



Council

CNL(02)70

Resolution on Mixed Stock Fisheries

NGO Statement

European Anglers Alliance – L'Alliance Européenne des Pêcheurs à la Ligne

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Resolution on Mixed Stock Fisheries

The European Anglers Alliance (EAA), with 5 million affiliated members in 18 countries, represents 25 million anglers throughout Europe. At its 8th General Assembly held in the Czech Republic April 5th – 8th 2002, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

“The EAA continues to emphasize its total opposition to commercial mixed stock fishing of salmon. We applaud the restraint shown by Greenland and the Faroes in recent years; while recognising the traditional nature of their hunting and fishing communities, we very much hope they will continue to exercise that restraint in forthcoming quota negotiations at the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) annual meeting in June 2002.

The EAA acknowledges the crucial role played by NASCO in arresting the 40 year decline in salmon stocks. However, any slight recovery in multi-sea-winter (msw) stocks indicated by ICES must not be used as a lever to increase quotas. These stocks remain fragile, close to their conservation limits (well below in N. America) and still represent historic low levels.

To match this restraint on the high seas fisheries, the member states of the EU must do more to reduce exploitation of msw salmon in home-waters. Anglers and riparian owners have played their part by practising catch and release - up to 40% of salmon caught on rod and line in the UK are now returned - and in negotiating voluntary schemes with netsmen to buy-out commercial licences, usually with the backing of the North Atlantic Salmon Fund .

Some Governments have begun to help; we applaud the contribution of £1.5m in N Ireland to buy-out ALL nets and although we welcomed the £0.75m from the UK as matching funds to buy-out the north east coast drift net fishery, it has not proven enough. Compare this with the \$76m spent by Canada in eliminating commercial fishing over the last 20 years.

We also welcomed the decision by the Irish Government to impose quotas on drift and draft net fishermen which could help the private sector negotiate a buy-out, but ultimately the actual quota reductions proved disappointing.

The Member States of the EU cannot expect the traditional hunting and fishing communities of Greenland and the Faroes to continue exercising restraint unless they can demonstrate a firm commitment to reduce home-water exploitation. The EAA calls on these Member States to allocate SUBSTANTIAL funds, and/or the necessary legislative time, to accelerate the closure of mixed stock fisheries in home-waters. Promises are not enough; the time has come for practical action.”

