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North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)
28th Annual Meeting, Ilulissat, Greenland
4th – 6th June 2011

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

Working Through Midnight Sun to Conserve Wild Atlantic Salmon: Countries Conclude International Negotiations North of the Arctic Circle

Today, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) completed its 28th annual meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland. As a feeding ground for wild Atlantic salmon, Greenland's waters are an important component in the life cycle of this emotive, beautiful, culturally and ecologically important species. Following a 40 year decline to the lowest levels on record, Atlantic salmon have in recent years shown slight improvements in the numbers returning to a limited number of rivers. While it is far too early for this to be taken as a sign of a recovery, it is encouraging and may reflect the extensive conservation efforts taken by NASCO's members. In recognition of the importance of NASCO's work to Greenlandic fishermen, delegates attending the NASCO meeting from around the North Atlantic met with Greenland's hunters and fishermen's organization (known as KNAPK) at its request just after the official opening of the conference.

Salmon at Sea and the Salmon Summit, 2011

Atlantic salmon are a unique species and their evolution has led to the development of numerous genetically distinct populations within the Atlantic stock. Monitoring has revealed that high rates of mortality occur while salmon are at sea. To address this, NASCO implemented the largest salmon research programme to date, SALSEA. Salmon collected from across the North Atlantic are being DNA fingerprinted to identify their region of origin, including, where possible, to individual rivers. Information on migration routes and health is also being collected. The findings will be presented in an international salmon summit, to take place in La Rochelle, France, from October 11-13, 2011. For more details see www.salmonatsea.com.

Mary Colligan, President of NASCO, said:

"I am very excited about the forthcoming Salmon Summit, which will showcase the results of all the hard work that has gone into SALSEA over the years. The information gained cannot fail to support and guide future actions to conserve and manage Atlantic salmon."

Performance Review

While recognising its past accomplishments, NASCO is continuing a period of restructuring to ensure that it is aligned to tackle future issues in salmon management. Having recently completed an initial round of internal review through its "Next Steps" process, NASCO will now conduct a further review of its performance in 2011-2012 using a panel of independent experts.

The NASCO President said:

"The challenges facing wild Atlantic salmon are significant. NASCO and its members have now completed an important review of the work of the organisation and implemented significant changes that increase transparency and accountability. Moving forward, NASCO agreed that future reporting and evaluation will have a greater focus on outcomes and measurable results. As we continue efforts to strengthen the organisation, we look forward to the recommendations from our expert panel. Once implemented, these recommendations should further improve our work and ensure that NASCO is in the best position possible to meet current and future challenges wild facing Atlantic salmon."

Regulatory measures for distant water fisheries

The current multi-annual regulatory measure will continue in 2011 for the salmon fishery at West Greenland. Under the measure there is no commercial quota. The Faroe Islands also agreed to continue their existing agreement not to fish in 2011.

Notes for Editors:

NASCO is an intergovernmental treaty organization formed in 1984 and based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Its objectives are the conservation, restoration and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon stocks, which does not recognise national boundaries. It is the only intergovernmental organisation with this mandate which it implements through international consultation, negotiation and co-operation.

The Parties to the convention are: Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union (representing its 27 member states), Norway, Russia and USA. There are 34 non-government observers accredited to the organization.

The 2011 meeting included over 70 scientists, policy makers and representatives of 13 Nations as well as 2 Inter-Governmental Organisations 11 Non-Governmental Organisations met to discuss the present status of Wild Atlantic Salmon and make recommendations for future management.

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