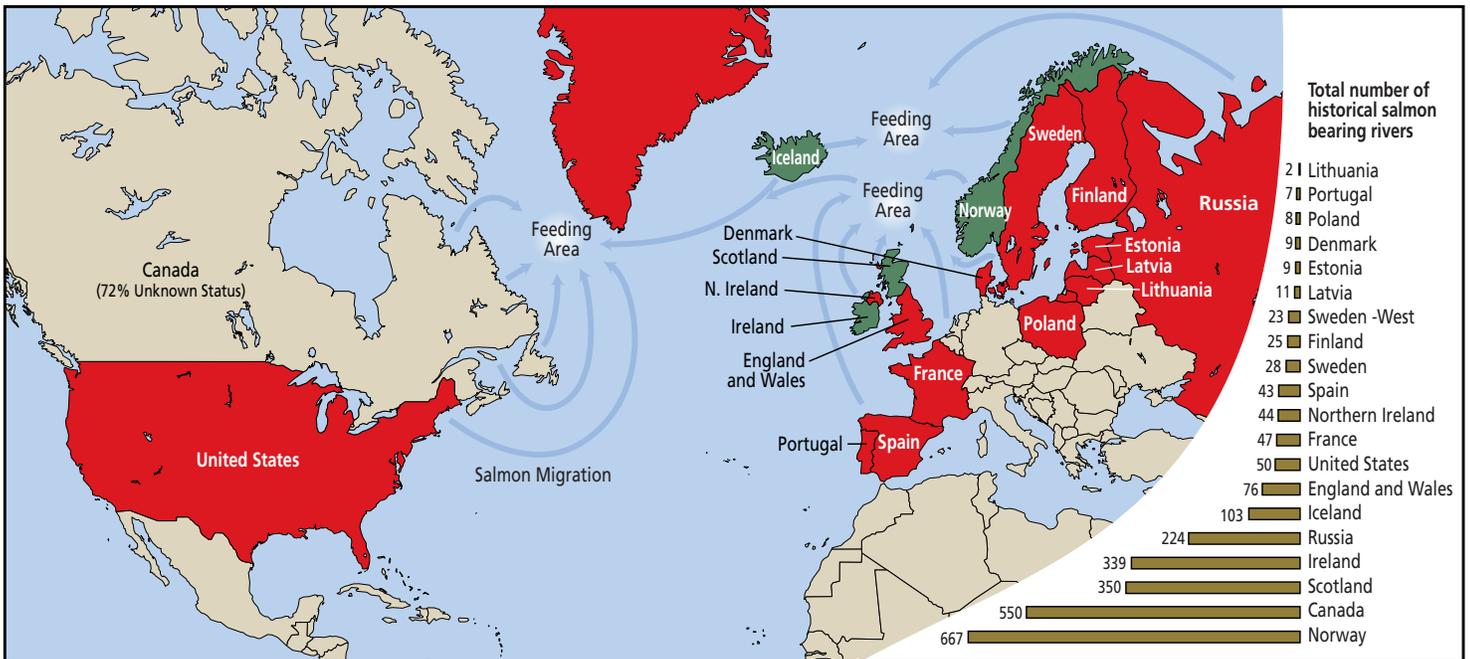


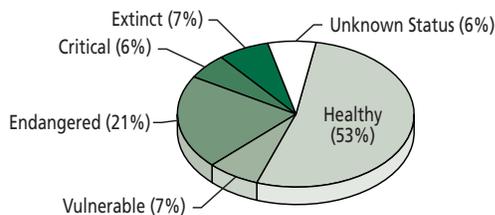


The Status of Wild Atlantic Salmon: A River by River Assessment

Map showing the wild Atlantic salmon's range in 2000, its known migration routes and the status of salmon rivers country by country.

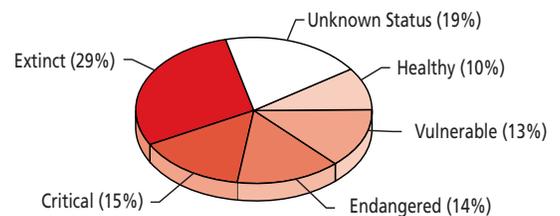


■ Aggregated categorization of salmon-bearing rivers in the four countries¹ that host the majority (more than 90%) of the remaining healthy rivers

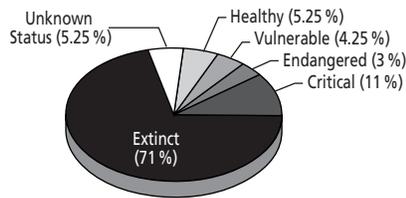


1. Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Scotland

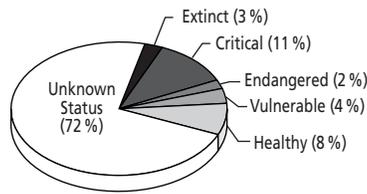
■ Aggregated categorization of salmon-bearing rivers in 14 countries² where the majority of rivers are threatened (vulnerable, endangered, critical and/or extinct)



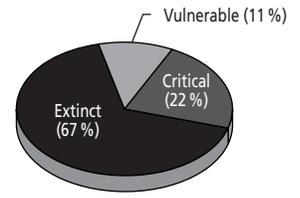
2. Denmark, England and Wales, Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, N. Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Sweden - West, United States (Canada was not included since 72% of the rivers are Unknown Status)



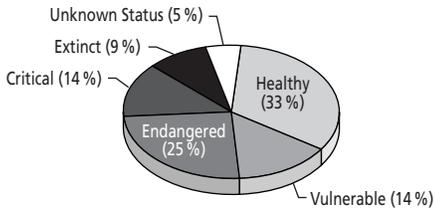
THE BALTIC



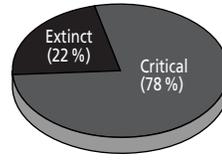
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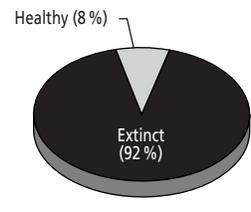
DENMARK



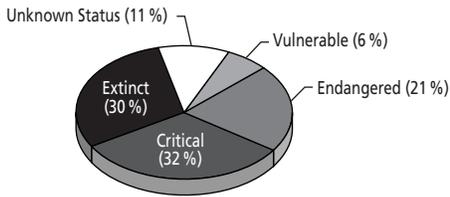
ENGLAND AND WALES



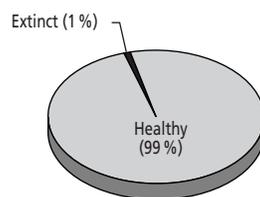
ESTONIA



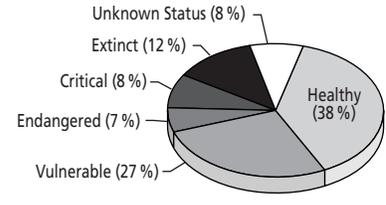
FINLAND



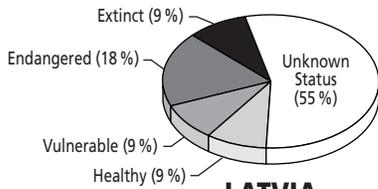
FRANCE



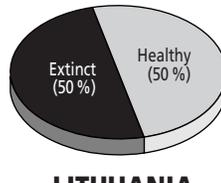
ICELAND



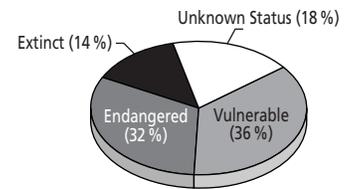
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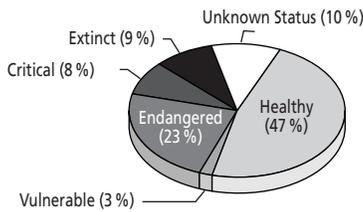
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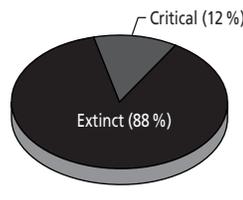
LITHUANIA



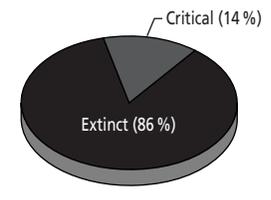
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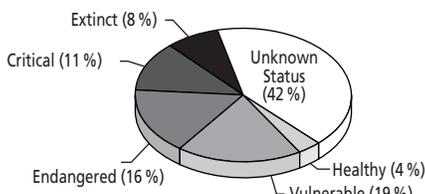
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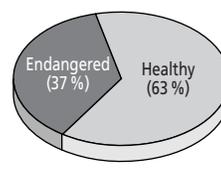
POLAND



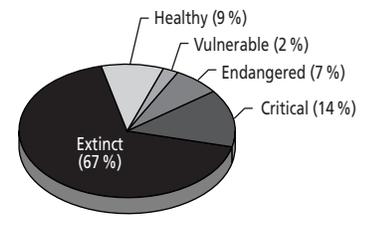
PORTUGAL



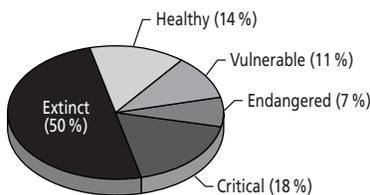
RUSSIA



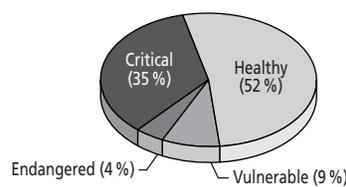
SCOTLAND



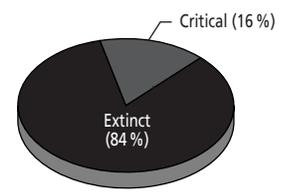
SPAIN



SWEDEN-BALTIC COAST



SWEDEN WEST COAST



UNITED STATES

The pie charts show the categorization (%) of salmon-bearing rivers in a country or region according to six categories: Extinct, Critical, Endangered, Vulnerable, Healthy and Unknown status.



*Embargoed for 12:00 GMT,
Thursday, 31 May, 2001*

Call to Action

To restore Wild Atlantic Salmon and assure a legacy of healthy populations for future generations, all the State Members of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization must act now to address the most serious threats to the survival of this great wild species.

WWF and ASF call on the Delegates to NASCO 2001 to adopt resolutions that:

- ◆ **INSTRUCT** all member countries to assess and classify the status of all salmon rivers within their borders and present to NASCO 2002 a plan of action aimed at eliminating the major threats to salmon and their habitat;
- ◆ **IMPLEMENT** measures to close all mixed-stock fisheries for wild Atlantic salmon, establish permanent “no-take” marine protected areas for salmon and provide appropriate compensation for adversely affected fishermen;
- ◆ **DECIDE** to establish a code of conduct for Responsible Aquaculture Industry Operations within the boundaries of the NASCO member countries by NASCO 2002 and full compliance within NASCO by 2005; and
- ◆ **URGENTLY REQUEST** member governments to establish, before NASCO 2002, gene banks that would ensure the survival of salmon stocks in rivers faced with imminent extinction.

The Status of Wild Atlantic Salmon: A River by River Assessment

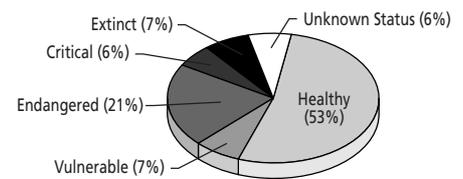
(Published by WWF, May 2001)

Summary of findings

Based on nation-by-nation reports from the remaining 19 countries still hosting populations of wild Atlantic salmon, this study finds that:

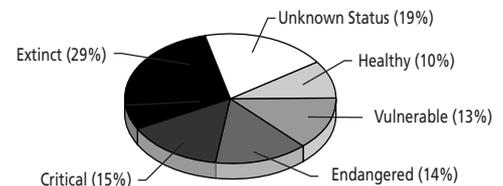
- Wild Atlantic salmon populations in one third of the rivers of North America and Europe are endangered;
- Wild Atlantic salmon stocks have already disappeared completely from at least 309 river systems in Europe and North America;
- Wild Atlantic salmon are on the brink of extinction in Portugal, Estonia, Poland, the United States and adjoining parts of southern Canada;
- Nearly 90 percent of the known healthy populations of wild salmon are found in only four countries – Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Ireland;
- In the remainder of the range, 85 percent of wild Atlantic salmon populations are categorized as either *Vulnerable*, *Endangered* or *Critical*; and
- The production of farmed salmon in the North Atlantic is 600,000 tonnes annually – which is 300 times greater than the annual catch of wild salmon. This means that for every wild salmon caught, one tonne of farmed salmon is produced.

Aggregated categorization of salmon-bearing rivers in the four countries¹ that host the majority (more than 90%) of the remaining healthy rivers



1. Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Scotland

Aggregated categorization of salmon-bearing rivers in 14 countries² where the majority of rivers are threatened (vulnerable, endangered, critical and/or extinct)



2. Denmark, England and Wales, Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, N. Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Sweden - West, United States (Canada was not included since 72% of its rivers are categorized as Unknown Status)

Major impacts on wild Atlantic salmon

This study finds that the major threats to wild Atlantic salmon populations are:

- **Overfishing** in the sea, estuaries and rivers reduces the stock size to below a critical level;
- **Hydropower dams and other man-made river obstructions** form severe obstacles to upstream and downstream migration of salmon, reducing population viability;
- **River engineering schemes** (e.g. for flood defence or navigation) result in direct habitat loss (e.g. through channel deepening) and disconnection of the main river from the complex of floodplain habitats (e.g. ox bow lakes, channels and islands). Habitat degradation also occurs through the resulting changes in ecological processes such as nutrient cycling, sedimentation and flooding;
- **Pollution** (from industry, urban settlements and agriculture) resulting in acid rain, inputs of excessive nutrients and upstream sediments, heavy metals and other toxic substances, including endocrine disruptors. These pollutants degrade the salmon habitats and some have direct impacts on species mortality and behaviour; and
- **Salmon aquaculture** results in erosion of the natural gene pool through interbreeding with escapees, resulting in a competitive disadvantage to the wild stock. Diseases and sea lice transferred from caged salmon to wild salmon are a severe hazard to juveniles in countries where salmon farming is predominant. In countries with major salmon aquaculture industries (Norway, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and the United States), which impact upon nearly two-thirds of the salmon rivers in the Atlantic salmon's range, salmon aquaculture now constitutes a major threat to wild salmon stocks – if not *the* major threat.



WWF International
Avenue du Mont-Blanc
1196 Gland
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 364 9111
Fax: +41 22 364 8307
www.panda.org

Press Release

Embargoed for 12:00GMT, Thursday, 31 May, 2001

Governments Should Act to Save Wild Atlantic Salmon, Says New Report

Madrid, Spain – Wild Atlantic salmon have disappeared completely from at least 309 river systems in Europe and North America and urgent action is needed to protect the species from the threat of extinction, according to a study released today by WWF, the conservation organization, in advance of next week's government delegate meeting in Galicia, Spain.

WWF and the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) are calling on countries participating in the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) conference in Spain from 4 to 8 June, 2001, to take vital steps including a moratorium on certain types of fishing, and more effective watershed management, to ensure the salmon's survival.

"To save the wild Atlantic salmon, governments must restore rivers where the species is threatened or has disappeared and take action to protect those rivers still hosting healthy populations," said Tom Grasso, WWF-US Director of the Marine Conservation Programme.

The Status of Wild Atlantic Salmon - A River by River Assessment, reports that, in the 2,005 rivers historically nurturing this species on both sides of the Atlantic, the wild fish have disappeared in Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. And the species is on the brink of extinction in Estonia, Portugal, Poland, the United States, and parts of Canada. Nearly 90 percent of the known healthy populations exist in only four countries: Norway, Iceland, Ireland, and Scotland. In the remainder of the range, 85 percent of wild Atlantic salmon populations are categorised as vulnerable, endangered, or critical.

According to the study-team led by Henning Røed of WWF-Norway, the five major threats to these populations are: overfishing, which reduces stocks to below critical levels; dams and other man-made obstructions that impede salmon migration; river engineering projects that degrade habitat and alter natural ecological processes; pollution from industry and agriculture; and commercial salmon farming, which results in erosion of the gene pool through inter-breeding with escapees and the spread of diseases.

Commercial ocean harvesting of the species and the impacts of industrially-farmed salmon on their wild salmon populations are among the issues to be discussed by member nations of NASCO. "The problem with ocean fisheries," said Bill Taylor, President of ASF, "is that they cannot be managed. The nets kill wild salmon from rivers that have endangered populations as well as those from healthier river populations. We must end all ocean netting for Atlantic salmon."

Without decisive preventive measures, the already precipitous decline of the wild salmon catches will continue, the study warns. Salmon catches in the entire North Atlantic fell by more than 80 percent between 1970 and the end of the 20th century, the researchers found. Today they stand at the lowest levels in known history, with wild Atlantic salmon completely eliminated from much of their original range, and hanging by a thread in many other locations.

WWF and ASF will present a Call to Action, based on the report, to NASCO delegates at next week's meeting in Galicia, specifying constructive measures to restore the species to its former glory throughout Europe and North America.

(more)



For further information contact:

General information: Robert Kihara, WWF International, Tel: +41 22 364 9553 - rkihara@wwfint.org

NASCO information: Carlos Vallecillo, WWF-Spain, Tel. +34 91 308 23 09/10. Mobile +34 609 97 99 17.
Email: medioscom@wwf.es.

Martha Wilson, WWF-U.S. +34 652 51 01 21- martha.wilson@wwfus.org

Salmon expertise: Henning Røed, WWF-Norway - Tel. +47 2203 6519 - Mobile +47 9508 3721 -
hroed@wwf.no

Sue Scott, + 34 652 51 01 22, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Tel: +1 506 529 4581 - policy@nbnet.nb.ca

Rivers in Europe: Bent Hygum, WWF European Freshwater Programme, Tel. +45 3524 7840, Mobile +45
2371 3177, b.hygum@wwf.dk

Editors Notes:

The pre-NASCO WWF Press Conference will be held in Madrid on **Thursday, 31 of May, at 12:00GMT** at Hotel Gran Versalles. Please contact Carlos Vallecillo at +34 609 97 99 17 for further information.

During NASCO, WWF, ASF and other NGOs will hold a press conference, at Hotel Tryp Balneario Mondariz, on **Tuesday, 5 June, at 12:00 GMT**. Please contact Martha Wilson or Sue Scott at +34 986 656156 for further information.

Journalists from outside of Spain who want to listen to the press conferences and ask questions of the speakers, are asked to phone +1 703 871 3019 a few minutes before the 14:00 starting time.
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