

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>North American Commission</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Report of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the North American Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NAC(25)08</b></p>
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***Report of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the North American Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chair, Dale Marsden (Canada), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates.
- 1.2 A list of participants at the Forty-Second Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included as Annex 1.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda**

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, [NAC\(25\)06](#).

**3. Nomination of a Rapporteur**

- 3.1 Tim Sheehan (USA) was appointed as Rapporteur.

**4. Report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area**

- 4.1 The Chair reminded delegates that the ICES advice for North Atlantic Salmon Stocks was published on 9 May 2025, [CNL\(25\)06](#). He noted that, in 2022, the Council had agreed that full ICES Advice should be presented in Council only in future.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker (UK), had presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to Council and this presentation is available as document [CNL\(25\)61](#). Dr Walker attended the NAC Meeting to answer questions relevant to the Commission. There were no questions.

**5. Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission**

- 5.1 The Chair noted that in 2024, Council had 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 (MSFs) and the justification for their continued prosecution ([CNL\(24\)88rev](#)). He noted that the addition of the request to provide justification for the continued prosecution of MSFs was new and that members of the Commission had been asked to include justification for this in their papers on MSFs.
- 5.2 The Chair thanked Canada for its paper ‘Labrador Subsistence Food Fisheries – Mixed-Stock Fisheries Context Paper’, [NAC\(25\)05](#). The United States did not provide a report because it has no directed wild Atlantic salmon fisheries. The Chair asked the Commission if there were any questions or comments on this paper, particularly in relation to the justification for the continued prosecution of MSFs in the North American Commission area.
- 5.3 The NGO Co-Chair noted that although the sampling of the Labrador mixed-stock fishery was approximately 10% of the reported catch, it appeared to be opportunistic and not random. He asked if Canada had conducted any assessment on the sampling results to determine if it was representative of the harvest, or if the result might possibly provide a distorted view. He also enquired if Canada had any plans to implement a more structured sampling programme in the future.

- 5.4 A member of the Canadian delegation stated that although he could only provide information regarding the sampling of their Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fishery, and not the entire DFO fishery sampling programme, he did think there was some merit to the question. He suggested that there could be benefit by focusing sampling on individual fishers that fish in the coastal areas of Labrador, which may have a higher likelihood of harvesting non-Labrador origin salmon.
- 5.5 At the Commission's second session, Canada provided further information related to the NGO Co-Chair's question. Canada noted that the word 'opportunistic' indicates that the sampling of fish caught in these fisheries is not mandatory. Nunatsiavut Government Conservation Officers and NunatuKavut Community Council samplers approach fishers as they land their catch and ask for permission to sample the harvest. Figure 3 in 'Labrador Subsistence Food Fisheries – Mixed-Stock Fisheries Context Paper', [NAC\(25\)05](#), displays the temporal distribution of sampling and Canada has provided an additional figure (Annex 2), which displays the spatial distribution of the sampling in 2024. Collectively these figures demonstrate the representativeness of the sampling. Samples were taken throughout the range of coastal communities in 2024 with the exception of the community of Hopedale, although Canada noted that less than 3% of the coastal catch occurs north of Makkovik. Regardless, efforts will be made to ensure that all areas are sampled annually in the future and Canada has offered to include this new figure in future reports. Canada also noted that it may be possible to have the Nunatsiavut Government and NunatuKavut agree to supply additional sampling kits to specifically target fishers fishing in coastal areas and not in estuaries. However, this additional sampling would be an over-representation of the entire catch as less than 20% of the catch is in coastal habitat. The NGO Co-Chair thanked Canada for this additional information.
- 5.6 The United States asked if the time series referred to was for 2024 only or a longer series. Canada noted it was referring to the 2024 data.
- 5.7 The NGO Co-Chair thanked Canada for the additional information. It also requested that Canada consider future efforts to ensure that the sampling is spread out and covers the entire area where harvest occurs. The NGO Co-Chair also requested that Canada may consider providing NASCO with information assessing the efficacy of the current sampling programme given the geographic distribution of the fishery.

## **6. The St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery**

- 6.1 The Chair noted that the Commission had been concerned about catches of salmon at Saint-Pierre and Miquelon for some time. Although low, this catch occurred at a time when there are serious concerns about the abundance of North American stocks and when strict harvest restrictions had been introduced throughout the North American Commission area. He also noted that the President of NASCO had last [written](#) to France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) in March 2024.
- 6.2 The Chair thanked France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) for providing the report on the 2024 'Management and Sampling of the Saint-Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery', [CNL\(25\)27](#) and highlighted that, in response to comments raised by members of the North American Commission at NASCO's recent Annual Meetings, a 'Commitment Charter for the Recreational Atlantic Salmon Sea Fishery at Saint-Pierre and Miquelon' has been under development for a number of years and was signed in December 2024. The Chair asked the Commission if there were any questions or comments for France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) on this paper.

- 6.3 Canada enquired if the 49 inspections that were reported as being carried out in 2024 occurred on the water or in port and how many were for salmon specifically. Canada also noted being very concerned and disappointed that the 2024 reported harvest had increased to the highest level since 2019 and wondered if France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) had considered any measures to restrict catches to lower levels in the future. Canada noted that this was especially difficult to accept when Canada's own fisheries are so heavily constrained in an effort to minimise pressure on these stocks that originate in its rivers. Canada stated that co-operation in fisheries management, including salmon fisheries, is best achieved by joining relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and encouraged France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) to accede to the NASCO Convention.
- 6.4 In response to the questions posed by Canada, France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) stated that inspections occur both at sea and on land via landings inspections. At-sea controls focus on both recreational and professional salmon fishers to ensure that nets are located in appropriate areas and are removed at the end of the season. France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) also noted that no infringements were documented during the 2024 inspections and that its inspection vessel, KILDA, was first deployed in 2024 and will allow continued at-sea inspections in future years.
- 6.5 France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) stated that its position has remained unchanged as it is attached to its observer status within NASCO and wished to remain in this capacity. France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) also noted that, although there was a slight increased harvest in 2024, this does not decrease the willingness of the French delegation to co-operate with NASCO Parties towards the conservation and management of North Atlantic salmon. France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) noted that it also remains satisfied with its scientific co-operation with Canada to facilitate the sampling programme of the harvest and it looks forward to this continuing into the future.
- 6.6 France (in respect of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon) noted that, although the majority of the 2024 harvest came from the recreational fishers, this group actively works towards the preservation of this for the future. They voluntarily keep fishing logbooks and willingly participate in the annual sampling programme. Many of these efforts are outlined within the 'Commitment Charter for the Recreational Atlantic Salmon Sea Fishery at Saint-Pierre and Miquelon' referenced above.

## **7. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers**

- 7.1 The Chair stated that under Article 7 of the Convention, the Williamsburg Resolution, and the NAC protocols, members of the Commission must report on salmonid introductions and transfers. He reminded the Commission that in 2010 it had decided that members of the Commission would provide focused annual reports on issues of mutual concern, including salmonid disease incidences, breaches of containment, introductions from outside the Commission area and transgenics (see [NAC\(10\)6](#)).
- 7.2 The Chair informed the Commission that, prior to the Annual Meeting, Canada and the United States had exchanged their respective reports and thanked Canada, [NAC\(25\)04](#), and the United States, [NAC\(25\)03](#), for submitting their reports to NASCO.
- 7.3 The United States reported that it had received one question from Canada prior to this Commission meeting enquiring if there was additional information available on any confirmed escapees that turn up in monitoring facilities in the United States. The United States noted that one suspect fish had been captured at the Union River trapping facility

in 2024. Based on genetics, Cooke Aquaculture (the only salmon aquaculture company operating in Maine at this time) concluded that the sampled individual did not match any entries within their U.S.-broodstock database. The United States noted that it is pursuing further analysis from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine if the fish originated from its restoration programme.

- 7.4 The NGO Co-Chair noted that during last year's meeting, there had been detailed discussions related to the document entitled 'North American Commission Annual Report – Tabled by Canada', [NAC\(24\)04rev2](#), particularly the last column of Table 4, which identified the disposition of introduced salmon in Canada. The NGO Co-Chair sought clarification on if the final column in this year's report identified the proximate or final disposition of the introduced salmon.
- 7.5 The NGO Co-Chair also noted that some of the salmonid introductions inventoried in last year's report were unapproved non-triploid strains of salmon. He referenced a recent peer-reviewed scientific publication that described significant genetic introgression in salmon sampled from rivers along the southern Newfoundland coast. Within that study, some sampled individuals were identified as being 100% European origin. He asked if Canada has subsequently followed up to refine the origin of those sampled individuals.
- 7.6 Canada was unable to provide a response to this question during the Meeting, but indicated that a written response would be forwarded to the Secretariat and NGO Co-Chair following the Meeting to be included as an annex to the Report. This is included as Annex 3.
- 7.7 The United States thanked Canada for its Annual Report. The United States noted the continued use of non-reproductively viable triploid salmon from Iceland in aquaculture operations. These fish are reproductively sterile and do not pose a genetic threat to wild salmon, but they are known to have compromised immunities and therefore are more vulnerable to a number of highly infectious diseases. The increased risk to disease poses an increased risk to both nearby wild and aquaculture fish, including U.S.-origin salmon that swim past sites that contain these fish. The United States identified that it does not have a specific question for Canada to consider but rather wanted to express its concern over the increased use of these triploid salmon from Iceland in aquaculture operations.
- 7.8 Canada noted that it will consider this comment.

## **8. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice**

- 8.1 The Convention requires NASCO to take into account the best scientific evidence and establish working arrangements with ICES. The Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) assists the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES. During the Annual Meeting, the SSC meets to develop a Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES for consideration by the Commissions and the Council.
- 8.2 The Chair noted that the Commission needed to appoint another representative to the SSC. The Commission appointed Julien April (Canada) to the SSC. The Commission's representatives on the SSC are Julien April (Canada) and Tim Sheehan (USA).
- 8.3 The Commission agreed to defer consideration of the request to ICES for scientific advice in relation to the North American Commission to the Council. The request to ICES, as agreed by Council, is contained in document [CNL\(25\)09rev](#).

## **9. Other Business**

- 9.1 The Chair advised the Commission that under Council Agenda item 6.b), ‘Decisions on the ‘Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO’, [CNL\(24\)14](#)’, Council had considered a recommendation from the Working Group on the Future of NASCO relating to the work of the Commissions. The recommendation text (IP11) read as follows:

*‘Jurisdictions provide information on co-operative approaches to the management of salmon catchments that are shared with other jurisdictions. This would include information on how fisheries are managed for the full catchment (e.g. quotas, Conservation Limits, catch returns, habitat plans, regulations). Discussion focused on the following rivers: the Teno / Tena in EU – Finland and in Norway, for the Minho / Miño in EU – Portugal and in EU – Spain (Galicia), and for the Bidasoa in EU – France and in EU – Spain (Navarra).’*

- 9.2 During its deliberations on this matter, Council had agreed to ask the Commissions to consider whether there is a benefit in the provision of information to the Commissions on co-operative approaches to the management of salmon catchments that are shared with other jurisdictions. The Chair asked the Commission to consider whether there were potential opportunities and benefit for co-operative approaches to the management of shared salmon catchments within the Commission.
- 9.3 The United States stated that it absolutely sees value in a co-operative approach towards sharing information and collaborating on management of its shared border river, the St. Croix / Skutik. However, it believes the United States and Canada already have existing mechanisms in place to facilitate this cross-border collaboration and co-operation (e.g. St. Croix International Waterway Commission). Therefore, it does not believe that there would be benefit in providing this information at NAC. Canada agreed with the approach stated by the United States.
- 9.4 The NGO Co-Chair noted that the St. John River also flows through the United States and Canada. Canada noted that the situation is similar to that of the St. Croix / Skutik given that there is a vehicle for co-operation that facilitates cross-border collaboration and co-operation. The United States agreed.
- 9.5 The Chair advised the Commission that the current Vice-Chair, Patrick Keliher (USA) is no longer involved in the work of NASCO and that the Commission would need to elect a new Vice-Chair. The Commission elected John Burrows (USA) as its Vice-Chair (proposed by Canada) to serve for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2025 Annual Meeting.

## **10. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**

- 10.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next Annual Meeting at the same time and place as the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the Council.

## **11. Report of the Meeting**

- 11.1 The Commission agreed a Report of the Meeting.

## **12. Close of the Meeting**

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