



NEWS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUÉ

International Review Reveals Canada's Lackluster Performance

Implementation Plans to Save Wild Atlantic Salmon Barely Pass; U.S. garners perfect score.

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St. Andrews, New Brunswick: - - Canadians enjoy their international reputation of being inhabitants of a land with a clean natural environment. However, conservation groups say that when it comes to wild Atlantic salmon, our reputation is about to take a beating at an international forum, where Canada's limited progress on conservation and protection of the species will be made all the more apparent when compared to some of our North Atlantic neighbours such as Norway, England and the United States.

Tomorrow, Canada's federal department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) will gather with other federal governments from across the North Atlantic at a conference in Bar Harbor, Maine. The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is a Treaty conference attended each year by nations that have wild Atlantic salmon populations spawning or migrating in their territories. Part of the 2007 itinerary will be grading the implementation plans submitted by these nations on their commitments to protect the species.

Canada has received a barely-passing grade by the NASCO reviewers who analyzed the various plans. To add to the dilemma, international scientists are predicting poor returns of large salmon to spawn in Canada's rivers in 2007, 2008, and 2009; about half the total number that are needed to sustain Canada's wild Atlantic salmon runs.

Spokesperson for the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) Sue Scott, VP Communications, said that DFO isn't just failing its duties for wild Atlantic salmon on the international stage, but also at home. "Canada's efforts internationally mirror the country's efforts domestically, a constant concern to ASF and our five Regional Councils in Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. We believe that the federal government's commitment to the future of the wild Atlantic salmon must be stronger to reflect the great responsibility Canada bears for preservation of this extraordinary species."

Only one region, Newfoundland, is reaching a basic conservation level (112%), and even it faces a reduced reproductive capacity. The Bay of Fundy and Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia are reaching only 10% of the basic minimum requirement to meet conservation targets. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, including the vital Miramichi watershed, achieved 81% of basic conservation limits. Quebec, including both the Gaspé and North Shore, is at risk with 65% of the conservation limit reached. In Labrador, only 50% of the basic conservation requirement is being met.

Salmon conservationists want DFO to implement effective actions to enable wise and adaptive fisheries management, to keep habitat healthy, and to protect wild Atlantic salmon from the impacts of salmon aquaculture, backed by adequate funding to conserve healthy populations

and recover endangered populations. A public opinion study conducted for DFO by Dr. Murray Rudd of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook NL, indicates that wild Atlantic salmon are very important to the social, cultural and economic values of all Canadians, from Bonavista to Vancouver Island. They consider the wild Atlantic salmon among the most important species for the Government of Canada to conserve and to fund, alongside whales and Atlantic cod.

Canada has met with other North Atlantic countries that belong to NASCO since 1983 to develop resolutions and agreements to conserve wild Atlantic salmon. In response to urging from non government organizations, such as ASF and the World Wildlife Fund U.S., NASCO, in advance of the annual meeting in Bar Harbor, asked signatory nations to submit Implementation Plans, with a timetable and commitment to action, outlining how they intend to better protect their native populations of wild Atlantic salmon, in line with their NASCO obligations. A Review Group made up of representatives of Government and Non Government Organizations accredited at NASCO gave Canada a mark of 7 out of 13 for its implementations plan. "In comparison," continued Sue Scott, "our neighbor, the United States, received a perfect score of 13 out of 13."

Canada was also deficient in divulging timeframes or summaries of their approaches and priority actions relating to habitat protection and restoration, minimizing the adverse effects of salmon aquaculture, and the adoption and modification of fishery management regulations. Without these vital plans, transparent and accountable assessment of progress, the purpose of the implementation plans, is impossible. Canada was deficient in reporting on habitat inventories, and provided little indication on how plans would address any social or economic implications of their wild Atlantic salmon conservation regimen," Ms. Scott explained.

"The federal government has a clear mandate and responsibility to protect these at-risk Atlantic salmon at home and abroad. However, when it comes to our own shores, or representing Canada's interests at an international forum such as NASCO, they are failing to live up to that responsibility," Ms. Scott concluded.

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The Atlantic Salmon Federation is an international, non-profit organization that promotes the conservation and wise management of wild Atlantic salmon and their environment. ASF has a network of seven regional councils (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Maine and Western New England) that have a membership of more than 135 river associations and 40,000 volunteers. The regional councils cover the freshwater range of the Atlantic salmon in Canada and the United States.

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) was established to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean through international cooperation. Member Governments are the United States, Canada, European Union (including England & Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, France, Germany, Spain), the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, and the Russian Federation. NASCO is an international body established under the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean, founded 1 October 1983.

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Background information can be found at www.atlanticsalmonfederation.org

Documents include:

Canada Media Release

United States Media Release

Executive Summary on Implementation Plans and Results

Backgrounders on Implementation Plans

Canada

United States

State of the Populations – 2007