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Bitte antworten an
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Kopie

Blindkopie

Thema Status of the ban on hobby net fishing along Dutch coast

Dear Friends of the Salmon,

Sometime ago I informed you about plans of the Dutch government to stop all the fishing with gill nets and fykes by so called hobby fishermen along the Dutch coast. The Dutch government wanted to end these fisheries because of the difficulty to control these fisheries, the illegal trading in the catch and the by-catch of sea mammals and protected salmon and sea trout.

The total ban of these hobby fisheries however met with fierce opposition by regional and local governments because of the so-called 'traditional' and 'historical' nature of these fishing methods. Ultimately a majority in the Dutch national parliament - for the same reasons - supported an overthrow of the fishing ban. After a special - neutral - commission studied the problem, a kind of compromise was reached. This compromise meant that in principle the fishing by non-commercial fishermen with professional fishing gear would be banned along the Dutch coast, but under special circumstances city-councils of towns along the Dutch coast would be allowed to give a limited number of licences of hobby fishermen. This would especially be the case in areas where these fishing methods had a long 'history', like the Wadden Sea area.

The North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF) in a letter by Orri Vigfússon to the Dutch minister of Fisheries and the Dutch parliament (see attached NASF_Letter_to_Mr_Bleker) protested against the plans to lift the total ban and to make all kind of exceptions on 'cultural' grounds. This letter also pointed to the illegal by-catches of salmon and sea trout in these hobby fisheries along the Dutch coast. Especially in the Wadden Sea area there was a substantial by-catch of salmon stemming from many rivers in Northern-Germany, Denmark and other countries, a so-called 'mixed stock' fishery. The by-catches of salmon were proven by what was shown on a number of Dutch websites advertising the smoking and preparing of 'self-caught' salmon in the Wadden area. (See: Word-copies of these websites; Wijnberg; Staand want; ZALM-roken). Since then most of these websites have deleted the pages dealing with the catch of salmon and sea trout (!)

On March 9, 2011, the deputy-minister on Fisheries, Mr. Henk Bleker, answered Orri Vigfússon with an 'empty' letter (See attachment: Letter-to-NASF), stating among others: ... "that the obligation to release salmon and brown trout still applies". This is absolute nonsense, because the gill nets used along the Dutch coast, fall dry during ebb-tide (as is shown on the pictures in the attachments!) and no fish in these nets can be released alive.

What has happened since then?

Recently a letter of the deputy-minister Henk Bleker was published (http://www.sportvisserij Nederland.nl/vis_en_water/actueel/3879/verbod_recreatieve_staand_wantvisse_rij_noordzeekust_definitief.html) in which he stated that "the ban on recreational gill net fishing along most of the Dutch coast would definitely be upheld and enforced". Motivation for this move was the much needed protection of sea mammals, especially the harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*). The good thing is that the Dutch government upheld the ban of the fishing with commercial gear by the 'hobby fishermen' along most of the Dutch coast.

The bad thing is that exceptions can be made in the Wester-Schelde area and the Wadden Sea area. Here city-councils of coastal towns are allowed to give licences to their citizens to fish with gill nets. Especially in the Wadden Sea area, the risk of the by-catch of salmon is still very high.

You might argue that city councils lack the knowledge and oversight to take into account international conservation plans and obligations regarding the protection of salmon and harbour porpoises, when dealing with fishing licences. And that is indeed a strong point against this kind of regulation.

So this regulation is badly flawed and poses a serious threat for the salmon restoration programs in many neighbouring countries.

Now, of course, Orri Vigfússon of NASF can write another letter to the Dutch government pointing to the fact that this regulation still poses a serious threat to the salmon conservation programs of many rivers because it keeps in place a kind of 'mixed stock' fishery by hobby fishermen, but this case is also in YOUR interest!

The lack of interest and involvement by governmental institutions and NGO's shown in the past had not been conducive for dealing with this problem. (To say the least!...)

So now it is YOUR turn!

If necessary I can provide you with the address of our Dutch minister of fisheries and the e-mail addresses of the members of the Dutch parliament dealing with this problem.

With kind regards,
Franklin Moquette



NASF_Letter_to_Mr_Bleker[1].pdf



Letter-to-NASF.pdf



Wijnberg Wadexcursies.doc



Staand want visserij.doc



ZALM-roken.doc



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Date **09 MAART 2011**

Re Recreational cast net fishing in the Dutch coastal zone

Our ref.

DRZN/2011-381

Dear Mr Vigfússon,

In your letter of 24 January you call for continuation of the ban on the use of professional fishing gear for recreational fishing purposes in the Dutch coastal zone.

As you so rightfully pointed out in your letter, the ban caused great concern when it was first introduced. The issue was subjected to further study and on the basis of that outcome, I proposed legislation for a block exemption for recreational cast net fishing earlier this month. To reduce fishing pressure, however, the proposed exemption stipulates conditions which must be adhered to, including a maximum net length of 100 metres. Additional restrictions may be imposed by the relevant councils. The block exemption does not extend to the ban on eel traps which is still in place. Please also note that the obligation to release salmon or brown trout still applies.

With these measures in place sustainable fisheries is guaranteed, while justice is done to what I consider to be small-scale historic co-use.

I hope that this answers your questions.

Yours sincerely,


Dr. Henrik Bieker

The Minister for Agriculture and Foreign Trade



To: Staatssecretaris van Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie
Mr. Henk Bleker
Postbus 20401 - NL-2500 EK Den Haag

January 24, 2011

Dear Mr. Bleker,

First let me introduce ourselves: The North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF) is an organisation devoted to the conservation of Atlantic salmon and one of the leading forces to prevent the commercial fishing on the so-called mixed salmon stocks. Mixed salmon stocks exist where salmon from several different rivers congregate and may include salmon from rivers which have 'threatened' populations and cannot spare any exploitation.

The unique Waddensea – stretching along the North Sea coast of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark – is such an area where salmon from many rivers congregate before they enter their rivers of origin. Here salmon from North German rivers like the Eems (Ems), Oste, Weser and Elbe as well as salmon from Danish rivers like the Sneum-Aa, Ribe-Aa and Varde-Aa congregate. Even salmon destined for the Rhine and Meuse (Maas) rivers pass by the Waddensea.

Thanks to the restoration programs in these rivers, the numbers of salmon are increasing and indeed the by-catches of salmon by hobby-fishers with nets in the Waddenarea have increased during recent years. This information can also be found on several Dutch websites. These developments are of serious concern to those involved in the important salmon restoration programs taking place, especially because there is little control over these so-called 'recreational fishermen' fishing with professional fishing gear.

Luckily your government stepped in. For many good reasons, but mainly as part of the Dutch national eel recovery plan, two years ago your former minister for fisheries, Ms. Gerda Verburg, came with a plan to ban all the fishing with professional gear by non-commercial fishermen along the Dutch coast.

Unfortunately, this plan was met with an huge uproar, especially from hobby fishermen and communities in the Dutch 'Waddensea region'. They claimed that this kind of fishing was an age old tradition in this region. Politicians from islands, towns and villages in this region started an intensive lobby in your national Dutch parliament to preserve this 'cultural heritage'. The minister was asked to make an exception for the hobby fishers in the Wadden region, but she refused. Nevertheless the Dutch parliament still wanted to make an exception for the 'hobby-fishers' in the Wadden area. The minister then promised to investigate if such an exception was possible and desirable from a conservation perspective.

It seems that a short time ago a report surfaced that said that no exception for the Wadden-region should be made, but instead the ban of all hobby net-fishing along the whole Dutch coast should be withdrawn!

This is a terrible development, considering the Waddensea is an area where salmon from many rivers congregate and where the chances of by-catch of salmon are apparently very high. Fishing with gillnets and fykes by hobby fishermen creates a situation where unlawfulness is just waiting around the corner. If you allow this group to fish with nets it will be impossible to prevent the catch of protected species like sea trout and salmon.

Again: The increasing number of salmon caught in the Wadden area is a consequence of the growing success of the many reintroduction programs for salmon in Germany and especially Denmark!

Although salmon and sea trout are protected by law in the Netherlands, some entrepreneurs even shamelessly publicise on the Internet trips to the Wadden region in which "you can smoke your own net-caught salmon yourself"! (see attachment).

NASF therefore urges you to stick to the original ban of the use of professional gear by 'hobby-fishermen' along all of the Dutch coast and certainly to make no exceptions for the Waddensea area.

With kind regards,

Orri Vigfússon

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