

Dr. Kurt R. Mueller
672 Hwy 276
Goshen N.S.
BOH 1M0

Dr. Kurt R. Mueller
Wallnstr. 16
85256 Vierkirchen
Germany
Dr.K.R.Mueller@t-online.de

Dear Bill Taylor,

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ASF got my annual gift to support all the different projects for salmon conservation. But I take time to comment the front page of ASF Magazine Volume 56, Number 1, Spring 2007. I'm totally confused and worried about the headline under the picture of a salmon, getting released: Investing in the future. **Too valuable to be caught only once.**

I know the strategy of ASF to urge all fishermen to release all salmon ever hooked. Catch-and-release is one of your prime management tools to protect wild salmon. I know your campaign to join the life-release-program. You promise salmon fishermen some gifts if they accept **in principle** to release all salmon they hook. And I understand, that you think or hope, this is one of the very important strategies to protect the salmon stocks, still endangered.

Maybe. But there are further aspects to be thought about, much more difficult to handle when fishermen cast a line to catch a salmon. For example: do you have an answer for the question, too many people ask me. "Why anybody should catch the endangered species?" And now after I read the headline of the magazine furthermore: "Why anybody should **catch the same fish again and again**?" It seems, ASF defines the fish as a living object of our fun society: "It's so funny to catch the same salmon twenty times or more!" Funny for whom? Sincerely not for the fish. We know, about 4% of the fish we hook and release will die.

The logic of the ASF campaign now I understand as follows: we save the salmon by offering the fish to the fishermen as a toy, playing with it again and again. In my mind, with this strategy **ASF produces a serious ethical problem and in the following serious political problems.** I'm sure, ASF will get a serious problem in the future when more and more people will ask: "Tell me your reasons why you catch an endangered species, why you hurt it, why you risk to kill it if you don't catch it for food?" Perhaps not in these days, but in the near future, when the environmental consciousness of people grow and grow, more and more people will ask these questions – and we fishermen don't have any answer, satisfying the critical questioners.

I hope you've read the opinion of CANADIAN FLYFISHER: Further thoughts on catch-and-release. I hope this opinion is **Jim McLennan** in the November/January Edition of THE one you and the Board of ASF earnest think and discuss about, because the arguments are too important to become wiped from the table.

I will tell you about the situation with no-kill fishing actually I have to handle with in Germany where I live (the summer time I spend in Nova Scotia). Since some years there are laws which forbid no-kill fishing **as a matter of principle.** The law determines under an ethical aspect, that there is **only one acceptable reason to catch, it means to stress and to hurt a fish: to eat it.** Fish are still accepted as a source of human food, but not as an object to

have fun, to play or only to spend your pastime. It doesn't mean, that every fisherman has to kill every fish he hooked – he can release the fish when special conservation arguments or aims are given. But nobody is allowed to start fishing deciding in advance to release all the fish he will hook, although he would be allowed to keep, to kill and eat some of the fish he caught. These fish he has to take and immediately to kill. If I don't accept this regulation of the state, I risk punishments.

I'm deeply convinced, that the ASF program for catch-and-release fishing will create more ethical and therefore **political problems** than to guarantee the survival of the fish. In a longer range the program risks the acceptance of the society to fish! Are you interested in such a process? Are you interested to support PETA, to deliver these people the best arguments against fishing? Do you have any idea how the PETA people are grateful for the sentence: "Too valuable to be caught only once."

In my mind, you and the Board should change the general no-kill fishing strategy of ASF. McLennan says: "We must think carefully about how we present catch-and-release to the people in the middle of the spectrum of the opinion – those who are neither anglers or animal rights supporters. If these people see catch-and-release fishing as a sport pulled out of the air, simply invented one day like baseball, it will be correctly viewed as absurd. Playing with, traumatizing, and stressing wild animals for entertainment, without dignifying them by killing and eating? Absurd indeed." McLennan is right! In contrary to this arguments it seems, ASF defines salmon fishing as a kind of human entertainment. Only in this way I can understand the headline: "Too valuable to be caught only once."

In my mind necessary are well-founded **local** conservation strategies, perfectly adapted at the problems of each river, e.g.: there are stretches of the river with "no fishing year round" (stretches most important for conservation objectives), "catch-and-release stretches", stretches where fishermen can take e.g. grilse (1 to X a year; e.g. 8 in Nova Scotia) and so on. It should be possible to present these strategies to the local people "in the middle of the spectrum of opinion." and in sum to all Canadian people. ASF should advice local fishermen to find the best strategies for fishing and conservation in their rivers and the best arguments for the people living in that area. ASF should put back the responsibility for conservation strategies, e.g. no-kill fishing to the people living with their river, knowing their river and loving their river since centuries. So ASF should not propagate catch-and-release **as a principle** for salmon fishing state-wide, **ASF should not wish salmon to be caught several times**, ASF should accept that salmon may be killed and eaten under certain conditions (these conditions should be published from time to time), ASF should talk about no-kill fishing only as one of the different management tools, adapted to the special conditions of every river. **Otherwise ASF risks and loses its credibility as an organization thinking first of all in the welfare of salmon.** ASF will be understood as an ideological organization, mainly supporting archaic human instincts or superficial interests – and hiding these interests behind a quasi noble character. In my mind this wouldn't be worth to be supported with one cent!

Best Regards – and wise decisions

Dr. Kurt R. Mueller