



**Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the Council**

**Macdonald Aviemore Resort, Scotland**

**2 – 5 June 2026**

**Annotated Agenda**

The purpose of this paper is to provide the background, decisions and links to papers, for each item on the Agenda for the Meeting of the Council.

Papers for the meeting are on the [website](#), including the Schedule of Meetings.

This Annotated Agenda references papers that the Secretariat is aware of at the time of writing. If additional papers are issued, they will be posted on the website and delegates will be informed by email.

As agreed in 2022, Parties / NGOs were invited to submit questions on Agenda items, in advance to the relevant Party. Under NASCO’s new T&Cs for accredited observers, Indigenous Peoples’ representatives and institutions (IPRIs) are now able to attend NASCO meetings and in 2025, Council agreed, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#), paragraph 2.10, it would be happy to include a provision for IPRIs to ask questions in advance, in addition to Parties and NGOs. The Secretariat requested that it be copied on any questions asked, to allow the questions to be included in the Annotated Agenda. There were questions in relation to Agenda items 4.b), 5.b), 6.a)i), 6.b). These can be found in Annex 1.

A summary of the decisions before the Council this year is contained in Annex 2.

To assist with decision making, Annex 3 contains a timetable for NASCO work that is expected to be conducted between June 2026 and May 2027 and an indicative schedule of NASCO’s work for the next five years.

During the meeting, interventions by accredited NGOs and IPRIs shall be in accordance with the ‘Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings’, [CNL\(24\)59](#). Noting that this is the first year under which these T&Cs apply, further guidance will be set out at the beginning of the Meeting. The President will recognise requests on all Agenda items other than items 2 and 3.

**Timings of the Meeting (UK local time)**

The Council will meet on:

• Tuesday 2 June	09:00 – 12:00 hrs
• Wednesday 3 June	09:00 – 11:30 hrs -Special Session of the Council 11:30 – 13:00 hrs
• Thursday 4 June	09:30 – 12:30 hrs
• Friday 5 June	10:00 – 12:30 hrs

**Order of Business**

The meeting will begin on Tuesday 2 June with the ‘Opening of the Meeting’. Delegates will

be advised of the daily order of business during the Annual Meeting.

## 1. Opening of the Meeting

The President, Seamus Connor (UK), will open the meeting and make a statement on behalf of the Organization.

Parties, IGOs, IPRI, NGOs and France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) may make verbal Opening Statements, as is usual in years when regulatory measures are negotiated. Delegates are requested to submit a written version of their Opening Statement for distribution. These will be annexed to the report of the meeting.

- *no decision is required.*

## 2. Adoption of the Agenda

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure and following consultation with the President, a Provisional Agenda, [CNL\(26\)01](#), was issued on 9 February 2026. No supplementary items were proposed. The Draft Agenda, [CNL\(26\)03](#), was issued on 10 April 2026.

- *the Council may wish to adopt its Agenda.*

## 3. Financial and Administrative Issues

### a) Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) will meet on 1 June. The Chair, Rebecca Wintering (USA) will present the Report of the Meeting of the FAC to the Council, CNL(26)04. The Report will be made available on the website and will include the Draft Budget for 2027 and the Forecast Budget for 2028.

Article 16 of the Convention states that ‘The Council shall adopt an annual budget for the Organization.’

#### FAC Inter-Sessional Meeting

At its inter-sessional meeting in April 2026, the FAC considered seven items for the 2027 and future NASCO budgets. These included the general issue of arrears, the Contractual Obligation Fund, staffing levels, ICES advice, the hosting of NASCO meetings and a potential observer fee. Increasing the ceilings of the Contractual Obligation Fund and the Working Capital Fund and a cap on the Secretariat lump sum were also discussed.

#### *The Council may wish to:*

- *agree to move funds from the Recruitment Fund (£20,000) and the Special Fund (£25,000) to the Contractual Obligation Fund; and*
- *consider additional recommendations from the FAC, which may result in adjustments for the Draft 2027 Budget or the Forecast Budget for 2028 ([FAC\(26\)04rev](#)).*

#### Recurring items of FAC Business

#### *Regarding other FAC issues, the Council may wish to:*

- *direct NASCO to engage with OSPAR to update the OSPAR Status Assessment for Atlantic salmon in 2027;*
- *accept the Audited Accounts for 2025;*

- *approve the budget for 2027 and note a Forecast Budget for 2028; and*
- *adopt the Report of the FAC.*

The following papers are available:

- 2025 Audited Accounts, [FAC\(26\)02](#);
- Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, [FAC\(26\)03](#);
- 2027 Draft Budget 2028 Forecast Budget and Five-Year (2027 – 2032) Budgeting Plan, [FAC\(26\)04rev](#);
- Report of the Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, CNL(25)04 (to be made available at the meeting).

Other papers for the FAC are available [here](#).

**b) NASCO Calendar and Working Group Membership**

To improve the efficiency of NASCO’s work schedule, a calendar of inter-sessional meetings will be agreed during each Annual Meeting of the Council, as will the membership of Working Groups. This will provide greater certainty for Parties and the Secretariat, thereby enabling more efficient working for all concerned.

*The Council may wish to:*

- *agree a calendar of inter-sessional meetings; and*
- *agree on the membership of any Working Groups agreed during the meeting.*

Any papers will be made available during the Meeting.

**4. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information**

**a) NASCO News 2026**

Article 5, paragraph 6, of the Convention states ‘The Council shall submit to the Parties an annual report of the activities of the Organization.’

In 2022, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#), the Council agreed that ‘the Report on the Activities of the Organization and the Secretary’s Report be merged to be a showcase for NASCO’s work’. ‘NASCO News 2026’ will be available. There will be no presentation. However, the President may allow questions and comments, time permitting.

- *no decision is required.*

The following paper will be available:

- NASCO News 2026, [CNL\(26\)05](#).

**b) Scientific Advice from ICES**

**(i) A new approach / presentation of the ICES Advice**

In 2022 the Council asked the Secretary to approach ICES to investigate a more streamlined approach / presentation of the ICES Advice, [CNL\(22\)53](#), paragraph 4.35. In 2023, an update on the timing and background of the process was provided to Council, [CNL\(23\)09](#). A subgroup including the Secretary and experts from Canada, Ireland, France, USA, UK and ICES, with assistance from the ACOM Vice-Chair met

periodically in 2024 and 2025 to consider the four advice sheets presented to NASCO. At its 2024 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(24\)88rev](#), the Council of NASCO agreed to adopt ‘The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy’, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), which incorporates NASCO’s high-level actions in a single document. As part of this Action Plan, Council agreed on the action:

- ‘ICES deliver simplified fisheries advice’, by 2025.

In 2025 the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) Vice-Chair provided a ‘2025 Update on the Streamlining of the ICES Advice’, [CNL\(25\)07](#). In response to the ACOM presentation, the UK on behalf of all NASCO Parties, presented a high-level direction, [CNL\(25\)63](#), to the NASCO Secretariat on how to progress the streamlining of the ICES advice for 2026.

At its 2025 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#), Council agreed:

- the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) be asked to add new text to the request for scientific advice from ICES to include an overview of the status of salmon in the North Atlantic as a whole in the section on Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic area in 2026;
- the SSC be directed to request the advice on salmon in the three regional areas is provided in 2026 in the ‘simplified fisheries advice’ format as presented in [CNL\(25\)62](#) by the ICES ACOM Vice-Chair; and
- the Secretary be asked to work with ICES, including in its advice format sub-group, to enable this to happen.

Providing streamlined advice for the three regional areas enables delivery of the high-level action ‘ICES deliver simplified fisheries advice’.

The ICES ACOM Vice-Chair will be invited to provide an update on the work to streamline the ICES Advice.

***The Council may wish to request that:***

- ***ICES advice should be provided in the revised format going forward, as outlined in [CNL\(26\)07rev](#);***
- ***the SSC retains text in the ICES advice request for 2027 to include an overview of the status of salmon in the North Atlantic as a whole; and***
- ***the advice on salmon in the three regional areas is provided in a similar format to that in 2026.***

The following paper is available:

- 2026 Update on the Streamlining of the ICES Advice, [CNL\(26\)07rev](#).

## **(ii) Scientific Advice from ICES**

In 2022, the Council agreed that the full ICES Advice should only be presented in Council in future, [CNL\(22\)53](#), paragraph 4.35.

The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker (UK), will present the full ICES advice. He will also present the advice relating to item 7(a) ‘New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management’. The Chair of WGNAS will answer questions following the presentation.

- *no decision is required.*

The following papers are available:

- the Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), [CNL\(26\)06](#); and
- the [Report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon](#) is on the ICES website.

**c) Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board**

The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) will meet on 1 and 4 June. The Report of the Meeting will be presented to Council by its Chair.

*The Council may wish to:*

- *adopt the Report of the Meeting of the Board.*

The following paper will be available:

- the Report of the Meeting of the Board, CNL(26)08.

Other papers for the Board meeting are available [here](#).

**d) Report of the Standing Scientific Committee**

Articles 3 and 4 of the [Convention](#) require NASCO to take into account the best scientific evidence and establish working arrangements with ICES. In 1992, the Council established a Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) to assist the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES. The SSC comprises two representatives from each Commission, ideally one scientist and one manager.

During the Annual Meeting, the SSC will meet to develop a Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES for consideration by the Council and Commissions.

Depending on the outcome of the agreement on a regulatory measure in the West Greenland Commission, the Standing Scientific Committee and the Council may need to consider the timing of the next request for full advice from ICES.

*The Council may wish to:*

- *adopt a request to ICES for scientific advice.*

The Standing Scientific Committee's recommendations will be available once its work is complete:

- Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES.

**e) Update on NASCO's Communications and Outreach Strategy**

At its 2024 Annual Meeting, Council recognised that communication is central to delivering NASCO's Ten-Year Strategy, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), and included in the high-level actions a request that the Secretary engage with an appropriate consultant to 'develop a communications and outreach strategy (e.g. running symposia, public & political engagement, industry engagement, certification agencies, improvement to website, etc.)'.

The Secretariat worked with a consultancy in the second half of 2024 to develop an outreach and communications strategy.

At its 2025 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#), Council agreed, subject to a capped budget of £10,000, to adopt the NASCO Outreach and Communications Strategy, [CNL\(25\)54](#), including the approach and associated actions summarised in its Annex 1 as a

framework.

Following the 2025 Annual Meeting, within the same capped budget of £10,000 and as directed by Council, the Secretariat:

- worked with a communications expert to develop (1) concise branding guidelines and associated templates for NASCO's outputs and (2) a social media strategy and implementation guidelines;
- completed an internal assessment of resources to establish whether it would be beneficial to retain the services of a communications expert for routine actions identified in the social media strategy; and
- considered the need for and resources available to review and update the website in 2026 / 2027.

With the current limitations on NASCO's budget restricting the use of external communications services, the Secretariat has utilised the resources (1) and (2) above, developed with a communications expert, to create and implement a communications and outreach scheduling plan. Several training courses related to communications and outreach have been completed by Secretariat staff and one staff member has identified this as an area for their continuing professional development.

The Council had also directed the Secretariat to explore options for a future Ministerial meeting with Parties. Norway had raised the importance of considering a Ministerial meeting and offered to work with the Secretariat to investigate how this could be done in the future.

The second State of North Atlantic Salmon report by NASCO is scheduled for publication by the end of 2026 and may provide an opportunity for a symposium based on its content. The Parties' / jurisdictions' Conservation Commitments, directed at addressing the decline of salmon stocks, and NASCO's increasing catalogue of updated Guidelines are valuable resources, which when coupled with NASCO's messaging from its Ten-Year Strategy may provide opportunities for Ministerial engagement.

***The Council may wish to:***

- ***direct the Secretariat to explore options for a future Ministerial meeting in 2027 associated with the Annual Meeting or in association with another event which may have appropriate Ministerial representation.***

The following paper is available:

- Update on the NASCO Communications and Outreach Strategy, [CNL\(26\)37](#)

**f) Definitions of Salmon in NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines**

At the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Council, the Report of the Working Group on Future Reporting (WGFR), [CNL\(25\)22](#), raised seven topics for consideration by the Working Groups for the Revision of NASCO's Guidelines. Council agreed that six of the topics should be incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the Working Groups, but that one on the definition of 'wild Atlantic salmon' was not appropriate for the Working Groups' consideration. It was raised that NASCO seemed to be inconsistent in its definitions of 'wild Atlantic salmon'.

Council agreed, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#):

- to commission the Secretariat to compile a list of any definition of salmon to be

found in NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

The resulting paper should, at the latest, be tabled at the Forty-Third Annual Meeting in 2026.

- *no decision is required.*

The following paper is available:

- Definitions of 'Salmon' in NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, [CNL\(26\)14](#)

## **5. NASCO's High-Level Action Plan**

### **a) Progress on Implementing NASCO's High-Level Action Plan (2025-2026)**

In 2023, following various recommendations from its third performance review, [CNL\(23\)17rev](#), Council agreed, [CNL\(23\)87](#), paragraph 6.10, to establish a Working Group on the Future of NASCO (WGFON) with the Terms of Reference as set out in document [CNL\(23\)70](#). The WGFON met inter-sessionally in 2023 and 2024 to develop a draft Strategy and Action Plan. At the 2024 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(24\)88rev](#), many of the WGFON's proposed actions were compiled into a high-level Action Plan and combined with the Strategy. Council adopted 'The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy', [CNL\(24\)71rev](#).

At the 2025 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#), an update on the Action Plan, [CNL\(25\)79](#), was produced to meet Council's request that the Secretariat:

- create an updated high-level Action Plan, immediately after each Annual Meeting, showing the status of the high-level actions;
- create an accompanying Word document each year to describe the changes, immediately following the Annual Meeting; and
- each year, combine this information into a Council paper, separate from the 'Ten Year Strategy', that serves as the record of Council's decisions.

The first full year of the high-level Action Plan saw 11 actions complete by the 2025 Annual Meeting. The Action Plan for 2025 / 2026 includes 14 ongoing actions and 10 actions classified as future actions. All actions scheduled to be addressed in 2025 / 2026 have been successfully progressed. In summary:

- three Working Groups met, bringing together members from approximately 30 agencies, across all Parties and a total of 14 jurisdictions, as well as NGOs and IPRIs;
- revised Guidelines on Habitat Restoration have been completed, for approval by Council;
- a new regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery has been drafted for discussion and potential agreement at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission;
- NASCO's fourth reporting cycle commenced with 19 Draft Conservation Commitment Reports received from the 22 Parties / jurisdictions expected to submit them;
- a communications plan has been developed and is under implementation;

- simplified ICES fisheries advice has been developed;
- a standard basic NASCO meeting model has been developed; and
- a staff training, development and appraisal process has been implemented.

**b) Consideration of Actions for Inclusion in NASCO’s High-Level Action Plan for 2026-2027**

Of the ‘ongoing’ actions in the 2025 high-level Action Plan, 13 remain ongoing and one has been completed. Three additional actions will become ‘ongoing’ in 2026-2027. In summary:

- two Working Groups are scheduled to meet, with the composition of the Working Group to Revise Guidelines on aquaculture and disease to be determined;
- updated NASCO Guidelines on aquaculture and disease to be developed, including review of two sets of existing Guidelines;
- publication of the second ‘State of North Atlantic Salmon’ report;
- submission of the final Conservation Commitment Reports from 22 Parties / jurisdictions will be required as part of NASCO’s fourth reporting cycle;
- completion of the Performance Indicator reporting forms will be required by all 23 Parties / jurisdictions;
- ongoing actions to be continued include monitoring of West Greenland and Labrador fisheries and domestic mixed-stock fisheries; and
- communications and outreach to be maintained and increased as Secretariat training is completed.

*The Council may wish to:*

- *adopt the high-level NASCO Action Plan for (2026-2027)*

The following paper is available:

- Update on NASCO’s High-Level Action Plan and Future Actions, [CNL\(26\)38](#) (dashboard presentation as annex)

**6. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach**

**a) Evaluation of Conservation Commitment Reports Under the Fourth Reporting Cycle (2026-2032)**

At its 2024 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(24\)88rev](#), Council agreed to conduct a fourth reporting cycle. At the 2025 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#), the basis of the fourth reporting cycle, [CNL\(25\)55rev](#), was agreed to be (1) an individual ‘Conservation Commitments Report’ (CCR) developed by each Party / jurisdiction, and (2) the use of metrics called ‘Performance Indicators’. The CCRs will be reported on annually, starting in 2027, and reviewed biennially, starting in 2028, consisting of the three top-priority (unless otherwise justified) stressors of a Party / jurisdiction identified in their stressor analysis along with a minimum of one and maximum of three actions per stressor to address those stressors.

**(i) Special Session: Evaluation of Conservation Commitment Reports Under the Fourth Reporting Cycle (2026-2032)**

Online reporting forms were developed by the Secretariat and made available in January 2026 for Parties / jurisdictions to submit initial Draft CCRs. A total of 18 Parties / jurisdictions submitted Draft CCRs in February 2026 for review by the CCR Review Group. Each Party / jurisdiction that had submitted a Draft CCR met with the Review Group in February 2026 and received written feedback. The Draft CCRs could then be amended for further feedback in April 2026.

On 30 April, all Draft CCRs and any written feedback provided were made available on NASCO's [website](#). At the time of writing, 19 of a possible total of 22 Draft CCRs have been submitted.

**(ii) Decisions Taken Regarding Evaluation of Conservation Commitment Reports Under the Fourth Reporting Cycle (2026-2032)**

*The Council may wish to agree that:*

- *each Party / jurisdiction is required to finalise their Conservation Commitment Report (CCR) by 30 November 2026 as specified in the original Schedule of the Fourth Reporting Cycle, [CNL\(25\)57](#).*

The following papers are available:

- Report of the Conservation Commitment Reports Review Group Meeting, [CNL\(26\)13](#)
- Update on NASCO's Fourth Reporting Cycle (2026 to 2032), [CNL\(26\)36](#)

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

This is addressed under Agenda item 4b)(ii), Scientific Advice from ICES, above.

**c) Report of the Working Group to Revise Habitat Guidelines**

In 2024, Council considered a ten-year strategy for NASCO, together with an associated action plan, that included recommendations to revise its 2010 Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat, [CNL\(10\)51](#). Council agreed 'The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy', [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), at the 2024 Annual Meeting, which contained a high-level Action Plan. It further agreed (see [CNL\(24\)88rev](#)) that a Working Group would be convened, composed of relevant experts volunteered by the Parties / jurisdictions, NGOs and IPRIs. To enable this, 'Generic Terms of Reference for the Working Groups for the Revision of NASCO's Guidelines, [CNL\(25\)53](#), were agreed. The Working Group met inter-sessionally, in person at NASCO HQ, in November 2025, to draft the document 'Draft Revised NASCO Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Improvement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat'. The Chair of the Habitat Guidelines Working Group, Stephen Gephard, will present the Guidelines.

*Council may wish to adopt:*

- *the 'Draft Revised NASCO Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Improvement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat'.*

The following papers are available:

- Report of the Meeting of the Habitat Guidelines Working Group, [CNL\(26\)11](#); and
- Draft Revised NASCO Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Improvement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat', HGWG(25)02, see Annex 3 of [CNL\(26\)11](#).

**d) Pink Salmon in the NASCO Convention Area**

At its 2022 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#), the President noted that the magnitude of pink salmon entering many Atlantic salmon rivers is very concerning. The Council adopted a ‘Statement of the Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, in the NASCO Convention Area’, [CNL\(22\)47](#). This included agreement to establish a Standing NASCO Working Group on pink salmon (PSWG). 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 PSWG met for the second time in 2025, [CNL\(26\)10](#), after the Annual Meeting, in person in Kirkenes, Norway, at the invitation of the Norwegian Members of the Group. The main purpose was to observe pink salmon abundance and mitigation measures in Norwegian rivers, and to have Members report on pink salmon status across their Parties / jurisdiction.

A new Chair of the Pink Salmon Working Group, Eva Thorstad (Norway), was appointed at the end of 2025 following the retirement of the previous Chair, Jarle Steinkjer (Norway). The third meeting of the PSWG, [CNL\(26\)16](#), took place in March 2026 with Iceland attending for the first time.

The PSWG Terms of Reference (ToRs) were agreed by Council in 2024, [CNL\(24\)64](#). One of the ToRs charges the Group to ‘Review and modify, as necessary, these Terms of Reference for agreement by the Council’.

***The Council may wish to:***

- ***agree Terms of Reference for the Pink Salmon Working Group.***

The following papers are available:

- Report of the Meeting of the Working Group on Pink Salmon, [CNL\(26\)10](#);
- Report of the Meeting of the Working Group on Pink Salmon, [CNL\(26\)16](#);
- Status of Pink Salmon Work in Sweden, [CNL\(26\)35](#); and
- Draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Pink Salmon, PSWG(26)21, see Annex 20 of [CNL\(26\)16](#).

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

In recent years, the Council and the North American Commission have been concerned about catches of salmon at St Pierre and Miquelon, which, although low, occur at a time when there are serious concerns about the abundance of North American stocks and when strict harvest restrictions have been introduced throughout the North American Commission area. France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) has provided a Report on the 2025 Salmon Fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon.

- ***no decision is required.***

The following paper is available:

- Management and Sampling of the Saint-Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery, [CNL\(26\)15](#).

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

Under Article 10 of the Convention ‘*Each Commission, shall, on a timely basis, make*

*a report of its activities to Council.*’ The President will ask the Chairs of each of the regional Commissions of NASCO to report to the Council on the work of their Commission.

- *no decision is required.*

## **7. Other Business**

At the time of writing, the Secretariat had not been made aware of any other business.

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

The provisional dates for NASCO’s Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting are 1-4 June 2027. Council will be asked to confirm the dates and location for the meeting.

Council will be asked to confirm the dates, and consider the location for, its Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting in 2028.

*The Council may wish to:*

- *confirm the dates, 1-4 June, of, and consider the venue for, its Annual Meeting in 2027; and*
- *agree on the dates of the 2028 Annual Meeting.*

## **9. Report of the Meeting**

Rule 29 of the Rules of Procedure for Council requires that ‘A draft report shall be considered by the Council before the end of the meeting.’ A Draft Report of the Meeting will be circulated for review.

*The Council may wish to:*

- *adopt the Report of the Meeting.*

## **10. Close of the Meeting**

The President will close the Forty-Second Annual Meeting.

Secretariat  
Edinburgh  
29 May 2026

## *NGO Questions on the Council Agenda*

### **Questions to all Parties:**

1. Agenda Item 4 (b) – Scientific Advice from ICES - Recognizing that this is a new request of ICES, are the Parties content with the by-catch reporting through ICES? NGOs encourage NASCO and parties to think about the level of data required to support conclusions and development of actions to address by-catch, if needed, and ascertain from ICES whether it is even possible. Do the parties feel that the breadth and depth of by-catch reporting through ICES will provide sufficient data and information?
2. Agenda Item 5 (b) - Consideration of Actions for Inclusion in NASCO’s High-Level Action Plan for 2026-2027 - As an intergovernmental organization responsible for the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and rational management of Atlantic salmon, North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization works with Parties to improve cooperation, information-sharing, and management of factors affecting salmon populations, including incidental bycatch in non-directed fisheries that can present monitoring and regulatory challenges across jurisdictions. How can NASCO enable better and more consistent monitoring and regulation of fisheries with a high risk of salmon bycatch?
3. Agenda Item 6 (b) - New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management – Noting that the IUCN has reclassified the global Atlantic salmon population from “Least Concern” to “Near Threatened,” and recognising that many of the principal pressures affecting Atlantic salmon extend beyond the direct scope of the Convention, how does NASCO intend to strengthen its policy influence, intergovernmental coordination, and engagement with relevant international bodies to address these wider conservation challenges?
4. Agenda Item 6 (b) - What are your plans, if any, to establish Marine Protected Areas that contribute to Atlantic Salmon conservation through supporting global targets of 30% area protections? Is there opportunity to engage with other organizations (e.g., OSPAR in NEAC)?

### **Questions to the UK:**

These questions are provided in advance of the special session on Conservation Commitments Reports.

### **Stressor 1- Ensuring Sustainable Abstraction**

1. How much of the £85m by 2030 quoted in the CCR specifically for PSR catchments, as opposed to simply being the total size of the fund?
2. How much is the Big Nature Impact Fund projected to raise from the private sector? How much will be specifically for peatland restoration, and how much will be targeted at PSR catchments? Is the area set out as an outcome for peatland restoration (2,282 hectares) specific to PSR catchments or for peatland restoration generally?
3. When will the programme for the review of abstraction licences (589 water bodies across 20 PSRs) be published and will the data be publicly available?
4. Of the 49 water bodies (HMWBs) impacted by low flows as a result of public water supply reservoirs, the target for 2030 appears to only address 8.2 through the WINEP. Is this

correct? And what actions envisaged can be taken by water companies, the EA, or third parties outside of the WINEP?

5. In the period covered by the CCR, it is proposed to increase the number of water bodies with adequate flow by four percent and the number of HMWBs by three, from one (totaling four) of the 17 HMWBs. We note that actions are expected to be Urgent and Transformative. What further steps will DEFRA/the EA take to build on this and rise to the scale of the crisis when they submit their updated plan in the autumn?

### **Stressor 2 – Water Quality**

6. The outcome, S.2.1.d. (1,902 farm inspections). Is this specifically for PSR catchments or is it the total number of farm inspections conducted in the time period?
7. Are the 2,956 inspections of wastewater treatment works (WWTW) the total number of inspection across all WWTWs or just those discharging into PSR catchments?
8. What level of non-compliance is anticipated, if any?

### **Stressor 3 – Habitat Alteration**

9. The CCR proposes to address 105 barriers out of a total of 492 (21.3%). Will the updated CCR be able to increase this number?
10. A total of 252 in-channel habitat improvements will take place through this CCR. How many will be specifically focused on improving the habitat for salmon and how many will be more general improvement but will not have salmon as the priority species behind the improvement?
11. What length of river will be improved from the 252 in river habitat improvements, and what length of river is it expected will benefit from these improvements?
12. What percentage of the £816m government grant program for tree planting will be directed at riparian tree planting? And of those, what percentage will be specifically for PSRs?
13. How is the figure of 648ha of tree planting for PSRs calculated? What is the expected impact of this level of commitment at a national scale?
14. The CCR proposes to address 105 barriers out of a total of 492 (21.3%). This is too low. Will the updated CCR be able to increase this number?

### **Questions to Canada:**

These questions are provided in advance of the special session on Conservation Commitments Reports.

Canada described that fishing was ranked first in the stressor analysis, but it was not directly addressed because it was considered to be low in all impacted DUs.

1. What evidence was used to support the designation of low severity of impacts
2. How will Canada ensure the best outcomes for Canadian-origin salmon given the reliance on external management (e.g., West Greenland fishery)?

### **Stressor 1- Introduced Genetic Material**

3. Why are there no specific actions addressing escapees from aquaculture sites despite it being identified as a primary source of genetic introgression? Aquaculture escapes are by far the biggest threat, as evidenced by papers published by DFO's own scientists and from results presented and included in NASCO special sessions on impacts of Open net-pen salmon aquaculture. These results identify AQ impacts, including genetic introgression, as

the leading cause of decline in significant salmon populations. How does Canada see this as consistent with previous commitments at NASCO going back to at least the Williamsburg resolution CNL(06)48?

4. Canada expects to have 100% of hatcheries using (currently non-existent) policy guidance for stocking Atlantic salmon by 2031. Policy development and implementation in Canada is notoriously slow, is it realistic to expect 100% implementation in five years?
5. Canada describes the risks to wild salmon populations as a result of stocking. Has this been examined in the context of Canadian rivers to identify if this is representative of the situation in Atlantic Canada?
6. Subsequently, has there been any investigation regarding any significant differences where stocking is undertaken using fish from live gene banking facilities which take extra care to pair fish using genetic information?
7. The outcome of stocking policy is to reduce the severity of impacts from introduced genetic material. How will this policy adoption translate into measurable genetic improvements in wild populations?
8. Similarly, how will 100% policy adoption translate into measurable improvements in genetic fitness or population recovery? Has there been consideration of the biological indicators that will be used to demonstrate success?
9. The draft document highlights 12 facilities rearing Atlantic salmon for stocking purposes. Two biodiversity facilities have recently closed (Coldbrook and Mactaquac). Does the 12 facilities include these two facilities?

**Stressor 2 – Habitat shifting alteration - Action 1: Establishing Canada’s focal Atlantic salmon rivers**

10. As noted, Canada has nearly 1,000 Atlantic salmon rivers which makes management and actions a challenge. At least one river from each of the 19 DUs will be designated as a “focal river” for prioritizing actions. How will these rivers be selected and who will be responsible for providing the decision rationale to the Minister for Fisheries?
11. A minimum of 19 focal rivers will be identified out of nearly 1,000. Will there be any form of ‘ranking’ amongst non-focal rivers? Will the non-focal rivers become deprioritized?
12. How does Canada propose to measure species-wide recovery on a very small subset of rivers?
13. There is no measurable progress identified until 2029. Does Canada have any short-term milestones they will be reporting on in 2027 and 2028?

**Stressor 2 – Habitat shifting alteration - Action 2: Restore ecosystem connectivity in focal rivers**

14. Canada describes that the annual reporting will include milestones such as upgrading the existing national database of barriers to fish passage, estimating baseline connectivity in each focal river, and developing a prioritization tool to inform barrier removal. Much of the necessary supporting data is regularly contributed by funding recipients. Will these data be incorporated to ensure timely application of the tools described?
15. What is the scale of intervention (e.g., number of barriers removed, km of habitat restored etc.) that corresponds with the target percentages?
16. Canada declares that their actions are addressing habitat shifting and alteration with urgency and at a scale capable of delivering population-level improvements for wild

Atlantic salmon. How will success be measured at the population level if key threats are largely being addressed within only the focal rivers?

**Stressor 3: Temperature extremes - Action 1: Limiting authorized activities in focal salmon rivers during episodes of warm water**

17. Why is Canada limiting these actions to focal rivers rather than broad application across any salmon river?
18. Given that DFO introduced Codes of Practice and Standards/Guidelines for routine projects a few years ago, which eliminates project reviews or authorizations for those types of projects, will these documents be updated to reflect the warm water restrictions?
19. How does Canada propose to measure the effectiveness of these measures on reduced mortality, elevated stress, or impacts to fitness?

**Stressor 3: Temperature extremes - Action 2: Reducing impacts of recreational fisheries during episodes of warm water**

20. There are existing Warm Water Protocols (WWPs) in place in key rivers currently. Data from community-based monitoring efforts suggest that the protocol does not effectively cover the full range of extreme events. Further, there is a large data gap in time series temperature data for many key rivers (including within SARA-designated Critical Habitat rivers for the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon DU). How will Canada overcome this paucity of data within the “short” timeframe of 50% by 2030?
21. The existing WWPs cover only salmon fishing; however, there are overlapping fisheries interests. Will there be broader coverage to ensure the lack of salmon by-catch?

**Overarching question on Canada’s CCR:**

22. Why is there an overall lack of specificity around measurements for actions where there is a purported benefit at the population level?

*Summary of Council Decisions*

Agenda Item	Decision	Paper No.
2. Adoption of the Agenda	Adopt the Agenda	<a href="#">CNL(26)03</a>
3.a) Report of the Finance and Administration Committee	<p>The Council may wish to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agree to move funds from the Recruitment Fund (£20,000) and the Special Fund (£25,000) to the Contractual Obligation Fund;</li> <li>• consider additional recommendations from the FAC, which may result in adjustments for the draft 2027 Budget or the Forecast Budget for 2028 (<a href="#">FAC(26)04rev</a>);</li> <li>• direct NASCO to engage with OSPAR to update the OSPAR Status Assessment for Atlantic salmon in 2027;</li> <li>• accept the Audited Accounts for 2025;</li> <li>• approve the budget for 2027 and note a Forecast Budget for 2028; and</li> <li>• adopt the Report of the FAC.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">FAC(26)03</a></p> <p>CNL(26)04 (Issued at meeting)</p> <p><a href="#">FAC(26)02</a></p> <p><a href="#">FAC(26)04rev</a></p>
3.b) NASCO Calendar and Working Group Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agree a calendar of inter-sessional meetings; and</li> <li>• agree the membership of any Working Groups agreed during the meeting</li> </ul>	
4.b) (i) A new approach to presentation of the ICES Advice	<p>Council agrees to request that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICES advice should be provided in the revised format going forward, as outlined in <a href="#">CNL(26)07rev</a>;</li> <li>• the SSC retains text in the ICES advice request for 2027 to include an overview of the status of salmon in the North Atlantic as a whole; and</li> <li>• the advice on salmon in the three regional areas is provided in a similar format to that in 2026.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CNL(26)07rev</a>
4.c) Report of the International Atlantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt the Report of the Meeting of the Board</li> </ul>	CNL(26)08 (Issued at meeting)

Salmon Research Board		
4.d) Report of the Standing Scientific Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a request to ICES for scientific advice</li> </ul>	CNL(26)09 (Issued at meeting)
4.e) NASCO's Communications and Outreach Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct the Secretariat to explore options for a future Ministerial meeting in 2027 associated with the Annual Meeting or in association with another event which may have appropriate Ministerial representation.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CNL(26)37</a>
5. NASCO's High-Level Action Plan		
5.b) Consideration of Actions for Inclusion in NASCO's High-Level Action Plan for 2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt the high-level NASCO Action Plan for (2026-2027)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CNL(26)38</a>
6. Conservation, Restoration, Enhancement and Rational Management of Atlantic Salmon under the Precautionary Approach		
6.a)(ii) Decisions Taken in Light of the Special Session on the Evaluation of Conservation Commitment Reports Under the Fourth Reporting Cycle (2026-2032)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each Party / jurisdiction is required to finalise their Conservation Commitment Report (CCR) by 30 November 2026 as specified in the original Schedule of the Fourth Reporting Cycle, <a href="#">CNL(25)57</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">CNL(26)13</a>
6.c) Report of the Working Group to Revise Habitat Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopt the revised NASCO Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Improvement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CNL(26)11</a>
6.d) Reports of the Pink Salmon Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree Terms of Reference for the Pink Salmon Working Group</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CNL(26)16</a>
8. Date and Place of the Next Meeting	<p>Council may wish to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>confirm the dates, 1-4 June, and consider the venue for its Annual Meeting in 2027; and</li> <li>agree on the dates of the 2028 Annual Meeting.</li> </ul>	

9. Report of the Meeting	Adopt the Report of the Meeting	Issued at meeting
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### *One Year and Five Year NASCO Schedule of Work*

#### **One-Year Work Schedule for Parties / jurisdictions**

The inter-sessional work listed below will involve representatives from NASCO Parties. Each is likely to involve multiple sub-meetings. Work involving the Secretariat only is not listed. The list is subject to decisions made at the Annual Meeting.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Publication of completed Conservation Commitment Reports	30 November 2026
Publication of the Second State of North Atlantic Salmon Report	December 2026
Meetings of the Working Group to revise NASCO's Guidelines on Aquaculture and Disease (including consideration of two current documents)	Subject to Council's agreement Autumn 2026 – Spring 2027
Completion of Performance Indicator templates under the fourth reporting cycle	January – April 2027
Update of Conservation Commitment Reports template under the fourth reporting cycle	January – April 2027
Meeting of the Working Group on Pink Salmon	In person March 2027 – at WGNAS meeting

## Five-Year Work Schedule

The five-year work schedule will be dependent on decisions made in response to the proposed Strategy and Action Plan. In addition to any work agreed in that regard, the following work is also planned.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
2026	Publication of the Second State of North Atlantic Salmon Report
2027	Completion of Performance Indicator templates under the fourth reporting cycle
2027	Update of Conservation Commitment Reports template under the fourth reporting cycle
2027	Meeting of the Pink Salmon Working Group
2027	Meetings of the Working Group to revise NASCO's Guidelines on Management of Salmon Fisheries in the Light of Rapid Change
2027 / 2028	Symposium on the State of North Atlantic Salmon following publication of the Second State of North Atlantic Salmon Report
2027 / 2028	Ministerial meeting to consider the status of wild Atlantic salmon
2028	Completion of Performance Indicator templates under the fourth reporting cycle
2028	Update of Conservation Commitment Reports template under the fourth reporting cycle
2028	Meeting of the Conservation Commitment Reports Review Group to review the Conservation Commitment Reports under the fourth reporting cycle
2028	Meeting of the Pink Salmon Working Group
2029	Meeting of the Working Group on <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i>
2029	Completion of Performance Indicator templates under the fourth reporting cycle
2029	Update of Conservation Commitment Reports template under the fourth reporting cycle
2029	Meeting of the Pink Salmon Working Group
2030	Completion of Performance Indicator templates under the fourth reporting cycle
2030	Update of Conservation Commitment Reports template under the fourth reporting cycle
2030	Meeting of the Conservation Commitment Reports Review Group to review the Conservation Commitment Reports under the fourth reporting cycle
2030	Meeting of the Pink Salmon Working Group
2031	Completion of Performance Indicator templates under the fourth reporting cycle
2031	Update of Conservation Commitment Reports template under the fourth reporting cycle
2031	Meeting of the Pink Salmon Working Group