

CNL(26)32

Review of Draft Conservation Commitments Report

Date	Party / jurisdiction	Draft CCR – February 2026
February 2026	UK-Northern Ireland	<a href="#">UK_Northern Ireland - Draft CCR submitted February 2026</a>

Overview of Conservation Commitments Report

Overall Comments / Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Review Group discussed the detrimental impacts that not addressing one of the top stressors, due to competing conservation objectives, could have.</li> <li>The Review Group appreciated the 3 actions identified to address the predation on smolts stressor and notes that the description of the actions ranges from very descriptive to vague. Although the goal of the action 3 is to implement 2 mitigation measures, no details as to what those measures will entail was provided so it is challenging to assess if they will have any positive impact.</li> <li>The Review Group notes the focus on Atlantic salmon habitat under stressor 2 and 3 but struggled with understanding the magnitude of the potential impact of the proposed actions.</li> </ul>

Consultation and Engagement

CCR reference	Review Question	Comments / Recommendations
E.1. E.2.	<b>Are the questions in the ‘Consultation and Engagement’ section of the CCRs answered fully?</b>	Yes.

Stressors

CCR reference	Review Question	Comments / Recommendations
Stressor Justification	<b>Are the top three stressors identified in the Party’s / jurisdiction’s stressor analysis used as the basis for the CCRs?</b>	No.

	<b>If not, are the justifications provided for the substitutions adequate?</b>	Yes.
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### Stressor 1

CCR reference	Review Question	Comments / Recommendations		
S.1.a.	<b>Are NASCO's theme areas identified?</b>	Yes.		
S.1.b. S.1.c. S.1.d.	<b>Is the impact of the stressor on wild Atlantic salmon described clearly?</b>	Yes.		
	<b>Are there no more than three actions for this stressor?</b>	Yes.		
		Action 1	Action 2	Action 3
S.1.1.d S.1.2.d S.1.3.d.	<b>Does the action have a clear and measurable tangible outcome to improve conditions for salmon survival through the removal or diminishment of the identified stressor (i.e. in line with NASCO's Strategic Goal)?</b>	Yes.  The action aims to improve survival for downstream migrating smolts within the lower Bann River	Yes.  There is an expectation of a 20% increase in smolt survival for the River Bush given the proposed management action	In part.  The clear and measurable outcome is the implementation of 2 mitigation measures  However, the mitigation measures are not identified and therefore it is not possible to assess if these will likely improve conditions when implemented.
S.1.1.c. S.1.2.c. S.1.3.c.	<b>Does the action have a clear starting point (baseline) against which progress towards the outcome can be measured?</b>	In part.  A clear baseline of 0 freshets coinciding with peak smolt migration was identified.	Yes.  Baseline smolt survival in the lower River Bush is estimated	Yes.  Zero mitigation measures are currently being undertaken.

		<p>A qualifying condition was that this action was targeted during low-flow periods only.</p> <p>No information was presented describing the natural freshet dynamics or the current impact.</p>	to be 60% based on past monitoring data.	
<p>S.1.1.e. S.1.2.e. S.1.3.e.</p>	<p><b>Are clear interim goals / milestones identified for this action?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>A single freshet during low flow periods coinciding with peak migration per year was identified.</p> <p>However, no information was provided describing the survival benefits from a single freshet.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Expected progress is 80% smolt survival in the lower River Bush, which represents an increase of 20% over baseline conditions.</p> <p>It was noted that this increase in survival is expected for all out years with no additional improvements expected.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Expected progress is to have one management action by 2031, but the clear and measurable outcome of 2 mitigation actions is never met.</p>
S.1.4.	<p><b>Does this stressor include a quantitative baseline and tangible outcome to enable progress towards the achievement of the Strategic Goal to be measured?</b></p>	<p>In part.</p> <p>A quantitative baseline was not identified for the stressor, rather they were provided for actions 2 and 3. Action 1's quantitative baseline was identified as the average number of freshets during low flow at peak smolt migration (2018-2025), but it doesn't appear that this information was used subsequently.</p> <p>A tangible outcome was not provided for the stressor, rather tangible outcomes were identified for each action to be implemented.</p>		
<p><b>Comments / Recommendations</b></p> <p>Further information describing natural flow conditions could be provided to put the need for this action into better perspective.</p> <p>Further information on action related to reducing sea lamprey predation is warranted.</p> <p>It appears that correction(s) need to be made milestones for action 3.</p>				

Stressor 2

CCR reference	Review Question	Comments / Recommendations		
S.2.a.	Are NASCO's theme areas identified?	Yes.		
S.2.b. S.2.c. S.2.d.	Is the impact of the stressor on wild Atlantic salmon described clearly?	Yes.		
	Are there no more than three actions for this stressor?	Yes.		
		Action 1	Action 2	Action 3
S.2.1.d S.2.2.d S.2.3.d.	<b>Does the action have a clear and measurable tangible outcome to improve conditions for salmon survival through the removal or diminishment of the identified stressor (i.e. in line with NASCO's Strategic Goal)?</b>	<p>In part.</p> <p>The jurisdiction noted that there are potentially 11,000 barriers across the jurisdiction, however the action will conduct 2 easement actions on primary salmon river per year.</p> <p>However, an easement action could entail one of the following: preventing a barrier from being constructed, developing a fish passage solution or removing a barrier.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The action will increase the inspections of water abstraction from 100% every 2 years to 100% each year</p>	
S.2.1.c. S.2.2.c. S.2.3.c.	<b>Does the action have a clear starting point (baseline) against which progress towards the outcome can be measured?</b>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The starting point is 0 (Number of easement actions), but this assume that no actions are currently being undertaken.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The starting point is to inspect 50% of all water abstraction sites each year</p>	

S.2.1.e. S.2.2.e. S.2.3.e.	<b>Are clear interim goals / milestones identified for this action?</b>	Yes.  Two new easement actions are expected to occur each year	Yes.  The action will increase the inspection rate to 100% of all water abstraction sites each year	
S.2.4.	<b>Does this stressor include a quantitative baseline and tangible outcome to enable progress towards the achievement of the Strategic Goal to be measured?</b>	<p>In part.</p> <p>A quantitative baseline was not identified for the stressor, rather they were provided for each action. The baseline for action 1 was related to potential barriers, which was not wholly relevant to the action itself and the baseline provided for action 2 suggested that water abstraction inspections were conducted on an ad hoc basis.</p> <p>A tangible outcome was not provided for the stressor, rather tangible outcomes were identified for each action.</p>		
<b>Comments / Recommendations</b>				
<p>Providing further details on the existing 11,000 barriers (e.g., number on primary salmon rivers, full obstructed, partially obstructed) would provide further context as to the magnitude of these actions.</p> <p>Should preventing a barrier from being constructed be considered a relevant action and equal to easements and removals.</p> <p>A baseline of 0 suggest that no actions are currently being undertaken under this action.</p>				

### Stressor 3

CCR reference	Review Question	Comments / Recommendations		
S.3.a.	<b>Are NASCO's theme areas identified?</b>	Yes.		
S.3.b. S.3.c. S.3.d.	<b>Is the impact of the stressor on wild Atlantic salmon described clearly?</b>	Yes.		
	<b>Are there no more than three actions for this stressor?</b>	Yes.		
		<b>Action 1</b>	<b>Action 2</b>	<b>Action 3</b>

S.3.1.d S.3.2.d S.3.3.d.	<b>Does the action have a clear and measurable tangible outcome to improve conditions for salmon survival through the removal or diminishment of the identified stressor (i.e. in line with NASCO's Strategic Goal)?</b>	In part.  The action will conduct 5 habitat protection, restoration or improvement projects per year, however no specific details on what type and scale of projects is provided.	Yes.  The action will conduct annual inspections at 3 salmon stronghold within primary salmon rivers across the jurisdiction every other year	
S.3.1.c. S.3.2.c. S.3.3.c.	<b>Does the action have a clear starting point (baseline) against which progress towards the outcome can be measured?</b>	Yes.  The starting point is 0 (habitat protection, restoration or improvement projects), but this assume that no actions are currently being undertaken.	Yes.  The starting point is 0 primary salmon rivers being inspected at 3 salmon stronghold sites per year, but this assume that no actions are currently being undertaken.	
S.3.1.e. S.3.2.e. S.3.3.e.	<b>Are clear interim goals / milestones identified for this action?</b>	Yes.  Five new habitat protection, restoration or improvement projects are expected each year	Yes.  The action will result in 50% of primary salmon rivers being inspected at 3 salmon strongholds each year	
S.3.4.	<b>Does this stressor include a quantitative baseline and tangible outcome to enable progress towards the achievement of the Strategic Goal to be measured?</b>	In part.  A quantitative baseline was not identified for the stressor, they were provided for each action. The baseline for action 1 was related to the number of projects to be undertaken each year and the baseline provided for action 2 was the number of inspections.  A tangible outcome was not provided for the stressor, tangible outcomes were identified for each action.		

**Comments / Recommendations**

It would be beneficial to provide further detail, even rough details, on what the expected habitat restoration projects may entail.  
Providing a clearer link between the increased salmon inspections and the expected increase in salmon productivity would be beneficial.