



Annotated Agenda

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

Papers for the meeting are on the [website](#).

A summary of the decisions before the Council is contained in Annex 1.

During the meeting, interventions by accredited NGOs shall be in accordance with the Revised Conditions for Attendance by Observers at NASCO Meetings, [CNL\(06\)49](#). The President will recognise such requests on all Agenda items other than item 2.

Timings of the Video Conference (all timings are British Summer Time)

The Council will meet by video conference on:

- Thursday 27 May: 13:00 – 17:30 hrs (Theme-based Special Session)
- Friday 28 May: 14:00 – 15:00 hrs (ICES Advice Webinar)
- Monday 31 May: 13:00 – 15:00 hrs
- Tuesday 1 June: 14:15 – 16:15 hrs
- Thursday 3 June: 13:30 – 14:30 hrs (Special Session of the Council: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans)
- Thursday 3 June: 14:45 – 16:45 hrs
- Friday 4 June: 13:00 – 15:30 hrs

Main Table Participants

President	Serge Doucet
Canada	Doug Bliss Carl McLean David Dunn
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)	Katrine Kærgaard Svein Magnason Maria Strandgård Rasmussen
European Union	Arnaud Peyronnet Clemens Fieseler Ignacio Granell
Norway	Raoul Bierach Helge Dyrendal Heidi Hansen
Russian Federation	Alexander Khatuntsov Ekaterina Kazantseva Sergey Prusov
United Kingdom	Ruth Allin Antje Branding Seamus Connor

United States	Kim Damon-Randall Stephen Gephard Pat Keliher
NGOs	Paul Knight Steve Sutton
IGOs	Cathal Gallagher – EIFAAC Ghislain Chouinard – ICES Laura Poinsoot – ICPR Darius Campbell – NEAFC Vladimir Radchenko – NPAFC Mark Saunders – NPAFC
States not Party to the Convention <i>France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon)</i>	Camille Servetto
International Salmon Farmers Association	Mark Lane
Secretariat	Emma Hatfield Wendy Kenyon

Order of Business

As set out above the date and time of the Theme-based Special Session, ICES Advice Webinar and the Special Session of the Council: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans, are fixed.

Other Agenda items may be taken in the following order:

1.	Opening of the Meeting
2a)	Report of the Finance and Administration Committee
3a)	Secretary’s Report
3b)	Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2020
5b)	Report of the Inter-Sessional Implementation Plan Special Session
3e)	Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board
3d)	Scientific Advice from ICES
5g)	New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management
5a)(ii)	Decisions Taken Following the Theme-based Special Session
5 f)	Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry
4.	The Third Performance Review: Update to the Council
5 h)	Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery

5 e)	Progress in Implementing the ‘Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, CNL(13)38
3f)	Consideration of the NASCO Rivers Database
5d)	International Year of the Salmon Legacy Activities
5c)(i)	Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans Special Session: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans (Thursday 3 June)
5c)(ii)	Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans (Thursday 3 June)
3g)	Report of the Standing Scientific Committee
6.	Other Business
3c)	Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize
5 i)	Reports on the Conservation Work of the Three Regional Commissions
7.	Date and Place of the Next Meeting
<i>Adjourn to finalise and circulate the report of the Meeting</i>	
8.	Report of the Meeting
9.	Close of the Meeting

Adoption of the Agenda

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure and following consultation with the President, a Provisional Agenda, [CNL\(21\)01](#) was made available on 4 February 2021. The Draft Agenda was published on 23 March, [CNL\(21\)03](#).

The Agenda, [CNL\(21\)25](#), was adopted by correspondence on 30 April, prior to the inter-sessional correspondence period that ran from 3 – 14 May.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The President, Serge Doucet (Canada), will open the meeting and make a statement on behalf of the Organization. Parties, IGOs, NGOs and France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) may make verbal Opening Statements, as is usual in years when new regulatory measures are negotiated. Written Opening Statements submitted to the Secretariat prior to the Meeting will be emailed to delegates and annexed to the Report of the Meeting.

- *no decision is required.*

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

2. Financial and Administrative Issues

a) Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

Article 16 of the [Convention](#) states that ‘The Council shall adopt an annual budget for the Organization.’ The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) will meet on 26 and 28 May and its report, making recommendations on the decisions before the Council, will be available thereafter.

The Council may wish to:

- *accept the Audited Accounts for 2020;*
- *adopt a budget for 2022;*
- *decide on any actions required under NASCO’s MoUs with ICES and / or the OSPAR Commission;*
- *appoint auditors for the 2021 – 2023 / 2025 accounts;*
- *adopt the report of the FAC.*

The following papers are (or will be) available:

- The 2022 Draft Budget 2023, Forecast Budget and Five-Year (2022-2026) Budgeting Plan, [FAC\(21\)07](#);
- Report of the Finance and Administration Committee, CNL(21)06; and
- other papers for the FAC are [available](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item for the Council Agenda. Inter-sessional correspondence did take place in advance of the FAC meeting and can be found in the FAC Annotated Agenda, FAC(21)09A.

3. Scientific, Technical, Legal and Other Information

a) Secretary’s Report

The Secretary’s Report provides information on procedural, administrative, financial and other matters. The report notes that on 27 November 2020 the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) became the seventh contracting Party to NASCO and on 10 December 2020, Council agreed unanimously that the UK may become a member of the West Greenland Commission and the North-East Atlantic Commission. The report also highlights NASCO’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- *no decision is required.*

The following paper is available:

- Secretary’s Report, [CNL\(21\)09](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

b) Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2020

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

- *the Council may wish to adopt the report.*

The following paper is available:

- Report on the Activities of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in 2020, [CNL\(21\)10](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

c) **Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Grand Prize**

NASCO operates a Tag Return Incentive Scheme. Individually identifiable, external tags (all tags from West Greenland) that are returned to the appropriate authorities in the country of capture are eligible for inclusion in the draw. Each year a Grand Prize of £1,500 is awarded together with three prizes of £1,000, one in each of NASCO's three Commission areas.

The Grand Prize winner will be announced in the Meeting and then on the website and twitter; they will be recorded in the Meeting Report.

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

No action is required by the Council.

d) **Scientific Advice from ICES**

On 28 May, the Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Dennis Ensing, will present the ICES advice relating to the North Atlantic area and the individual Commission areas. He will also present the advice relating to item 5g) 'New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management'. The Chair of WGNAS will answer questions following his presentation.

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

The following papers are (or will be) available:

- The Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), [CNL\(21\)11](#);
- The [Report](#) of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon is on the ICES website;
- Presentation from the Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon.

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

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

The Terms of Reference for the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) and its Scientific Advisory Group state 'Board meeting reports will be considered by the Council for adoption' [ICR\(20\)03](#).

The Board will meet on 26 and 28 May. The main topics for its consideration will be the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Metadatabase of Salmon Survey Data and Sample Collections, and a Potential Successor to SALSEA-Track.

- ***the Council may wish to adopt the report.***

The following papers are (or will be) available:

- The Report of the Meeting of the Board, CNL(21)12; and
- other papers for the Board meeting are available [here](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

f) **Consideration of the NASCO Rivers Database**

In 2020, the Council agreed that the Secretary should work with Parties / jurisdictions

to explore why they had not used the Rivers Database as had been agreed in 2016. The Rivers Database was used only partially to inform the [2019 State of North Atlantic Salmon Report](#), instead of providing the sole basis of information as had been envisaged originally.

The Council may wish to:

- *confirm that the Council agrees that ‘NASCO should be the source of information on salmon stock status around the North Atlantic...’*
- *agree the need to develop a consistent and robust approach to presenting information on stock status; and*
- *agree the approach for the next update of the status of salmon in North Atlantic rivers.*

The following paper is available:

- The Future for the NASCO Rivers Database, [CNL\(21\)13](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

g) **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. At its 1992 Annual Meeting, 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. Its work is co-ordinated by Paddy Gargan (EU). During the Annual Meeting, the SSC will meet to develop a Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES for consideration by the Commissions and the Council.

- *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.

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

4. The Third Performance Review: Update to the Council

At the December 2020 Inter-Sessional Meeting, the Council agreed that NASCO’s third performance review would report in 2023. The President requested an update at the 2021 Annual Meeting on planning for the third performance review, [CNL\(20\)58](#).

- *no decisions are anticipated.*

The following paper is available:

- Update on Planning NASCO's Third Performance Review, [CNL\(21\)15](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

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

- a) (i) **Theme-based Special Session: Minimising Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon: Supporting Meaningful and More Rapid Progress**

Towards Achievement of the International Goals for Sea Lice and Containment

The half day Theme-based Special Session (TBSS) will take place on 27 May 2021. The overarching objective for the TBSS is to stimulate urgent action to implement further measures to protect wild salmon from the impacts of salmon farming, and to ensure demonstrable progress by Parties / jurisdictions towards achievement of the international goals for sea lice and escaped farmed salmon, taking into account the recommendations from the Steering Committees of the [2016 TBSS](#) and the 2019 IYS Symposium, [CNL\(19\)16](#).

A report of the TBSS will be prepared by the Steering Committee following the Annual Meeting.

- ***Any decisions related to the TBSS will be taken under Agenda Item 5a)(ii).***

The following papers are available:

- Programme for the 2021 Theme-based Special Session, [CNL\(21\)57](#);
- Pietrak_Genetic and Other Innovative Strategies to Reduce Sea Lice, [CNL\(21\)47](#);
- Espmark_How to Protect Wild Salmon Against Sea Lice with the use of New Technologies and Post-smolt, [CNL\(21\)48](#);
- Bolstad_Faster Pace of Life in Wild Atlantic Salmon Following Introgression from Farmed Escapees, [CNL\(21\)49](#);
- Karlsen_Impact of sea lice on wild Atlantic salmon, [CNL\(21\)50](#);
- Nilsen_Establishing Barriers Between Farmed Fish and Sea Lice, [CNL\(21\)51](#);
- Campbell_State of Salmon Aquaculture Technologies, [CNL\(21\)52](#);
- Sterud_Recirculating land-based systems – reducing conflicts between farmed and wild salmon, [CNL\(21\)54](#);

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

(ii) Decisions Taken Following the Theme-based Special Session

As set out above, the half day Theme-based Special Session (TBSS) will take place on 27 May 2021. This Agenda item allows for decisions to be taken in light of that Session, if required.

It also allows the Council to decide whether to hold a TBSS in 2022, and if so, on which topic. In light of their evaluations of Annual Progress Reports, the Implementation Plan / Annual Progress Report Review Group suggested that the following could be considered as topics for future Theme-based Special Sessions:

1. How wild salmon management and conservation should be adapted to mitigate for the impact of climate change;
2. Best practice in improving fish passage for salmon (upstream and downstream);
3. Sharing stock assessment approaches to inform management; and
4. Evaluating the impacts of predation on wild Atlantic salmon.

The Council may wish to:

- ***consider actions arising from the 2021 TBSS, if required;***

- *decide whether to hold a TBSS in 2022, and on what topic; and*
- *establish a Steering Committee to plan the 2022 TBSS.*

The following paper is available:

- Report of the Meeting of the IP / APR Review Group for the Review of Annual Progress Reports, [CNL\(21\)17](#), (Section 6, page 8 for possible future TBSS topics).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

b) **Report of the Inter-Sessional Implementation Plan Special Session**

A Special Session webinar was held on 5 May to discuss the evaluation of the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans (IPs). A period of inter-sessional correspondence related to the IPs and their review took place prior to the webinar from 12 – 23 April. At the webinar a presentation, [CNL\(21\)55](#), was made by the Chair of the IP / APR Review Group, Cathal Gallagher (EU), and a question-and-answer session with all delegates was conducted. The Report of the Inter-Sessional Implementation Plan Special Session states that clarification on the following is sought:

1. *Council may wish to agree that there will be no major change to the IP process until the Performance Review Panel has reported (noting that the Review Panel has, in its Terms of Reference, [CNL\(21\)22](#), been asked to consider the IP process).*
2. *Council may wish to request that Parties / jurisdictions either:*
 - *submit no further revision of their IP until the Performance Review Panel provides advice on how the process might be revised to better meet its objectives (and, therefore, that no further IP reviews take place), recognising that this may not be until the next reporting cycle; OR*
 - *continue to submit revised IPs, until their IP is considered satisfactory in all sections / areas by the Review Group (and therefore that subsequent IP reviews take place as required).*
3. *If it is agreed that no major change should take place until the Performance Review Panel has reported, Council may wish to clarify the following issues, to facilitate the process in the interim:*
 - a) *Council may wish to agree that where ‘fish farms’ are mentioned in the IP template, this relates to all forms of aquaculture, including conservation hatcheries, as per the definition given in Annex 1 of the [Williamsburg Resolution](#);*
 - b) *Council may wish to decide whether a Party’s / jurisdiction’s national legislation which prevents a satisfactory response to an IP question, should / should not be considered a mitigating circumstance to allow it to be considered satisfactory;*
 - c) *Council may wish to consider the Review Group’s interpretation of the Guidance ([CNL\(18\)49](#)) and the Enhanced Guidance ([CNL\(20\)55](#)), used in their November 2020 review;*
 - d) *Council may wish to agree that in future IP revisions, questions / actions deemed satisfactory in November 2020 are not revised (unless clarification is requested), and revised sections are highlighted clearly; and*

- e) *Council may wish to agree that future APR reviews only consider actions deemed to be satisfactory by the Review Group.*
4. *Council may wish to consider whether increased participation from the Parties and jurisdictions in the work and/or meetings of the Review Group would benefit the review process;*
5. *Council may wish to invite France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to participate in the Implementation Plan process.*

The following papers are available:

- Report of the Inter-Sessional Implementation Plan Special Session, [CNL\(21\)56](#);
- Third Interim Report of the IP / APR Review Group for the Review of Implementation Plans, [CNL\(21\)07](#); and
- Implementation Plan, Annual Progress Reports and related papers are available on the [Third Reporting Cycle \(2019 – 2024\) webpage](#).

Inter-Sessional Correspondence

Whilst most of the Inter-Sessional Correspondence on this item is included in [CNL\(21\)56](#). The following additional question was asked:

Q1. NASCO NGOs asked UK (10 May):

The UK – England & Wales IP ([IP\(19\)13rev2](#)) sets out actions to address freshwater environmental problems arising from loss or damage of habitat, connectivity, water quality and quantity and other ecosystem changes from invasive alien species or climate change effects. The NGO welcomes these but recognises that the potential or actual benefits to salmon remain unclear and unspecified.

All the actions will likely benefit salmon productivity (as smolt output) to some degree, but some more than others. The key questions for salmon management should be how much benefit has or will arise, is it enough and what else needs to be done? A fundamental prerequisite to do this is a national, spatially explicit inventory of river habitat (as the original NASCO Habitat Guidance advises), because that provides the template for all salmon production (juvenile stock) assessment and improvement.

The 2010 NASCO Habitat Guidelines advise that,

- a. Managers should assess the expected effects of management actions and the timescale in which they will occur prior to their implementation.
- b. Managers should also monitor the outcomes of the management actions to determine whether they have achieved the desired aims.

We agree and ask:

- i. Is there a functioning, spatially explicit river habitat inventory for England and Wales?
- ii. How are a) and b) being done now and are current measures enough to protect stocks?
- iii. If they are not, what factors (structural, resources or other) are limiting this delivery?
 - ***A1. UK response (19 May):***

i. Salmon stocks in England and Wales’ 64 principal salmon rivers are assessed annually against conservation limits. These limits were calculated in 1996/97 based on modelling of available habitat. The stock assessment methodology, including how conservation limits are set, is currently being reviewed. This review, which is being carried out by the Environment Agency (EA), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Cefas and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and is due to complete in 2022 and will consider the options for, and the costs and benefits of, obtaining a better understanding of available habitat quality and quantity.

In addition to modelling the quantity of freshwater and estuarine habitat available to Salmon the EA and NRW have also assessed salmon limiting factors, including physical habitat, for most of the principal salmon rivers. This work was carried out in England between 1997 and 2003 and published in Salmon Action Plans. In Wales detailed Fisheries Habitat Restoration Plans (FHRPs), that identify all known physical habitat constraints, have been developed more recently. These plans are informing River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) produced under the Water Framework Directive. RBMPs in England and, FHRPs in Wales, are now the primary tools for driving forward habitat improvements.

ii. Most actions to improve salmon habitat are progressed as part of broader projects intended to deliver a wide array of environmental outcomes, in line with the goals set out under the Water Framework Directive and intended to move water bodies towards “good” ecological and chemical status.

These objectives, whilst not always being salmon specific, clearly implement the expectation and requirement of the NASCO habitat guidance in terms of assessing and maintaining an inventory of habitat limiting factors that potentially where salmon form part of the overall fish assemblage within a river catchment.

The overall benefits with respect to moving water bodies towards “Good” status will generally be assessed prior to implementation of any improvement work but the specific benefits to salmon will only be assessed if they are the main, or an associated, reason for not achieving a good status.

Similarly, post implementation assessment will be much broader than just salmon. However juvenile surveys and stock assessments are carried out annually on England and Wales’ 64 principal salmon.

iii. Despite significant reductions in salmon exploitation in England and Wales (from 219 Tonnes in 2000 to 3 Tonnes in 2020) coupled with wider conservation efforts the status of UK-England and Wales’ salmon stock remains poor, with 40% predicted to be “at risk” in 5 years time and another 50% predicted to be “probably at risk”.

The UK – England and Wales Implementation Plan set out a comprehensive programme of salmon conservation actions and our Annual Progress Reports show progress is being made. The pace of action is limited by a combination of factors, including competing priorities and funding constraints. The increasing national and international focus on the state of our natural environment should offer opportunities to push forward further salmon conservation work and we remain committed to working with stakeholders to progress the five point approach, the partnership plan for salmon in England, and the Wales Plan of Action for Salmon and Sea Trout.

c) **Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans**

(i) **Special Session: Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans**

The purpose of the evaluation of the Annual Progress Reports by the Review Group is to ensure that Parties / jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their Implementation Plans. In addition, under Article 15 of the [NASCO Convention](#) Parties are required to report catch statistics and other information to the Council annually. This is achieved through the submission of Annual Progress Reports (APRs).

The Chair of the IP / APR Review Group, Cathal Gallagher (EU), will present the Report of the Meeting of the IP / APR Review Group for the Review of Annual Progress Reports, at a Special Session of the Council. Discussion will take place with all delegates.

- *no decision is required.*

The following papers are available:

- Report of the Meeting of the IP / APR Review Group for the Review of Annual Progress Reports, [CNL\(21\)17](#);
- APR Summary, [CNL\(21\)18](#); and
- Implementation Plan, Annual Progress Reports and related papers are available on the [Third Reporting Cycle \(2019 – 2024\) webpage](#).

Inter-Sessional Correspondence

Q2. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked EU – Ireland (6 May):

In Ireland salmon fishery is allowed and reporting of catches via returned logbooks is a requirement in accordance with the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Regulation. However according to the data presented in Ireland’s APR from the calendar year 2020 (section 3.1 Action F2), it is only estimated that 60% of the logbooks provided to anglers are returned. Could there be some underlying reason for this relatively low return rate of catch-data?

In the APR it is further stated that “All anglers who do not return logbooks are written to as a means of improving logbook returns and a proportion are taken to court annually and fined for non-return of logbooks”. However, it does not supply a penalty for failure to report catches. In other countries it is also a requirement to report catches, and a penalty suspension from the fishery for failure to report must be implemented by request of council members.

What happens in Ireland if they fail to report their catches? Is there a criteria that determines who it is that have to appear in court, and how large is that proportion?

Furthermore, this creates potential issues with accurate information regarding the inventory of salmon stocks. How is this missing information accounted for in the stock estimations?

- ***A2. EU – Ireland response (21 May):***

Background

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) manages each of Ireland's 144 genetically unique salmon stocks on an individual stock basis. Management is and remains strictly in line with the scientific advice, and this principle was ratified by a Government decision in 2006.

Management Advice is prepared annually by IFI for each river and is supported by annual independent scientific advice from the Technical Expert Group on Salmon (TEGOS) - a group comprised of scientists from a range of organisations.

Each individual stock is reviewed by TEGOS every year and the annual scientific advice sets out the predicted stock status on each river. This information is used to establish any potential harvest surplus/deficit for each river. Based on this advice managers draft and implement annual legislation aimed at ensuring that any exploitation of salmon stocks is done on a sustainable basis.

Use of a range of data sets

In carrying out salmon stock assessments TEGOS draws on several data sets and does not rely entirely on rod catch returns. These data sets incorporate include both rod (inc. catch and release) and commercial catch data, fish counters, catchment wide electro-fishing and reports from experienced Fisheries Inspectors nationwide.

Each data set is averaged over the previous 5 years. The use of a five year rolling average avoids a good or bad year having a disproportionate impact on the assessment based on the established precautionary principle. In addition, information on juvenile abundance indices derived from electro-fishing surveys, carried out by IFI, is also evaluated as an indicator of stock status.

Profile of licenced anglers

It should be noted that some 40% of the licenced anglers are visitors and nationals of other countries and therefore residing outside the jurisdiction. In these circumstances visiting anglers have little incentive to make timely, if any, returns as enforcement or prosecution of such anglers is virtually impossible.

This situation is not comparable to the commercial licencing regime where every licensee is domiciled in Ireland and can be easily brought to task under domestic law for non-reporting of catches, thus we have full compliance with the commercial license reporting requirements.

Prosecutions have been taken by the Fisheries Authorities in relation to anglers domiciled in Ireland but conviction and penalty is a matter for the statutorily independent Courts system and Fisheries Authorities have no role in that regard.

Accounting for missing information in the stock estimations

The reported rod catch from the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Carcass Tagging Scheme are collated and reported annually by Inland Fisheries Ireland and raised to take into account of fish caught by anglers who have not returned logbooks. The raising factor used is based on Small (1991) and applied to each of the 17 constituent Fisheries Districts based on their respective angling logbook return rates (it should be noted that returns of logbooks from the commercial fisheries are 100%).

In the annual national stock assessment and catch advice process undertaken by TEGOS, the resulting raised rod catch information along with associated exploitation rates is used as one of the data sets to estimate stock abundance in individual rivers. This approach accounts for any missing information in the stock

estimations.

For Irish inputs to the ICES WGNAS North Atlantic stock assessment models to estimate Irish pre-fisheries abundance, homewater returns and spawners, the raised angling catch is used along with a further associated unreported catch which is deemed to be 7.5% (and an associated error of 2.5%) of the collated national raised angling catch. For annual reporting of stock abundances to NASCO in the Irish APR, an unreported catch figure of 10% of all harvested fish is assumed in our reporting.

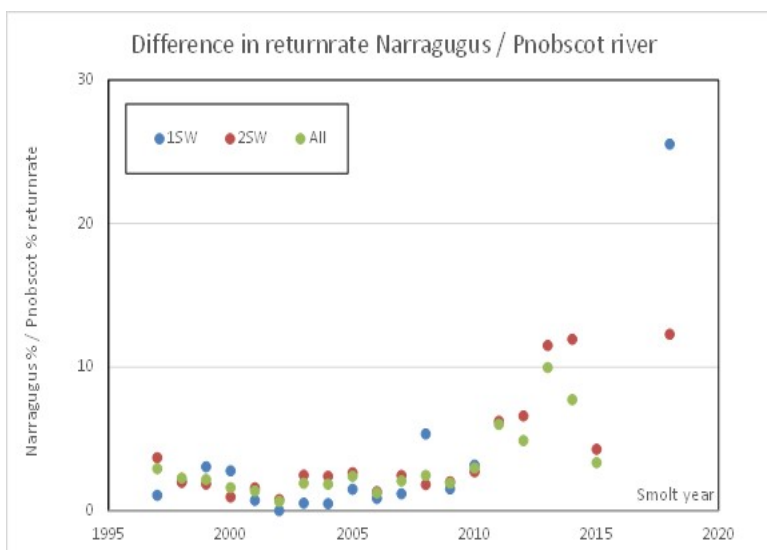
Conclusion

TEGOS takes account of all potential variables and adopts very much a precautionary approach to setting out comprehensive scientific advice on each of the 144 salmon stocks. Based on this approach and the methodologies used by TEGOS, to take account of situations raised by DFG, Ireland has confidence in the outcome of scientific assessments to underpin the status of (and potential harvestable surplus identified for) fisheries to keep those fisheries within safe biological limits in the domestic arena.

Annual TEGOS advice and the annual management advice it supports are based always on the precautionary principle.

Q3. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked United States (6 May):

ICES use regional/nation summarised return rates as input for the PFA model, and not individual river return rates. However, variability in return rates within regions can be very high, even for rivers located side by side. This regional variability must be assumed to be attributed to regional factors, since both river stocks must experience equivalent conditions at sea. In the United States return rates of large salmon (2SW) has varied between two rivers (Narragugus and Penobscot) by more than a factor of 12, and the small salmon (1SW) has varied by a factor of 25 (figure below). These variations are not accounted for in the PFA model, however they imply that conservational efforts in the rivers of origin are necessary to recover the stocks.



What future initiatives do the United States propose to improve conditions in their rivers of origin to equalise stock improvements?

○ **A3. *United States response (13 May):***

We are a little confused by the preamble to these questions as ICES does not use regional/nation summarised return rates or individual river return rates as inputs for the PFA model. The United States does report individual river returns rates as a metric of marine productivity in support of NASCO's request to ICES to "describe the status of the stocks...". Regardless, we will do our best to answer the questions below.

Different stocking approaches are used in different watersheds to support various research or adaptive management practices and much of the annual variability in adult returns is attributable to these different approaches. As an example, the Penobscot River is a smolt stocked river; whereas, the Narraguagus River primarily receives fry stocked fish. Variability in the return rates for these two hatchery products is expected. A quick survey of the literature suggests that wild smolts may have return rates up to eight times higher than hatchery reared smolts.

That said, one of the biggest initiatives that we are taking across all rivers is ensuring Atlantic salmon can access high quality, climate resilient habitats that can maximize spawning success, juvenile survival, and, ultimately, the number of smolts leaving our rivers. Some of this work is summarized in Action H3 of our APR, and also within our final Recovery Plan (see sub-actions under C1.0, C2.0, C3.0 and actions F3.2, F3.3 and F3.6 in USFWS & NMFS, 2018): U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (USFWS & NMFS). 2018. Recovery Plan for the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*): Final Plan for the 2009 ESA Listing.

Q4. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked United States (6 May):

It appears as if there has been improvements in Narraguagus river since 2012 for the salmon population. This is one of the smaller rivers habitating salmon in the United States. Has any measures been taken in Narraguagus river since the population has improved? If so which?

○ **A4. *United States response (13 May):***

Yes, habitat restoration efforts continue throughout the Narraguagus River, much like they do in all our rivers that continue to support salmon. These efforts include restoring stream connectivity by removing any remaining man-made barriers and restoring physical habitats damaged by past land use practices.

Regarding the improved runs in the Narraguagus, the Narraguagus 2SW return rate has remained below its 1995-present mean value in all but two years since 2010. The two values that were above the mean were the two highest estimates in the time series and a significant deviation from the recent estimates. The Penobscot River has remained at low levels below its 1995-present mean value since 2010. As such, we do not think that the ratio of Narraguagus return rates to Penobscot return rates is an appropriate comparison as the ratio may increase with an increase in Narraguagus return rate and or a decrease in Penobscot return rate.

Q5. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked United States (6 May):

Are these potential measures different from the measures taken in other habitat rivers, such as Pnobscot? And why?

○ **A5. *United States response (13 May):***

In general, habitat restoration activities in Maine rivers are guided by process-based restoration principles described in Roni et al. (2002), which is cited below. This is a four step process of: 1) protecting the most important habitats; 2) ensuring they are well connected (remove dams that block access to them); 3) restoring the ecological function; and, 4) enhancing habitats as it is needed. For many of the larger rivers, including the Penobscot River, we are working within step 2 (ensuring habitats are well connected). In some of our smaller watersheds, including the Narraguagus where many of the connectivity issues have already been addressed, we have moved to the next phase of restoring and enhancing freshwater habitats.

Roni, P., Beechie, T. J., Bilby, R. E., Leonetti, F. E., Pollock, M. M., & Pess, G. R. (2002). A review of stream restoration techniques and a hierarchical strategy for prioritizing restoration in Pacific Northwest watersheds. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*, 22(1), 1-20.

Q6. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked United States (6 May):

There is only one standing dam in this Narraguagus River, and the salmon seem to have only that barrier to pass during migration. When three dams have been removed from the Penobscot river, what is the reasoning behind keeping the only dam in Narraguagus river?

○ **A6. *United States response (13 May):***

The Cherryfield Dam is the single dam remaining on the Narraguagus River, and it was originally constructed as an ice control dam to protect downstream communities from flooding during the winter and early spring months. It contains fish passage, although it still presents some challenges for Atlantic salmon. Efforts are underway to evaluate the feasibility of removing the Cherryfield Dam. While we are supportive of efforts to remove the dam from a salmon conservation perspective, we understand that it is necessary to consider not only fish passage needs but how the dam serves to protect the communities from floods and ice downstream. We will provide any relevant updates in future versions of our APR.

The United States set a goal of restoring 5,000 units (1Unit=100 M²) , equivalent 50 hectares or about 123 acres, of salmon habitat by 2024. However, due to the lack of prerequisites attached to this goal, it is essentially possible to reach it without contributing to the conservation of salmon. Prior to this goal, the removal of Bangor dam (1995), Veazie dam (2013) and Great Works dam (2012) has provided approximately 50,000 units, a factor 10 of the current goal, of unobstructed river, explained as salmon habitat. However, there is not accounted for the fact that other dams still obstruct Penobscot river and the breeding sites are still challenging to reach.

Q7. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked United States (6 May):

The United States set a goal of restoring 5,000 units (1 Unit=100 M²), equivalent 50 hectares or about 123 acres, of salmon habitat by 2024. However, due to the lack of prerequisites attached to this goal, it is essentially possible to reach it without contributing to the conservation of salmon. Prior to this goal, the removal of Bangor dam (1995), Veazie dam (2013) and Great Works dam (2012) has provided approximately 50,000 units, a factor 10 of the current goal, of unobstructed river,

explained as salmon habitat. However, there is not accounted for the fact that other dams still obstruct Penobscot river and the breeding sites are still challenging to reach. How much of this 5000 unit goal is expected to occur in the remaining U.S. identified salmon rivers (Penobscot river, Narraguagus river, Sheepscot river, East Machias river)?

○ **A7. *United States response (13 May):***

We are again a little confused by the preamble to these questions. The removal of Bangor Dam occurred in 1978, and passage was fully restored at that time. The final removal of the remnant debris from the old structure of the dam occurred in 1995. Further, we are not sure where the estimate of 50,000 units of habitat came from in relation to the removal of the Great Works and Veazie dams. The Great Works and Veazie dams were the lowest dams on the river at the time, and their removal has resulted in full access to 11 miles of lower river mainstem habitat, which contained essentially no viable salmon rearing habitat. However, the access to all the upstream habitat was greatly improved with the removal of these two dams and has resulted in improved connectivity within the system. Regardless, we will do our best to answer the questions below.

All of the 5000 habitat unit goal described in our Implementation Plan must occur within the range of the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment where wild Atlantic salmon remain. The 5000 unit goal in our Implementation Plan is explicitly linked to the recovery goals in our Final Recovery Plan (USFWS & NMFS, 2018, cited below). The goals in the Recovery Plan describe criteria that define very stringent standards for passage effectiveness at dams that would allow for upstream habitat to be counted towards our recovery goals. Furthermore, only habitats considered to be highly suitable for Atlantic salmon spawning and juvenile rearing can count towards these goals. The remaining dams in the lower Penobscot still have not achieved the passage effectiveness standard, and, therefore, habitat upstream from them does not count toward our recovery goals. We are continually working on a variety of habitat connectivity and dam passage improvement efforts as outlined within our APR to allow salmon access to the habitat mistakenly referenced within the preamble to these questions.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (USFWS & NMFS). 2018. Recovery Plan for the Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment of Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*): Final Plan for the 2009 ESA Listing.

Q8. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked United States (6 May):

How much of this goal will be executed in places where it can facilitate migration to and from breeding sites or in quality habitats?

○ **A8. *United States response (13 May):***

Since our Implementation Plan is tied to our recovery goals in our Final Recovery Plan, and our recovery plan explicitly states that only habitats considered suitable for spawning and rearing count towards our habitat goals for recovery, all of the 5000 units described in our Implementation Plan must be in places that facilitate migration to and from breeding sites.

(ii) Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans

This Agenda item allows for decisions to be taken in light of the Annual Progress

Report Special Session, if required.

The Council may wish to:

- ***request that the Chair and Secretary of the IP / APR Review Group arrange a meeting in April 2022 to review the 2021 APRs; and***
- ***consider actions arising from the Special Session.***

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

d) **International Year of the Salmon Legacy Activities**

In 2016, the NASCO Council decided to hold an International Year of the Salmon (IYS) in partnership with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). The focal year for the IYS was 2019 with some efforts continuing to 2022. The aim of the IYS was to raise awareness of the factors driving salmon abundance, the environmental and anthropogenic challenges they face, and the measures being taken to address these.

In 2019, Council agreed that:

‘with regard to the legacy of the IYS, a periodic Symposium and State of Salmon Report should be delivered by the Secretariat. The other work of the Secretariat needs to be considered when determining when to hold the Symposium and update the State of Salmon report’, [CNL\(19\)46](#).

In 2020, Council agreed that ‘a joint NASCO / NPAFC IYS Concluding Symposium should be held in Vancouver, Canada, in September 2022, if possible, or October 2022 at the latest’ and ‘to accept the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee of the joint NASCO / NPAFC IYS Concluding Symposium’, [CNL\(20\)58](#), paragraph 5.2.

Consideration of the Future for the NASCO Rivers Database, [CNL\(21\)13](#), is also relevant to this Agenda item.

The Council may wish to take decisions in line with Council’s agreement on IYS legacy activities in 2019 and 2020:

- ***to request that the Secretariat make proposals for the timing and structure of the next State of North Atlantic Salmon report, to be agreed at the 2022 Annual Meeting;***
- ***to approve the NASCO / NPAFC IYS Concluding Symposium Steering Committee’s choice of venue; and***
- ***to approve the Symposium dates, 4-6 October 2022.***

The following papers are available:

- International Year of the Salmon Legacy Activities, [CNL\(21\)19](#); and
- The Future for the NASCO Rivers Database, [CNL\(21\)13](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

e) **Progress in Implementing the ‘Action Plan for Taking Forward the Recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, [CNL\(13\)38](#)**

In 2013, the Council adopted an ‘Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO’, [CNL\(13\)38](#). Comprehensive progress reports on the recommendations contained in the

Action Plan have been submitted to the Council each year since 2014.

- *no decision is required.*

The following paper is available:

- EPR Action Plan, [CNL\(21\)20](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

f) **Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry**

In 2013, the Council agreed that the regular meetings of the International Salmon Farming Association (ISFA) / NASCO Liaison Group would not continue but that if a need arose, consideration would be given to convening a joint *ad hoc* group. The Council decided to retain an item on its Agenda during which a representative of ISFA could be invited to participate in an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon.

ISFA has been invited to contribute a paper or written statement which will be made available on the website, if provided. This year a representative of ISFA was also invited to speak at the TBSS (Agenda Item 5a)(i)).

- *no decision is required.*

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

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

This is addressed under Agenda item 3d), Scientific Advice from ICES, above.

h) **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.

In 2017, the President of NASCO wrote to France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) noting NASCO's concerns and encouraging France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to become a member of NASCO. In response, France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) noted that it wished to retain its observer status at NASCO and committed to providing NASCO with information on the fishery and taking NASCO recommendations on catch taken by communities dependent on fishing into account ([CNL\(18\)17](#), Annex 1-3).

- *no decision is required.*

The following paper is available:

- Management and Sampling of the St Pierre and Miquelon Salmon Fishery, [CNL\(21\)21](#).

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this Council Agenda Item. However, inter-sessional correspondence that took place for the North Atlantic Commission is set out in the NAC Annotated Agenda, NAC(21)07A.

i) **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.*’ Reports will be produced for each Commission and made available to Council before its last meeting, for information only.

The Chair of each Commission will make a short presentation highlighting the work of the Commission.

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

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

6. Other Business

Election of President

The President of NASCO, Serge Doucet (Canada), has resigned, to take effect from the end of the 2021 NASCO Annual Meeting. In accordance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, the Council will be asked to elect a President.

The Vice-President, Arnaud Peyronnet (EU), is eligible for election as President. If so elected, the Council will, therefore, need to elect a new Vice-President.

- ***the Council may wish to elect a new President (and Vice-President).***

No background papers are produced for this item. Work to seek candidates and Parties’ support has been conducted by the Secretary.

7. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

The Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting in 2022 is being planned in Edinburgh.

The Council will be asked to confirm the dates of, and consider the venue for, its Fortieth Annual Meeting in 2023.

- ***the Council may wish to agree on dates of the 2023 meeting; 6 – 9 June 2023 are proposed.***

It is proposed that any Party / jurisdiction that wishes to offer to host the Annual Meeting in 2023 contact the Secretariat in advance of the Annual Meeting.

8. 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. A summary of business conducted inter-sessionally via correspondence will be annexed to the Report after the Meeting.

- ***the Council may wish to adopt the Report of the Meeting.***

9. Close of the Meeting

The President will close the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
21 May 2021

Summary of Council Decisions

Agenda Item	Decision	Paper No.
Adoption of the Agenda	The Agenda was adopted via correspondence on 30 April	CNL(21)25
2. Report of the Finance and Administration Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accept the Audited Accounts for 2020; • adopt a budget for 2022; • appoint auditors for the 2021 – 2023 / 2025 accounts; • decide on any actions required under NASCO’s MoUs with ICES and / or the OSPAR Commission; • appoint auditors for the 2021 – 2023 / 2025 accounts; and • adopt the report of the FAC. 	CNL(21)06 Issued at meeting
3b. Report on the Activities of the Organization in 2020	Adopt the Report on the Activities of the Organization	CNL(21)10
3e. Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board	Adopt the Report of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board	CNL(21)12 Issued at meeting
3f. Consideration of the NASCO Rivers Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to confirm that the Council agrees that ‘NASCO should be the source of information on salmon stock status around the North Atlantic...’ • to agree the need to develop a consistent and robust approach to presenting information on stock status; and • to agree the approach for the next update of the status of salmon in North Atlantic rivers. 	CNL(21)13
3g. Report of the Standing Scientific Committee	Adopt the Standing Scientific Committee recommendations	

5a)(ii) Decisions Taken Following the Theme-based Special Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider actions arising from the 2021 TBSS, if required; • decide whether to hold a TBSS in 2022, and on what topic; and • establish a Steering Committee to plan the 2022 TBSS. 	
5b. Report of the Inter-Sessional Implementation Plan Special Session	Clarification is sought on a number of issues, as set out in the Report of the IP Webinar (and copied in the body of this document, under item 5b).	CNL(21)56
5c)(ii) Decisions Taken Regarding the Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports under the 2019 – 2024 Implementation Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • request that the Chair and Secretary of the IP / APR Review Group arrange a meeting in April 2022 to review the 2021 APRs; and • consider actions arising from the Special Session. 	CNL(21)17
5d. International Year of the Salmon Legacy Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • request that the Secretariat make proposals for the timing and structure of the next State of North Atlantic Salmon report, to be agreed at the 2022 Annual Meeting; • to approve the NASCO / NPAFC IYS Concluding Symposium Steering Committee’s choice of venue; and • to approve the Symposium dates, 4-6 October 2022. 	CNL(21)19
6. Other Business	Elect a new President (and Vice-President)	
7. Date and Place of the Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a decision on the dates of the 2023 meeting is required; 6 – 9 June 2023 are proposed. 	
8. Report of the Meeting	Adopt the Report of the Meeting	Issued at meeting