

**Press Release**

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)
Fortieth Annual Meeting,
Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada
5 – 8 June 2023

**Climate Change, Other Threats to Wild Atlantic Salmon Clear
North Atlantic Countries Taking Action. Commit to Doing More**

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the international body responsible for promoting the recovery, conservation, and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon, closed its Fortieth Annual Meeting today. Delegates gathered in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, on the banks of the Petitcodiac River, where Atlantic salmon are actively being restored. Countries from around the North Atlantic discussed the alarming effects climate change will have – and is already having – on Atlantic salmon and ways to improve the climate resiliency of the stocks. NASCO also welcomed Indigenous peoples from across the North Atlantic to share their perspectives on the importance of this species to their social and cultural lives and to explore how they could participate more fully in the work of NASCO.

According to information presented during a Special Session held by NASCO on climate change and Atlantic salmon, the warming environment will be devastating for this species, and its effects are already becoming evident. The Special Session highlighted actions that NASCO Parties are taking in their own waters to mitigate those effects, but more is urgently needed at the national and international levels to address this existential threat. Already many Atlantic salmon stocks are threatened with extinction; the climate crisis is increasing the urgency to take meaningful action to ensure the future of this iconic species. Today, NASCO Parties expressed their unwavering commitment to Atlantic salmon by agreeing to consider climate change and its impacts in a systematic manner in all aspects of its work. This commitment was part of a broader NASCO initiative to reform and refocus the work of the organisation – based on the results of a third performance review conducted by independent experts – to meet the most important challenges facing Atlantic salmon today and into the future.

‘Atlantic salmon is a magnificent species that we must not fail to recover and conserve.’ said NASCO President Arnaud Peyronnet. *‘This is a pivotal time for NASCO and for the species it manages. Atlantic salmon face many stressors during their complex life cycle, and these are being exacerbated by climate change. The renewed commitment made to salmon by all Parties during this NASCO Annual Meeting, however, is cause for hope.’*

A Special Session was also held to invite the perspectives of Indigenous peoples on wild Atlantic salmon. A series of presentations informed NASCO about the fundamental importance of salmon to Indigenous peoples around the North Atlantic, about the roles, successes, and challenges of Indigenous peoples in salmon conservation and management, and about the value they could bring through strengthened engagement in NASCO’s work. The successful session led to a commitment by NASCO to enhance the engagement of Indigenous peoples in the work of the Organization going forward. Said the NASCO President, ‘Indigenous peoples bring

unique and important perspectives to the table. Ensuring these groups can participate meaningfully in NASCO is essential. Our Organization is stronger when all voices concerned with Atlantic salmon are heard.’

NASCO also established a new Working Group aimed at addressing the threat to Atlantic salmon posed by the spread of invasive Pacific pink salmon across the Atlantic. Outputs from this important body will be considered in 2024.

Finally, NASCO welcomed the news that Iceland is taking steps to rejoin the organization. ‘I am so pleased that Iceland, a founding member of this Organization, will again take its rightful place in NASCO. Iceland’s participation will strengthen our Organization further,’ said President Peyronnet. Iceland participated in the 2023 NASCO Annual Meeting as an observer.

Non-member France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) also attended NASCO as an observer. France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) conducts a fishery that harvests wild Atlantic salmon originating from the rivers of NASCO members. NASCO has urged France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) to join the Organization for many years in light of its ongoing fishing interests. It did so again in 2023. To-date, France (in respect of St. Pierre et Miquelon) has declined the invitation, but it is taking steps to ensure transparency in the fishery and conduct sufficient sampling.

The Fortieth Annual Meeting of NASCO was held during 5 – 8 June 2023 in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. The Forty First Annual Meeting will be held in Westport, Ireland, from 3 – 7 June 2024.

Notes for Editors:

NASCO is an intergovernmental organization formed by a treaty in 1984 and is based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Its objectives are to promote the conservation, enhancement, 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, the United Kingdom and the United States. There are 46 non-governmental observers accredited to the Organization.

The 2023 Annual Meeting was convened in a hybrid format, with 92 participants joining in-person and 34 joining remotely. The participants included 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.

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