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**Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting
Gijon, Asturias, Spain
June 2-6, 2008**

**North Atlantic Countries Commit to Actions to Save Wild Salmon
International Cooperation At All Time High**

The Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) concluded on June 6 in Gijon, Spain. NASCO made significant advancements in a critical program of North Atlantic-wide research. Through the SALSEA (Salmon at Sea) Programme, investigations are underway regarding the reasons for high mortality of Atlantic salmon during their sea phase. Many European and North American countries committed significant funding, ship time, and scientific personnel to support integrated research programs.

“Uncovering the reasons wild Atlantic salmon are dying in great numbers at sea is perhaps the most important step NASCO and its members can take for the species,” said NASCO President Dr. Ken Whelan. “The realization of coordinated international research programs across the North Atlantic demonstrates an incredible level of international cooperation and commitment to ensuring the future of this magnificent fish. It is an exciting time to be involved with Atlantic salmon.”

In a groundbreaking step, NASCO members finalized plans articulating their salmon conservation commitments. Countries also provided detailed plans focusing on management of salmon fisheries. Both plans were reviewed and assessed in advance of the meeting by groups that included government and non-government representatives. The reporting and review process ensures a high level of transparency in the salmon conservation actions of countries and improves accountability. In 2009, countries will report on habitat protection, and, in 2010, on their management of the impacts of salmon aquaculture and related activities on wild Atlantic salmon populations.

“NASCO is really at the forefront of international fisheries organizations in promoting adherence by members to conservation agreements,” stressed Dr. Whelan. “I know of no other Organization where the members report on conservation activities and plans in such detail and where implementation of agreements is so well scrutinized. This is yet another example of the commitment of NASCO members to the conservation and recovery of the wild Atlantic salmon.”

To protect declining populations of Atlantic salmon, Greenland and the Faroe Islands agreed to manage their salmon fisheries in a precautionary manner in accordance with scientific advice. No fishery has occurred in Faroe Islands since 2000 and the West

Greenland fishery will be limited to internal consumption, which is estimated to be about 20 tonnes.

A new President, Mr. Arni Isaksson of the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority was elected and Ms Mary Colligan of the US National Marine Fisheries Service was elected Vice-President.

Notes for editors

NASCO is an intergovernmental organization formed to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean. NASCO's members are Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union (which currently has 27 member states), Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. Representatives of these Parties and from 13 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 2 inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) also attended the meeting.

The report of the 2008 NASCO Annual Meeting with annexes and other information on Atlantic salmon and the Organization will be made available on the NASCO website: www.nasco.int. In addition, detailed information on coordinated international research on salmon at sea can be found at www.salmonatsea.com.

The next Annual Meeting of NASCO will be held from 1 to 5 June 2009 in Norway.

For further information contact:

Dr M L Windsor
NASCO
11 Rutland Square
Edinburgh
EH1 2AS

Tel: Int+44 131 228 2551
Fax: Int+44 131 228 4384
E-mail hq@nasco.int