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Draft Press Release

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)
Thirty-First Annual Meeting, Saint-Malo, France
3 – 6 June 2014

**Major developments in international Atlantic salmon research programme to be pursued:
NASCO continues to support ground-breaking science**

Managers, scientists and stakeholders attending the Annual Meeting of the inter-governmental North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) in Saint-Malo (France) this week resolved to develop an international programme of research to better understand the reasons for low survival of salmon at sea.

Scientific information presented at the meeting indicated that salmon abundance remains low and in some areas critically low despite large reductions in fisheries. Mortality at sea is a major factor and, building on the recent marine surveys under the Salmon at Sea (SALSEA) Programme, NASCO's International Atlantic Salmon Research Board will now develop plans for an ambitious and innovative programme of research to track salmon from their rivers of birth out into the ocean to improve knowledge of where the mortality occurs and what is causing it.

A primary focus at the meeting was on the management of fisheries and, in particular, those that harvest stocks which are below their Conservation Limits. A highly successful themed session, organised with the accredited NGOs, was held during which open and detailed discussions took place and information shared to help inform future management.

NASCO President, Mary Colligan said 'mixed-stock fisheries pose particular management challenges, especially in ensuring that the weakest of the contributing stocks is protected. Newly available genetic methods should support rational management of these fisheries in the future and our goal must be to ensure that harvesting activities do not exacerbate the serious conservation situation already facing the wild salmon at sea.'

The meeting provided the opportunity for NASCO Parties to report on the progress made in implementing actions related to the management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities.

NASCO establishes regulatory measures for the fisheries in West Greenland and around the Faroe Islands and multi-annual measures had been agreed in 2012 that will be due for re-negotiation in 2015. Important preparatory discussions were held in relation to these measures and for the West Greenland Commission a cooperative process to develop approaches for enhanced fishery

management and control was also agreed. In addition, an inter-sessional meeting will be held in Greenland to set the stage for a new agreement in 2015.

The Council of NASCO elected Mr Steinar Hermansen (Norway) as its new President and Mr Jóannes Hansen (Faroe Islands) as its Vice-President. Mr Hermansen said 'These are challenging times for the wild Atlantic salmon and the need for international cooperation has never been greater. It is an honour to be appointed President, and I look forward to working with all the Parties in our important work to conserve this iconic species'.

The 32nd Annual Meeting of NASCO will be held during June 2 -5, 2015.

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), the European Union, Norway, Russia and USA. There are 34 non-government observers accredited to the Organization.

The 2014 meeting included almost 100 delegates, including scientists, policy makers and representatives of Inter-Governmental Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations who met to discuss the present status of wild Atlantic salmon and to consider management issues.

For further information contact:

Dr. Peter Hutchinson

NASCO

tel +44 (0)131 228 2551 email hq@nasco.int

www.nasco.int