

North-East Atlantic Commission

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Letter to the President of NEAFC Regarding By-catch

CNL34

11 June, 2004

Mr Einar Lemche
President – North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
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In recent years NASCO has become concerned about the potential by-catch of Atlantic salmon post-smolts in pelagic fisheries for mackerel and herring in the North-East Atlantic Commission area. There is also a potential by-catch of Atlantic salmon in pelagic fisheries for blue whiting and capelin. ICES has advised that the southern European stock complex of Atlantic salmon is outside safe biological limits.

Since 2001, this Commission has asked that ICES provide estimates of the by-catch of salmon post-smolts in pelagic fisheries. Information has been derived from research cruises and screening of commercial catches. In its latest advice (attached), the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management has indicated that “it is not possible to provide sound estimates of by-catch for any pelagic fishery” and that “this situation will prevail until there is sufficient monitoring of, and information derived from, commercial fisheries”.

Access to weekly disaggregated catch data is essential, but I understand that this information has not been made available to ICES for the fisheries of particular concern to NASCO. Catches of mackerel and herring in ICES divisions IIa, IVa, Vb, VIa, VIb, VIIb, VIIc and VIIj, by rectangle and standard week, are required by ICES to facilitate more reliable estimation of the by-catch of salmon in these fisheries. It may also be useful to have the same catch information for capelin and blue whiting. On behalf of the North-East Atlantic Commission of NASCO, I would be grateful for your assistance in requesting that the NEAFC Parties involved in these fisheries provide any information on this to ICES, if possible before the end of February 2005, for the last five years.

I would be grateful if this letter could be circulated to all Contracting Parties of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Steinar Hermansen
Chairman
North-East Atlantic Commission

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