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North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO)

26th Annual Meeting, Molde, Norway 2nd – 5th June 2009

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

Conserving wild salmon stocks in the North Atlantic

Against the background of continuing declines of wild Atlantic salmon stocks across the North Atlantic, delegates met for the 26th Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) in Norway, which has the largest remaining stocks of this iconic species. The meeting was opened by Heidi Sorenson, the Norwegian State Secretary for the Environment, who stressed the importance of wild salmon to Norway and the role of NASCO in addressing the many problems that impact on this special fish.

Despite large reductions in exploitation and many conservation measures in all countries around the North Atlantic, the decline of wild salmon has continued and is now mainly attributed to lower marine survival during their extensive migration phase.

Salmon at sea

There was exciting news from the SALSEA (Salmon at Sea) project, launched by NASCO in 2006 to try and solve the mystery of what happens to salmon at sea. The first SALSEA ocean cruises to catch salmon at sea took place in 2008, and with the latest genetic fingerprinting techniques, the fish that were caught can now be attributed to their rivers of origin - for the first time salmon can be tracked on their long and complex journey to the ocean feeding grounds in Greenland and the Faroes. Further cruises to expand this work are planned in 2009. An extended sampling programme at West Greenland in support of SALSEA was agreed. Any additional samples would be part of the internal use fishery. For more details see www.salmonatsea.com

Regulatory measures for distant water fisheries

A multi-annual measure was agreed for the salmon fishery at West Greenland, continuing the existing zero commercial quota for the further three years 2009 - 2011. Representatives of the Faroe Islands (while retaining their historic right to fish) also agreed to continue their existing agreement not to fish for 2010. There has been no fishing for salmon at the Faroes since 2000.

Fisheries management , habitat restoration and aquaculture

NASCO agreed to review all its agreements and guidelines on these three subjects in 2006 (The Next Steps process - see www.nasco.int). As part of that continuing process at this Annual Meeting delegates agreed new and tighter guidelines for management of all salmon fisheries. New guidelines for habitat restoration in home rivers will be debated in 2010, and a comprehensive review of measures for reducing the impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon will take place in 2010/2011. Norway also announced a timetable for consultation on new regulations to restrict coastal fisheries which intercept salmon from other countries.

Aquaculture Task Force

NASCO has formed a Task Force with the International Salmon Farming Association (ISFA) which focussed on measures to reduce the impact of escaped farmed salmon and parasitic sea lice on wild Atlantic salmon.

The full report of the 2009 Annual meeting can be found at www.nasco.int

Arni Isaksson, the President of NASCO, said:

“NASCO is the only inter-governmental treaty organisation dedicated to wild Atlantic salmon. The continued co-operation promoted at NASCO between the contracting governments, NGOs and all those managing this precious resource is the only way forward if we are to succeed in conserving and restoring stocks of this iconic species for future generations”

Notes for Editors:

NASCO is an intergovernmental treaty organisation formed in 1984 and based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Its objectives are the conservation, restoration and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon stocks. The contracting Parties to the convention are : Canada, Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, European Union, Iceland, Norway, Russia and USA. There are 35 non-government observers accredited to the organisation.

For further information contact:

Dr Peter Hutchinson

NASCO

tel 0131 228 2551 email hq@nasco.int