



CNL(13)55

*Draft Press Release*

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)  
Thirtieth Annual Meeting, Drogheda, Ireland  
4–7 June 2013

**International Conference Highlights the Precarious Situation Facing Wild Atlantic Salmon**

Managers, scientists and stakeholders from the North Atlantic met this week in Drogheda to discuss the condition of wild Atlantic salmon stocks and new steps to support recovery. Scientific information provided to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) during its 30<sup>th</sup> annual meeting indicated that salmon stocks across the North Atlantic remain at historically low levels, despite the sacrifices made by fishermen in many NASCO member countries. Scientists are developing and implementing international research programs to answer key questions, including how salmon fisheries are affecting salmon originating other countries' waters, so that managers can take appropriate conservation actions.

The Group discussed human impacts on various stages of the life-cycle of Atlantic salmon and highlighted how international collaboration amongst those involved in salmon conservation is now more important than ever. Urgent conservation actions must be taken in order to ensure the future of this iconic species. As such, NASCO adopted an action plan designed to strengthen the work of the organization. The Plan resulted from internal and external performance reviews and input from NASCO members and stakeholders.

The Parties reaffirmed that priority areas of focus with respect to salmon conservation continue to be fisheries management, habitat, and aquaculture and related activities. As part of the effort to strengthen the organization and improve salmon conservation, NASCO decided to change the format and structure of its Annual Meeting in order to target specific issues affecting Atlantic salmon. This structure will allow countries to enhance the sharing of information and expertise and to identify solutions. This new approach will begin in 2014 with in-depth discussion of fisheries management and socio-economic issues, including with regard to harvests of indigenous peoples for food and cultural purposes. The prime focus will be on fisheries that harvest stocks that are below their conservation limits.

In another action to enhance the work of the organization, the Parties to NASCO submitted Implementation Plans that outline the actions to be taken in their jurisdictions over the coming five years to conserve and manage wild Atlantic salmon. The plans include clearly described, identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales. Over the next five years, the Parties will implement the actions and report their progress. To support accountability, reporting on these plans will be done in a public setting that encourages exchange among countries and stakeholders.

In other news, Dr Peter Hutchinson, the Interim Secretary of NASCO, has been appointed as Secretary of the Organization for a four year period. On his appointment, Dr Hutchinson stated that “There are undoubtedly considerable challenges ahead in our attempts to restore and conserve this iconic species, and Mother Nature is not in a helpful mood. However, this only serves to reinforce the importance of international cooperation and sharing of expertise, and the new working methods agreed this week should facilitate this”.

NASCO President, Mary Colligan said, “International collaboration on science and management is essential to the future of wild Atlantic salmon, and NASCO is poised to play an enhanced role in this regard. I am proud of the work we have done to ensure we can meet the challenges facing us, and our new action plan, template for reporting on implementation of NASCO agreements, and meeting format and structure are key elements. As we transition to a new way of doing business, the organization will benefit enormously from the support of Peter Hutchinson, NASCO’s new Secretary and only the second in its history.”

The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual meeting of NASCO will be held in France, June 3-6, 2014.

#### **Notes for Editors:**

NASCO is an intergovernmental organization formed by a treaty in 1984 and is based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Its objectives are the conservation, restoration and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon stocks, which do 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 2013 meeting included over 90 scientists, policy makers and representatives of 13 nations as well as 3 Inter-Governmental Organisations and 16 Non-Governmental Organisations who met to discuss the present status of wild Atlantic salmon and to consider management issues.

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