 41st Annual Meeting of NASCO in the town of Westport, Ireland. We sincerely thank our hosts for the wonderful meeting venue and arrangements, as well as the NASCO Secretariat for their hard work in preparing for this meeting.

As in past years, the management and control of the West Greenland mixed-stock fisheries that intercepts U.S.- origin salmon continues to be a priority for the United States. Given the critically low numbers of Atlantic salmon returning to U.S. waters, any U.S. fish harvested in this fishery has an outsized impact on these critically endangered populations. We take very seriously the scientific advice from ICES that continues to recommend that "there should be zero catch at West Greenland".

Other key issues for the United States during the 2024 Annual Meeting will be on efforts to prioritize and advance the numerous recommendations that NASCO has received from the External Performance Review, Tromsø Symposium, and Climate Change Special Session, and the development of the next reporting cycle. We are eager to build on the excellent work of the WGFON to address these recommendations. We look forward to agreeing to a process that

will enhance NASCO's role in promoting urgent and transformative actions directed at the protection, conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon, while doing so in an expeditious and efficient manner and remaining cognizant of the resource's constraints of the Parties. We hope, in particular, that we can focus our collective efforts towards advancing actions that will contribute the most to salmon conservation, while increasing NASCO's effectiveness at ensuring transparency and accountability of the participating Parties and Jurisdictions in upholding our commitments to NASCO's Convention as well as its resolutions and guidelines. We are also excited to adopt the proposed revised observer rules that will enhance engagement by Indigenous Peoples in NASCO. This will also greatly enhance transparency and accountability on actions taken by NASCO and the Parties that impact Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, we would like to thank the Stocking Guidelines Working Group for their work assessing the risks and benefits associated with stocking, evaluating practices that could minimize any risks, and for updating NASCO's Guidelines for Stocking Atlantic Salmon. We look forward to considering their report this week and to assess their guidelines against our own stocking program at home to increase the efficacy of our recovery program.

In closing, I want to reaffirm that the United States is fully committed to NASCO and the conservation of Atlantic salmon and to working cooperatively and collaboratively with our international partners to successfully address the important issues and challenges facing us this week and into the future.

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon)

On behalf of St Pierre and Miquelon, the French delegation thanks the NASCO Presidency for its invitation to attend the Annual Meetings of the Council and the North Atlantic Commission as an observer. The French delegation expresses the commitment of St Pierre and Miquelon on co-operation and dialogue on the North Atlantic salmon conservation and management.

Opening Statement to Council Submitted by NASCO's Non-Governmental Organizations

Madam President, Secretary, Heads of Delegation, Distinguished Delegates, NGO colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, the NGOs appreciate this opportunity to make an opening statement to NASCO Council at the 2024 Annual Meeting. The NGOs would like to thank Ireland for arranging this meeting in Westport and we look forward to contributing to best outcome for our wild Atlantic salmon.

This year the NGOs will concentrate on the future of NASCO.

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization was established under the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic. Today, there is a strong impression that NASCO has mainly based its mandate on safeguarding wild salmon by only focusing on reporting routines from the member states. The situation for wild salmon is dramatic compared to what was the situation in 1984. It cannot be the case that NASCO limiting its mandate of safeguarding to only documenting this dramatic development without pushing much harder for proper action. NASCO must be loud and clear on consequences – unless action taken.

Madam President, Secretary, Heads of delegations, delegates, accredited NGOs. We have all entered the “same boat” which left for a destination and a goal to preserve the wild Atlantic Salmon. The stock of wild salmon must be of such a size that it can be harvested on both sides of the Atlantic without risking extinction. Today our ship is clearly heading in the wrong direction. Our wild Atlantic salmon – as we know it - its heading for extinction. By wild salmon we mean the species that developed over 10 thousand years into an anadromous that mastered the large deep sea as well as the tough rapids and waterfalls in our rivers. NASCO's mandate is not to pave the ground so that only option left for reproduction is by human hands-on technological facilities. We have failed if reproduction must be taken care of by similar tools as the farming industry. Then we have broken and destroyed 10 thousand years of evolution.

In 2024, NASCO has more than enough knowledge to predict that wild salmon, which - by nature - should reproduce themselves, are now on the way to extinction.

Here in this room, we can point fingers to each other to blame what we have not done well enough to achieve what was the mandate of NASCO. It helps so little when the final evaluation is to take place. Why was the wild salmon exterminated and who was responsible? The member countries only know one formal international organization with responsibility for wild salmon. It's NASCO. It is NASCO that will be held responsible if we are unable to establish a mechanism that creates measures to preserve our species. NASCO means all of us sitting here. The employees of NASCO, the delegates and accredited NGOs. The eyes out there will look towards us to hold us accountable for why we failed.

Why is it so important to preserve wild salmon? Wild salmon depend on the sea as much as the clear sweet water in rivers. It is one of the most important selectors for the state of the environment in the Atlantic Ocean and the combining coast, fjords and rivers. Considering the historic international agreement in Montreal in December 2022 - to protect a third of the world's biological diversity - it sets clear guidelines on how important it is to protect wild salmon. If the wild salmon loses due to the conditions that now challenge it - then many other species will also disappear. An ever-growing and comprehensive farming industry, production of power and energy both in rivers and now at sea, as well as general environmental pollution and a change in climate show that we are far behind in our ability to look after wild salmon.

The accredited NGOs will stand together with NASCO in the work to address our respective political leaders. We have no other formal organizations to seek cooperation with. NASCO and The NGOs stays together – but be sure we will be much more visible. We will motivate and bring on board more NGOs. Together with the delegates we will prepare a strategy for how we can assist NASCO in the best way possible to convert knowledge about the threats to wild salmon into recommendations for measures that the member states must implement. NASCO will become the Atlantic defence organisation for wild salmon. NASCO must address each individual member state and make recommendations on relevant measures that must be implemented to fight extinction.

A good example is when the Norwegian farming industry expands to Iceland and establishes itself along the coast and outside the rivers where wild salmon are completely dependent on passing in order to complete their migration. Since 1984, NASCO has gathered more than enough knowledge to predict what consequences this may have for wild salmon who depends on coast and rivers in Island. All knowledge collected from Norway about the consequences of the farming industry for wild salmon is well documented at NASCO. Despite this, the farming industry continues to expand and places an ever-greater burdens on the wild stock without us standing together and informing the authorities of the consequences of this expansion. The same goes with other industry. Where is the voice of NASCO? Where are we?

Now we must concentrate on how to strengthen NASCO's understanding of its mandate. The time ahead is going to be characterized by crises that have dimensions not previously seen in the time NASCO has existed. These are security policy crises that take the focus away from environmental considerations. In that perspective, the focus on special species such as wild salmon could be perceived as premature. That is why we must mobilize now and put in place routines that stand strong - also when other crises are attracting attention.

Here, the NGO environment must think smartly to ensure that our political leaders and resourceful actors both within the private- and public sector, artist and entertainers are spot on for the wild salmon. This will be our most important tool in support of NASCO and their delegates. But we will only succeed in this if there is will in the rest of the assembly here. Willingness to take the mandate seriously and willingness to address our decision takers who will once again fight for the wild salmon and the environment around it in their respective ministries.

For those of you who are not completely dedicated to saving our salmon - or think there are bigger tasks to focus on: To you, I would recommend getting a hold of it and finding something else to do. Our salmon and NASCO don't need you. To those of you who want to take the mandate seriously and contribute to bringing the wild salmon out of the crisis. I can promise you that we - the NGOs - will stand by you in difficult times - but only then.

Thank you, Madam President – and the rest of you for your time.

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Membership of Working Groups Agreed During the 2024 Annual Meeting

Party / Organization	FAC small WG	WGFON subgroup	SGWG	WASA	WGFON	WGFR	PSWG	GSWG
Chair	Seamus Connor (UK)	Kim Damon-Randall (USA)	Stephen Gephard (USA)	Livia Goodbrand (Canada)	Kim Damon-Randall (USA)	TBC	Jarle Steinkjer (Norway)	Haakon Hansen (Norway)
Canada	-	Doug Bliss	Livia Goodbrand	-	Doug Bliss / Isabelle Morisset	Livia Goodbrand	Julien April	
DFG	-	Katrine Kærsgaard	-		Katrine Kærsgaard	Rebekka Nygård Bak	-	
European Union	-	Ignacio Granell	Sarah McLean	Sarah McLean	Ignacio Granell	Cathal Gallagher / Mick Millane	Jaakko Erkinaro / Mick Millane / Tom Staveley	Hampus Hällbom / Mick Millane / Marjukka Rask
Iceland	-	Guðni Magnús Eiríksson	Hlynur Bárðarson		Guðni Magnús Eiríksson	Hlynur Bárðarson	Hlynur Bárðarson	NA
Norway	-	Raoul Bierach	TBC	Helge Dyrendal	Raoul Bierach / Heidi Hansen	Helge Dyrendal	Eirik Frøiland	Asle Moen
Russian Federation	-	Anna Shulaeva	-		Anna Shulaeva		Sergey Prusov	Sergey Prusov
United Kingdom	Charlotte Beardwell	Ruth Allin	Simon Toms	Nora Hanson	Ruth Allin / Rob Floyd / Alex Kinninmonth	Rob Floyd / Alan Walker	Colin Bean	Vickie Curtis / David Mercer / Ed Peeler / Neil Purvis / David Stone
United States	Rebecca Wintering	Tim Sheehan	-	Steve Gephard	Shannon Dionne / Tim Sheehan / Rebecca Wintering	Dan Kircheis	Tim Sheehan	
NGOs³	NA	Steve Sutton	Steve Sutton	Janina Gray	Nils Olav Gjone / Steve Sutton	Nils Olav Gjone / Steve Sutton	Øyvind Fjeldseth	Ken Whelan
IPRI⁴	NA	NA	-	-	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

³ Observers from NASCO's accredited Non-Governmental Organizations

⁴ Observers from NASCO's accredited Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions

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Calendar of Inter-Sessional Meetings 2024 to 2025

Meeting	Description	Place	Dates
FAC small Working Group	Revise Staff Rules	Virtual	July-November 2024 by correspondence
WGFON subgroup*	Prioritisation of remaining recommendations	Virtual	September / October 2024
WASA	Webinar	Online	September 2024
SGWG	Follow ToRs	HQ / virtual	September 2024
WGFR*	Planning meeting	Virtual	September / October 2024
WGFR	Fourth reporting cycle preparation	HQ	Week of 18 November 2024
WGCIS	Inter-Sessional Meeting	TBC	Spring
Board IS**	Review of SAG proposal	Virtual	February / March
FACIS	Agree draft revised Staff Rules	HQ	Week of 17 March 2025 two days
WGFON	i. WGFR output ii. WGFON subgroup output iii. Convention change paper	HQ	Week of 17 March 2025 three days
WGFR	Finalise fourth reporting cycle documentation	HQ / virtual	28 / 29 / 30 April 2025
PSWG	Follow ToRs	Norway	July / August 2025
GSWG	Follow ToRs	HQ / Norway	October 2025

*NAFO meeting 23 – 27 September 2024

**WGNAS 17-28 March 2025

***Question and Answer Session held during the Special Session of the Council:
Working Group on the Future of NASCO***

Tapio Hakaste (European Union): thank you, Tapio Hakaste, Finland. Thanks for the presentation. And I quite agree that it's a good idea to think about the risk analysis, and think about the stressors. The next thing that came to my mind is, well, I would say the main stressor might be the climate change, and something what's happening in the open ocean areas, and how to co-operate with the thing what they are mostly something we cannot affect directly, and it's something else that needs to be done. At least in Finland, and in the Teno / Tana, we are quite often in a situation where the reasons for decline are elsewhere, but the only option to do something is to do something for overfishing, for the fishery itself. While you cannot turn back for climate change, or you cannot change the conditions in the open ocean, but have you thought about that it might lead to a situation where the big audience might think, but okay, there are things we cannot do anything about, why should we bother? Thanks.

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): the Action Plan itself won't have that level of granularity in it. So, at the end of the day, NASCO is an overarching body that doesn't tell the Parties and jurisdictions what to do, it shares best practice and guidance. Climate change is recognised as being an overarching theme across all areas of NASCO's work, and there's definitely a commitment to change / modify / update / completely renew all the existing guidelines that NASCO has, to make sure that climate change is actively taken into consideration. I think some of the messages that have come out clearly in the Review Group for the last few years, it's a horrible idiom, control the controllables, but it's true. So, you can't do anything about what's in the open ocean, but if you have rivers that flow through habitat that's severely degraded, you can upgrade the habitat, improve the habitat, and have better, stronger, more fit individuals going out to sea to hopefully survive what's being thrown at them. So, like I said, NASCO doesn't tell its Parties and jurisdictions what to do, but there is going to be a strong commitment to new guidelines or improved guidelines that help Parties and jurisdictions to make the kinds of decisions that they need to make to improve the lot for salmon in their home rivers.

Raoul Bierach (Norway): thank you. I also have a short comment to what Tapio was saying. Of course, we agree that there are many, many stressors, and climate change is probably one of the major drivers that influences almost all salmon stocks around the North Atlantic, and unfortunately, increasingly, probably. So, I think we have to adapt our salmon management to this fact. And, of course, we have to do what we can to influence other bodies that are actually dealing with climate change issues to recognise that also salmon is heavily affected by it. And that salmon is really something to look at when you look at the effects, and maybe also as a species that can be used as an indicator on how things are going. Having said that, I must say that fisheries are also a stressor, and especially overfishing. And I think we all agree that at least in the past there has been overfishing of the Tana stocks, and probably we are suffering from that still. And, of course, the rebuilding of the stocks is now very difficult when they don't face the best opportunities in the ocean, so it takes much longer time probably. But overfishing has been a problem, especially for the Tana stocks. Thank you.

Nall Greene (Salmon Watch Ireland): Niall Greene, Salmon Watch Ireland. Two questions. The report seems to conceive that international co-operation will be confined to other fishery organizations. We're not just in the fishery business, we're in the biodiversity business. Surely there's fruitful scope for at least consultation with other organizations, international and

otherwise, and some engagement with the biodiversity Convention. That's question number one.

Question number two, this exercise started with the decision in 2022 to launch an EPR. And so we're already two years down the track in a situation which the strategy document recognises the salmon is under threat to its very existence. So, we're two years down the track. When do you anticipate that we can expect to see transformative actions emerging from this exercise that will have a real impact on helping Parties deal with salmon conservation? Because if I could just make a comment, the list of actions, it's extraordinarily extensive, and it brings to mind the old saying that if everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. But the list also doesn't draw much distinction between key actions that need to be done, things that have to be done to enable those key actions to be taken, and then reporting on them. They tend to be grouped, well, that's just a framework that I'm familiar with, but they seem to be grouped in an entirely different way that doesn't make those distinctions. Anyway, enough, those are my questions.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): thank you for the questions. So on the other relevant entities, we did talk about that, but maybe we need to be a little bit more explicit about what we meant with that, just to make sure that that's clear. So we'll take a look at that, and make sure that we're providing more context there. And then on the transformative actions, I think that was recognised, and that was why in the Saturday Heads of Delegation Meeting that we had, we talked about those high-level actions that I went through, and a bunch of those are already ongoing. That document hopefully will be tabled this week. The way that it's described in that document is very high-level. There are actually different actions underneath it that are more granular, but it's not in that document right now.

So, I think that document has actions that are ongoing, or in progress, that we're agreeing at this Annual Meeting, things like that. I think there are definitely transformative actions that are already going to be taking place or are already taking place as a result of this work. The remaining recommendations and proposed actions that we have in the Action Plan, we're going to have a group that goes through and prioritises those and comes out with I think the granularity that you're looking for in terms of priority. I think Emma had something to add to that.

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): yes. And I think really the way that NASCO can demonstrate that its Parties and jurisdictions are doing what NASCO has signed up to do, is through the reporting cycle. The stressor analysis, that's done well, and that's done properly by all jurisdictions. That's game changing. That's very different. So everyone in the current IPs, in the second, the third reporting cycle, they list what they say their threats and challenges are, but there's no real evidential background basis for that that's demonstrated to all the other Parties and jurisdictions, to be able to have a really solid understanding of what the real issues are in each Party and jurisdiction. So, I think that's game changing. And then there's other messaging coming out from the Review Group. Rather than having 30 / 40 / 50 sub-actions upon sub-actions upon sub-actions in your IP, for each of your really challenging areas you have three very strong, very solid actions that really are doing something for salmon, that really are addressing NASCO's intention, NASCO's Strategic Goal, to act in the next ten years to make a difference. So, there's lots of plans and lots of strategies all around the world, and they're words. What is being proposed in this Action Plan, there's a lot in there, but some of the kind of fundamental things to move NASCO forward are very key, very simple things, that can be done to show quite clearly what the different Parties and jurisdictions are doing. It should be more transparent. If it's done in that way, it should be much easier to compare what's being done across the Parties and jurisdictions, so it's easier, then, for the outside world, whether that's NGOs or others, to see what's being done. It's easier for NASCO to have clear messaging

to demonstrate what's being done. There's a strong intent to make a difference here, but it's up to the Parties and jurisdictions to make it work.

Cathal Gallagher (European Union): I might ask a question this time. So as part of the IP Review Group, this stressor analysis came forward as a very useful tool. I think it was through Norway that we've seen the benefits of that. And in fact, in this year's presentation it is the one piece I've taken forward from the other years of review, is this stressor analysis, and I think it's critical. So, my question is, so we're going to start the path of doing this with all Parties, all the jurisdictions, is to do that correctly, to do that in a consistent way, so that we're comparing apples with apples, that it's transparent and how it's done, that we start off doing it effectively. So, we don't have time to go back, maybe at the start of this cycle there was a lot of going back, going back, and trying to understand what was actually being asked, and how we were going to report, and we spent a couple of years really getting to an effective process. So my question is, how are we going to get to a standard stressor analysis that can be done across jurisdictions effectively, and how that can be rolled out consistently? And it'll have to be done pretty quickly, because that may be the basis for a lot of the future work that we're going to do. Thanks.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): what we had talked about is how important the stressor analysis is, that each Party and jurisdiction considers, in their waters, what are the biggest threats and challenges to wild Atlantic salmon. There was concern expressed about how to go about doing that with a lack of resources, and staff, and time. So, what we thought in our discussions was that it's more important to have the Parties and jurisdictions actually undertake that analysis, and identify what the things are that are really affecting salmon in their waters, than to develop right now a consistent process that everybody follows. The Norway model is being held up as an example, you could do it this way. Or if you've already undertaken one; there are some Parties that have already undertaken an analysis. The UK, I believe, has done one. They could use the results of their analysis that they've already done to really highlight what those risks and threats are. So, we are at this point not recommending that there be just one consistent methodology, because we really want the Parties and jurisdictions to do their stressor analysis.

Cathal Gallagher (European Union): just to come back on that. I suppose that the danger you could see with that is that maybe if you have a programme that is pointing in a certain direction, and you're doing works that might impact on what you choose as the highest stressor, so there has to be a certain amount of structure to that analysis. And I'm just wondering, if we're going to be consistent, and you're going to hold a tight line on delivery, would it be worthwhile spending the time and making sure that we have a standard at least of some level of consistency in that analysis? There's a wide variable number of jurisdictions that may not have the same level of resources. So that's the question. Thanks.

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): time is of the essence. And if we have a year, or however many months in which some kind of standard is developed, then it can't inform the fourth reporting cycle. And I think it's felt quite strongly that it should inform the fourth reporting cycle. We had a chat about this in the Heads of Delegation meeting the other day, and I actually asked Raoul how he would explain the Norwegian risk framework. And it's not a scientific model. It's not a completely objective analysis. It's an expert-led analysis by people that understand the problems in their country. They have a small group of people who cross the expertise of the different areas of concern. And they have a framework, it's published, it's a 2017 paper, by Forseth *et al.*, I'm sure most of you know the paper, or at least the scientists know the paper. It has a very clear materials and methods component, it shows what's done, it explains the expert-led analysis, and that could be utilised by every jurisdiction to do what that jurisdiction is able to do using that kind of approach. That to me would be some kind of standard. You wouldn't

be imposing a rigid box around the work that has to be done. But it's a very good starting point. Norway started in 2010, so what they're looking at has moved on as their expertise has increased, etc., and their knowledge has increased. So, start somewhere, Precautionary Approach. Don't do nothing in the absence of a lack of knowledge. Start somewhere, start small. If you can only do small, do small, but do an expert-led analysis, and let that be the start of a process to improve the lot of salmon.

Shelley Denny (Canada): Hello, Shelley Denny, in Canada. I was just wondering, when you're speaking of resilience, and climate change, and using the best available scientific knowledge, I think there's one area for improvement, and that's to bring in evolutionary biologists in the fisheries context. It may be valuable to find out where we're going, what are we seeing? Is this a consequence of previous fishing pressure, a change of genetics, and where can we see this going? And maybe that will allow better opportunities for planning to think about what are salmon going to look like in five / ten years.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): can I just ask for a clarification, are you talking about bringing them into the stressor analysis that the Parties and jurisdictions are doing, or into the WGFON process? I just want to make sure I'm understanding your question.

Shelley Denny (Canada): I think it's necessary to bring it in at some place. It may not necessarily be part of the stressors, but also it might be good to bring it into the Working Group, or as a Special Session, just to see where we can go. Is it useful, is it not useful? But I think that's one of the key areas that have been neglected, evolutionary biology, and evolutionary ecology.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): we do have in the Terms of Reference for the WGFON, the existing Terms of Reference, we have the ability to bring in expertise, so that is definitely something that we can do if Council decides to keep WGFON's work going. Thank you.

Robert Otto (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): hi, Robert Otto with NGOs, Canada. I just want to thank NASCO and the Working Group for all the effort they've put into this. It's excellent to see. Just thinking about Cathal's point about some structure to this, and Shelley's point about using the best available evidence, and again, coming back to I think advice even from the NASCO Working Group itself. Maybe there's a way to have some structure across the Party stressor analysis by NASCO being able to provide some level of what NASCO's view of what the evidence around some of these stressors is. What I wouldn't like to see happen with all of the work from the Parties, is to have very different priorities placed across the different Parties to some of the stressors. My first point. And the second point is, to your point about making sure that the Parties take on some effective actions to help conserve wild Atlantic salmon, it should be I think that the Parties take on those stressors which are the top priority, or the most important ones, not just some, but take on the top three, for instance, back to Emma's point. Any comment on that, I'd appreciate hearing it. Thank you.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): yes. And that's exactly what we were talking about. Emma, if you want to add to that, but that's what we were thinking, that the whole point of doing the stressor analysis is to really, as I said, identify the things that are the biggest threats. And then to, in the IPs and APRs, be talking about how you're implementing actions to address those high-priority threats. That is the goal.

Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland): thank you, Katrine Kærgaard from the Government of Greenland. First of all, I want to thank Kim and Emma for the presentation, and all the people in the WGFON Working Group. Also, the Heads of Delegation for continuing the discussion, so we get the best possible product, and that we get decisions on actions. I just want to come back to some of the comments that were made

earlier. I think one of the important points to highlight is that there was a lot of discussion in the Working Group about outreach and communication. And that should be an extremely important focus point next to the stressors and the threats that we need to of course focus on. And it's very important for NASCO to engage more, and communicate, and have that outreach position, because that's one of the unique roles that we can do as an inter-governmental organization. And here I want to point out that it's extremely important to have the close collaboration with the NGOs, and that the NGOs give a lot of input here. Because they have the broad network, they have the contacts, and it's something that they do every day, outreach and communication about the causes. So here they can really help us informing that work moving forward. Thank you.

Livia Goodbrand (Canada): thank you, Livia Goodbrand from Canada. Just echoing your statements, Katrine, you said it much more elegantly than I could have. I'd just like to ping off what Shelley Denny had asked, where she was looking at the future of salmon, and where they're going. I'm interested in the concept of baselines, and, Emma, I did see that mentioned in your slide. I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about the discussions with WGFON around appropriate baselines, and what your thinking is there? Thank you.

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): we haven't developed the baseline thing as much as the stressor analysis thing, but we were talking over the weekend about the need to do an analysis on stressors, and an analysis to establish baselines. And it's how we do it, when we do it. And we can't do... for example, can I talk about what we're talking about in terms of timetable? So, what we're proposing at the moment, we're trying to line all the ducks up, because there are so many different decisions, and you can't do one without the other, and everything else. In the IP / APR process right now we've been having almost annual revisions of IPs, or reviews of IPs in November, and then we have reviews of APRs in April. If the Working Group on Future Reporting is agreed this year in Council, then there will be no IP review in November. That will be when the Working Group on Future Reporting would meet. So, there's a whole thing that's set up then for the Working Group on Future Reporting 's work, that it's not going to happen in two or three days. I'm getting to your question, honestly, but it's complicated. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Future Reporting factor in the review by WGFON of the templates and guidance for the next reporting cycle. To enable us to get that done, the Working Group on Future Reporting will probably need to meet again sometime around April. And if they do that, because a chunk of the Future Reporting Group is the IP Review Group, then you couldn't then do APRs. So that's one round of APR reviews not done. So, stressor analyses would then be done over the next year, independently of the APRs, but when do you then do the baseline analysis? Well, if you do it the following year, then you probably wouldn't have time as well to fit in the APR review, because there'd be other stuff going on.

And the conversation that was being had in Heads over the weekend was, right now it feels like doing a stressor analysis, getting that in place, doing a baseline, getting that in place, to have really strong, fabulous reporting against these baselines, with these very strong actions, based on the very high-priority stressors, means that maybe the third reporting cycle comes to an end early, because this other work is starting to take precedence, and we feel like it's more important. So, there are lots of things up in the air, there are a few plates spinning, there's more discussion needs to be had, but it's trying to find a way forward, recognising this stuff is really important.

NASCO is going to have a strategic goal, if it's agreed in Council; it's never had one of those before; it's big, it has the potential to be transformative, but a lot of the other stuff that NASCO does also has to be transformative. There has to be a recognition that NASCO can't do

everything. Council has to sit down and has to prioritise really what it wants NASCO to do to enable transformation.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): I would just add to that, that we have a time block tomorrow in Plenary and Council to talk about the stressor analysis, we have time blocked out for Council on Wednesday to talk about the Strategy, and time blocked out on Thursday to talk about the Action Plan. We are trying to make sure that we're having these sort of more in-depth conversations in Council before decisions are made on how we move forward with them. So, all of what Emma was just talking about will be on the floor and Council throughout the course of this week.

Alan Wells (Fisheries Management Scotland): Alan Wells from Fisheries Management Scotland, one of the NGOs. I really support the idea of the stressor analysis. It's something that we've done in Scotland very much in partnership with the Scottish Government. We have a tool that identifies specific pressures on Atlantic salmon, and that's been used to inform a series of 44 catchment-based fishery management plans that identify those pressures, and the actions that need to be taken. The important point though is identifying those stressors is one small step in the process. What we then need to do is act on those stressors, and we need to do that really effectively. So, although our process is similar to the one in Norway, where it differs quite markedly as we don't identify two or three key stressors, salmon are facing death by 1000 cuts. There are thousands of stressors facing salmon, or at least hundreds. Sorry, I shouldn't go too far on that. And actually it's quite hard to identify sometimes maybe two or three, so we need to take action everywhere. We need to start putting wild salmon first, in every decision that we all make, or otherwise salmon are going to continue to decline, because it's death by a thousand cuts at the moment.

Steve Sutton (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): what is the status of the proposal for the four Theme-based Working Groups?

Kim Damon-Randall (President): that's a very good question, Steve. So in Heads of Delegation meetings, we talked about the four Theme-based Working Groups, and whether or not that was something that could be supported. We, after extensive conversation, determined that a better course of action would be to do the high-level Action Plan as one thing. We also identified that in that high-level Action Plan we still have remaining proposed actions and recommendations from the draft Action Plan that need to be reviewed and prioritised. So, a subgroup will be formed of the WGFON to do that prioritisation. And then one of the other things that we talked about is in reviewing the existing Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. There is a need to have a group that is expert in either fisheries, habitat, or aquaculture introductions, transfers, and transgenics, to review those Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, and determine what updates need to be made where we can consolidate. So, working groups will be established for those three themes going forward. We still need to talk about, at this meeting, whether or not, one, if we go with that plan, but also would we do one per year, or how that how that whole process would work. There is still a discussion that needs to take place. But the original proposal, or the proposal that was in the document that went out for consultation of the four Theme-based Working Groups has been modified to these Working Groups that are going to focus on the themes for the Resolutions, Agreements, and Guidelines updates.

Nigel Milner (Institute of Fisheries Management): hello, Nigel Milner from the IFM, one of the NGO groups. First thing is a comment really, is just to support the numerous people now have approved objective for this idea of collaboration and communication between Parties. Because the decline in salmon is just an example of collateral damage that we've inflicted on the natural world through our misuse of the planet and resources, especially fresh water. So,

it's not just us as salmon biologists and salmon managers who are interested, it's a far wider constituency of people we need to engage with and communicate across the biodiversity and conservation world. I'd really like to see NASCO having a really clear, forward-thinking, active set of communication and collaboration plans in place to communicate with other bodies, other agencies. So that's just support for what's been said before, really. And the second thing is, out of curiosity, I wonder how the position statements on Convention change is going to be developed, and why there's been some reluctance so far to take forward any of the recommendations from the EPR on that? I understand it's a difficult, sticky issue, but I wonder how that's going to be taken forward in developing for next year.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): thank you for the question. So, on the first one, one of the actions in the plan is to, at this meeting, decide on whether or not we want to go forward with commissioning a consultant to develop an outreach and communication strategy that we can use going forward. Hopefully that will help identify what our strategy could be for that, who we'd want to communicate with, and how we message to all those different audiences. So that is definitely part of the Action Plan, and hopefully will be agreed at this meeting, and will be a work in progress.

On the second question, Convention change, thank you, there is an action in the Action Plan about that. There has been a position paper that has been drafted. And in the high-level action document we're talking about what we're going to do with that document going forward. So that is part of the next steps as well.

Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland): thank you, Katrine Kærgaard again- I just wanted to add to what Kim said to the reply to Steve. We have been looking into how to prioritise the work on updating all of our Guidelines and Resolutions, and we hope to soon put forward a paper on that, so we can get some discussions and input on that, and hopefully make some decisions, and put it into the Action Plan before it's decided by the end of the week. And I'm sure Steve has a lot of good input to that work as well. So we hope to put something forward soon that can be discussed by all Parties. Thank you.

David VanderZwaag (Marine & Environmental Law Institute, Canada): who has drafted the NASCO Convention position paper?

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): we talked about this in either the first or the second WGFON, I don't remember. There's been so much going on. The conversation was that there's been discussion about Convention change. Convention change has been raised, it was raised in the last performance review, it was raised in the most recent performance review. Council, there's nothing really written down on paper to say what Council's view is on this, and everyone in the Working Group felt that there really should be. There should be something written down to clearly state what the position is of Council on Convention change. So, there isn't a drafted paper yet. Doug put some thoughts down on paper, he sent them to me. It was talked about over the weekend, there's a commitment to having something that will be agreed, we don't know what the process is yet to get this done, it will have to be an inter-sessional process for agreement, something for discussion and agreement next year. But again, there's a commitment to do something. Because this has been going on for quite a long time now, and there's never really been clarity on why NASCO hasn't seemed to want to do various things. So, Doug has made a start. No one else has seen it. Because I didn't send it out as everybody else had too much else to do. There were about five million other inter-sessional meetings going on at the time.

Doug Bliss (Canada): that allowed me to access my memory banks. And essentially what the paper was is me encouraging my colleagues to say that we've had two performance reviews,

talked about Convention change, we have to have a formal discussion about it, and make a decision, and make the decision public about what we are or we are not going to do. That was that was it. So, I guess we'll be starting that process somehow.

Nils Olav Gjone (Norwegian Salmon Rivers): hello. In this case I'm representing the Norwegian Lakseelver (salmon rivers), but I'm also representing the NGOs. But just a comment to the Convention plan, or about to change the Convention. I don't seriously believe that we need to change the Convention. I think the Convention has been used as an excuse not to go harder on to the government and the different Parties. And actually, I would like you to answer, if the Convention was different, would you then go harder on, and push for different pressures, and different actions towards the government to see some changes?

Kim Damon-Randall (President): I think the question of Convention change is a challenging one, because NASCO was established over 40 years ago with a very specific mandate to address high-seas fisheries. And it did a very good job of that, and the Convention is set up to do that. But we know now that a lot of other things are affecting Atlantic salmon. Some of those things are things that are very much domestic issues, and it's very hard for NASCO, with the Convention the way it is now, and with Parties and jurisdictions managing their domestic issues, to necessarily be telling Parties and jurisdictions what to do in their home waters for those domestic issues. So I think that's a really hard question to answer, and I think we're going to have to lay that all out in the position paper. I can't really say what we would be doing differently if there was Convention change, because I don't know what it would look like.

Shelley Denny (Canada): Shelley, of Mi'kmaq in Canada. I think there are other things that you could implement instead of changing the Convention. There are opportunities for declarations as tools, the Arctic Council, for example, as part of the Ottawa declaration, where all the states agreed to work together for policy changes, I believe, and have different things implemented in each state. So, I think that without a Convention change, there may be other opportunities to do something with more force. Thank you.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): thank you. And that's something that the WGFON talked about, is having declarations, or letters from the President, or whatever, to help with those issues. So yes, that's in line with the WGFON discussions.

***Question and Answer Session held during the Theme-based Special Session
of the Council: Management of Pink Salmon in the North Atlantic and
Their Potential Threats to Wild Atlantic Salmon***

Questions to Speaker Michael Millane following his presentation:

Gavin Scott (Maritime Aboriginal Peoples Council): first off, Michael, very well presented. I just have two quick questions for you. The first one is I'm very familiar with the different habitat selections of Atlantic salmon as they go through their progressive life stages. But is there any difference, distinct differences, with pink salmon during those same life stages, or are we looking at a carbon copy, so they'd be in the same places that some of the salmon would be? And the part two to that is are they more sensitive or tolerant to other water quality characteristics, namely something like pH? How does pH affect pink salmon development?

Michael Millane (European Union): I think, from what I've ready anyway, they're not as sensitive as Atlantic salmon to water quality, but they need good quality water and habitat to successfully spawn. And so there is some evidence to say they're a bit more tolerant of very moderate water pollution or water quality. So that's the second part.

Your first question about overlapping between spawning and habitat areas in rivers for Atlantic salmon, yes, I have to think about this. Other authors here that may actually address that question as far as I know.

I might leave that for that. But, of course, they overlap in rivers. They come in at different times, but there is a lot of overlap and some interesting stuff you mightn't obviously think of, like even Atlantic salmon juveniles may prey on pink salmon fry that emerge and different things like that. I think pink salmon are generally more aggressive as well, from even talking to people that have directly seen them in action in the water, in the river.

And I've seen them myself as well in the trap at the National Salmonid Index Catchment at the Erriff. Yes, so they can be quite aggressive and stress out Atlantic salmon that are sitting in pools, holding for the winter to spawn, or even sea trout and things like that.

Carl McLean (Canada): in the report of the Working Group, in section 3.1, it talks about – I think it's related to a presentation given by Colin Bean, UK, Scotland. It talks about two reported in 2022, of which one was eliminated after being found to be a salmon trout hybrid. I'm wondering what a salmon trout hybrid is?

Michael Millane (European Union): yes, it's a good question. We do get them. They're rare. Less than 4% of what you think is an Atlantic salmon stock, it could be 1%, but I've heard less than 4%, they can hybridise. Native Atlantic salmon and brown trout can hybridise. So, we do get, what's the word, reports that aren't true, like Colin had. And I went down last year to look at an unusual salmon. It was an Atlantic salmon, but the local staff down there thought it was a pink salmon. But that's why it's so important to verify records when you can.

Questions to Speakers (Eva Thorstad, Beatriz Diaz Pauli and Åse Helen Garseth) following the second session of the TBSS:

Tim Sheehan (USA): thank you very much. Tim Sheehan with NOAA Fisheries. This is for Beatriz. Are you aware of any ongoing or planned marine research to look into competition, the marine issues? We've got a good overview of what we know, but I'm wondering if there are plans to learn more.

Beatriz Diaz Pauli (University of Bergen, Norway): I am aware of many researchers who want to do all these things that are asking for money, but the money doesn't come. Because most of this work is coming from side projects that we have to do, which is very interesting. So, there's a lot of thoughts and there's a lot of rejected proposals.

Guðni Magnús Eiríksson (Iceland): thank you for excellent presentations. As demonstrated in the presentations, we have had some rapid increase of pink salmon in our waters, which is quite alarming. But compared to what is being faced in Norway, this is still small numbers. With Eva's summary of potential and obvious threats, we are quite worried. So, this was just a comment but not a question, but I'm interested in if there are studies on the genetic variation. And as you mentioned in your presentations, of course, there may be evolution within the population. We may have changes in the environment or the populations. Are there any indications, direct indications of genetic change that might explain this change in distribution? Thanks.

Beatriz Diaz Pauli (University of Bergen, Norway): well, I'm not an expert in this, but there have been these genetic studies that show, again, this population is similar to that population and is different from that population. So, there are these. But what gene is doing, what this gene is doing to make that behaviour, to make it more invasive, that we don't have any data on. Yes, so there was this study that the Norwegian populations are different from the source, and the Eastern Canadians, it seems to be very similar. I'm talking about odd years only, similar to the Norwegian ones. But what is the difference? What do these genes actually mean into something that we understand? That we don't know.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): I was wondering, in response to your last question, or the response to the last question, yes, about having to try to find resources, is it a situation where researchers and even managers are having to divert the limited resources that they have for Atlantic salmon away from Atlantic salmon to address issues for pink salmon? Or is it not that those resources are in competition? Because that's an indirect negative impact to Atlantic salmon, if you're taking resources away from them to deal with pink salmon.

Eva Thorstad (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research): yes, okay, I'm on the side of applying for grants, not handing out grants. So, I guess that's more a question for those people here. But yes, well, it's a limited sum of money for salmonid research, so I guess there is competition.

Jaakko Erkinaro (European Union): Jaakko Erkinaro, Natural Resources Institute, Finland. There's been a couple of times that the habitat use has been mentioned in different life stages in freshwater, and especially this possibility of overlapping or competition during the spawning time. It's both temporal and a spatial question, of course. Eva, you mentioned that there is later spawning time for pink salmon. And in our area, what we have done and seen in the large river system of the Teno / Tana in the north, there's actually quite a substantial difference in spawning time. But the question is how much it can actually expand over time, as has been suggested by some Russian scientists earlier. About the spawning areas, what we have seen in this large main stem river is that the pink salmon are spawning definitely in very different spawning areas compared to Atlantic salmon, very close to riverbanks in very shallow water. But this is the large main stem. And my question, to you, Eva, is that are you aware of any studies actually looking into pink salmon spawning area preferences in different types of rivers? Are there any quantitative or any systematic work going on this potential habitat overlap in terms of spawning areas?

Eva Thorstad (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research): I'm not familiar with those kind of studies from the Pacific. So, there might be studies from the Pacific area. But from the

Norwegian side, there's no systematic studies, but there's quite a lot of observations on where they spawn. And I guess the Tana River, the Tana watershed is a quite special watershed. So, in many of these smaller rivers, they will spawn in the same areas as Atlantic salmon will, also in the main rivers. Also, as a comment to these questions of genetics and adaptations, and which you mentioned as well, pink salmon, they're in big numbers. They live a short life. There's variation. There's variation in spawning time, there's variation in a lot of different traits. So, they do have a big scope for adaptation and for change. And I think we have seen that from the introduction in the Great Lakes. Should have learned from there that they are able to change and adapt quite quickly over a few decades. It will be very interesting to see what happens in our areas in that respect. Yes. Thank you for the question.

Questions to Speakers (Frode Fossøy, Sergey Prusov, Eirik Frøiland / Malin Høstmark and Tom Staveley) following the third session of the TBSS:

Øyvind Fjeldseth (Norwegian Association of Hunters & Anglers): my name is Øyvind Fjeldseth. I'm from the Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers. I'm not sure if this is going to end up as a question. It might be more of a request, I guess. I saw a lot of pink salmon last summer. It was not a pleasant thing to see, it was shocking to see, at least.

I saw my first pink salmon in 1993 when we treated the River Rauma for *Gyrodactylus salaris*, a threat that we saw as an existential problem for Norwegian salmon stocks. Little did I know then that that 760 gram male pink salmon should arise as a new potential existential problem when we were about to win the fight against *Gyrodactylus salaris*, which we are. My organization's local clubs and others are doing a huge job trying to remove this fish, with the help of good people from the Environmental Agency and the County Governor and others. We need funds. And I guess this is the request, because funds are needed, and we need a lot of funds, and we need it for a lot of years, unfortunately, as it looks like.

For my organization, we work for getting the government giving those funds each autumn. But the request, I guess, is that the NASCO Parties have to support Norway's fight in this and support and give clear advice for the Norwegian Government to stay in there and give the needed funds. And I would thank the Norwegian Environmental Agency for being so clear for the years that has passed, and we will support you wholeheartedly in the years to come. So, thank you.

Gavin Scott (Maritime Aboriginal Peoples Council): I've got a comment for the gentleman who spoke about eDNA today. I just want to bring to your attention that in North America, a common eDNA method is to use two litres in their sampling regime. I know that you guys had mentioned that the European Union needs a uniform sampling regime for their eDNA, so moving forward with North Atlantic salmon as a whole across all transboundaries, it should be discussed as to finding a nominal amount that's uniform across all different countries. Thank you.

Steve Sutton (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): Norway has taken a position that pink salmon are an invasive species and must be eradicated. This is a strong and appropriate position. I understand the desire to find a use for the large amounts of fish that are removed, but finding human uses for the fish comes with a risk that some people will come to value the pink salmon for those uses and may eventually come to be opposed to the goal of eradication. I wonder if Norway has given any thought to this and has any plans for how they will prevent people from coming to view pink salmon as a positive thing.

Eirik Frøiland (Norway): yes, this is something we have thought about, but I don't think you can stop people for having these thoughts anyway. People see this as a resource already in some communities, and in some organizations, they work to alter the regulations, to shift the policy.

But the policy in Norway is that it's an unwanted, harmful species, but we have to get rid of the fish. We can choose to treat it as a waste, but I don't think that will stop the same people for thinking of this as a resource. I don't think that's a solution, to control people's minds, to say it like that. There are different opinions on this. The Norwegian Government has been clear on what is the status and the goal, and we are working to achieve that.

Eva Thorstad (Session Chair, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research): we have another comment from the Norwegian Government.

Håvard Nilsen (Norway): thank you, Eva. My name is Håvard Nilsen. I'm from the Ministry of Climate and Environment in Norway. I just want to more or less echo what Eirik said, that the Norwegian position regarding this question is that pink salmon is an invasive alien species, and we do not want to establish commercial interests around that species. That being said, we still want to utilise the catch as much as possible when we implement these measures. But this has been an ongoing discussion in Norway as well. And I saw that Tom asked the question in his presentation, will there be any fishing opportunities for pink salmon in Finland in the future? And hopefully the answer for that is no. And that's the Norwegian Government's position. Thank you.

Eva Thorstad (Session Chair, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research): another question from Tapio or a comment?

Tapio Hakaste (European Union): Tapio Hakaste from Finland Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Thanks for Eirik for a good presentation. And I'm aware of the Norwegian strategy, but still, I have a comment or question that should there be a plan B when everything goes wrong? Because I must say that in Tana, everything went wrong last summer. The dam structure stopped Atlantic salmon for ascending, but it didn't stop the pink salmon at all. And that was very evident from the very beginning. But this doesn't work. And unfortunately, continuing it for the whole season has done a lot of damage for the attitudes towards this work in the Tana Valley. So, should there be more focus also on the effects on Atlantic salmon that sometimes appear and a plan, what to do if measures do not work? Because it might be better to stand out and then think again and try next time. But yes, this is the view, but we would like to also share and know, besides many successful things, where are these kinds of possibilities also. Thank you.

Eirik Frøiland (Norway): well, I think we disagree on the question of whether or not the Atlantic salmon was stopped by the weir. We don't think that everything went wrong with the Tana trap. The most important thing was not to stop the Atlantic salmon spawning migration. And we don't think we did, even though you imply that we did. We opened the fence on a daily basis when we saw that the salmon did not pass. We made a big hole in the fence, and we saw that the salmon passed. We don't think we stopped the Atlantic salmon. I have to be clear on that. We were not happy with the number of pink salmon caught, and we are working to improve. We are working on a new design and a new location. You were asking for a plan B. We have tried other methods. We don't think it's effective enough to do net fishing or being drift net, gill net. Other kind of net fishing alone will never take us where we want to go to achieve high enough removal of pink salmon. So, we think we still can make a trap for pink salmon work in Tana, and we are working to do that. We have not changed our view on that. And we would very much like Finland to contribute and co-operate on achieving that.

Alan Wells (Fisheries Management Scotland): really impressive to see all these talks today and see the massive amounts of work that are going on. And we also view pink salmon as being an invasive non-native species. So, I'd really like to support the comments by our friends in the NGOs from Norway. We've been quite lucky so far in that we've had relatively few pink salmon

coming to Scotland. We don't want to be in the situation that Norway found themselves in. So, I very much support the comments about supporting that work, making sure it's funded. And Norway are right in the front line of this fight against pink salmon. Long may it continue to fight against that. Thank you.

Tim Sheehan (USA): Tim Sheehan with NOAA Fisheries. I actually do have a bunch of questions if we need to fill time, so I can keep going for a while. But this is for Sergey. If I understood correctly, I thought, towards the end of your presentation, you said something about there being no limits on exploitation or the recommendation was for no limits on fishing. And I wasn't sure if that was a recommendation or if it was actually within the fishing regulations.

Sergey Prusov (Russian Federation): thank you for the question, Tim. That was a recommendation developed for the Regional Commissions on Anadromous Fish and Fisheries. The aim was to allow commissions to regulate pink salmon fisheries in a different manner than we regulate Atlantic salmon fisheries. So, as you know, for Atlantic salmon fisheries, we have to set conservation limits, provide spawning escapement and so on. With pink salmon, with the lower homing of pink salmon, we don't have to use that approach as we use for Atlantics. So, we recommend not to establish such measures in pink salmon fisheries. We don't recommend to establish such measures as passage days, as we established for Atlantic salmon, not to establish limits for catching fish and that we can do this. Well, by Russian regulation, we have to establish limits, but if we see a lot of pink salmon coming in the rivers, we can change those limits and let people catch more salmon. So, this recommendation is to maximise commercial catches, to maximise fisheries. That was a recommendation for our regional commissions. Yes.

Tim Sheehan (USA): this was for Frode and possibly Tom. And I think this is an overly simplistic view of the eDNA sampling. But I couldn't tell from the Tana sampling if all of the sampling was only conducted in tributaries. And this is related to the Scottish sampling too, where you had positive detections, whether it be a fish detected, a fish seen in the Scottish situation, or green marks upriver but there was no eDNA detection downriver. And I know it's a very simplistic view of eDNA, but you would expect if you have them upriver, you would detect them downriver. And I was wondering if you could comment on that a little bit.

Frode Fossøy (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research): sure. So for the Tana, it was different tributaries basically, so you don't expect that downstream effect. But even if there's a downstream effect, we're talking about a really huge river. So basically, you would think 1 km, 2 km, 3 km, 4 km, you will have transport, but then the DNA is gone. So, if you don't have that in extremely long rivers, you won't have that transport all the way, because... yes.

Tim Sheehan (USA): So there's a limit in terms of when the DNA is going to degrade. Then you likely wouldn't be able to detect it. Yes, awesome.

Frode Fossøy (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research): that's depending on thousands of factors. That's the volume and size of the river. Is there a lot of waterfalls? Is it slow flowing water, etc? Yes.

Katrine Kærsgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): thank you. Katrine Kærsgaard from the Government of Greenland. This question is for the guys from Norway. Thank you very much for all of your presentations. It was very interesting. So, I wonder if you have drawings or sketches for those homemade traps that you have. Thank you.

Malin Høstmark (Norway): yes, we do have that. And a manual was developed that we sent out to all organizations that wanted to build them themselves that said how to build them, what materials to use, dimensions, and also how to assess the river, if it was suitable for it. Yes, it is in Norwegian. I'm not sure if we have a translation, but yes.

Niall Greene (Salmon Watch Ireland): Niall Greene, Salmon Watch Ireland. I was very struck by an expression used by one of the Norwegian presenters, but there have been so many that I don't remember who, that Northern Norway was the gateway to the North Atlantic. It certainly is in respect of the dissemination of pink salmon. I'm encouraged by the development of things like PINKTrack, with multinational co-operation and so on, but much more national / international co-operation is going to be needed to combat the pink salmon, I suppose, invasion or invasions. And that kind of co-operation is going to be needed just to make sure that the funds we have at the moment are spent in the most fruitful way. But it may be necessary for some kind of international funding too, as has been said by some other contributors, some kind of international funding mechanism to be put in place so that all of those who benefit from successful interventions against pink salmon contribute to the cost of that. That may be not achievable within the framework of NASCO. I understand there's some disagreement on this issue within the Parties. But it's not beyond the abilities of all of us to put together a coalition of the willing, such as the PINKTrack project, and others who may join us, to achieve that. So that's all. That, well, it's not even a question.

But a question is, notwithstanding what I've just said, I'm intrigued by the fact that the Russian Federation, according to Sergey's presentation, they take their conservation of the wild Atlantic salmon very seriously. As any of us who have fished in Russia know, it is a serious matter, backed up by serious law. And yet they seem to have found some way of cohabiting or having their wild stocks cohabit with the wild Atlantic salmon, whereas we're taking a very different attitude, perhaps necessarily. Perhaps our numbers are bigger or whatever. But it's an interesting dichotomy that needs to be teased out. Thank you.

Sergey Prusov (Russian Federation): yes, I'd like to comment. Yes, people who have visited the Kola Peninsula could see salmon abundance in our rivers and the quality of recreational fly fishing. And the matter is we have a bit different Atlantic salmon in the White Sea rivers. Most of fish, most of Atlantic salmon belong to so-called autumn run fish. They enter rivers in autumn time, in August, now October, November, even in December, and spawn in the autumn, following year. So, when big pink salmon run occurs in the summer, in beginning, and it usually occurs in the beginning of July, we have very few salmon in the White Sea because there are very few summer run fish there. So, people can catch pink salmon in the sea with bag nets without bycatching Atlantic salmon. And so Atlantic salmon come later and they don't overlap. Different situation in the Barents Sea rivers. As I told you, we have some problems in recreational fishing in the Barents Sea, because pink salmon come in those rivers in so-called prime weeks of recreational fishing in beginning of July. And people who pay a lot of money for exclusive Atlantic salmon fishing in prime weeks in beginning of July start asking questions. What have I paid for? Because when pink salmon come in big numbers in small rivers, pink salmon, Atlantic just stop biting flies. That's a problem. And another problem we have, we had in 2023 in the White Sea rivers, in the White Sea coast, when local people who invested into fishing gears for commercial pink salmon fishery didn't catch any and asked another question. Where have all pink salmon gone? So, it's a bit different in Russia's White Sea region, different even to Russia's Barents Sea region, because of the different Atlantic salmon biological groups that exist there.

Questions to Speaker (Jarle Steinkjer) following the fourth session of the TBSS:

Guðni Magnús Eiríksson (Iceland): we have recently nominated someone to take part in the work. And as I have expressed earlier, this is an important work, and we look forward to taking part in the Working Group. Thank you.

Tom Chrosniak (Connecticut River Salmon Association): hi. I'm Tom Chrosniak from the Connecticut River Salmon Association, NGO. And I'd like to say I'd like to encourage the

Working Group to meet more than annually, if necessary, to deal with this issue, one. Two, I'd like to say that we support Norway in their efforts to halt the invasion of pink salmon, and we support NASCO in supporting them in any way you can. And lastly, I'd like to say that this has been a fantastic Theme-based Special Session, and it shows the real benefit of NASCO. You really showed off what NASCO can do to bring people together on specific issues and share information and hopefully bring a focus to the issue. Thank you.

Alan Walker (United Kingdom): Alan Walker from Cefas in the UK here. Just a little thing that is not new to... this isn't a question. This is really a statement or a suggestion. It's not new to anybody here, but it hasn't really been mentioned today, so I thought I would mention it. The Pacific. Just, we've heard all about the collaboration and the knowledge exchange, but just a reminder that, of course, the Pacific has a great deal of experience on pink salmon and to remember that through the IYS framework that we had, collaborations and knowledge exchange networks have been set up with the North Pacific and Anadromous Fish Commission. And just a reminder to the Working Group and others to make use of those collaborations. Thank you.

Bénédicte Valadou (European Union): I just wanted to ask a question to the Working Group. According to the IPBES, invasive non-native species is one of the five major causes of the loss of biodiversity. So, we have four barriers to recognise these species as well as invasive non-native species. These barriers are introduction to the territory, acclimatisation, naturalisation and expansion. So here we are. So, my question is, how can we classify these species as invasive non-native species at the international level? The Working Group could do something for that, or not? Or should we classify these species by our own? For example, in Europe, we can activate the recommendation about non-native species. So, I think that the Working Group could do something for that, but I don't know yet what you could do. Thank you.

Jarle Steinkjer (Norway): I have some difficulties to hear the question. But of course, I think it's very important, when we are working with an alien species, it's very important to bear in mind the obligation under the various conventions. We cannot only look at the pink salmon and the Atlantic salmon. We also need to look at the conventions. So, in the beginning and the first meeting of the Group, we have most discussion and not so many recommendations. So, we have a discussion to be able to make new Terms of Reference. And we will, of course, discuss this in more detail at our next meeting. But when I'm talking now, I just want to say something more for my own and not only for the Group. For us in Norway, who are sitting in the centre of the problem with pink salmon, we have recommendations we think should be implemented. We have almost removed the threats from *Gyrodactylus salaris* in Norway and have now started work to reduce the threats from pink salmon. So firstly, it is of great importance that Norway continues the work of catching pink salmon before they can spawn. This measure will help us to save the threatened salmon stocks in the rivers with large quantities of pink salmon. The measure will also reduce the possibilities of pink salmon to spread to new rivers in Norway, which also will help to reduce the risk of spread in the rest of the Atlantic. So, I don't like expressions like adverse effects on Atlantic salmon. I would prefer the Precautionary Approach rather than waiting for an adverse effect. If you are waiting, it may be too late or too difficult to implement the necessary measures, and the probability of further spread is high.

I would recommend that all Parties draw up a contingency plan in the same way as we have been done for *Gyrodactylus salaris*. To implement such plans, we must first define a common platform, which can be a challenge, but it should be possible to come up with good solutions.

When we see what is happening in the river in the northernmost part of Norway, it is, in my view, a potential disaster that is about to occur. I am afraid that what we are seeing now is only the beginning. So, I hope we are able to go on to work to reduce the amount of pink salmon in

the rivers and get good co-operation with other countries so we can do a good job to help to get rid of the problem.

Carl McLean (Canada): in Canada, we're seeing certainly warming oceans, warming waters, and there have been instances of pink salmon coming from west to east across the Canadian Arctic. So, I don't think that that's a natural occurrence. That's just because of climate change and the warming oceans. We're also seeing Atlantic salmon going up the east coast into the Arctic Ocean. There's been instances of that, that have been identified. So that's just food for thought on that could be another issue that we'll have to deal with over time. Thank you.

Raoul Bierach (Norway): I could have spared this one for the Council, but I thought it might be the appropriate time to say it. If Council so decides and this Working Group is going to continue, we would be very pleased to welcome the Working Group, whoever that will be, to actually go and look in 2025 up in the north and see what's happening firsthand. I think that will make an impression. And so you are very welcome. We would be very pleased to organize that, if that's so desired. Thank you.

Joint Statement by Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), EU, Iceland, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*

RECALLING the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization's (NASCO) 'Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area', [CNL\(22\)47](#), particularly the encouragement to Parties to initiate corrective measures when adverse effects on wild Atlantic salmon stocks are identified;

RECOGNISING that the pink salmon is an invasive species in the NASCO Convention Area;

OBSERVING that pink salmon populations are successfully reproducing in more rivers in the northern parts of the Convention Area and that a significant increase in the number of pink salmon has been recorded in 2023, most notably in rivers in Norway;

UNDERSTANDING that eradication, instead of commercialised management, is the preferred corrective measure to deal with this invasive species;

ACKNOWLEDGING and welcoming the extensive removal of pink salmon from many rivers of Norway in 2023 which limits the ability of this invasive species to continue to spread to other jurisdictions in the NASCO Convention Area; and,

REFERRING to NASCO's 'Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach', [CNL\(98\)46](#), which, *inter alia*, supports the initiation of corrective measures without delay, and to give priority to conserving the productive capacity of wild Atlantic salmon;

We, Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), EU, Iceland, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States, encourage jurisdictions bordering the North Atlantic where invasive pink salmon are found, to consider initiating, continuing, and, if warranted, increasing efforts to eradicate non-native pink salmon from their rivers as this may reduce the ability of this species to expand throughout the NASCO Convention area.

We acknowledge the importance of preventing harmful effects to Atlantic salmon stocks during pink salmon removal.

We encourage the initiation of monitoring programmes, or to collate existing observations, to contribute to an overview of the distribution of non-native pink salmon for use by the NASCO Pink Salmon Working Group.

*Statement by the Russian Federation
Regarding Pink Salmon (Oncorhynchus gorbuscha)*

The introduction of pink salmon to the rivers of the White Sea in Russia started in the 1950s aimed at enhancing fisheries in the Arctic regions of the Russian Federation. The introduction of odd year spawning line laid the foundation for the growth of its natural production in the new area.

Pink salmon has existed in the North Atlantic environment for decades along with the native species, Atlantic salmon, and has been harvested in commercial and recreational fisheries in northwest Russia since the 1960s. Pink salmon in the Russian Federation is a fisheries-targeted species and not considered as an invasive species. Fisheries for both Atlantic salmon and pink salmon are carried out in accordance with Article 29.1 of Federal Law 166 FZ of 20 Dec 2004 “On fisheries and conservation of aquatic biological resources” and management of stocks is based on decisions of regional commissions for regulation of fisheries of anadromous fish.

There is no evidence of an adverse impact of pink salmon on Atlantic salmon reproduction at present and the increase in pink salmon abundance in remote areas of Russia is believed to provide socio-economic benefits for regional economies through commercial, artisanal and recreational fishing.

The numbers of pink salmon arriving to Russian rivers are quite comparable with those in Norway and removal through harvesting is significant. The goal of the pink salmon stock management in Russia is to effectively harvest it to contain its production and keep at environmentally safe level.

***Question and Answer Session held during the Special Session of the Council:
Evaluation of Implementation Plans / Annual Progress Reports Under the
Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024)***

Ignacio Granell (European Union): my name is Ignacio Granell, I'm the head of the EU delegation to NASCO. Thanks, Cathal, for your presentation. I want to ask you if you could elaborate a little bit. I was wondering if you could perhaps say something about this proposal. I found it interesting that you referred to the possibility that the Review Group would actually meet in the week, that the first part of the week there could be a little bit of a general assessment towards the actions, etc. and the second part of the week would be the assessment of the reports themselves. What do you envisage there? Thank you.

Livia Goodbrand (Canada): hi, I'm going to answer on behalf of Cathal, who missed that part of the discussion this year. And Dan, you and I have had several discussions too, so feel free to jump in. So, these were just informal discussions had, and we did put these recommendations forward, but they haven't been agreed by Council. I just want to be clear. I think what we're getting at is this could potentially be a really big task. There's a lot going on with WGFON. We all feel, as per Cathal's points, that this is a really important accountability function and tool for NASCO, but any conversation around this overhaul, it could quickly go out of scope. So, we're wondering how we can structure the meetings to get the most out of them? How do we take what we learned from all the work, that slide that Cathal showed, and our timeline of how we got to where we are, into consideration before making changes? Dan, I don't know if you want to expand on the idea of how to structure those meetings to get the most out of them, but I think that's what the question is about.

Dan Kircheis (USA): no, I think you got it. My name is Dan Kircheis. I think the idea is: just organising the meeting in a way that we get as much input into the process, and from the Parties and jurisdictions on the process, to inform the next round of Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports, that is going to be most effective in achieving the desired outcome. What do we want these things to actually do, how are they most effective, as the transparency and accountability are really important, and are the existing plans that we have actually achieving that objective in an effective way? And so, gathering input from as many people in the first part of the meeting is really important. But then having a subset of those people take all that information and then formulate the next round of reporting based on the information that we gather initially at the beginning of the meeting. So, it's just trying to provide some organization and structure in the meeting that helps get the most value out of the end product in the end.

Robert Otto (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): good morning, Robert Otto with NGOs from Canada. I'd just like to say to Cathal and the Group, thank you for both the presentations, and all the hard work that's obviously gone into this over the last year with a couple of meetings. And to Livia's point, I think the accountability piece with the IP / APR process is incredibly important. And I'd just like to ask any members of the committee about, I guess from your perspective, how this process has happened over an annual cycle, to give some perspective or comment, as you see fit, on how the Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports from the Parties have progressed over the five years. And whether or not there's been some sort of plateauing, or whether or not you still see the commitment from the Parties to constantly improve their reporting back to NASCO. For instance, I look at, in particular, Canada, and I see that opening up in salmon aquaculture is certainly a high-level threat, and I don't think

there's been any change in Canada's Annual Progress Report or implementation planning over the last at least two years, as an example. Thank you.

Cathal Gallagher (Chair of the IP / APR Review Group): so, from the second cycle to the third cycle, if we want to take in that way, and see if we got progress. There was really, really good progress being made, in my opinion, because for example, this year, we got 21 APRs. So, we've now got jurisdictions and reports from places that we never had before, so the engagement has widened. The process itself started off, it's a really technical process. You've all been through it, you've all developed your plans. And what now has to happen is that if you're doing a review, you've got to go to the Guidelines, you might be looking at different Guidelines, you're going to look at the IP itself, you're going to look at the reporting mechanism, you have to look at the time bounds, the expected outcomes. It's a really, really technically structured approach, which really took a lot of getting used to. The first couple of years there was a lot of cycling, a lot of changing. Council helped a little bit, didn't help a little bit at the time, so changing the rules as we went along. Am I allowed to say that? I don't know. So that was very difficult, but progress was being made. Where we're maybe not getting to it in the cycle, is that I don't feel that when we do the reviews, we accept what is presented in the plans to us, and we do not question what has been reported to us. And I've often had discussions during the review progress with the NGOs that might have said, well, that's not actually what's happening. The place where that should be happening, and that scrutiny is at this meeting. There's an opportunity here to hold account everything that's in that Plan. And maybe one of the learnings is that maybe at this meeting we should be more focused on holding the jurisdictions accountable to those Plans, if we disagree with what's happening in them, or also giving positive feedback as well. So that may be one priority in the future that we might do a little bit better. But overall, I think there's lots of good sharing of information. There's lots of information. If you remember previously that the second cycle there was cut and pasted. It was like a report on cut and paste. So, if you were doing something on water quality, you got 20 pages, and you put it into a report, and you couldn't read it from top to bottom, and there were 50 links in it. So, it was totally a different horse. It has improved, but it's very technical. They're long and difficult. So, there are some general comments maybe. I don't know if anyone wants to add to that.

Dan Kircheis (USA): just in terms of, like you mentioned, the plateauing off on some of the Implementation Plans, and the Annual Progress Reports, and the reporting on stuff like that. And we did see some of that, but I think it's a real opportunity for Parties when they develop their Implementation Plans, or developing ambitious goals that they set forth for themselves. And it gives the Parties an opportunity to look at their progress over the period of the reporting cycle, how much progress did they actually make in respect to those goals that they set five years ago? I know I can only speak for our Implementation Plan for the US, so it was really helpful to say, we set these really ambitious goals, this is how we did, this is where we could show we've made progress in some places. We didn't make as much progress as we really wanted to, and be even having that opportunity to kind of reflect back what happened, why didn't we achieve what we wanted to, and what were the limitations that prevented us from doing that? And it was really helpful just to have those ambitious goals set up front that you can reflect back to help inform your next process, and maybe how we can do things better. And you don't always see, it's not always readily apparent, the changes the Parties are making necessarily, but I mean it's there. People are thinking about it when they're writing these Implementation Plans. And like Cathal was saying, we're getting a lot of participation, all the Parties and all the jurisdictions are participating, and that's really good. And that transparency there, you can see it on the website, you can go there. And even though we're not all meeting the bar, we're not all putting forward acceptable actions, we're all thinking about ways that we

can do it. And sometimes it's just like, we just don't have the resources. To me, I think it's real, they're doing what they're supposed to do, just providing that opportunity to reflect, and set meaningful goals for the Parties. All the Parties and jurisdictions do it differently, but I'm speaking somewhat for the US, and how we've used it, and how we see it. So that's where I'll leave it.

Raoul Bierach (Norway): thank you. My name is Raoul Bierach, I'm from the Norwegian delegation. Well, hearing to this conversation, it triggered some thoughts that I actually had during working on the work form that I would like to share. I think the focus on the fourth reporting cycle has to be more on not what we are doing, but what we are achieving, the outcomes of what we are doing. We have also already decided that we will focus on stressors probably in the next years, and establishing baselines for those stressors that we think are the most important ones, maybe on a less national-regional level, I don't know. Probably that would add to making it much more efficient and easy to report, and show progress, or no progress, or even if things are getting worse. So probably this will make the whole process much more effective and less work intensive, both for the Parties, and for the coming Group. And then, about what was said during the last comment, your comment, about we don't have the resources, it's something that they have been thinking about a lot, and it's about political will. It's not only about resources, it's of course connected. But I think that this process, and NASCO itself, also could contribute to actually making the NGO society even more effective in their work, both nationally, but also maybe internationally, to create that political will to do more. Because I think, personally, most of the people here in the room, also from the different governments, they do what they can, or to use another word, allowed to do in favour of salmon. So, it's of course an interaction. I don't say that governments and bureaucrats like myself don't have a responsibility here, but it's also a responsibility for the whole sort of NASCO family. And I think there is a lot of potential in doing that better. Thank you.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): just building off of what Dan and Raoul just said, I couldn't agree more. I think that going forward, if we agreed to do the stressor analysis, calling out very clearly what the biggest threats and challenges are, and then talking about what actions you're going to take, and then if you don't have the resources to take those actions, it's going to be very clear. And I think that helps build the political awareness like you were talking about, Raoul. At least I can speak for the US, it would help us to be able to talk to our higher-ups and say, look, we've got these actions that we've indicated are really imperative to make tangible, meaningful progress for Atlantic salmon, but we don't have the resources to be able to do it. And it really puts them on notice, calls attention to it. They would also know that it's going to be drawn out at the NASCO meetings as a high-level discussion. So, I think going forward, that stressor analysis, and really focusing in, as we've been talking about, on those actions that are really needed to address those key threats and challenges, really helps to message this back home for at least, I can speak for the US.

Livia Goodbrand (Canada): Livia, from Canada. I am on the IP / APR Review Group. I'm wondering, is it possible to flip back to one of Cathal's slides he presented? I'm interested in the first slide that looked at the recommendations of our Group for the future reporting. This actually links back to what Raoul was saying too, but I need the assistance of the slide. Yes, the second presentation. Okay, yes. So, the one change, and this is kind of linking together a few pieces of the conversation that we've had today, the one change that I've noticed on my third year participating on the IP / APR Review Group, is a movement towards linking our feedback directly to the Resolutions and Agreements of NASCO. When I first started, we weren't doing that. We were simply measuring progress against the stated actions. Now we make that link to the appropriate Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. I think that this is what Raoul is getting at, how do you move from international standards, or part of what you're

getting at, if NASCO is here to set the standards, to set the bar for what is expected, and how to achieve positive outcomes for salmon. How do we move from those standards, or RAGs, down into reporting by each Party? The APR, the IPs, is the tool for doing that. And really ensuring that that link is made clear is really important. The function of the prioritisation exercise, whether you choose to go with Norway's gold star, or another way of prioritising your actions, really just sets up for you, your Party, what the most important things are going to be. So, you can't say that we are going to prevent tigers from eating our salmon, because it is irrelevant. You need to focus on what is truly relevant. Prioritisation though does not necessarily move us towards standard actions for achieving or working towards the RAGs. One thing I'm interested in is, okay, we've set priorities, maybe it's, I think, for Norway it's aquaculture, followed by, I can't recall. But what are the actions that are going to work to move us towards those standards? And I feel like that's part of the conversation that we're not quite having, because we're really focused on prioritisation, but it is the ongoing challenge of Parties to respond to aquaculture in particular. And if you can recall Cathal's slide that has how we all did, nobody's achieving their aquaculture actions. Part of that is because it's really hard to develop meaningful actions that can move us towards the standard, which is 100% containment of lice and escapees. I think the Parties would benefit from having examples of actions and measures that would help move us forward and then report against. Because right now, for aquaculture in particular, it's kind of a catch 22. You can either set a really ambitious target of achieving 100% containment, which you will fail, or you can set an action of, let's say, doing some research towards minimising lice, but that action is not going to be deemed to be acceptable. So, it's an area that we need to work on. We're really focused on prioritisation right now. That is super important, but I think it's only one piece of the equation. And I'm hoping that our work through future reporting also takes a look at providing Parties with examples and best practices for setting actions that work, and that move us in the right direction.

Kim Damon-Randall (President): I think those are good points. I think we're focused on the prioritisation because that's something that we're agreeing here at the meeting, but going forward out of the Annual Meeting, the Working Group on Future Reporting, we'll be looking at exactly what you're talking about. So, I think that's the next step.

Noel Carr (Federation of Irish Salmon and Sea-Trout Anglers): Noel Carr, Federation of Salmon and Sea Trout Anglers. Thanks, Cathal, for the presentation. I want to first of all say thanks to the Review Group for the enormous amount of work they put into it. With regards to the annual cycle last year, there was a major change in the EU – Ireland policy, where they took legal action against a department that granted a licence. And I was wondering why that was omitted from the APR in our case? Because there was uncovered a whole lot of information for NGOs, for the groups that we actually can use in the future to take our task forward. Thank you.

Cathal Gallagher (Chair of the IP / APR Review Group): thanks. Yeah, so we're still awaiting the outcomes of that at the moment. But the reason it's not in, because it was never in the Implementation Plan five years ago, so you're reporting on actions in there. But you're right, there's lots of information come out of that process.

Cathal Gallagher (Chair of the IP / APR Review Group): I'm just wondering that, I suppose we're just talking about the Review Group here about what people's impressions they have of the process, and what they think because now's your chance to contribute to what it might look like in the future, or any changes you think are not being made. But also, I'd encourage that if you have any comments about any of the IPs themselves, this is your opportunity to say what you've been told is not correct or accurate. So, it's something that I really encourage you to engage in, because this is your chance to hold to account all of the work that the Parties and

jurisdictions are doing. So, there's an opportunity here to talk about the future, talk about things that you don't think went well last time, or things that went well, and also what you want from the future of that sort of reporting. Thanks.

Robert Otto (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): thank you. Robert Otto, NGOs Canada again. I think that just going back to Noel's question, and Cathal's answer, and just thinking off the top of my head, that the issue that Noel brought up was not addressed, because it hadn't been in the in the process some years ago. And so it just struck me just now about how we make the process more flexible. If we're going to be holding ourselves accountable for actions, but we don't have any mechanism to include more recent developments into our Annual Progress Reports and implementation planning, I'm wondering if that's perhaps a major hole here that none of us perhaps anticipated at the beginning of this. And given the state of salmon in so many jurisdictions, five years is too long to wait, in my opinion. So, I'd like some comment on that, if I could, or to hear some comment on that, if I could please. Thanks.

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): I can make a comment on the Plans. So, in the Plans, you're laying out a plan, so if anything changes, if anything substantive changes in your jurisdiction in the five years, you can write another plan. There is nothing to stop anyone from doing that. Anything substantive changes, that's already kind of hardwired in the system. And then in terms of annual reporting, every year every jurisdiction is asked if they have anything of significance to add. So, every jurisdiction is asked a specific question, is there anything big, is there anything significant that's happened in the last 12 months that you want to tell NASCO about? So it is already in there. If the Parties and jurisdictions choose not to put it in there, then that's something else. But it is already hardwired in the system, but the expectation is that the information is provided.

Robert Otto (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): Robert Otto, again, NGOs Canada. So, I'm thinking from, for instance, an NGO perspective, and the mechanism from which perhaps there's things that come to our attention that we feel need to be added. And so is the Review Group the mechanism for us to engage, and ask those kinds of questions, I guess, a question of process?

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): On an annual basis, or in terms of setting up the fourth reporting cycle?

Robert Otto (Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada): both.

Emma Hatfield (Secretary): in terms of setting up the fourth reporting cycle, there will be NGO involvement. Because there are two NGOs on the IP / APR Review Group, and the Review Group will form the basis of the Working Group on Future Reporting. So there's nothing to stop the NGOs from asking for somebody else to be on the Working Group on Future Reporting. But if it gets too big, it's then difficult to work, which is I guess why the proposal has been made to have a large group for a few days to really kind of thrash out what it should be, and then a smaller group to take those messages, and write the actual templates and guidelines for the next reporting cycle. So here, please, NGOs, if you have comments, raise them now because this is your opportunity, and then you can do it through the NGOs that are representing you on the actual Working Group on Future Reporting. So, on an annual basis, this is the forum, so this is where we're giving everybody, not just the NGOs, everybody, individuals who don't have to speak through their Heads of Delegation, everybody has been given the opportunity at this meeting, in these Special Sessions, to comment.

Statement to Council Submitted by France (in respect of Saint-Pierre & Miquelon)

First of all, French delegation would like to recall number for salmon fishing in Saint-Pierre & Miquelon. In 2023 : 28 kg for professional fishermen and 1.4 tons for recreational fishermen.

Salmon fishing in Saint Pierre and Miquelon is traditional and part of the territory's culture. This year, for recreational fishermen, fishing has increased slightly. This increase is limited and does not call into question the willingness of the France delegation to cooperate with the nasco.

Saint-Pierre & Miquelon is working to promote a sustainable management of the resource. To this end, I can mention some measures adopted locally, as the quota of annual fishing authorizations for recreational fishermen (there is a quota of 80 annual authorizations since 2021).

Besides, it can be report that the President of the recreational fishermen association and the authorities of Saint-Pierre & Miquelon have signed few days ago a charter including regulatory and voluntary measures to ensure the sustainability of Atlantic salmon resources and the marine ecosystems. The charter will come into effect on May 1, 2025. The specificity of the charter is that it allows each recreational fisherman to make an individual commitment by signing an individual appendix and by voluntarily submitting to controls. Without individual signature, licenses should not be renewed.

In this charter, it is specifically mentioned that recreational fishermen are engaged to co-operate with administrations on illegal captures of salmons. Then, the declaration of each capture of salmon is also provide which is not binding under French legislation for recreational fishermen. Moreover, it is specifically mentioned in the charter that recreational fishermen are engaged to co-operate with the French research institute IFREMER in sampling and helping it to reach 100% of its needs. 3 maritime affairs agents will be trained by the French research institute to carry out these samples.

The French delegation is also particularly satisfied about the scientific co-operation with Canada on the evaluation and analysis of sampling to improve the understanding of the biological characteristics and origin of salmon caught by the Saint-Pierre & Miquelon fishery.

About professional fishermen, fishing decreased and it is also important to remember that professional salmon fishing in Saint-Pierre & Miquelon is a secondary activity and no fisherman carries out this activity as a principal activity. This sector is not attractive for companies from Saint-Pierre & Miquelon.