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***Press Release***

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)  
Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting, Portland, Maine, USA  
12-15 June 2018

**Many Wild Atlantic Salmon Populations Imperiled:  
New International Regulatory Measures Adopted to Enhance Protections**

On the shores of the State of Maine, the last bastion for endangered populations of wild Atlantic salmon in the United States, an inter-governmental organization met to discuss the fate of this iconic species. Countries bordering the North Atlantic Ocean gather each year to review the newest scientific information and consider actions being taken and those still needed to ensure the conservation of this important species.

This year, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), adopted two important measures to regulate fisheries - one around the Faroe Islands and the other off West Greenland. The decision applicable to the Faroe Islands acknowledges that the fishery will be managed from 2019-2022 taking into account scientific advice. The three-year measure adopted for the internal use fishery at West Greenland strengthens monitoring and control and sets a total catch of 30 t. The return by NASCO to setting a total catch as part of the multi-year measure is essential to the effective management of the fishery, and the agreed level is well below the quota set by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) in each of the last three years.

“I am pleased that these two important regulatory measures were reached in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration,” observed NASCO President Jóannes V. Hansen of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). “The mutual respect shown by all Parties during negotiations bodes well for the future of this organization and for wild Atlantic salmon.”

Factors that affect the health of Atlantic salmon extend well beyond fisheries, and NASCO and its scientists are engaged in cutting edge work to identify and address those causes. Determining why salmon are dying at sea before they can come back to their natal rivers to spawn is a key area of research. A new innovative approach to oceanic acoustic monitoring, ROAM, will allow salmon to be tracked through the marine environment. The approach will overcome many of the significant challenges associated with tracking Atlantic salmon throughout their extensive marine migration. Another area of critical international research is the “Likely Suspects” project, which aims to identify ocean areas where salmon are disappearing to help prioritize and effectively target additional scientific work. A data workshop is currently in the planning stages with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to advance this project.

NASCO is a key partner in the International Year of the Salmon (IYS). IYS is a bold multi-year effort undertaken in cooperation with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission that is intended to create a hemispheric partnership to facilitate an intense burst of outreach and research that will fill knowledge gaps and catalyse new ways to generate and share knowledge necessary for the resilience of salmon and people in a changing world. The focal year for the initiative is 2019, and a number of IYS-related activities and projects are already underway. Two signature projects previously mentioned are ROAM and “Likely Suspects” Given the importance of IYS, NASCO held a workshop to progress the planning of this important initiative. In addition, an IYS symposium entitled *Salmon in a Changing World* will be held just prior to the 2019 NASCO Annual Meeting in Tromsø, Norway.

Harvests of endangered and threatened populations of North American origin salmon in the St. Pierre and Miquelon mixed stock fishery were also discussed, and NASCO continued to urge France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to cooperate in the management of, and research on, its fishery. While France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) explained it was not in a position to join NASCO, it expressed its commitment to take NASCO recommendations on catch by its communities into account.

Finally, NASCO continues to look for ways to improve implementation of its agreements on fisheries management, habitat protection, and aquaculture and related activities. A workshop was held again this year to review critically and publicly how well NASCO members are meeting their commitments. Holding members accountable in this way is essential to the effectiveness and credibility of the organization. A new reporting cycle will begin in 2019 and possible improvements to the review and evaluation process are under consideration. The President of NASCO underscored the important progress made in the area of reporting by the NASCO Parties over the last 15 years and looked forward to concluding the current work that will further enhance the transparency of reporting over the next five years.

The Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of NASCO was held during 12-15 June in Portland, Maine, USA.

#### **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 inter-governmental 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, the Russian Federation, and the USA. There are 41 non-governmental observers accredited to the Organization.

The 2018 Annual Meeting included 101 participants, including scientists, policy makers and representatives of inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations who met to discuss the status of wild Atlantic salmon and to consider management issues. The Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting will be held in Tromsø, Norway, and will be preceded by the IYS Symposium. The Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting will be held in the Faroe Islands.

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