



25 YEARS IN FAVOR OF THE PEOPLE AND THE
SALMON OF THE VALLEY OF TORNIO-MUONIO RIVER
TORNIO-MUONIO RIVER ASSOCIATION

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

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Anadromous stocks and TAC

Spawning migrations of wild SALMON are collapsing in Torne river and in other rivers of the Gulf of Bothnia in the northern Baltic Sea. This emergent situation is caused by the EU-level political decisions which are not based on the scientific facts about levels of wild salmon stocks and the consequent scientific community's (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea ICES) recommendations on fishery quotas and policies. The situation is further impaired by the lack of patrolling of fisheries in the Baltic Sea. Illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing of salmon has become an increasing problem especially with the practice of longline fishing. There are problems with other fishing methods too.

We especially emphasize the urgency for European Community to take action on protection of **wild sea trout in the Baltic Sea**; ICES has assessed this species' condition to be extremely endangered due to fishery policies of the EU member states. Therefore, we demand the EU Commission to take legal action under **The Treaty of Lisbon Article 2 B 1d**: "*The Union shall have exclusive competence in the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy*"

The basis of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of Salmon are against The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The basis of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of salmon is against the **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, part V, article 66 Anadromous Stocks**. 1. "*States in whose rivers anadromous stocks originate shall have the primary interest in and responsibility for such stocks*". All EU countries around the Baltic Sea have ratified this article, **big mistake is that the basis of sharing TAC of salmon between Baltic countries has not been adjusted to incorporate the provisions of Article 66.**

Spawning migrations of wild salmon are rapidly collapsing in Torne river, the most important salmon river of the Baltic Sea. **Data strongly suggests that over-fishing on sea and river mouths has caused this dramatic loss:** The 2009 salmon catch was 42 % higher than 2008 even though the TAC was set 15 % lower.

HOMEcomings PERCENTAGE OF THE SALMON IN TORNE RIVER

| | | |
|-----------|--|-------|
| Year 2008 | returned more than 40 000 salmon of less than 800 000 smolts | 5-6 % |
| Year 2009 | returned about 32 000 salmon of about 800 000 smolts | 4 % |
| Year 2010 | returned about 18 000 salmon of about 1,2 million smolts | 1,5 % |

Comparison is made by the smolt accounts of two years earlier, because of the great part of homecoming salmon have spent two years on sea. Just in two last years the percentage of homecoming salmon has reduced to fourth.

The total catches of salmon are far too high and it takes far too long time to reach sustainable level of catches if the rules pertaining to the 15% maximum annual reductions will be followed. For instance, if TAC will be decreased only by 15% per year, it will take at least five more years to reach the level of TAC that is recommended by scientists for the year 2011 (see ICES advice)! This slow reaction will have disastrous consequences to our wild salmon if the current trend in the total sea survival of salmon will persist (see the table above). **The 15% rule should be banned NOW.**

The stakeholders representing and supporting sea fishing will say it is not possible, but we refer to **The Treaty of Lisbon Article 2 B 1d**: “*The Union shall have exclusive competence in the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy*” we state that **15% RULE MUST NOT BE PERMITTED.**

The basis of TAC of salmon on the Baltic Sea is against the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, part V, article 66 Anadromous Stocks, 1. “States in whose rivers anadromous stocks originate shall have the primary interest in and responsibility for such stocks”. All EU countries around the Baltic Sea have ratified this article. Regardless of that the basis of sharing TAC of salmon between Baltic countries has not changed in accordance with the Article 66. For example Denmark has nearly as big quota as Finland and Sweden, the states in whose rivers the most of these anadromous stocks originate. The Article 66 is made to correct injustices like this. Therefore **the criteria of the TAC should be corrected.**

The fishermen on sea are not real stakeholders with respect to anadromous stocks such as wild salmon!

Original stakeholders of wild salmon are the people in the valleys of the rivers where the salmon hatch and return for spawning. Salmon and sea trout have been fished for centuries on the rivers and the river mouths, NOT ON SEA. The great wars of 20th century changed everything; salmon was dispossessed from the rightful stakeholders by the forces of supremacy. During the last decades, sea fishermen have taken over salmon fishing by harvesting all available surplus of salmon and even that doesn't seem to be enough.

The sea ranching of salmon, meaning the liberate placing of smolts into the sea, was very productive on Baltic sea in the 80's and 90's. Maximum level of salmon catch was 5 636 000 kg in the 1990. As a consequence the level of TAC is still far too high even though the level of salmon catch have been lowered to one million kilos. It has become clear that **there is no future for sea-ranched salmon.** Furthermore, **natural stocks of salmon and sea trout will never withstand profitable sea fishing.**

The 25th of October will be the FIRST TIME when these things are on the table in the Council of Ministers under The Treaty of Lisbon. So **THE TIME IS NOW TO GET THESE THINGS RIGHT AND SAVE OUR SALMON** from a certain extinction by overfishing on sea and river mouths of the Baltic Sea. It is, we remind, a European sea.

The past summer gave a proof of suitability of ICES advice of 133 000 salmon for this year 2010, so actually TAC for 2011 has been caught in beforehand. – So TAC 2011 should be 0 (nil) salmon. **YES, we mean a total ban of salmon fishing!**

As seen in the table above: the wild salmon of Baltic rivers will survive if it has not been killed by the man on the sea. This means that a total fishing ban is a solution that gives positive consequences. A complete ban is the most effective method to minimize the negative effects of widespread illegal fisheries, if selling salmon would be prohibited simultaneously.

Stop unnatural sea ranching of anadromous stocks. Bringing a total ban of salmon and sea trout fishing into force will give a strengthening pulse to stocks and valuable information for research. A total ban of salmon fishing will strengthen fishing tourism, which would yield a profit of tens of millions for years to come. A total ban is an act of respect for the International Year of Biodiversity 2010, and it is also an act of respect to the people on the riversides where the real stakeholders originate.

Pello the 10th October 2010

Yours faithfully

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Tornio-Muonio River Association <<http://www.tornionjoki.fi/jokiseura>> is working in Lapland on both sides of Torne river and Muonio river in Finland and in Sweden. We have been working over 25 years in favor of our people and our salmon. We say our salmon because salmon has been a very important nature resource for us as long as Lapland has been inhabited.

Torne River (510 km) and its tributary Muonio River (387 km) are in Natura 2000 both in Finland FI1301912 and in Sweden SE0820430; nowadays it is widely accepted that the river system have potential to more than 2,5 million smolts.