

Submission by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

Contribution to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, as mandated by United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/144 of 12 December 2024, entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea”.

Background

NASCO is a single-species (Atlantic salmon) organization, set up under the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean. Under the Convention, fishing for salmon is prohibited beyond 12 nautical miles from the baselines (with exceptions at West Greenland and the Faroe Islands), thus creating an enormous area in the North Atlantic free from any directed salmon fishing. Regulatory measures or Decisions have been adopted for the distant-waters fisheries in most years since NASCO was established in 1983 and have resulted in major reductions in harvests. There have also been major restrictions on fisheries by States of Origin. Those salmon fisheries which do occur within the permitted areas have been assessed by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) as having ‘no, or only minor, influence on the marine ecosystem’.

Adoption of Measures

At the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO, held in Cardiff, UK between 3 and 6 June 2025, the West Greenland Commission agreed that the ‘Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland’, [WGC\(22\)10](#), adopted in 2022, would continue to apply in 2025.

The North-East Atlantic Commission confirmed that the ‘Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2024 / 2025 and 2025 / 2026’, [NEA\(24\)14](#), would also continue to apply in 2025 / 2026. This sets out that the North-East Atlantic Commission:

‘HEREBY DECIDES: Not to set a quota for the salmon fishery in the Faroese Fisheries Zone for 2024 / 2025. This decision will also apply in 2025 / 2026 unless any member of the Commission requests its reconsideration based on a review of the scientific advice provided by ICES. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) retains the right to conduct a scientific research fishery in the Faroese Fishery Zone.’

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has been requested to provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2026 – 2028 at West Greenland and the 2026 / 2027 – 2028 / 2029 fishing seasons at the Faroe Islands, to inform discussion at the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of NASCO of any potential new regulatory measures or Decisions relating to those salmon fisheries.

Other Actions

The Forty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO

A number of recommendations arising from the ‘[Third Performance Review](#)’ of NASCO (conducted in 2022 / 2023) and subsequent follow-up work remained outstanding and were addressed at the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO in June 2025.

Several of these related to ocean affairs and / or the law of the sea, including:

- The Action Plan associated with ‘The Future of NASCO – a Ten-Year Strategy’, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), has been updated;

- ICES has been asked to gather data concerning bycatch information and, if possible, estimates of bycaught Atlantic salmon at the scale of ecoregions across the entire NASCO Convention area; and
- the Council of NASCO has adopted ‘NASCO’s Position on Convention Change’, CNL(25)52. This will be made available shortly on the [NASCO website](#).

Report on the Effect of Salmon Aquaculture on Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations

A NASCO and EU-funded study to provide the latest scientific knowledge on the impacts of sea lice and escaped farmed salmon has been undertaken and the results will be published in two peer-reviewed papers:

- ‘Does exposure to sea lice from aquaculture have a population-reducing effect on wild Atlantic salmon? A systematic review’ to be submitted to the journal ‘Fish and Fisheries’ in summer 2025; and
- ‘Genetic introgression of farmed Atlantic salmon in wild salmon populations throughout its native range’, to be submitted to the journal ‘Nature Communications’, in summer 2025.

A policy brief, ‘[Effect of Aquaculture on Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations](#)’, provided by the Expert Groups that undertook the studies, is available.

International Co-operation on Marine Research

The Council of NASCO has adopted revised Terms of Reference for its International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) and its Scientific Advisory Group (the SAG), ICR(25)12 (which will shortly be made available on the [Board’s website](#)). The main purpose of this revision was to allow the inclusion of designees from NASCO’s newly accredited Indigenous Peoples’ representatives and institutions in the work of the Board and SAG.