

NEA(11)7

Draft Report of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission

Hotel Arctic, Ilulissat, Greenland

4 - 6 June, 2011

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway), opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Commission.
- 1.2 An opening statement was made on behalf of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 1).
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions is included on page **XX** of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, NEA(11)6 (Annex 2).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Mr Manson Wright (European Union) was appointed as Rapporteur for the meeting.

4. Review of the 2010 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 4.1 The representative of ICES, Mr Gérald Chaput, presented the scientific advice on salmon stocks relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission, CNL(11)8. His presentation is available as document CNL(11)xx. The Advisory Committee (ACOM) report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page **XX** of this document.

5. Progress with development of a Risk Framework for the Faroese Fishery

- 5.1 At the Commission's Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting the Chairman had noted that ICES had been unable to make progress in developing quantitative catch advice because the Commission had not agreed explicit management objectives for provision of catch advice for the Faroese fishery and there is no pre-agreed sharing agreement among NASCO Parties. ICES had been requested to provide, for the Commission's 2010 Annual Meeting, an assessment of the issues that would need to be resolved before they could provide quantitative catch advice. The advice from ICES had been

discussed at the Commission's 2010 Annual Meeting and, while no consensus was reached, it was agreed to try to progress this matter inter-sessionally. In this regard, the Chairman had written to the members of the Commission seeking feedback on the following three questions:

- 1) Do the Parties agree that stocks at the country/region level be defined as the management units for the purpose of developing a risk framework for providing quantitative catch advice for the Faroese fishery, or are there alternative proposals?;
- 2) Do the Parties agree that the management objectives used in developing a risk framework for providing quantitative catch advice for the Faroese fishery should be that there is a 75% probability of simultaneously achieving the conservation limits for each of these management units, or are there alternative proposals?;
- 3) Do the Parties agree that the allocation of any harvestable surplus used in developing a risk framework for providing quantitative catch advice for the Faroese fishery should be on the basis of the average share of catches harvested at Faroes and in homewater fisheries during the period 1986 - 1990, or are there alternative proposals?

5.2 The responses to these three questions are contained in document NEA(11)3 (Annex 3), which was introduced by the Chairman. In summary, the EU, Norway and the Russian Federation could agree to the proposals made in questions 2 and 3. With regard to question 1, Norway and Russia had indicated that the four regions used within each of these countries to calculate pre-fishery abundance could be used as management units for the purpose of developing a risk framework. The EU had noted that it was important that the selection of management units respect the application of the Precautionary Approach rather than the large stock complexes currently used which ICES indicated could mask changes in a substantial proportion of stocks. The EU, therefore, proposed that ICES be requested to provide a more detailed evaluation of the appropriate choice of management units including, if possible, worked examples of catch advice. This was accepted by the Commission which had further asked that ICES: 'provide a more detailed evaluation of the choice of appropriate management units to be used in a risk based framework for the provision of catch advice for the Faroese salmon fishery, taking into account relevant biological and management considerations and including, if possible, worked examples of catch advice'. The response from ICES is contained in the ACOM advice, CNL(11)8.

5.3 The representative of Norway tabled document NEA(11)5 (Annex 4) which provided a possible management approach, in flow chart format, to facilitate the establishment of multi-annual measures for the Faroese salmon fishery. It was noted that there would be a need for further advice from ICES and decisions by NASCO before further progress could be made. In the event that the risk analysis was based on management units comprising large numbers of river stocks (jurisdiction or stock complex level), ICES had proposed that an additional management objective should also be applied at a smaller geographical scale. This objective might state that an agreed percentage of the assessed river stocks within each of the smaller geographic units must meet specified management objectives before a TAC is allocated to the

mixed-stock fishery at Faroes. The representative of ICES indicated that without advice from managers on the management objectives and an appropriate sharing arrangement, ICES would only be able to provide examples of quantitative catch options. The representative of the NGOs indicated that mixed stock fisheries pose particular risks to the wild stocks and questioned why the Commission was discussing a possible quota at this time. The representative of the European Union indicated that this was complex matter but there was a need to have a mechanism in place to set quotas in the event that the advice indicated that there was a harvestable surplus at some time in the future. The Commission agreed, therefore, that it should ask that ICES further develop both the Framework of Indicators and the Risk Framework and report to the 2012 meeting of the Commission so that there could be further discussions on this matter at that time.

6. Regulatory Measures

- 6.1 The Chairman noted that at the 2010 Annual Meeting, a Decision was adopted regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2011, NEA(10)8. Under this Decision the Commission decided not to set a quota but noted that the Faroe Islands would manage any fishery on the basis of the ICES advice and in a precautionary manner. He noted that although the Faroe Islands were not represented at the meeting, they had indicated that they could support a roll-over of the decision in 2012.
- 6.2 The Chairman circulated a Draft Decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2012, NEA(11)4. The Commission adopted this Decision, NEA(11)xx (Annex 4) on the assumption that the Faroe Islands would again manage any fishery on the basis of the ICES advice and in a precautionary manner.
- 6.3 In 2009, an informal consultation meeting of the Parties had been held concerning Norwegian coastal fisheries (see NEA(09)3) and a further process of cooperation between Norway, the Russian Federation and the EU had been agreed. The representative of Norway indicated that, in 2010, the pre-fishery abundance of salmon in Norway had been at historically low levels but escapement had been maintained at adequate levels in most rivers. He noted that for 2011 there would be no change in the fishery regulations compared to 2010. In 2011 responsibility for regulation of the salmon fisheries had been transferred from the County Convenors offices to the Directorate for Nature Management and that 2011 would therefore be a transitional year. There would be a more complete review of the regulations in 2012 and dialogue with the Russian Federation and affected EU Member States would continue in future.

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

- 7.1 The Chairman indicated that, at its 2008 Annual Meeting, the Commission had considered a report from its Working Group on *G. salaris* in the North-East Atlantic Commission area, NEA(08)3. While the Working Group had not met since 2008, the Commission had agreed to retain an agenda item on this issue so as to monitor developments in relation to the parasite.
- 7.2 The representative of Norway indicated that rotenone treatments of infected rivers are being conducted in order to eradicate the parasite. Of a total of 48 infected rivers, 21

rivers have been declared free of the parasite after successful treatment. An additional 5 rivers are being monitored for a period of five years after treatment before they can be declared free from the parasite. 22 rivers are still infected with *G.salaris*. She noted that there are 10 infected rivers in the Vefsna region of northern Norway, which were scheduled to be treated in 2010 and 2011. However, *G.salaris* was found on Arctic char in Lake Fustvatnet. In 2010, an extensive survey was carried out to determine the prevalence of *G.salaris* on Arctic char in the distribution area of Atlantic salmon in this region and the parasite was found on Arctic char in a total of three lakes located in the same catchment area. Lake Fustvatnet is the largest lake, and a water body of this size has not previously been treated with rotenone. She advised the Commission that survey results had indicated that it would be feasible to treat the lake if it is carried out before the fall turnover. The Norwegian authorities, therefore, plan to carry out rotenone treatments of all 10 infected rivers and 3 lakes in the Vefsna region during 2011 and 2012 subject to approval from the Parliament. The total budget for this project is NOK120 million (\$20 million).

- 7.3 The representative of Norway indicated that in 2011 and 2012 new attempts will be made to eliminate *G.salaris* by the use of acid aluminum in the River Lærdalselva. In the river Driva, in central Norway, salmon can migrate 90 km upstream. To reduce the distance to be treated with rotenone, a barrier will be constructed 30 km from the sea. The engineering phase of this barrier commenced last year with construction in 2012/2013. In the Rauma region, which contains 4 infected rivers, mapping and planning are being undertaken with the aim of conducting rotenone treatments in 2013 and 2014.

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 8.1 The Chairman announced that the draw for the North-East Atlantic Commission prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditor on 12 May. The winning tag was of Norwegian origin and had been applied at the mouth of the Trondheim Fjord, on 5 June 2010. The tagged fish was recaptured in the River Gaula on 2 July. The winner of the Commission's prize was Mr Clas Bjørnsrud, Dal, Norway. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

9. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice

- 9.1 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(11)10 (Annex 5).

10 Other Business

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 11.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting during the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Council.

12. Report of the Meeting

12.1 The Commission agreed a report of its meeting.

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page **XX**, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of North-East Atlantic Commission papers is included in Annex **XX**.