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North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)
27th Annual meeting, Quebec City, Canada 1st – 4th June 2010

PRESS RELEASE

International efforts press ahead to save wild Atlantic salmon stocks

Countries from around the North Atlantic met in Quebec City this week to discuss the status and future of wild Atlantic salmon. At the 27th Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the six Parties recognized that stocks of Atlantic salmon are at some of the lowest levels on record despite many conservation measures in all countries around the North Atlantic. The decline of wild salmon is now mainly attributed to lower marine survival during their extensive migration phase at sea. While awaiting the results of the ambitious Salmon at Sea (SALSEA) research program, NASCO's members continue to take action to manage to the highest possible standards to promote stock recovery.

NASCO performance review

In 2004, NASCO initiated its Next Steps process to review how well the organization was meeting its objectives. In addition to this review process, NASCO has decided to undertake a further performance review, to be conducted by an independent, international expert panel. This process, which will be completed by 1 April 2012, is consistent with the United Nations General Assembly resolution 61/105, which calls on regional fisheries management organizations to undertake a performance review of their activities.

Habitat restoration

The NASCO Parties adopted new guidelines for habitat restoration in rivers. The guidelines will assist NASCO members in implementing agreed international measures to protect and restore freshwater habitat critical for successful spawning by Atlantic salmon.

Aquaculture

A draft report on Aquaculture, Introductions and Transgenics was presented, summarizing actions taken by NASCO members to implement NASCO's Williamsburg Resolution (a measure adopted in 2003 to reduce impacts of aquaculture and related activities on wild Atlantic salmon) and reflecting previously adopted best management practices in aquaculture. The draft report indicated that all Parties could improve their implementation of the Williamsburg Resolution. A final report on this matter will be considered at the 2011 NASCO annual meeting.

Salmon at sea

SALSEA, an international research program begun in 2006, has been investigating the causes behind why Atlantic salmon are not returning to their home rivers. A tremendous amount of data has been collected in recent years through the program and the analysis of the data has begun. The results of this important work as well as the implications for management will be presented and discussed at an international salmon summit, which will take place in La Rochelle, France, from October 11-13, 2011. For more details see www.salmonatsea.com

Regulatory measures for distant water fisheries

A multi-annual regulatory measure will continue in 2010 for the salmon fishery at West Greenland. Under the measure there is to be no commercial quota. The Faroe Islands also agreed to continue their existing agreement not to fish in 2011.

Mary Colligan, President of NASCO, said:

“NASCO should be proud of its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations and enhance the implementation and efficacy of salmon conservation measures. I am delighted that we have also agreed on an external Performance Review as part of our commitment to continuous improvement and benchmarking our standards against the best in the world. Exciting progress is being made through the SALSEA research initiative, contributing to our understanding of the factors affecting salmon survival at sea. The future of Atlantic salmon clearly rests on initiatives like these, which involve international cooperation, to which NASCO is so integral”.

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. The Parties to the convention are : Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Norway, Russia and USA. Iceland withdrew from the Convention in 2009. There are 36 non-government observers accredited to the organization.

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