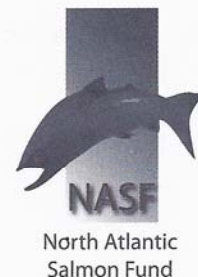


Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs
Lisbeth Berg-Hansen
Grubbeggt 1
P.O. Box 8118 Dep,
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May 7th, 2012

Dear Minister,

It was good to meet you briefly at the Hardanger conference last Friday. Sadly there was no time to review your excellent recent article on the rebuilding of mackerel stocks in our oceans. Some fish species like mackerel, salmon, herring, capelin and blue whiting are determined to travel internationally without passports. They migrate between countries or more specifically between areas of sea over which individual countries have jurisdiction. While the harvesting rights belong to stakeholders in many countries it is not so easy to agree set rules on how to divide the stocks.

Your article hit all the key points -- the need for sustainability, documented scientific data, the UN Law of the Sea, the importance to appreciate the needs of rural & coastal communities and, indeed, the necessity for overall fairness. But these principles should apply to all the straddling stocks, not just those that suit individual governments at any given time. Norway and the EU have adopted scientific formulas that ban "mixed-stock salmon fisheries" for countries like Greenland and the Faroe Islands but allow them without limits for Ireland, Scotland and Norway. For a long time now, your Government has known that most of the spring salmon taken commercially in Norway are salmon that are native to Russian rivers.

These are the most vulnerable spawning stocks. As you rightly say in your article fish quotas are normally issued to nations in proportion to where the biomass is created. It should be realised that up to 90% of the biomass for wild salmon migrating through coastal waters of Norway is created in Faroese waters.

Where is the fairness in giving the Faroe Islands a zero quota but allowing an unlimited salmon net fishery in Finnmark? Why does Norway have one set of international principles to the West but another set of principles to the East. It has been well known for many years that the Finnmark spring salmon fishery is principally taking salmon that have originated in the Russian Kola rivers.

This is a violation of article 66 of the UN Law of the Sea. The most recent scientific study says between 60% and 70% of the Finnmark salmon catch is from Russian rivers and for the last three years the Russian authorities have demanded an end to this. The most recent letter was sent on January 31st, 2012 by Mr. V Chiklinenko, Deputy Head of the Department of International Cooperation in Moscow.

We believe you will discover that the same principles of sustainability and the same international law should apply to all straddling fish stocks. We would therefore ask you to amend the existing legislation and adopt a Norwegian policy that covers all these migrating fish species. For wild salmon this is a matter of particular urgency and it calls for action before the nets can destroy what is left of a fast-diminishing resource.

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