

CNL(25)64

**WGFR Proposal for
NASCO's Fourth Reporting Cycle**



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Cardiff, Wales
2025

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- Steve Sutton
Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada (November
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- Alan Walker
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- Ben Wilson
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Introduction

2020: Council considered NASCO's reporting cycle to be a vitally important mechanism to strengthen the Implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines

2024: Council agreed to a Ten-Year Strategy and Action Plan:

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

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

As part of the Action Plan, Council agreed...

- That a fourth reporting cycle should be developed, and agreed to a Terms of Reference for a Working Group on Future Reporting
- That each Party / jurisdiction should carry out a stressor analysis to enable an objective understanding of the key threats to wild Atlantic salmon, that, would then inform the fourth reporting cycle.

Process:

- **November 18 - 22, 2024:** WGFR met in-person to draft a proposed fourth reporting cycle
- **February 2025:** Proposed Draft was delivered to the WGFON (HoD's plus one expert advisor)
- **March 19 - 21:** WGFON Reviewed the proposed draft and provided comments back to the WGFR
- **April 28 - 30:** WGFR addressed the comments provided by the WGFON

Council's instructions to the WGFR:

- Create a fourth reporting cycle that builds on an objective analysis of stressors by each Party / jurisdiction
- to enable a reporting cycle balancing simplicity, effectiveness and transparency
- and to simplify accountability through a limited number of specific outcomes and clear metrics

Specifically, the elements of the fourth reporting cycle should...

- Ensure that progress can be measured clearly against tangible outcomes for salmon. Each outcome should be based on an action that improves conditions for salmon survival and / or its population by the removal or diminishment of a threat
- Relate clearly to reducing stressors for wild Atlantic salmon with a clear baseline against which progress can be measured
- Provide clear guidance that is easy for the Parties / jurisdictions to understand



Additionally,

- it must remain a transparent mechanism to strengthen the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and
- it may be a departure from earlier reporting cycles

Given these instructions to the Working Group, the proposed fourth reporting cycle comprises of two main components:

- 1. Performance Indicators:** Goal of demonstrating Parties' / jurisdictions' progress towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines
- 2. Conservation Commitment Reports:** Goal of demonstrating Parties' / jurisdictions' commitments towards addressing NASCO's Strategic Goal of prioritising and driving actions necessary to slow the decline of wild Atlantic salmon populations and demonstrate that restoration is possible.

Components of the fourth reporting cycle are detailed in the following four papers:

- CNL(25)23_Proposed Performance Indicators
- CNL(25)24_Proposed Conservation Commitments Report
- CNL(25)25_Proposed Terms of Reference
- CNL(25)26_Proposed Schedule



Performance Indicators

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Purpose:

Quantitative reporting of key metrics for each of NASCO's theme areas that serve as Performance Indicators of Parties' / jurisdictions' commitment towards the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines

Rationale:

- the reporting template provides a succinct, transparent, fair and balanced approach for reporting on the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines (RAGs) by the Parties / jurisdictions
- Over the course of the fourth reporting cycle, NASCO can objectively track compliance with its RAGs and the achievement of its objectives at an organizational level. The PI's can also be used by the Secretariat for communication and outreach purposes.

Reporting Metrics

- For each theme area, between 6 and 12 metrics were selected based on the existing Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines
- Metrics were chosen that allow for accurate reporting of progress towards the implementation of the RAGs
- The first year of reporting will establish the baseline (i.e. the starting point) upon which progress can be measured for each subsequent year of reporting within the fourth reporting cycle
- The approach used to respond to Performance Indicators will vary between Parties / jurisdictions. However, it is most important that the approach chosen remains consistent within each Party / jurisdiction between years

Four principal areas of reporting

- Baseline Indicators
- Management of Salmon Fisheries
- Restoration and Protection of Salmon Habitat
- Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics

Baseline Indicators Questions

- how many salmon rivers in your jurisdiction? (information taken from the WASA)
- What are the estimates of adult wild returns to your rivers?

Example of the Questions on Management of Salmon Fisheries

- do you have salmon fisheries in your Jurisdiction?
- have conservation limits been established?
- have management targets been established in consideration of the CLs?
- are fisheries permitted on rivers that are below their CLs?
- are the impacts of catch and release fisheries considered in the management of salmon fisheries?

Example of the Questions on Habitat Protection

- in the absence of man-made barriers how much habitat was historically available to salmon?
- how much habitat is currently available to salmon for the reporting year?
- provide an estimate of the number of man-made barriers to salmon migration
- provide an estimate of the number of barriers removed / constructed within the reporting year

Example of the Questions on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics

- do you have commercial aquaculture in your Party / Jurisdiction?
- provide an estimate of the numbers of salmon rivers likely impacted by salmon aquaculture
- does your Jurisdiction gather estimates of farmed salmon escapes from commercial aquaculture annually?
- are wild salmonids monitored to determine if sea lice loads in areas with aquaculture exceed levels in areas without aquaculture?
- is genetic intergression monitored and if so, are the levels of genetic intergression increasing, decreasing, or staying the same?

Primary difference between the third reporting cycle and the fourth reporting cycle in respect to reporting on NASCO's RAG's

- for the third reporting cycle, Parties / jurisdictions identified SMART actions related to each theme area that they planned to take to demonstrate progress towards the RAGs
- for the fourth reporting cycle Parties / jurisdictions will report on key common and specific metrics that can serve as Performance Indicators of a Party's / jurisdiction's commitment to the RAGs for each theme area.



Questions on Performance Indicators?



Conservation Commitment Reports (CCRs)

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Purpose:

To address Parties' / jurisdictions' commitments towards addressing NASCO's Strategic Goal by identifying actions that address the top three highest priority stressors identified in their stressor analysis

Overview of Reporting:

- The three stressors identified as highest priority in each stressor analysis will form the basis for the Conservation Commitment Report.
 - If any of the three stressors are not one of the three highest priorities identified in the stressor analysis, a justification must be provided
- Each Party / jurisdiction is to provide details of at least one, but no more than three specific actions that they plan to implement for each of their highest-priority stressors.
 - The action(s) related to each stressor must result in the improvement of conditions for wild Atlantic salmon through effective management

Continue...

- Work being carried out by all relevant actors in each Party / jurisdiction should be included in the planning and delivery of the CCR. This includes the work of stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples representatives and institutions (IPRIs).
- Reporting will be carried out via a web-based form, a departure from earlier reporting cycles. Each CCR will be a public-facing document.

For each action, the following information will be provided:

- name of the action
- a description of the nature of the action
- a description of how each action contributes significantly to reducing the impact of the stressor
- an identified measurable starting point against which this action will be measured, i.e. the baseline
- identification of at least three high-level milestones, i.e. interim goals
- identification of the expected clear and measurable tangible outcome of this action



Questions on the CCRs?



Terms of Reference

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Purpose:

- clear ToRs have been developed to ensure clarity for both NASCO and the Review Group in terms of the work expected and remit of the Review Group
- the Review Group will only review the CCR's
- the Review Group will not review the PI's

Review Group Composition

The Group will comprise members and representatives as follows:

- one member from the Western Atlantic
- one member from the Mid-Atlantic
- three members from the Eastern Atlantic
- one representative from NASCO's accredited NGOs
- one representative from an accredited IPRI (Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions) and
- one member from the Standing Scientific Committee.

The Review Group will conduct an initial review of the CCRs to ensure the following...

- does each action have a clear and measurable tangible outcome to improve conditions for salmon survival through the removal or diminishment of the identified stressor?
- does each action have a clear starting point (baseline) against which progress towards the outcome can be measured?
- are clear interim goals / milestones identified for each action?
- does each stressor include a quantitative baseline and tangible outcome to enable progress towards the achievement of the strategic goal to be measured?

The Review Group will review the CCRs Biennially to ensure the following

- is progress reported clearly for each action in relation to the achievement of the high level milestones, and against the relevant baseline specified in the CCR?
- is the quantitative measure of progress provided both in the reporting year and previous years?
- are any other significant developments reported under each action both in the reporting year and previous years?



Schedule CNL(25)26

Drafting of the Conservation Commitment Reports (CCRs)

- Draft CCRs to be completed by February 2026
 - information required from Parties / jurisdictions to be circulated post-2025 Annual Meeting
 - web-based template to be developed by Secretariat June to December 2025
 - online training session for Parties / jurisdictions to be provided in September 2025
 - CCRs developed using the web-based template
- Review Group to review the Draft CCRs late February 2026
 - The Review Group will meet (in person) and conduct its evaluations of the Draft CCRs. The evaluations will include a virtual presentation by each Party / jurisdiction of the rationale for inclusion of stressors and actions included in the CCRs. The RG will then provide written feedback to the Party / Jurisdiction
 - An additional opportunity for a dialogue between the Review Group and the Party / Jurisdiction will be provided if needed.
- Final CCRs will be due at the end of November 2026

Reporting by the Parties / jurisdictions

- first round of reporting on the PIs to start January 2027 using the web-based template
 - PI reporting to continue annually from 2027 to 2033
- first round of reporting of progress made on the CCRs to start in January 2028 using the web-based template
 - CCR reporting to continue annually from 2028 to 2032 (with 2033 reserved for final overall progress report)

Reviews by the Review Group

- The PIs will not be reviewed by the Review Group. The Secretariat to generate a report of the PIs that will be presented at an annual Special Session of the Council
- CCRs to be reviewed, biennially, in 2028, 2030 and 2032 by the Review Group to review Parties' / jurisdictions' progress towards achievement of their milestones

Review of the Fourth Reporting Cycle in 2033

- In 2033, the RG will carry out a detailed and critical review of the success of the fourth reporting cycle
- To achieve this, Parties / jurisdictions will deliver a report on progress made throughout the fourth reporting cycle towards the achievement of their tangible outcomes
 - This will reveal Parties/Jurisdictions success in delivering on their efforts at reducing or removing the impact of their identified stressors that demonstrates progress towards achievement of NASCO's Strategic Goal.

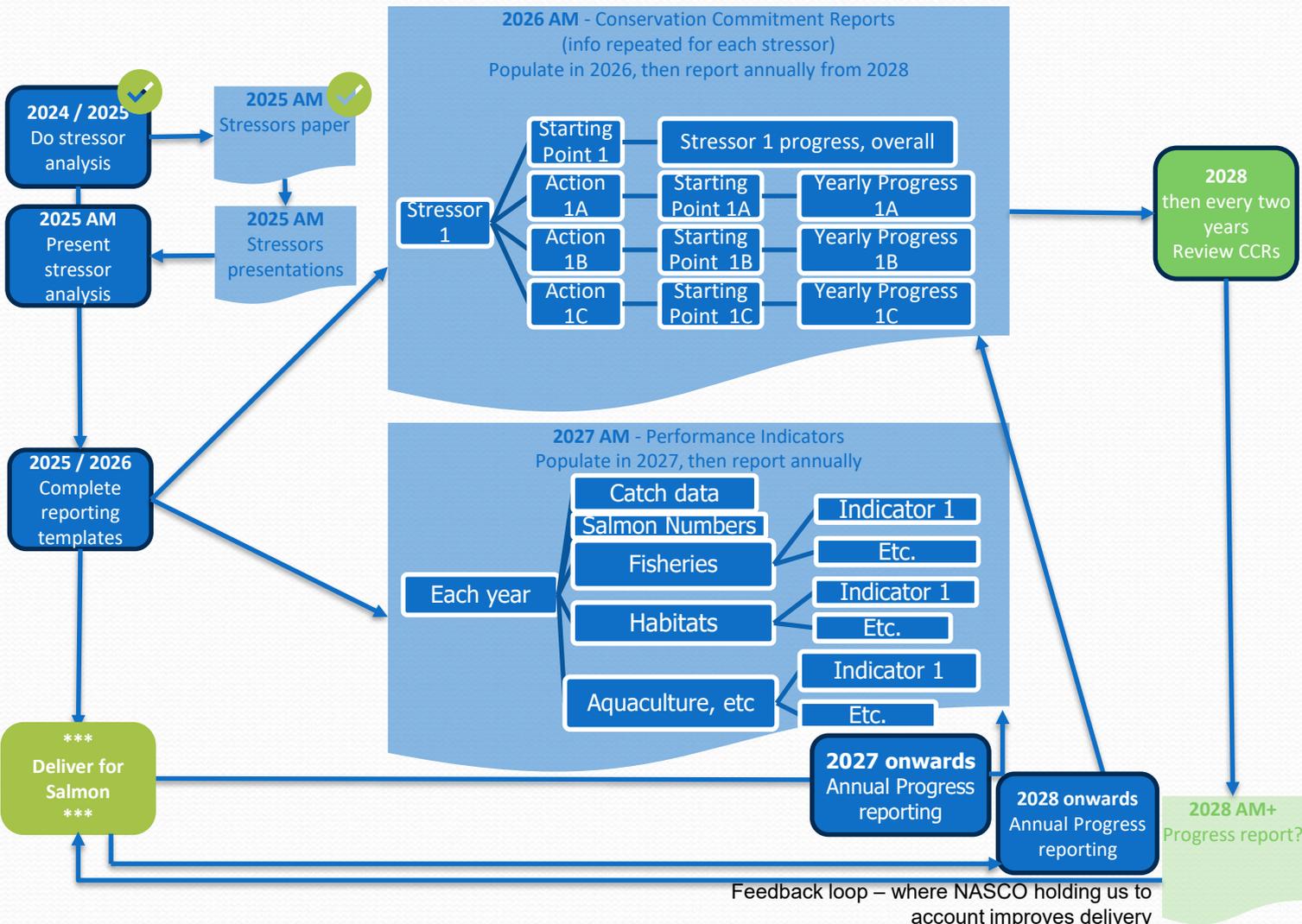
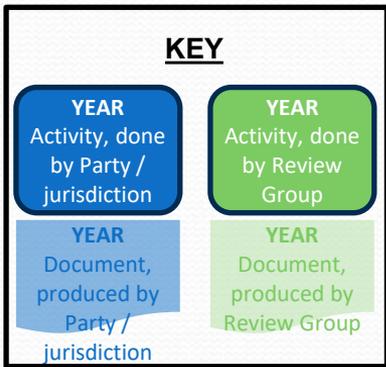
NASCO's Fourth Reporting Cycle

This diagram is intended to show key activities carried out and key documents produced during the fourth reporting cycle. It also shows their timing and who is leading.

The fourth reporting cycle starts at the 2025 Annual Meeting and final reports will be submitted on 2032 data, for the 2033 Annual Meeting.

This diagram **does not (yet)** cover end of cycle reporting

There will be steps specified within this process that have been omitted from this diagram, for simplicity





Questions



Other business

Items the WGFR identified for Council to consider when updating the RAGs:

- Consideration of perspectives on the definition of 'Wild Atlantic Salmon'
- Further guidance in respect to habitat quality
- Consideration of smolt quality, either as an indicator for habitat quality and overall habitat productivity or as an element of its own
- Changing environmental conditions as a driver for changes in habitat quality

Continue:

- Defining aquaculture in the context of salmonid and salmon aquaculture, and commercial aquaculture versus conservation hatcheries.
- Inclusion of freshwater operations in consideration of salmonid aquaculture
- Fisheries management in terms of larger or broader consideration of catch and release impacts



END