

IP(08)26

Fisheries Management Focus Area Report

***Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)
Faroe Islands***

FOCUS AREA REPORT ON SALMON FISHERIES IN THE FAROE ISLANDS

The NASCO Council has asked all parties and jurisdictions to prepare a fisheries management focus area report which shall provide the basis for evaluating the extent to which the jurisdictions management approach is meeting NASCO's objectives for the management of salmon fisheries.

Commercial fishery for Atlantic salmon in the waters around the Faroe Islands was stopped in 1991 in order to contribute to the rebuilding of the Atlantic salmon stocks. No decision has since been taken by the Faroese authorities to reopen a commercial fishery for Atlantic salmon. The information provided in the implementation plan submitted to NASCO in 2007 therefore still applies.

- Management of salmon fisheries in the Faroe Islands

A prospective commercial fishery for Atlantic salmon would be regulated by the Faroese Commercial Fishery Act from 1994. The Act applies to the regulation of all fisheries in the Faroese fisheries zone (FFZ), and by Faroese fishing vessels outside the Faroese fisheries zone.

The Commercial Fishery Act states that the living marine resources in the FFZ and Faroese allocations in waters outside the FFZ are the property of the Faroese people and that these fisheries should be managed sustainably, in both biological and economical terms.

Apart from the Commercial Fishery Act the Faroe Islands negotiate appropriate management measures for the salmon fishery at sea within NASCO. By decision NEA(09)7, NASCO agreed not to set a quota for the salmon fishery in the Faroese Fisheries Zone for 2010 and acknowledged that Faroese management decisions will be made with due consideration to the advice of ICES concerning the status of the stocks.

The provisions out of the Faroese Commercial Fishery Act, as well as decisions within NASCO, allow for the application of NASCO's Precautionary Approach. This means that if the Faroese authorities decide to resume commercial fishery for Atlantic salmon in Faroese waters, the fishery will be in line with management measures agreed by NASCO, and will be subject to close surveillance and control. Any future fishery will be organized in close cooperation between the fishermen and the authorities, and in conformity with ICES recommendations.

- Status of the salmon stocks

The assessments of the status of the salmon stocks and the definition of conservation limits in the FFZ are made by ICES. Reference is therefore made to the ICES Advisory Committee report concerning the North Atlantic Salmon stock for information regarding the status of the stocks.

Although commercial fishery in the FFZ stopped in 1991, the ICES assessments still show that there is a low abundance of Atlantic salmon, which appears to be related to poor survival at sea. There is a lack of understanding of the factors affecting salmon at sea which is a serious concern and potentially an obstacle to rational management of the resource. Therefore NASCO has initiated the SALSEA merge which will investigate the distribution and migration of salmon in the North-East Atlantic. A Faroese research vessel participates in the marine surveys conducted as a part of the SALSEA merge project.