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

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform Council of the results of the Secretariat's review of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines for definitions of 'salmon'.

Decisions

- No decision is required.

Background

The 2025 'Report of Working Group on Future Reporting under Implementation Plans and Evaluation of these Reports', CNL(25)22, included a list of seven topics that the Working Group felt should be further considered by the Working Groups for the Revision of NASCO's Guidelines. Council, CNL(25)80rev, considered that one on the definition of 'wild Atlantic salmon' (see paragraph 9.2 of CNL(25)22) was not appropriate for the Working Groups' consideration and it was raised that NASCO seemed to be inconsistent in its definitions of 'wild Atlantic salmon'.

During its consideration of this report at its 2025 Annual Meeting, CNL(25)80rev, Council agreed to commission the Secretariat to compile a list of any definition of 'salmon' to be found in NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines to be tabled, at the latest, at the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of NASCO.

The Review

The Secretariat has now conducted its review of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and found no formal definition of the word 'salmon'. However, two important associated definitions were found.

Important Associated Definitions

- Article 1 of the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean stipulates that the Convention 'applies to the salmon stocks which migrate beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction of coastal States of the Atlantic Ocean north of 36°N latitude throughout their migratory range'. This must, therefore, be the definition of salmon stocks subject to the Convention, unless the Convention is changed. 'NASCO's Position on Convention Change', CNL(25)52, was agreed most recently in 2025.
- The Secretariat notes that in two of the documents reviewed (the 'Williamsburg Resolution', CNL(06)48), and the 'Explanations of Terms Used in the Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks', SLG(10)9) 'wild salmon' are defined as '*Fish that have spent their entire life-cycle in the wild and originate from parents which were also spawned and continually lived in the wild*'.

Other Associated Definitions

It is worth noting that various other terms associated with salmon were defined in several of the documents reviewed, such as:

- Salmon Aquaculture: The culture or husbandry of Atlantic salmon, including salmon farming, salmon ranching and salmon enhancement activities (CNL(06)48, CNL(01)51) *a slightly different definition of 'aquaculture' is provided in NAC(92)24: 'The culture or husbandry of aquatic fauna other than in research, in hobby aquaria, or in governmental enhancement activities';
- Escaped Salmon: The product of an escape event (SLG(10)9);
- Farmed Salmon: The product of salmon farming (SLG(10)9);
- Salmon Farming: Production systems which involve the rearing of Atlantic salmon in captivity for the duration of their life cycle until harvested (CNL(06)48, SLG(10)9); and
- Salmon Ranching: The release of reared Atlantic salmon smolts with the intention of harvesting all that return (CNL(06)48).

Qualifying Adjectives

The review has also shown that references to 'salmon' are often accompanied by a qualifying adjective or phrase, such as 'Atlantic salmon' or 'salmon stocks subject to the Convention' (e.g. in the 'Resolution on Fishing for Salmon in International Waters, CNL(90)49). Where used, this additional text specifies the 'salmon' referred to.

A full list of the documents reviewed, and any relevant definitions, is contained in Annex 1.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
8 May 2026

Annex 1

Documents Reviewed for Definitions of 'Salmon'

Relevant Definitions Found

Subject Area	Document Title	Definitions	Notes
The NASCO Convention	The Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean	'This Convention applies to the salmon stocks which migrate beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction of coastal States of the Atlantic Ocean north of 36°N latitude throughout their migratory range'	This text (Article 1 of the Convention) defines that the salmon stocks subject to the Convention are those salmon stocks which migrate beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction of coastal States of the Atlantic Ocean north of 36°N latitude throughout their migratory range.
Management of Salmon Fisheries	NASCO Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries, CNL(09)43	**Stock:** A management unit comprising one or more salmon populations. This would be established by managers, in part, for the purpose of regulating fisheries. (The term may be used to describe those salmon either originating from or occurring in a particular area. Thus, for example, salmon from separate rivers are referred to as "river stocks" and salmon occurring at West Greenland may be referred to as the "West Greenland stock").	Definitions are found in Annex 1 of these Guidelines (SCPA(00)11).
	Decision Structure For Management of North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries, CNL31.332	**Stock:** A management unit comprising one or more salmon populations. This would be established by managers, in part, for the purpose of regulating fisheries. (The term may be used to describe those salmon either originating from or occurring in a particular area. Thus, for example, salmon from separate rivers are referred to as "river stocks" and salmon occurring at West Greenland may be referred to as the "West Greenland stock").	A list of definitions is provided on Page 8.
Habitat Protection and Restoration	NASCO Plan of Action for the Application of the Precautionary Approach to the Protection and	**Salmon aquaculture:** The culture or husbandry of Atlantic salmon and includes salmon farming, salmon ranching and salmon enhancement activities.	A list of definitions is provided in Annex 3.

	Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat, CNL(01)51		
Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics	Explanations of Terms Used in the Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks, SLG(10)9	**Escaped salmon:** The product of an escape event …; **Farmed salmon:** The product of salmon farming…; **Salmon farming:** Production systems which involves the rearing of Atlantic salmon in captivity for the duration of their life cycle until harvested. **Salmonid:** All species and hybrids of the family Salmonidae. **Wild salmon:** Fish that have spent their entire life-cycle in the wild and originate from parents which were also spawned and continually lived in the wild.	
	Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks, CNL(06)48	**Salmon aquaculture*:** The culture or husbandry of Atlantic salmon, including salmon farming, salmon ranching and salmon enhancement activities. **Salmon enhancement:** The augmentation of wild stocks in individual river systems by the release of Atlantic salmon at different stages in their life cycles. **Salmon farming:** Production system which involves the rearing of Atlantic salmon in captivity for the duration of their life-cycle until harvested. **Salmon ranching*:** The release of reared Atlantic salmon smolts with the intention of harvesting all that return. **Salmonid*:** All species and hybrids of the family Salmonidae. **Stock* (Management unit):** A management unit comprising one or more salmon populations. **Stock (local):** A stock from a river or tributary in close proximity to the river to be stocked. This may refer to rivers with a common bay of entry or closely related catchment areas. **Wild salmon:** Fish that have spent their entire life-cycle in the wild and originate from parents which were also spawned and continuously lived in the wild.	A list of definitions is provided in Annex 1. However, it is noted that some terms have other definitions in the NAC Protocols (see NAC(92)24 below). These are denoted here with a '*'.

	North American Commission Protocols for the Introduction and Transfer of Salmonids, NAC(92)24	**Aquaculture*:** The culture or husbandry of aquatic fauna other than in research, in hobby aquaria, or in governmental enhancement activities. **Salmonid*:** All species and hybrids of the Family Salmonidae covered by the AFS checklist special publication No. 12, "A list of Common and Scientific Names of Fishes from the United States and Canada (1980)". **Species:** A group of interbreeding natural populations that are reproductively isolated from other groups. **Stock*:** Population of organisms sharing a common gene pool which is sufficiently discrete to warrant consideration as a self-perpetuating system which can be managed. **Strain:** A group of individuals with a common ancestry that exhibits genetic, physiological, or morphological differences from other groups as a result of husbandry practices.	A glossary is provided in pages 14 – 16. Further definitions are provided on page 21. Where relevant definitions here vary from the Williamsburg Resolution (above), they are denoted with a *. Please note: The definitions contained in the Williamsburg Resolution denote 'Salmon ranching' as having a different definition in the NAC Protocols. However, there is no definition of 'salmon ranching' in the NAC protocols; instead 'commercial ranching' is defined as *'The release of a fish species from a culture facility to range freely in the ocean for harvest and for profit*'.
Stock Rebuilding Programmes	Guidelines on the Use of Stock Rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks, CNL(25)50	**Stock:** a management unit comprising one or more wild Atlantic salmon populations. This would be established by managers, in part, for the purpose of regulating fisheries.	A glossary is provided on pages 7 - 8.
	Guidelines for Gene Banking for Wild Atlantic Salmon, CNL(25)51	**Stock:** a management unit comprising one or more wild Atlantic salmon populations. This would be established by managers, in part, for the purpose of regulating fisheries.	A glossary is provided on pages 7 - 8.

Documents Reviewed with No Relevant Definitions Found

Subject Area	Document Title
Basic Texts	Handbook of Basic Texts (All text within the Handbook, other than the Convention, which is included above)
Fishing For Salmon in International Waters	Resolution on fishing for salmon in the high seas, CNL(92)54
	Protocol Open for Signature by States Not Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean, CNL(92)53
	Adoption of a Protocol for States Not Party to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean, CNL(92)52
	Resolution on Fishing for Salmon in International Waters, CNL(90)49
Precautionary Approach	Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps', CNL(05)49
	Action Plan for Application of the Precautionary Approach, CNL(99)48 (*not available on-line – please contact the Secretariat if you would like a copy*)
	Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach, CNL(98)46
Management of Salmon Fisheries	Regulatory Measures at West Greenland
	Regulatory Measures around the Faroe Islands
	Guidelines on Catch and Release
	Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean Concerning Scientific Research Fishing, CNL(96)60
	Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics, CNL(93)51
Habitat Protection and Restoration	NASCO Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat, CNL(10)51
Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics	Revised Road Map to Enhance Information Exchange and Co-operation 0n Monitoring, Research and Measures to Prevent the Spread of G. Salaris and Eradicate it if Introduced, NEA(23)14
	Guidance on Best Management Practices to address impacts of sea lice and escaped farmed salmon on wild salmon stocks (Adopted in June 2009 and Revised in June 2010), SLG(09)5
	Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and USA, NAC(05)7
Socio Economics	Guidelines for incorporating social and economic factors in decisions under the Precautionary Approach, CNL(04)57
Stock Rebuilding Programmes	Guidelines for Stocking Atlantic Salmon, CNL(24)61
Other Documents	The Future of NASCO - a Ten-Year Strategy, CNL(24)71rev123
	MoU with OSPAR
	FIRMS Partnership Agreement
	MoU with ICES

	Terms and Conditions for Observers at NASCO Meetings, CNL(24)59
	Guiding Principles for Cooperation between NASCO and its Contracting Parties and the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry, SLG(01)11
	North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO Liaison Group Constitution, SLG(00)6
	Resolution by the Parties to the convention for the conservation of salmon, CNL(94)53 (*not available on-line – please contact the Secretariat if you would like a copy*)
	NASCO Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmon, CNL(97) (*not available on-line – please contact the Secretariat if you would like a copy*)
	Resolution by the North-East Atlantic Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization to Protect Wild Salmon Stocks from Introductions and Transfers , NEA(97)12 (*not available on-line – please contact the Secretariat if you would like a copy*)