



CNL(17)58

Press Release

North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)
Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting, Varberg, Sweden
6 - 9 June 2017

**Many North Atlantic Salmon Stocks at Critically Low Levels -
Multinational cooperation essential to study causes, find and implement solutions**

Delegates from countries across the North Atlantic and beyond met in Varberg, Sweden, this week with one goal: to ensure the future of North Atlantic salmon. Despite strict conservation and management over the years, many stocks of this iconic species are in real danger, with threats often difficult to identify and address. This week, NASCO and its members considered actions taken on numerous fronts aimed at enhancing the conservation and rational management of Atlantic salmon. New initiatives were also advanced. Key actions and initiatives included:

- As highlighted in a special session, NASCO, in cooperation with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), and its members are taking steps to implement the International Year of the Salmon (IYS), including planning a high profile kick-off event in 2018, to officially launch this major initiative. IYS is a bold multi-year effort intended to create a hemispheric partnership to facilitate an intense burst of outreach and research that will fill knowledge gaps and catalyse new ways to generate and share knowledge necessary for the resilience of salmon and people in a changing world.
- Also in support of its SALSEA - Track and the IYS, NASCO's International Atlantic Salmon Research Board highlighted a potentially ground breaking, hemispheric level research activity aimed at improving understanding of salmon migrations and shed light on the key question of why salmon are dying at sea.
- Through an important Theme-based Special Session, NASCO explored the effectiveness of using stocking programs as a tool to support wild Atlantic salmon stocks. The session brought together experts on various aspects of and approaches to stocking and was highly informative, thought provoking, and generated discussion among the Parties about the risks of stocking.
- Norway reported on its success in preventing the spread of the parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* and eradicating it from many infected rivers. Work by Norway to fully eradicate this deadly salmon parasite is ongoing. The information shared on these actions is important to the broader effort within NASCO to stop this killer.
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reported on actions taken by Greenland in 2016 to monitor and control its mixed stock, interceptory salmon fishery in line

with a three-year regulatory measure adopted in 2015. NASCO's Parties acknowledged the important improvements made by Greenland in managing its fishery but also noted the need for additional steps to enhance monitoring and control further. As the current regulatory measure will end in 2017, an intersessional process is being established to consider the outcomes from the 2017 fishery and begin discussions of a possible future regulatory measure.

- Other NASCO Parties reported on their efforts to monitor and control their commercial, recreational, and/or subsistence fisheries in line with six identified tenets of effective fisheries management. Significant actions have been taken by a number of jurisdictions, including the closure of many fisheries.
- Non-member France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) reported on its 2016 mixed stock, interceptory salmon fishery, which has seen increases over time. Threatened and endangered populations of salmon from Canada and the United States are vulnerable to this fishery. NASCO will write to France (in respect of St. Pierre and Miquelon) to express its concerns, request effective management action be taken, and ask France to join NASCO in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon.
- In a successful special session, NASCO critically and publicly reviewed how well parties are meeting their NASCO commitments. This review is intended, among other things, to help hold members accountable to those responsibilities. The success of this review and evaluation process is essential to the effectiveness and credibility of the organization. A new review cycle will begin in 2019 and possible improvements to the review and evaluation process will be considered over the course of the coming year.

Of these significant actions, retiring NASCO President Steinar Hermansen (Norway) said:

'When you look at the important work being done by NASCO and its members in support of salmon conservation, you have to remain optimistic about the future of this spectacular species. There is no doubt that threats and challenges continue but the commitment of NASCO and its Parties to Atlantic salmon is both undeniable and unshakable. I am proud to have served this organization for over 25 years - first as head delegate from Norway and, for the last three years, as NASCO President.'

NASCO elected with acclamation Jóannes V. Hansen, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), as its next President. 'This is a time of great challenges for Atlantic salmon and significant changes for NASCO, but I am confident that I am leaving the organization in excellent hands,' said Hermansen.

NASCO also appointed a new Secretary to replace Dr Peter Hutchinson, who will be retiring at the end of September 2017. Said Hermansen, 'I have never known a more dedicated, professional, and competent public servant in my life. Dr Hutchinson's retirement is a great loss to NASCO, but after all he has given to NASCO over 32 years of service, we can only wish him all the very best in his well-deserved retirement'. Dr Hutchinson's successor, Dr Emma Hatfield, was selected this week in Varberg. She comes to NASCO from the European Commission. 'Dr Hatfield brings an excellent background and strong skills to the post of NASCO Secretary. There is no doubt that she will be a great asset to this organization,' observed Hermansen.

The Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting of NASCO was held during 6 - 9 June in Varberg, Sweden.

Notes for Editors:

NASCO is an intergovernmental organisation formed by a treaty in 1984 and is based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Its objectives are the conservation, restoration and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon stocks, which do not recognise national boundaries. It is the only intergovernmental 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 and the USA. There are 38 non-government observers accredited to the Organization.

The 2017 Annual Meeting included 102 participants, including 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. The Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of NASCO will be held in the United States during 12-15 June 2018, and the Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting will be hosted by Norway.

For further information contact:

Dr Peter Hutchinson, Secretary

NASCO

Tel: +44 (0)131 228 2551

Email: hq@nasco.int

Website: www.nasco.int