



MoU with the OSPAR Commission

Purpose

This paper provides information on work being carried out in OSPAR that may be of interest to NASCO Parties.

Decision

No formal decisions are required.

Issues of Interest to NASCO

The operation of the MoU between NASCO and the OSPAR Commission, which came into effect on 5 August 2013, continues to work well, with improved exchanges of information in the last few years.

There are four issues which may be of interest to NASCO currently. These are:

- OSPAR Recommendation 2016/3 on salmon;
- designation of a new Marine Protected Area in the North-East Atlantic;
- request to ICES for advice on salmon; and
- a status assessment of three diadromous species (Allis shad, Atlantic salmon, European eel).

OSPAR Recommendation on Salmon

OSPAR Recommendation 2016/3 on furthering the protection and conservation of the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) in Regions I, II, III and IV of the OSPAR maritime area became effective on 24 June 2016. The recommendation reflected comments and edits provided by NASCO, although NASCO did not endorse or take a policy position on the recommendation. Under the recommendation, the Contracting Parties of the OSPAR Commission are to report on the implementation of the Recommendation by 31 December 2019 and every six years thereafter. Once the Contracting Parties to OSPAR make their reports to the OSPAR Secretariat, NASCO will receive, per the terms of our MoU, any relevant information from OSPAR.

A review of the implementation of this recommendation was undertaken in 2019 and OSPAR has been working on analysing the information that Contracting Parties had reported. The intention was to consider the first draft of an overview assessment of the implementation reporting at OSPAR's Biodiversity Committee (BDC) meeting from 12-16 April but this did not happen. The OSPAR Secretariat is unclear when it will be considered. Information is, therefore, unavailable to NASCO at this time.

Designation of a new Marine Protected Area in the North-East Atlantic

A discussion began in OSPAR in 2018 on the possibility of establishing a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the central Atlantic Ocean. The proposed MPA is called the 'North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount Marine Protected Area' (NACES MPA). The site is located in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) of the OSPAR Maritime Area. It represents a marine area of near pristine open ocean habitat that provides an important feeding ground for many species of seabirds in the OSPAR Maritime Area. Its conservation vision is 'Maintenance and, where appropriate, restoration of seabird populations and the integrity of the various

ecosystems and their processes that support those populations of the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount MPA (NACES MPA).

The analysis, to which NASCO contributed, is now complete and OSPAR agreed at their 2020 Annual Meeting to publish the ‘background’ nomination proforma document for the NACES MPA, which is now available on OSPAR’s [website](#). The aim is to secure agreement to designate it at the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting from 27 September to 1 October 2021. The proforma document includes the following text:

‘The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) noted the ongoing work in OSPAR on developing the nomination proforma and provided information in relation to human activities regulated by the organisation. Under the terms of the NASCO Convention, fishing for Atlantic salmon is prohibited in the identified site, among other areas of the North Atlantic. In addition, information provided to NASCO regularly from surveillance flights and other MCS operations shows that no IUU fishing for Atlantic salmon in the identified site or elsewhere on the high seas in recent years has been detected. The last time IUU fishing for Atlantic salmon was known to occur in the North Atlantic was in the early 1990s, and NASCO took decisive action to eliminate it.’

Request to ICES for advice on salmon

It became known to the Secretariat in early 2020 that OSPAR was thinking about generating a request for ICES Advice on salmon, among other species. A proposal was discussed at OSPAR’s Biodiversity Committee (BDC) meeting in 2020 on four diadromous species including salmon but was then not taken forward as a request to ICES. The OSPAR Executive Secretary has said he will keep NASCO informed of any developments.

Status assessment of three diadromous species

Although no request for advice on salmon was put to ICES, France is leading on an OSPAR status assessment of salmon, together with a number of other diadromous species, in 2021 and the OSPAR Secretariat thought this might be something in which NASCO might be interested in being involved. The aim is to have most of the discussion at a workshop that France is in the process of organizing. The workshop on the diadromous species Allis shad, Atlantic salmon, and European eel will, therefore, be a working meeting to prepare a draft of the status assessment. Status assessments are a fairly new type of product in OSPAR, only a few have been published to date, available here: <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/committee-assessments/biodiversity-committee/status-assesments/>.

The purpose of the status assessments is to provide a ‘light-touch’ overview of whether there is any change in the status of the protected feature or the main threats. This assessment would be used as a basis for further discussions in OSPAR on what further management action might be needed. Keeping this ‘light-touch’ ambition in mind, the workshops have emerged as a good way for the lead countries to prepare draft assessments. The OSPAR Secretariat is not involved in organizing them, other than facilitating communication with invitations. The lead country organises the workshop, and most of these have been very informal expert forums for discussion with a view to agree on the content to be presented in the assessment. They have typically been one-day events. However the Covid-19 pandemic has of course had some impact, and the OSPAR Secretariat believes France and Norway, who are working together on the diadromous species, envisage one or two online meetings to allow for review of what has been drafted. The OSPAR Secretariat would be more than happy to facilitate contact between NASCO and the lead country so that all relevant information and expertise can be brought into

the drafting of the assessments. As an Observer, OSPAR has stated that NASCO is more than welcome to engage with the work and bring its knowledge and expertise to the workshop.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
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