

NASCO News 2025

**CONSERVING AND
RESTORING WILD
ATLANTIC SALMON**

1 MARCH 2024 – 28 FEBRUARY 2025

Welcome from the Secretary

Firstly, I would like to welcome you to the 2025 edition of the NASCO News! It will be my last NASCO News as Secretary of NASCO as my tenure is up later this year and a new Secretary will be taking over. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish them all the very best in what is a very exciting, complicated and varied role!



Dr Emma Hatfield, Secretary

This past year has been very busy indeed, continuing with the work of the WGFON, developing a potential process for a fourth reporting cycle, developing a draft outreach and communications strategy, finalising the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas, progressing the work of the Board to consider a new potential major study into the marine growth of salmon and all our usual work as well!

Whatever I move on to do, I am sure it will be quieter than my time here. In the past eight years the Organization has seen some major changes: the Covid-19 pandemic and learning to host Annual Meetings virtually and later in a hybrid format; the accession of the UK as a Party in its own right following Brexit; the re-accession of Iceland; a new Vision, Scope and Purpose for the Board; and a new Vision, Mission, Strategic Goal and Objectives for NASCO to name but a few.

It is my sincere hope that the decisions taken recently, and being considered at this year's Annual Meeting, on the future of NASCO, will allow the Organization to move into the future in a productive and efficient way to vastly improve the outlook for our wild Atlantic salmon stocks.

So, I will have very mixed feelings when it comes to my final Annual Meeting in June, but hope that our paths will cross again in the future.

Acronyms in the NASCO News

APR	Annual Progress Report
CCAMLR	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
EU	European Union
FAC	Finance and Administration Committee
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
IP	Implementation Plan
IPRIs	Indigenous People's Representatives and Institutions
NAC	North American Commission
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

NEA	North-East Atlantic Commission
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPAFC	North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SAG	The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board's Scientific Advisory Group
TBSS	Theme-based Special Session
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WGC	West Greenland Commission
WGFON	Working Group on the Future of NASCO

The Atlantic Salmon



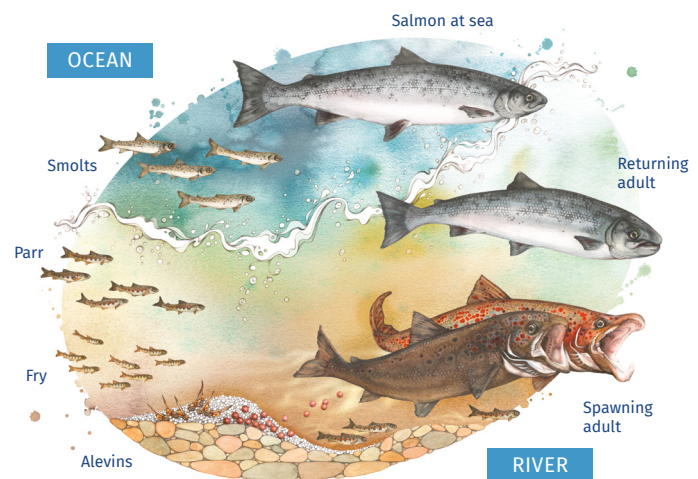
The Atlantic salmon is an iconic and fascinating species, capturing the hearts and imaginations of the communities around it for thousands of years. The extraordinary sight of this magnificent fish leaping over obstacles on its epic homeward migration is truly awe-inspiring and it is of little wonder that the 'King of Fish' features in social ceremonies, art and folklore across the North Atlantic.

The Atlantic salmon leaves its river of birth, travels huge distances across the Atlantic Ocean to its feeding grounds and then finds its way back home to the exact river of its birth to spawn, so completing its unique life cycle. In doing so, it brings essential marine nutrients to the river systems in which it lives.

However, this King of Fish is now threatened. In some areas, it is critically endangered. For example, the number of North American Atlantic salmon, prior to any fisheries taking place, has almost halved from an average of around 1.6 million fish during the period from 1971 – 1991 to an average of 815,000 fish in the period 1992 – 2022 (source: [CNL\(24\)06](#)).

There are many [reasons](#) for this decline, several of which are caused, in some way, by the actions of humans. These include climate change, overfishing, habitat degradation and aquaculture and related activities.

Governments around the North Atlantic work together through the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization to try to prevent the loss of this amazing species.



Migration routes

Who We Are

NASCO - The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

NASCO is an inter-governmental organization whose members are the Contracting Parties of the 1982 Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean.

There are currently eight Contracting Parties: Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Our [Strategic Goal](#) is:

‘within the next 10 years ... to prioritise and drive actions necessary to slow the decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations and demonstrate that restoration is possible’.

Under the Convention, no salmon fishing is allowed beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction and, in most areas of the North Atlantic, beyond 12 nautical miles from the coasts. **This has created an enormous area free from directed salmon fishing across the North Atlantic.**

The Contracting Parties work together through NASCO’s four main bodies (the Council and three regional Commissions) and other subsidiary bodies such as the Finance and Administration Committee and the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board.

The Contracting Parties and Regional Commissions



Canada



Denmark
(in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)



European Union



Iceland



Norway



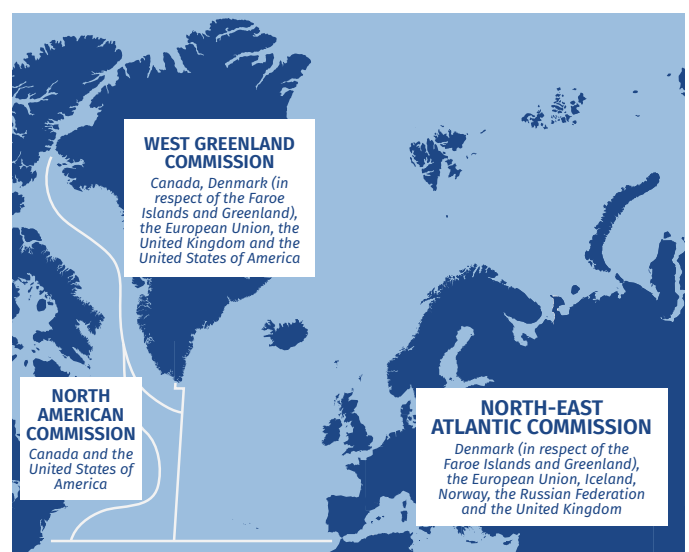
Russian Federation



United Kingdom



United States of America



The Council

The Council is the Organization's overarching body, responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Commissions and providing a space for information exchange across the whole of the North Atlantic. The [Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines](#) adopted by Council guide the work of the Organization in its three key areas of concern: Fisheries Management, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics.

The Commissions

NASCO has three regional Commissions: the NAC, the NEA and the WGC. It is through the Commissions that agreements are reached on salmon fisheries in the waters of one Contracting Party that catch salmon from rivers in another Contracting Party, such as for the salmon fishery at West Greenland.

Salmon born in rivers on both sides of the North Atlantic are caught in the salmon fishery at West Greenland, and many are from critically endangered stocks. A binding 'regulatory measure' has been agreed for the West Greenland salmon fishery for the period 2022 – 2025, restricting the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) to 27 t (see [WGC\(22\)10](#) for details), far below the record levels of almost 2,700 t in the 1970s.

A 'Decision' has also been reached in the NEA for the salmon fishery in Faroese waters (see [NEA\(24\)14](#)), covering the 2024 – 2025 and 2025 – 2026 salmon fishing seasons. Under this Decision, the Faroe Islands agrees to manage any salmon fishery on the basis of advice from [ICES](#), the inter-governmental marine science organization that provides NASCO's scientific advice. A similar Decision has been reached for each year since 2001, and as a result **no salmon fishery has taken place at the Faroe Islands since the year 2000.**

Other NASCO Bodies

The Finance and Administration Committee

The FAC deals with the financial and administrative matters related to the running of the Organization. Each Party to NASCO has one member on the FAC and it elects its own Chair from among the Parties. It usually holds its Annual Meeting the day before the main Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO begin.

The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board



The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) was set-up to promote collaboration and co-operation on research into the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality.

Each Party to NASCO has one member on the Board and there is also an NGO representative. The Board also elects its own Chair.

Over the years, the Board has funded, endorsed and / or developed a number of research programmes, including the flagship SALSEA Programme, and is currently considering developing a new signature project. It also maintains an inventory of research projects relating to salmon mortality at sea on its website. It usually holds its Annual Meeting the day before the Council and Commission meetings begin.

The Scientific Advisory Group

The SAG helps the Board to carry out its activities. Each Party to NASCO has a representative on the SAG and there is also an NGO representative. The SAG elects its Chair from among its members.

The SAG meets to carry out specific tasks as and when asked to do so by the Board.

Our Elected Officers



**Kimberly
Damon-Randall**
President
of NASCO



Ruth Allin
Vice-President
of NASCO



Dale Marsden
North American
Commission Chair



Pat Keliher
North American
Commission
Vice-Chair



Robert Floyd,
North-East Atlantic
Commission Chair



Helge Dyrendal
North-East Atlantic
Commission
Vice-Chair



**Katrine
Kærgaard**
West Greenland
Commission
Chair



Cathal Gallagher
West Greenland
Commission
Vice-Chair
(Photo: IFI)



Seamus Connor
Finance and
Administration
Committee Chair



Rebecca Wintering
Finance and
Administration
Committee Vice-
Chair



**Martha
Robertson**
International
Atlantic Salmon
Research Board
Chair



Peder Fiske
Scientific Advisory
Group Chair

Our Accredited NGOs

As part of our efforts to be inclusive and transparent, we work closely with a number of NGOs who have been given 'observer status' to the Organization.

These NGOs are invited to attend NASCO's Annual Meetings and can make interventions on most of the topics discussed at the Annual Meetings. The current NGO Co-Chairs are Nils Olav Gjone (Norske Lakseelver) and Robert Otto (Atlantic Salmon Federation). Robert replaces Steve Sutton (also of the Atlantic Salmon Federation) as NGO Co-Chair this year and we would like to both thank Steve for all his hard work over the years and wish Robert well in his new role.

The NGOs are also invited to provide representatives on many of NASCO's Working Groups and have two permanent members on the IP / APR Review Group (see page 12 for details). In return, NASCO benefits from a wide range of expertise and experience from within our NGO community.

During the period covered by this publication (March 2024 – February 2025), two new NGOs have been granted 'observer status': The Rivers Trust and South West Rivers Association (both based in the UK).

Here are just a few of NASCO's accredited NGOs:



For a full list of the NGOs accredited by NASCO, please see our [website](#).

Organizations interested in becoming accredited NGOs should consult the [Terms and Conditions for Observers](#) at NASCO Meetings before contacting the Secretary of NASCO (hq@nasco.int).

Our Accredited Indigenous People's Representatives and Institutions

Following the creation of a new observer category to deepen the engagement of Indigenous peoples (see page 8 for details), the first application for IPRI status was received from, and granted to, the Sámi Parliament in Norway. Several more applications for IPRI status have been received since the date of this article (28 February 2025).

Further information on the work of the Sámi Parliament in Norway can be found by clicking this thumbnail:



Organizations interested in IPRI accreditation should consult the [Terms and Conditions for Observers](#) at NASCO Meetings before contacting the Secretary of NASCO (hq@nasco.int).

Our Work

NASCO News 2025

A New Vision and Strategy for the Future of NASCO!

NASCO's Parties have worked incredibly hard together to agree a new Strategy to guide the Organization's work for the next ten years, as well as a new Vision, Mission and Objectives for the Organization.

Our Vision

The decline of wild Atlantic salmon has reversed and populations are recovering to healthy and resilient levels across their range.

Our Mission

NASCO will support and promote urgent and transformative actions directed at the protection, conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon throughout the species' range.

Our Strategic Goal

Within the next 10 years, NASCO's goal is to prioritise and drive actions necessary to slow the decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations and demonstrate that restoration is possible.

Our Objectives

NASCO will:

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



The WGFON (meeting in 2024)

Header photo - Pekka Tuuri.

An Action Plan has also been agreed to help the Organization reach its goals. Full details can be found [here](#).

This work has been carried out in response to the recommendations contained in the report of NASCO's [third performance review](#). When considering that report, Council agreed that it had been given an opportunity to take stock of NASCO's achievements – and constraints – and a chance to refocus the Organization's work to respond more effectively to the pressures faced by salmon. The WGFON has been asked to continue its work developing proposals on those recommendations

which have not yet been addressed and has also been tasked with developing a fourth reporting cycle (see page 12). The Group's proposals are available in a number of documents on the [NASCO website](#) and will be considered at the 2025 Annual Meeting. The Secretariat would like to thank all those involved in the work of the WGFON which has been a huge commitment and has required a lot of time and effort from all participants.

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Strengthening the Involvement of Indigenous Peoples in NASCO's Work

NASCO has recognised the need to deepen the engagement of Indigenous peoples in its work, to allow Indigenous participation in a manner that recognises their interest in the work of NASCO and the value that this strengthened engagement could bring. Therefore, in 2024, Council adopted new '[Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings](#)'. These conditions include a new observer category for accredited Indigenous People's representatives and institutions (IPRIs) that support the objectives of NASCO with a demonstrated interest in wild Atlantic salmon. Among other benefits, this allows up to two representatives of each IPRI to attend and participate in NASCO's Annual Meetings, while NASCO will benefit from Indigenous people's

knowledge systems and perspectives.

As of 28 February 2025, one IPRI had been granted accredited status. Several more applications for IPRI status have since been received. NASCO looks forwards to this strengthened collaboration and encourages more IPRIs to become involved in the work of the Organization. Organizations interested in IPRI accreditation should consult the [Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings](#) before contacting the Secretary of NASCO (hq@nasco.int).

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New Agreement Reached on Salmon Fishing in Faroese Waters

At its 2024 Annual Meeting, the NEA agreed not to set a quota for the salmon fishery in Faroese Waters for the 2024 / 2025 fishing season following a commitment from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to manage any salmon fishery on the basis of the advice from ICES. The [Decision](#) will also apply to the 2025 / 26 salmon fishery unless a Commission member requests its reconsideration based on the 2025 ICES advice.

Given that the advice from ICES for the 2024 / 25 - 2026 / 27 fishing seasons is that the catch at the Faroe Islands should be 0 (source: [CNL\(24\)06](#)), this effectively means that there will be no salmon fishing

at the Faroe Islands during the 2024 / 25 or 2025 / 26 fishing seasons.

In reaching this Decision, the NEA acknowledged the restraint shown by the Faroe Islands by not having commercial salmon fisheries for a number of years. Indeed, there has been no fishery for salmon at the Faroes since the year 2000 and the Commission has previously acknowledged the conservation measures taken by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to better protect Atlantic salmon stocks.

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Pink Salmon in the North Atlantic

Pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) are native to the Pacific Ocean but were introduced to the Atlantic Ocean through stocking in the Kola Peninsula. Although the stocking of pink salmon has now stopped, the species has recently spread throughout the North Atlantic Ocean in unprecedented numbers.

In 2023 in Troms and Finnmark County (Norway) alone, approximately 250,000 adult pink salmon were removed when entering rivers to spawn. Almost 100,000 more caught in licenced coastal Atlantic salmon fisheries and 13,000 were caught by sports fishing in rivers. This far outnumbers the abundance of native Atlantic salmon returning to spawn in the same area. Although the numbers of pink salmon found in other countries are much lower than in Norway, this invasive species is now found in most countries where Atlantic salmon occur.



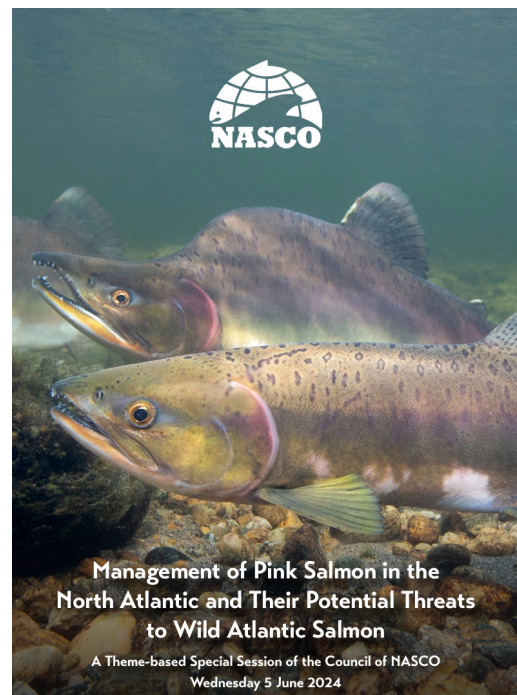
Pink salmon in the River Teno, Finland – Pekka Tuuri.

Concerns related to the potential for negative impacts to wild salmon productivity have been raised in NASCO and a number of actions have been taken, including establishing a Working Group on Pink Salmon, a Council-issued '[Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area](#)' and agreement to hold a TBSS on pink salmon.



Pink salmon in the River Teno, Finland – Pekka Tuuri.

Nine speakers were invited to give presentations at the TBSS, held during the 2024 Annual Meeting, on topics including the distribution and life history of pink salmon, the potential for interactions between pink salmon and Atlantic salmon in both the freshwater and marine environment and the management of pink salmon in Atlantic salmon systems. Papers on these presentations, and the conclusions drawn by the TBSS Steering Committee from the session, can be found in the report of the [TBSS](#) by clicking on this thumbnail:



Following the TBSS, seven of NASCO's Parties issued the following statement:

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.

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However, the Russian Federation, which views pink salmon as a resource rather than an invasive species, did not agree the Joint Statement and issued its own statement:

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.

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New Guidance on Stocking Atlantic Salmon

A NASCO Working Group with expertise in stocking conducted a review of recent evidence into the pros and cons of Atlantic Salmon stocking programmes and various stocking methods. In its report, it was noted that **where integrity (i.e. evolutionary and ecological naturalness) of the wild stock is a management priority, stocking should not be considered as a remediation measure.**

However, there are some cases in which stocking may be beneficial, such as where the local wild Atlantic salmon population has been lost or is at immediate risk of being lost. The Working Group developed Stocking Guidelines based on its review and these were adopted by NASCO Council at the 2024 Annual Meeting. These Guidelines can be found [here](#).

The Working Group has also been asked to develop and recommend updated guidelines on both the use of stock rebuilding programmes and the scientific and management protocols for gene-banking and these will be considered at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

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Citizen Science Lottery in the West Greenland Salmon Fishery

The Greenland Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting has entered into a partnership with the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the North Atlantic Salmon Fund. The goal is to improve reporting among salmon fishers, by incentivizing them to report through annual lotteries.

In 2023 this resulted in a lottery programme to encourage citizen sampling in the West Greenland Salmon Fishery. The programme is led by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources. Five prizes of 5,000 Danish Krone were awarded to salmon fishers who reported their catch and included scale and fin samples with their report in 2023. Further details on this scheme can be found [here](#).

Tag Winners

The 2024 Tag Return Incentive Scheme winners were Gerald Walters (UK – Grand Prize winner of £1,500), Steve Smith (Canada – NAC Prize winner of £1,000), Petter Pettersen (Norway – NEA Prize Winner of £1,000) and Herman Stach (Greenland – WGC Prize winner, also of £1,000). Following a 2024 Council decision to discontinue this scheme, these will be the last winners of the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prizes.

NASCO's Implementation Plan Process

Over the years, NASCO has adopted a number of [Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines](#) that address the Organization's three key areas of concern. In 2005, it was agreed that each Party and jurisdiction should develop an 'Implementation Plan' for meeting the objectives of these agreements and report on the steps taken under their Plans (see [CNL\(05\)49](#) for full details). This was the beginning of NASCO's Implementation Plan Process, one of the most valuable mechanisms that NASCO has developed, of vital importance in strengthening implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports

Under this process, each jurisdiction of NASCO develops a five-year plan, detailing the measures to be taken in relation to:

- the management of salmon fisheries;
- the protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat; and
- the management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics.

These IPs are evaluated by a Review Group comprising representatives of the Parties and NGOs. The Review Group provides feedback on the IPs, including whether it considers each section and area of the IP to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

NASCO is coming to the end of its third round of IPs, with the current plans covering the period from 2019 – 2025. Each year, from 2019 – 2024, Parties and jurisdictions were asked to provide a report on the progress made in implementing the measures

contained in their IP through an APR. These APRs were also evaluated by the Review Group and feedback provided to the Parties and jurisdictions. Due to the workload involved in developing the fourth reporting cycle, it was decided that there would be no further reviews of the IPs under the third reporting cycle and that APRs would not be sought in 2025 or 2026. Instead, Parties and jurisdictions have been asked to provide catch reports and the information provided in response can be found [here](#).

The reports of previous Review Group meetings can be found [here](#), along with further details on the IP Process, the IPs and APRs.

The Fourth Reporting Cycle

Council has asked the WGFON to develop a fourth reporting cycle for NASCO's Parties and jurisdictions. As part of this process, a Working Group on Future Reporting was established to undertake a review of the reporting process to date. The Group's reports are available as documents [CNL\(25\)10](#) and [CNL\(25\)22](#) and will be considered at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Recap: the 2024 Annual Meetings



Delegates at the 2024 TBSS on Pink Salmon

The Irish Government, on behalf of the EU, kindly hosted NASCO's 2024 Annual Meetings in Westport, Ireland. Representatives of the Parties and observers from France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon), two IGOs and 21 NGOs attended the Meetings, along with five speakers who were invited to speak on specific topics. The 96 delegates who attended in person had the opportunity to visit an Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) research centre and see the important work being done by IFI to monitor and protect wild Atlantic salmon in the area. A further 27 delegates participated virtually in the Meetings.

Full details of each of the Meetings can be found in the [Annual Reports of the Council, North American Commission, North-East Atlantic Commission, West Greenland Commission, Finance and Administration Committee and International Atlantic Salmon Research Board](#) Meetings.

The key outcomes of these Meetings are listed below:

- Council reached a number of decisions in relation to the work of the WGFON including, but not limited to:
 - adopting '[The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy](#)' (see pg 7 for further details)

- asking the WGFON to continue its work, including developing a fourth reporting cycle and a position paper on changing the NASCO Convention;
- agreeing that NASCO's Parties and jurisdictions will carry out stressor analyses, documenting the key threats and challenges in each jurisdiction, and provide papers on these analyses in advance of the 2025 Annual Meeting ([available here](#)). The results of these analyses will be used to inform the fourth reporting cycle;
- agreeing that each Party and jurisdiction will establish their baselines by 2026, i.e. the starting position from which progress in implementing actions that work toward the achievement of NASCO's strategic goal can be measured;
- NASCO's Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas (see pg 17 for more details) will be finalised and the data used to publish a 'State of North Atlantic Salmon' report in 2026;

- NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines will be updated and consolidated, as appropriate, incorporating climate change and other factors as key elements of the review. It is anticipated that the documents will be reviewed in the following priority order: habitat; aquaculture and disease; and fisheries;
- asking the Secretary to work with an outreach consultancy to develop a communications and outreach strategy;
- agreeing to remove the ISFA item as a standing item Council's Agenda and to consider engagement with ISFA and other relevant industries and organizations as part of the outreach strategy; and
- asking that Parties make stronger links with other RFMOs and IGOs and report back to NASCO's Annual Meetings.
- Council agreed new [Guidelines for Stocking Atlantic Salmon](#) and [Terms of Reference for the Stocking Guidelines Working Group](#) to update the current guidelines on the use of stock rebuilding programmes and develop guidelines on gene-banking (see pg 11 for more details);
- the NEA agreed a [Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters](#) (see pg 8 for more details);
- the WGC reviewed the 2023 salmon fishery at West Greenland and agreed that the regulatory measure agreed in 2022, [WGC\(22\)10](#), would continue to apply in 2024;
- A TBSS was held on pink salmon (see pg 10 for full details) and revised [Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Pink Salmon](#) were adopted;
- following recommendations from the FAC, Council adopted revised [Staff Fund Rules](#), revised [Staff Rules](#), [Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings](#) and [Conditions for Media at NASCO Meetings](#). Council also agreed a process and timeline for a full review of NASCO's Staff Fund Rules and Staff Rules and to discontinue the Tag Return Incentive Scheme on the basis of recommendations from the FAC;
- the Board considered an initial draft outline of a proposed study developed by its SAG. A process was agreed to further develop this draft outline so that the Board could consider it at an Inter-Sessional Meeting in 2025. The report of that Meeting is available [here](#) and will be considered at the Board's 2025 Annual Meeting. The Board also adopted [Guidelines on Submitting Proposals for Support by the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board](#);
- Elections were held in each of the Commissions and the FAC. The following office-bearers have been elected (or re-elected) for a period of two years from the close of the 2024 Annual Meeting:
 - Dale Marsden (Canada) – NAC Chair
 - Patrick Keliher (USA) – NAC Vice-Chair
 - Robert Floyd (UK) – NEA Chair
 - Helge Dyrendal (Norway) – NEA Vice-Chair
 - Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) – WGC Chair
 - Cathal Gallagher (EU) – WGC Vice-Chair
 - Seamus Connor (UK) – FAC Chair
 - Rebecca Wintering (USA) – FAC Vice-Chair



The Knockranny House Hotel and Spa, Westport, Ireland where the 2024 Annual Meetings were held

Roundup from the Secretariat



Administrative News from the Secretariat

Financial Status Update

At its 2024 Annual Meeting, the FAC noted that the Organization was, once again, in a sound financial position at the end of 2023, with the Working Capital Fund, Contractual Obligation Fund and Recruitment Fund at their ceilings.

The [2024 Budget](#), had been set at £661,550. Details on actual expenditure are available in document [FAC\(25\)02](#).

The 2025 Budget, [CNL\(24\)23](#), was set at £713,220. One Party has not yet paid its 2024 or 2025 contributions due to administrative difficulties.

Fishing for Salmon in International Waters

Each year, the NASCO Secretariat asks the EU, the NEAFC, NAFO and ICCAT Secretariats and the Icelandic and Norwegian coastguards for any information they may hold on fishing activities on the high seas of the North Atlantic that may undermine the conservation measures adopted by NASCO. At the time of writing, responses have been received from the EU, NEAFC, NAFO, ICCAT and the Icelandic Coastguard. None had received any reports of such fishing taking place. The last known incidences of fishing for salmon in international waters by non-NASCO Parties were in the early 1990s.

NASCO Website

In the period 1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025, the NASCO website saw 35,000 sessions, 23,000 users and over 99,000 page views. This is a significant increase compared to the period 1 March 2023 – 29 February

2024, when there were 24,000 sessions, over 12,000 users and over 50,000 page views. This may, in part, be due to the recruitment of a new Secretary. The average session duration in the 24 / 25 period was 1 minute and 4 seconds, with 2.9 pages viewed per session. Detailed information on the Board's website usage can be found in document [ICR\(25\)03](#).

Conferences and Events

Members of the Secretariat have been involved in a number of conferences, meetings and events over the past year to promote both the work and interests of the Organization and to learn from the practices of other organizations. These include:

Meeting with UK FCDO Officials, NASCO HQ, 30 April 2024

The Secretary and Assistant Secretary met with staff from the International Organisations Protocol Directorate of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) to meet the new FCDO team and to create connections to enhance NASCO's engagement with the FCDO.

ICES Annual Science Conference Lunch, Gateshead, UK, 9 September 2024

The Secretary was delighted to accept an invitation to an informal lunch for the ICES advice requesters in the fringes of the ICES Annual Science Conference. This is the first time such a lunch has been held and allowed the Secretary the opportunity to chat with the ICES Leadership on matters of importance to the Organization.

Icelandic Environmental and Natural Resources Board of Appeal, NASCO HQ, 13 September 2024

Members of the Icelandic Environmental and Natural Resources Board of Appeal visited NASCO HQ on 13 September during a fact-finding trip to Scotland. The visitors wished to hear more about NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

ICES Workshop on Fish of Bycatch Relevance, Virtual Meeting, 28 – 30 October 2024

This ICES-organized workshop was held to review and evaluate the current criteria used to establish the lists of fish species of bycatch relevance by ecoregion. Until now, ICES' position has been that species can only be included on the bycatch list if there is no ICES assessment. The Secretary attended this meeting as an observer, to ensure that the issue of salmon was discussed and participants were aware of how valuable any knowledge of salmon bycatch would be. The Secretary has continued to liaise with ICES on this matter and the outcome of those discussions is referenced in document [CNL\(25\)15](#), which will be considered at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Wild Salmon Connections, London, UK, 27 – 29 January 2025

The Secretary, Assistant Secretary and President of NASCO attended this international conference hosted by the Missing Salmon Alliance at Fishmongers Hall in London. The goal of the conference was to activate an urgent, renewed international focus on wild salmon, inspiring action to secure thriving wild salmon at the heart of healthy ecosystems. The President made a presentation on NASCO's work in a session entitled 'Leadership for Salmon, People and the Planet'. More information on the conference can be found [here](#).

Meeting with Pacific Salmon Colleagues, 28 January 2025

The NASCO President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary met in the margins of the Wild Salmon Connections conference with Pacific salmon colleagues to discuss potential areas for Atlantic and Pacific collaboration among RFMOs / IGOs. The attendees from the Pacific were Kathryn Berry (PICES Science Director), Katrina Connors (Director of the Pacific Salmon Foundation's Salmon Watersheds Program) and Mark Saunders (former IYS Pacific Director). NASCO discussed the role that its proposed outreach programme may have in enhancing collaboration.



NASCO President Kim Damon-Randall at the Wild Salmon Connections Conference in London, UK

Liaison with other RFMOs

The Secretary has remained in close contact with other RFMOs, including NAFO, NEAFC, NPAFC, ICCAT, CCSBT, CCAMLR, PSC, SPRFMO and IWC. The Secretariats of these organizations share information on matters such as staff rules, financial rules and other administrative aspects of running RFMOs. This has allowed NASCO to learn from other RFMOs to improve practices and allowed other RFMOs to learn from NASCO. In addition, members of the Secretariat have attended the following meetings to work with and learn from other RFMOs:

Tenth Meeting of the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network, Rome, Italy, 5 & 12 July 2024

The NASCO President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary met in the margins of the Wild Salmon Connections conference with Pacific salmon colleagues to discuss potential areas for Atlantic and Pacific collaboration among RFMOs / IGOs. The attendees from the Pacific were Kathryn Berry (PICES Science Director), Katrina Connors (Director of the Pacific Salmon Foundation's Salmon Watersheds Program) and Mark Saunders (former IYS Pacific Director). NASCO discussed the role that its proposed outreach programme may have in enhancing collaboration.

NEAFC Annual Meeting, 12 & 13 November, London, UK

The Information and Publications Officer attended the NEAFC Annual Meeting to see how other RFMOs run their Annual Meetings and whether any of their practices could be used at NASCO to improve efficiency and the experience for delegates. We would once again like to thank NEAFC for allowing us to join them at this very busy time of year!

NASCO was also represented at NAFO's Annual Meeting in September 2024 by the European Union.

Coming Up

A Brief Look at the Major Issues Coming up in the Next 12 Months

The Forty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO

The Forty-Second Annual Meeting will be held in Cardiff, Wales during 3 – 6 June 2025, with some delegates joining virtually. As ever, it will be a very busy meeting, with the launch of our Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas and decisions on the future of NASCO and a fourth reporting cycle!

Recruitment of a New Secretary

The new Secretary of NASCO will be announced at the 2025 Annual Meeting and will join us at the Meeting to see how the Meetings are run. They will take up the role on 1 October 2025.

A Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas

The Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas is an interactive Atlas of wild Atlantic salmon rivers across the North Atlantic. Users will be able to search for their local river (or any of the almost 2,500 rivers included in the Atlas) to find information on the status of salmon stocks within the river. The Atlas will be launched at the 2025 Annual Meeting and will be uploaded to the NASCO website thereafter. We can't wait to hear what you all think of it!



NASCO News 2025

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May 2025

For bibliographic purposes, this publication may be cited as follows:
NASCO. 2025. NASCO News 2025. CNL(25)05 15 pp

Cover photo: 'Under Yellow Foliage' – Pekka Tuuri.