



Council

CNL(20)20

***Proposals for Addressing the Future Management Challenges to NASCO in
the Report from the Tromsø IYS Symposium***

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine the recommendations of the IYS Symposium Steering Committee and propose how they might be prioritised and addressed.

Decisions

Council may wish to agree how to respond to each of the 11 recommendations below.

Background

As part of the International Year of the Salmon, a two-day Symposium entitled ‘*Managing the Atlantic Salmon in a Rapidly Changing Environment*’ was held immediately prior to the 2019 Annual Meeting of NASCO. The Symposium focused on the challenges facing Atlantic salmon and possible responses that can help conserve the resource in a rapidly changing environment. The Chair of the Symposium Steering Committee presented its report to Council which contained recommendations to address future management challenges ([CNL\(19\)16](#)).

Council agreed that the President would develop a process for Parties to discuss and agree inter-sessionally how to consider the recommendations ([CNL\(19\)46](#)). This item was due to be discussed at the Heads of Delegation inter-sessional meeting planned for March 2020. However, that meeting was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Recommendations

The Symposium Steering Committee’s report contains advice for all agencies and organizations who are involved in the conservation and protection of wild Atlantic salmon in addition to the recommendations for NASCO.

Much of the advice for managers and organizations is linked to the recommendations to NASCO to update and modernise guidelines. Therefore, action taken by NASCO in response to the recommendations is likely to help managers and organizations take on board the advice.

The table below considers how each of Steering Committee’s recommendations to NASCO might be addressed.

	Recommendation	Options on how to address
1	To remain relevant in a period of rapid environmental and social change NASCO needs a renewed strategy to respond to the challenges facing wild Atlantic salmon. To begin this process NASCO should specifically identify strategic activities to deal with climate change and its cascading effects on salmon and salmon habitat, possibly by updating its 2005 ‘Strategic Approach for NASCO’s ‘Next Steps’.	a) Council may wish to set up a Working Group to update NASCO’s Strategic Approach; b) Council may wish to specify that this recommendation forms part of the Terms of Reference of the Third Performance Review; c) Council may wish to set up a Working Group with NPAFC to identify strategic activities to deal with climate change and its cascading effects on salmon and

		salmon habitat, given that these effects are felt across the Northern hemisphere.
2	<p>Given the advances that have been made in the last 15 years in understanding genetic effects of artificial population supplementation, i.e. stocking, and given the conclusions of the 2017 NASCO ‘Special Session on Understanding the Risks and Benefits of Hatchery and Stocking Activities to Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations’, NASCO should immediately update its 2004 ‘Guidelines on the Use of Stock Rebuilding Programmes in the Context of the Precautionary Management of Salmon Stocks’ with reference to the summary of advice given to Agencies and Organizations (No. 4).</p>	<p>This may be considered a priority since the Guidelines are 15 years old. Updating has been recommended by two Steering Committees. In addition to the recommendations of the IYS Symposium Steering Committee, the Steering Committee for the 2017 Theme-based Special Session recommended ‘that the Council may wish to consider the need for revisions to its Guidelines for Stocking Atlantic Salmon and options for improving exchange of information among Parties on the effectiveness of stocking programmes’.</p> <p>Council may wish to commission an expert to revise the Guidelines in light of the 2017 Theme-based Special Session and the 2019 IYS Symposium.</p>
3	<p>Given the importance of habitat and water quality conservation as a key strategy to conserve salmon into the future, NASCO should update its 2010 ‘Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat’. Updated guidelines should not only consider the physical environment and include estuaries but should also seek to optimize water quality by considering the chemical and biological quality (e.g. toxic substances, diffuse agricultural pollution, persistent organic pollutants) as well as availability and distribution of prey in the future.</p>	<p>These Guidelines are more recent than the Stocking Guidelines. There is no Theme-based Special Session report on which to base an update.</p> <p>a) Council may consider a Theme-based Special Session on the subject, possibly in 2022, to inform an update of the Guidelines.</p> <p>b) alternatively, Council may wish to commission an expert to revise the Guidelines, either before or after a Theme-based Special Session on the subject.</p>

4	<p>Given the advances in the understanding of human dimensions and the importance of incorporating indigenous and local knowledge into salmon conservation, NASCO should update and modernize its 2004 ‘Guidelines for Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Decisions under the Precautionary Approach’. This update should include recent advances in human dimensions and the incorporation of traditional and local knowledge and indigenous perspectives.</p>	<p>These Guidelines are now 15 years old. The human dimension of conservation is increasingly seen as vital, as discussed in the IYS Symposium. This also forms an important part of NASCO’s State of North Atlantic Salmon Report (2019).</p> <p>a) in 2019 NASCO commissioned a report ‘The Social, Economic and Cultural values of wild Atlantic salmon. A review of the literature for the period 2009-2019 and an assessment of changes in values.’ Council may wish to ask the authors to update and modernise the Guidelines based on this work.</p> <p>b) Council may wish to hold a future Theme-based Special Session on human dimensions and how traditional and local knowledge and indigenous perspectives might be incorporated into NASCO’s work.</p>
5	<p>Recognizing the importance of salmon to indigenous peoples and the role that indigenous peoples play in salmon conservation, NASCO should improve the participation of indigenous people in NASCO.</p>	<p>Council may wish to establish a Working Group to review how NASCO currently engages with indigenous peoples, and how it could improve. Council could seek greater communication with these stakeholders and agree ways to do that.</p>
6	<p>NASCO should continue efforts, begun under the International Year of the Salmon, to raise global awareness about the status of wild Atlantic salmon, the threats they face, potential solutions, and actions that can be taken.</p>	<p>NASCO is already raising awareness of issues around wild Atlantic salmon through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dissemination of the State of North Atlantic Salmon report via printed and online access; • development and launch of the redesigned NASCO website; • consideration of how to present stock status consistently across the North Atlantic; and • education and outreach activities funded under the IYS, which are ongoing and will be reported at the 2020 Annual Meeting and beyond if deemed necessary. <p>In 2019 Council agreed that a periodic Symposium and State of Salmon Report should be delivered (CNL(19(46))).</p>

7	<p>NASCO should facilitate co-operation between Parties when there is a need for international collaboration to prevent or reduce the threat to salmon stocks from invasive species.</p>	<p>Under the IP / APR process, in question 3.3 in the IP template for the third reporting cycle, jurisdictions are asked ‘What management measures are planned to protect wild Atlantic salmon and its habitats from ... (b) invasive aquatic species?’.</p> <p>In accordance with the ‘Strategic Approach for NASCO’s Next Steps’, an agenda item – New or Emerging Opportunities for, or Threats to, Salmon Conservation and Management – is included on the Council’s Agenda annually and ICES reports to Council on this matter. There is currently no established mechanism for collaboration.</p> <p>a) Council may wish to establish an <i>ad-hoc</i> expert network or Working Group to address this;</p> <p>b) a mechanism could be developed by the Secretariat whereby Parties contact the Secretariat in the event of an issue arising. The Secretariat would then contact the network / Working Group members to share knowledge and co-ordinate action where appropriate.</p>
8	<p>Given the continued impacts of domestic salmon farming on wild salmon, NASCO should strengthen compliance to the agreed international goals of ‘100% farmed fish to be retained in all production facilities and, 100% of farms to have effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms’. This is as stated in the 2009 ‘Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon’.</p>	<p>In agreeing to the Theme-based Special Session on Aquaculture in 2020, Council has acknowledged concerns relating to compliance with the International Goals on sea lice and containment of farmed salmon.</p> <p>The TBSS Steering Committee’s intention is to examine the constraints faced by Parties / jurisdictions to understand better why the NASCO / ISFA International Goals relating to aquaculture have not yet been met, and to highlight best practice to overcome these constraints.</p> <p>a) Council may feel that agreement to hold this TBSS is an appropriate response to this recommendation; or</p> <p>b) Council may wish to reserve judgement until after the TBSS discussion.</p> <p>Given the Covid-19 pandemic, it is uncertain when the TBSS will take place.</p>

9	<p>NASCO should establish a new goal to prevent the spread of disease pathogens from fish farms to wild fish consistent with the existing goals on containment and sea lice in the 2009 “Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon”, and the 2016 “Theme-based Special Session: Addressing Impacts of Salmon Farming on Wild Atlantic Salmon”.</p>	<p>Article 5 of Williamsburg Resolution states: ‘Each Party shall take measures ... to: ... minimise the risk of disease and parasite transmission between all aquaculture activities, introductions and transfers, and wild salmon stocks.’</p> <p>ICES also reports annually on this to NASCO.</p> <p>However, Council may wish to commission work to examine the extent of the problem, beginning with scoping out the scientific literature in this area, before it decides to introduce further guidance.</p>
10	<p>Given the need to identify the importance of reduced sea survival due to ocean ecosystem effects versus human impacts in rivers and near-coastal areas and to predict spawner numbers for management, NASCO should support and continue to encourage research on mortality for Atlantic salmon at the beginning and the end of the marine phase of their life cycle in estuaries and near-coastal areas as well as on the high seas.</p>	<p>NASCO supports and encourages such research.</p> <p>A review of the SALSEA-Track Programme and the Inventory of Research Relating to Salmon Mortality in the Sea took place from 18 – 20 February 2020. Council may wish to consider this recommendation in light of the review. The report of the Working Group will be presented to the Board in June for its consideration.</p> <p>The Inventory currently has 23 ongoing projects related to this area of research with 32 having been completed.</p> <p>Voluntary contributions from the European Union in the form of grants to NASCO have funded three projects in this area (the SMOLTrack projects). The Governments of the United States and Canada have recently provided funds to support such research and the EU has informed NASCO of further available grant funding.</p>
11	<p>Given the success of this Symposium and the positive feedback the Committee has received from participants, NASCO should consider hosting similar events in the future.</p>	<p>The Council agreed (CNL(19(46)) that ‘with regard to the legacy of the IYS, a periodic Symposium and State of Salmon Report should be delivered by the Secretariat’.</p>

Secretariat
Edinburgh
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