



Media Factsheet

Objective

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is an inter-governmental organization established in 1984 under the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean. The objective of the Organization is to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage salmon stocks through international cooperation, taking into account the best available scientific information. The Convention applies to salmon stocks throughout their North Atlantic migratory range.

Membership

NASCO's Member Parties are:

Canada
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)
European Union
Iceland
Norway
Russian Federation
USA

NASCO has welcomed participation in its work by observers from Inter-governmental and Non-governmental organizations. Thirty-five Non-Government Organizations currently have observer status to NASCO. Observers from the media may also attend the Opening Session of NASCO's Annual Meetings.

Structure

NASCO consists of:

A Council - which provides a forum for international cooperation and information exchange on a wide range of pressures on the resource and best management practices.

Three regional Commissions (North American, North-East Atlantic and West Greenland), which establish regulatory measures for salmon fisheries and provide a forum for regional cooperation on salmon matters.

The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (IASRB) – established to promote cooperation on research into the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract it.

A Secretariat – the administrative headquarters are based in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Achievements

Over the past 25 years, NASCO has made significant progress in the following areas:

- Through the Convention, creating a large protected zone free of targeted fisheries for Atlantic salmon.

- Successfully addressing the problem of fishing for salmon in international waters by vessels registered to non-NASCO Parties and continuing to monitor the situation.
- Introducing regulatory measures that have greatly reduced the interception by a Party of salmon originating in the rivers of other Parties from around 30% prior to 1984 to about 1-2% in recent years. This process has also stimulated strict management measures by States of Origin.
- Basing management decisions on the best available scientific information and stimulating scientific research and improvements in the advice.
- Introducing the concepts of the Precautionary Approach to its work, under which the absence of scientific information should not be used as a reason for failing to take conservation and management measures. It also requires consideration of the needs of future generations, avoidance of irreversible changes and priority to be given to conserving the productive capacity of the resource.
- Developing Precautionary Approach Agreements in relation to: management of salmon fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; salmon aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics; stock rebuilding programmes.
- Identifying the wide range of social and economic values of wild Atlantic salmon and developing guidelines for incorporating them into management decisions.
- Developing recommendations designed to prevent the further spread of the parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris*.
- The IASRB has developed and is implementing a comprehensive and innovative programme of research on salmon at sea (SALSEA) through public/private partnerships.

Guiding Themes

- Conservation and management of highly migratory species such as salmon can only be achieved by international cooperation
- The wild salmon is unique in its wide range of environments and geographical spread. Because of this it is vulnerable to a variety of potentially adverse impacts, such as poor agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and other practices, and negative environmental factors such as acid rain and climate change
- Healthy salmon stocks are a good indicator of healthy aquatic environments
- It is important to manage our aquatic environment (oceans and rivers) to the benefit of all stakeholders
- NASCO is committed to research and information-gathering, which is vital to inform management actions, and a priority is unlocking the mystery of where salmon go at sea (distribution and migration) and the factors influencing them
- Salmon provide economic benefits to remote areas, pleasure and recreation to many, and enhance tourism even for those who do not fish
- The general public care about the wild salmon and its conservation
- Salmon conservation is everyone's business, the governments, the managers, the scientists, the stakeholders and the public

The next Annual Meeting of NASCO will be held from 2-5 June 2009 in Molde, Norway.

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Information on the IASRB is available at www.salmonatsea.com.