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Concerning the negative trend for Baltic wild salmon 2010

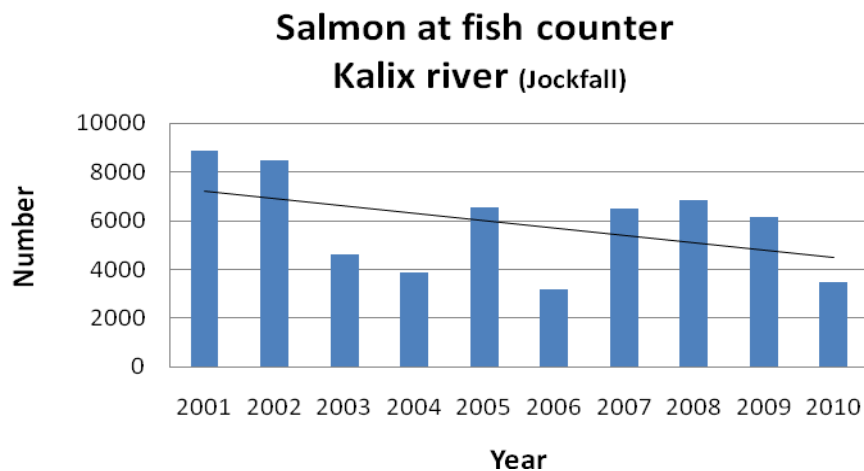
We the Swedish national sport fishing association (Sveriges Sportfiske- och Fiskevårdsförbund) and the Finnish federation for recreational fishing (Suomen Vapaa-ajankalastajien Keskusjärjestö) together represent over 100 000 fishermen in Sweden and Finland. The association of local authorities in Norrbotten (Kommunförbundet Norrbotten) consists of 14 regional councils spread over nearly 100 000 km². Located within our geographical boundaries are seven Baltic salmon rivers that together produced over 57% of all commercially caught Salmon in the Baltic 2009. Two of these rivers the Torne and Kalix rivers are of key importance producing over 45 % of all commercially caught salmon in the Baltic 2009.

We are writing to you to voice our deep concern about the greatly lowered number of spawning wild salmon returning to our rivers during the summer of 2010 (see table). Counts at fish ladders for the 2010 season show that returns of wild salmon to our rivers are at only 50 % compared to 2009. The ten year trend for several of our major rivers was unfortunately already negative (see diagram for Kalix river trend) but the spawning fish returns for 2010 show a further major downturn. As the Kalix and Torne rivers are the backbone of the commercial salmon fishery poor spawning returns to these rivers will in turn affect the numbers of fish returning to the Baltic sea fishery creating the risk for a further negative spiral in salmon numbers.

Spawning salmon returns to Baltic salmon rivers 2009-2010						
River	Torne	Kalix	Pite	Byske	Simo	Vindel
2009	33 000	6 173	1 048	1 976	1 150	5 902
2010	14 679 (- 55%)	3 475 (- 44%)	521 (- 50%)	1 734 (- 12%)	721 (- 37%)	3 068 (- 48%)

We believe the main reasons for the low returns of spawning fish to our major wild salmon rivers are:

1. The alarming decrease in post smolt survival of both wild and reared fish.
2. The large increase in commercial long line mixed stock fishery for salmon and sea trout (300% increase in effort since 2007).



Low returns of spawning salmon during the 2010 season have seriously inhibited regional entrepreneurs in the sport fishing tourism industry and created a large amount of negative local media (eg. <http://www.nsd.se/fiske/artikel.aspx?ArticleId=5450327>). Without the support of the local populace, councils, entrepreneurs and especially the local fisheries rites owners who work to protect and enhance the resource and environment we do not believe that a future management plan will be successful. Therefore it is important to immediately address the current situation of low returns of spawning salmon to our rivers.

We acknowledge the process for the creation of a new management plan for Baltic salmon is well advanced but we must request that the EU take into account the extremely low salmon returns for 2010 when preparing a new salmon management plan. We request that the EU's new management plan for Baltic Salmon follows the advice of the STECF that "no fishing of mixed salmon stocks should be allowed until the management target has been reached for all stocks".

We thank you for the work you are doing to protect this for us so important species.

Kind regards,

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 Generalsekreterare
 Sveriges Sportfiske- och Fiskevårdsförbund

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