

## **NEA(08)5**

### ***Draft Report of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission Tryp Rey Pelayo Hotel Melia, Gijón, Spain 3-6 June, 2008***

#### **1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Richard Cowan (European Union) opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates to Gijon.
- 1.2 An opening statement was made on behalf of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 1).

#### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, NEA (08) 02 (Annex x).

#### **3. Nomination of a Rapporteur**

- 3.1 Dr Paddy Gargan (European Union) was appointed as Rapporteur for the meeting.

#### **4. Election of Officers**

- 4.1 The Commission unanimously re-elected Mr Richard Cowan (European Union) as its Chairman and unanimously elected Mr Andras Kristiansen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) as its Vice-Chairman.

#### **5. Review of the 2007 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area**

- 5.1 The Chair noted that no regulatory measure was adopted last year in the North East Atlantic Commission Area and requested the representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) to confirm that no fishery took place at Faroes in 2007. The representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroes and Greenland) reported that no fishery took place in Faroes in 2007.
- 5.2 The Chairman requested the representative of ICES, Mr Timothy Sheehan, to present the scientific advice on salmon stocks relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission, CNL(08)7.
- 5.3 The Chairman thanked Mr Sheehan for his very clear and concise presentation and

opened the meeting for comment on the scientific advice from ICES.

- 5.4 The representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted from the ICES report that there is a substantial mixed stock fishery in Norway. He also noted that there is a substantial unreported catch and asked the representative of ICES if he could provide information on the location of where these catches were taken, and whether they were mixed stock catches or in-river catches. The representative of ICES advised that the unreported catch was a difficult figure to estimate and report upon. He reported that individual delegates to the ICES Working Group provide assessments of unreported catch for their jurisdiction. He suggested that the members of the Commission might be in the best position to respond to this question. The Chairman noted that the issue of unreported catch had been discussed at the Council in 2006.
- 5.5 The representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) referred to Question b, 4 on page 5 of the ACFM Report (CNL(08)7) posed by NASCO to ICES with respect to salmon in the NEAC Commission area, which to his knowledge, is the area east of 45 degrees West. He outlined that there were two parts to this question, the first being to describe the status of the stocks and secondly to provide annual catch options or alternative management advice for 2009-2011. Section 3.4 of the ACFM Report sets out the advice regarding catch options for Northern and Southern stocks. Both the Northern 1SW and MSW stocks were considered to be at full reproductive capacity while the Southern MSW stocks were considered to be suffering reduced reproductive capacity. The representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that in the ACFM Report, ICES state that therefore there should be no fishing on this complex at West Greenland or Faroes. This advice was given in underlined text in the report. He asked the Representative of ICES if this implied that one could fish this stock complex in another area in the NEAC Commission area.

The representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the West Greenland Commission area is the same as the regulatory area stated in the NASCO Treaty (Article 2.2) while the NEAC Commission area is much larger than the Faroese regulatory area within the NASCO treaty. It is his view that ICES should give advice on the status of stocks and the consequences of any fishery on these stocks and NASCO and its Parties should decide on regulatory measures within that Commission area based on the scientific advice from ICES.

- 5.6 The representative from ICES responded by saying that, with regard to the possibility of the stock complex being fished elsewhere, it should not be fished elsewhere as the stock was below the spawning escapement reserve. Regarding the question of ICES advice, the ICES Working group has been giving advice specifically in relation to distant water fisheries. He said that ICES can provide assistance at re-defining the question to avoid similar confusion in the future. The representative of Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed that this would be helpful.
- 5.7 The representative of Iceland asked the representative of ICES if there had been any progress made on determining the level of by-catch of salmon in pelagic fisheries. The representative of ICES said that the issue of by-catch had been reported previously and there were no new efforts to gather new data on by-catch.

5.8 The Representative of the NGO's raised the issue of mixed stock fisheries relevant to the ICES Report. He noted that there was a lot of concern regarding the mixed stock fishery in Finnmark. This fishery takes large numbers of fish from Russia and Finland. He is aware that there is dialogue between Norway and Russia with regard to obtaining better scientific data on the nature of the stocks. He asked whether this was an issue which should be discussed. The Chairman commented that it was more appropriate to raise this issue on the Council agenda and he proposed to leave it for the Council to discuss.

## **6. Regulatory Measures**

6.1 The Chairman noted that last year a decision was adopted regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2008. Under this decision the Commission decided not to set a quota since the Faroe Islands would manage any fishery on the basis of the ICES advice and in a precautionary manner. He asked if Denmark (in respect of Faroes and Greenland) were in a position to continue with the present arrangement. Denmark (in respect of Faroes and Greenland) indicated that they could accept a continuation of the present agreement.

6.2 The Chairman circulated a draft decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2009, (NEA (08)4). The Commission adopted this decision, NEA (08)xx, (Annex 3).

## **7. Risk of Transmission of *Gyrodactylus salaris* in the Commission Area**

7.1 In the absence of the Working Groups Chairman, Mr Stian Johnsen, Norway, the Secretary introduced the Report of the meeting of the Working Group on *Gyrodactylus salaris* in the North-East Atlantic Commission area, NEA(08)3, (Annex 4). The Secretary noted that the Group had recommended that the Commission should encourage each country without a contingency plan to develop one as a matter of urgency. The Secretary commented that the threat of *G. salaris* is serious and that the Group had recommended that information relating to the parasite be made available on the NASCO website.

7.2 The Chairman noted that one of the recommendations of the Working Group report was to establish a scientific Working Group to report back to the *G. salaris* Working Group. He believed that there may be some difficulties with this recommendation and sought advice from the Parties as to how to proceed. The representative of the European Union indicated that he could not accept the recommendations from the Working Group regarding representations to the European Commission and the establishment of a scientific Working Group. He felt there was no merit in the recommendation to set up another Working group as much work had been done in this area in the recent past. Commenting on the recommendation from the Working group to make representations to the European Commission in relation to Additional Guarantees he noted that the Health Directive was not intended to be revised at present and re-opening this issue was unlikely to be productive.

- 7.3 The representative of Norway concurred with the view expressed by the representative of the European Union regarding the establishment of a scientific Working Group.
- 7.4 The representative of the NGOs commented that the recommendations of the Working Group were made in good faith. While he was unhappy with the decision not to write to the European Commission, given the responses from the Parties on the issue, he did not intend to pursue the issue further at this meeting.
- 7.5 The Commission agreed to retain an agenda item on this issue for its next annual meeting to monitor developments.

## **8. Final Report of the Pilot Study to Improve Understanding of the Migration, Dispersal and Survival of Farmed Salmon**

- 8.1 The Chairman outlined that at the NEAC meeting in 2003, it was agreed that a pilot tagging project be undertaken to investigate the behaviour of “escaped” farmed salmon. He invited Dr Lars Hansen, the projects co-coordinator, to present the findings of the project.
- 8.2 Dr Hansen set out the background to the pilot project. The objective was to investigate the fate of salmon escaped from salmon farms and examine differences in the distribution of tag recoveries from fish released simultaneously from different countries. A number of countries were invited to participate but different problems delayed the start of the project. In 2006 Scotland and Norway released individually tagged large farmed salmon from farms along the coast.
- 8.3 597 large farmed salmon were released from the Floro area of Norway and 678 large farmed salmon were released from the Ardmair area of Scotland in spring 2006. Only five tag recoveries were made from the Scottish release (0.7%) compared to 42 (7.0%) from the Norwegian release. Dr Hansen speculated that the Norwegian fish may have been subjected to a higher fishing effort and that it is possible the Scottish fish move further out to sea and also suffer higher predation. Scottish tags were recovered north of the site of release on the Scottish mainland, in Shetland, in Sweden and Norway. The recovery locations of these tags could be explained by movement with the prevailing current. Most of the Norwegian recaptures were taken in fjords and rivers close to the site of release. Dr Hansen suggested that salmon that escape early may be driven by currents to arctic waters and have poor survival. Those fish released in Scotland showed a high capacity for dispersal and proved capable of reaching coastal waters and rivers in Norway and western Sweden. He concluded that there were likely to be difficulties in expanding this project but sought the views of the Parties.
- 8.4 The Chairman noted that the findings of the pilot programme were of interest but there may not be a desire to repeat the experiment. The representative of the NGO’s recommended that all farmed salmon be tagged as is the case in on the East Coast of the United States, NAC (08)5. He noted that while the industry is smaller in the USA,

genetic marking techniques are being used for farmed salmon and recommended that NASCO encourage the use of this technique in Europe. The Chairman noted that a workshop was held on marking of farmed salmon and it had proven difficult to make progress on this issue. The representative of the NGO's commented that there were a much smaller number of companies engaged in producing farmed salmon now and it may thus be easier to introduce a marking system.

## **9. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize**

- 9.1 The draw for the North-East Atlantic Commission prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditor on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The winning tag was of Norwegian origin. The tagged fish was released from a bag net fishery at the outlet of the Trondheimfjord and was recaptured in the river Gaula. The winner of the Commissions prize was Mr Bjorn Ronningen, Favang, Norway. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

## **10. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice**

- 10.1 The Commission agreed the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee in relation to the North-East Atlantic Commission area. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(08)xx (Annex 5).

## **11. Other Business**

- 11.1 There was no other business.

## **12. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**

- 12.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Council.

## **13. Report of the Meeting**

- 13.1 The Commission agreed a report of its meeting.