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EAA resolution adopted at EAA General Assembly in Helsinki 28 August 2010

Conservation of the Tana River system salmon stocks

The European Anglers Alliance, representing 11 European nations and over 3 million anglers, held its 16th General Assembly in Helsinki, Finland 28 August 2010, and discussed the situation of the border-river between Norway/Finland Tana.

The state of the salmon stocks in the Tana River, the border river between Norway and Finland, has alarmingly weakened in recent years. According to the reports of Norwegian and Finnish scientists the salmon stocks of the Tana River and tributaries are in critical condition in both countries. The number of the salmon migrating back to the river to spawn is decreasing; especially the number of big MSW-salmon (multi-sea-winter salmon) is low. The current fishing regulations in the river and in the sea are not effective and urgent measures are needed to protect Tana River salmon stocks.

EAA are of the opinion that salmon fishing at the sea and in the river must be reduced by shortening the fishing season and by catch limits. EAA suggest that the season for salmon fishing in the Tana River should be from 1st of June to 15th of August. EAA also suggest daily catch limits for salmon fishing with rod in the river. Salmon fishing in the sea in the coast of Finnmark and Tanafjord should be allowed from 7th of June.

Shortening the season for drift-net and gillnet fishing for salmon in the river is the key measure which should be implemented simultaneously with shortening the fishing season in the sea. Nowadays salmon fishing starts on 20th of May in the river area and 1st of June in the sea. Both starting days should be delayed to get more mature salmon to the spawning sites in the river.

EAA suggest that in the renewal of the fishing rules the local authorities, Fylkesmannen i Finnmark and Lapin ELY-keskus, should be able to make yearly changes on allowed fishing times, fishing gear and give orders of bag limits for all groups of fishermen.

The current fishing rules and regulations in the Tana River area are based on the convention between Norway and Finland and negotiations for the renewal of the fishing rules will start in 2011. The fishing regulations are far from ideal, because they cannot be changed yearly and thus the regulation of fishing do not follow the state of the salmon stocks.

Furthermore and in compliance with the European Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive, the EAA suggest the following changes to the salmon fishing regulations in Tana River system:

- Fishing rules should in general be updated in five year periods.
- The fishing season for drift nets in the river should be from 1st to 10th of June.
- The fishing season for gillnets (stängsel/pato) in the river should start at the same time as the salmon fishing in the sea starts in Norway and stop latest on 15th of July providing the scientific advice allows it.
- There should be a bag limit of one over 3 kg weight salmon per day per fisherman in rod fishing, after which fishing should be stopped for that day after getting this size of salmon. For smaller salmon there should be a limit of 3 fish.
- The restricted fishing times (weekly and daily) should be the same for the whole river area, including the river mouth on the Norwegian side.
- The privately-owned fishing rights for gillnets and driftnets in the river area should not be multiplied in any case of changes in ownership.

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- for fish, aquatic environment and anglers

The European Anglers Alliance (EAA) is a European NGO serving its members in 11 European countries with 3 million affiliated members and defending the interests of all Europe's 25 million recreational anglers. Recreational angling in Europe generates some 25 billion euro in socio-economic value. The tackle trade business alone has a turnover of about 5 billion euros supporting some 100,000 jobs across Europe.