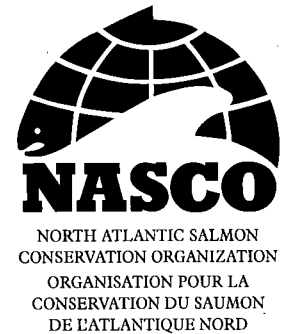


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27 October 2014

Mr. Sigurdur Ingi Jóhannsson
Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture
Ministry of Industries and Innovation
Skulagata 4
101 Reykjavik
Iceland



Dear Minister Jóhannsson

I am writing on behalf of all the Parties to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). As you will be aware, Iceland denounced the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean in 2009 and as a consequence ceased to be a Party to NASCO. However, at that time Iceland indicated its intention to re-accede to the Convention 'in the next few years' when the economic situation improves.

Given the current period of low abundance facing Atlantic salmon all around the North Atlantic, we believe that the need for international cooperation on this valuable and iconic species has never been greater. We hope, therefore, that Iceland, which played such a central role in establishing NASCO back in 1984, will be able to re-join the inter-governmental organization devoted to its conservation and restoration and once again participate fully in its work. In 2012, an external review of NASCO's work, conducted in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/105 by a panel comprising representatives of UNDOALOS, FAO and NEAFC, shared this view and encouraged Iceland to re-accede to the NASCO Convention.

NASCO's important contribution to salmon conservation has been widely recognised by the international community, including its 34 accredited Non-Government Organizations, that represent a wide range of stakeholders, and the external review panel referred to above. This contribution was also noted by Iceland at the time of its withdrawal from NASCO when it was noted that '...the activity within the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization has been very pleasant and fruitful for Iceland'. Furthermore, in a letter dated 17 July 2009 (copy attached), Mr Thorgeirsson (the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture at that time) had highlighted the importance of NASCO's work over the previous 25 years or so for the conservation of Icelandic salmon stocks and he noted the need for an international platform to address the various issues facing the resource not just those related to the fisheries but also habitat degradation and the threats from cage culture for which NASCO has developed internationally approved agreements.

There are important international issues to address in the coming years. For example, in 2015 there will be new negotiations on a regulatory measure/decision for the Faroese salmon fishery and we believe that Iceland should be, and would wish to be, part of that process. A

major factor currently influencing the poor salmon returns is increased mortality at sea. Through NASCO's International Atlantic Salmon Research Board, a major multi-million pound programme of research on salmon at sea, SALSEA, was developed and implemented by NASCO through a public/private partnership. This programme has delivered new insights into the marine ecology of the species, increased knowledge of the salmon's migration routes and distribution at sea and the factors influencing it, and delivered valuable new tools to support rational management. The Board is now developing a follow-up international programme of research to better understand the causes of mortality of salmon at sea through telemetry studies and we believe that this will be of relevance to scientists working to understand the marine mortality of Icelandic salmon stocks.

These are just two examples of important international initiatives but others include new measures to improve surveillance related to fishing by non-NASCO Parties in international waters and to better understand the scale of bycatch of salmon post-smolts in pelagic fisheries. The enclosed brochures may be of interest.

In short, we believe that the international work of NASCO on salmon supports the important work being undertaken nationally. The Parties to NASCO very much hope that Iceland will re-join NASCO so as to continue its important contribution to the international efforts to conserve and restore the Atlantic salmon.

I look forward to receiving your response in due course but if you would like additional information on NASCO's work please do not hesitate to contact our Secretary, Dr Peter Hutchinson, who will be very pleased to assist.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely



Steinar Hermansen
President

Enclosures

Copied to: Mr Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson - Ministry of Foreign Affairs