

## **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 77/248 of 30 December 2022, 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 Fortieth Annual Meeting of NASCO, held in Moncton, Canada between 5 and 8 June 2023, 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 2023.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea has been requested to provide catch options or alternative management advice for the West Greenland salmon fishery for 2024-2026.

The North-East Atlantic Commission confirmed that the ‘Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2021 / 2022, 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024’, [NEA\(21\)16](#), would also continue to apply in 2023 / 2024. 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 2021 / 2022. This decision will also apply in 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024 unless the application of the Framework of Indicators shows that a re-assessment is warranted. 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 has been requested to provide catch options or alternative management advice for the 2024 / 2025 – 2026 / 2027 fishing seasons at Faroe Islands, to inform discussion at the Forty-First Annual Meeting of NASCO of any potential new Decision relating to the salmon fishery there.

### **Other Actions**

#### ***Third Performance Review of NASCO***

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/105, 2006, contained specific recommendations to: urge further efforts by RFMOs to strengthen and modernise their mandates and measures adopted to implement modern approaches to fisheries management; urge RFMOs to improve transparency and ensure that their decision-making processes were fair and transparent, rely on the best scientific information available and incorporate the

precautionary and ecosystem approaches; and urge States, through their participation in RFMOs, to undertake performance reviews of those RFMOs using transparent criteria.

In 2016, the Resumed Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks recommended that States and regional economic integration organizations individually and collectively through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements:

- a) undertake regular performance reviews which include some element of independent evaluation, while seeking relevant information from all stakeholders;
- b) develop best practice guidelines for conducting performance reviews and implementing their results, inter alia, where appropriate, through the use of Kobe-like processes by other RFMOs, while ensuring consistency and harmonisation to the extent possible;
- c) establish mechanisms for follow-up actions in response to performance reviews, including the implementation of the recommendations, when necessary, in a timely manner, including such facets as transparency, publicity and accountability, and ensure that information on actions taken to implement the recommendations emanating from performance reviews are made publicly available.

The fourteenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (the Agreement) took place in New York from 2-3 May 2019. The informal consultations focused on the topic ‘Performance reviews of regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements’, in accordance with paragraph 55 of UN resolution 72/72 of 5 December 2017 and reiterated in paragraph 60 of resolution 73/125, with a view to understanding, sharing experiences and identifying best practices for the consideration of States parties to the Agreement.

Participants at the fourteenth round of Informal Consultations noted the following points:

- effective performance of RFMOs is key to the effective management of the resources managed under the RFMOs;
- performance reviews should be ambitious and effective and have an organized follow-up;
- an independent performance review process has been one of the most positive things to strengthen RFMOs.

NASCO is the first RFMO to undergo three performance reviews. Its third performance review was undertaken by a panel of external experts in 2022 and the panel’s [report](#) was delivered in March 2023. At its Fortieth Annual Meeting, the Council of NASCO considered the process for implementing the recommendations of the Performance Review Panel and adopted Terms of Reference for a Working Group on the Future of NASCO, CNL(23)70. This Working Group will develop a Draft Strategy for NASCO and a Draft Action Plan to propose a follow up process for NASCO’s third performance review for discussion and agreement by the Council of NASCO in 2024.

***International Co-operation in Atlantic Salmon Management***

Iceland has replied to an invitation from the previous President of NASCO, indicating that it will seek full membership of NASCO from 1 January 2024, increasing international co-operation in Atlantic salmon management, CNL(23)12).

***International Co-operation on Marine Research***

The Council of NASCO has adopted Revised Terms of Reference for its International Atlantic Salmon Research Board, ICR(23)18.