

## NEA(12)4

### *Draft Report of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission*

*George Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK*

*5 - 8 June, 2012*

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

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway), opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the Twenty-Ninth 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-Ninth 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(12)**XX** (Annex 2).

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

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

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

- 4.1 Mr Raoul Bierach (Norway) was re-elected as Chairman and Dr Ciaran Byrne (European Union) was re-elected as Vice-Chairman of the Commission for a period of two years commencing at the close of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting.

#### **5. Review of the 2011 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area**

- 5.1 The representative of ICES, Mr Gérald Chaput, presented the scientific advice on salmon stocks relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission, CNL(12)8. His presentation is available as document CNL(12)**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.
- 5.2 The representative of the NGOs asked the for clarification from the European Union on the reasons for the increase in coastal netting in England and Wales and Sweden in 2011. The representative of the EU indicated that in Sweden the increase was due to

one fisherman using a new fishing method that is not regulated and that had resulted in a catch of about 2,000 salmon in 2011. The Swedish authorities are exploring options to prevent the use of this fishing method in the future. In England and Wales, the increase was due to increased abundance of salmon as confirmed from counters in rivers. The increase in catch was considered to be justified because all stocks contributing to the fishery are above their conservation limits.

- 5.3 The representative of the NGOs commented that there had also been an increase in abundance of salmon at West Greenland but no increase in that fishery had been permitted so the increased catch in England and Wales does not seem to be in accordance with NASCO's goal of increasing fairness and balance in the management of distant-water and homewater fisheries. The representative of the EU responded that in the case of the mixed stock fishery in England and Wales all the contributing stocks were above their conservation limits and that is not the case for the stocks being fished at West Greenland. The representative of the NGOs indicated that he did not accept that argument.
- 5.4 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) commented that no decision had been taken by NASCO concerning a sharing agreement for the salmon fishery at Faroes but there had been discussions within the Commission. In response to a question from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) , the representative of ICES indicated that much effort had been put into developing forecast models at the country level and that this should be possible in the near future. The representative of the EU noted that advice is presently provided at the stock complex level and that the extent that advice can be provided at a finer scale would depend on data availability. He asked if the way forward would be for ICES to explore the implications of using different numbers of management units in terms of data availability and risk levels. The representative of ICES indicated that managers would need to consider the implications of providing advice on the basis of finer scale units as the more stocks are considered the harder it is to achieve conservation limits in all stocks.

## **6. Progress with development of a Risk Framework for the Faroese Fishery**

- 6.1 The Chair noted that the representative of ICES had indicated that feedback was sought from managers on the seasons that would apply to a fishery at Faroes (January – December or October to May), the choice of management units, the specification of management objectives and a sharing agreement for the Faroes fishery. Previous discussions on these issues had been held both at the Annual Meeting and inter-sessionally and these had been summarized in document NEA(11)3. ICES had been requested to further develop the risk framework and progress reports provided in both 2011 and 2012. The representative of ICES advised the Commission that following the work over the last year the same elements used to provide advice for the West Greenland fishery are now available in relation to the fishery at Faroes.
- 6.2 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that she was not ready to move forward on agreeing a risk framework as there is a need for internal discussions including with stakeholders. The representative of the Russian Federation asked if deadlines could be set but the

representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that she could not commit to a deadline at this stage. However, she intended to use the momentum from the Annual Meeting to commence this process and she would like to return to this issue at the next Annual Meeting. She referred to the mixed stock fisheries in other parts of the Commission area and wished to see progress from States of Origin with regard to these fisheries. The Chairman noted that a problem could arise if there was a harvestable surplus and no mechanism had been agreed for setting a quota. He indicated that it was therefore important to make progress on this issue and he asked that the Faroes keep him advised of progress and that the Commission would return to this issue at its meeting next year.

## **7. Regulatory Measures**

7.1 At its 2011 Annual Meeting, the Commission had adopted a decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2012, NEA(11)10.

7.2 The Chairman asked the Parties if they could accept the framework of indicators (FWI) as a way to identify if there had been any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice for the Faroese salmon fishery and that could be used in support of a multi-annual measure or decision. The Commission adopted the FWI developed by ICES. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that a multi-annual measure would be acceptable to the Faroe Islands if the same wording was used as that contained in NEA(11)10 but adjusted to reflect the fact that it would be a three year measure. This wording states that the Commission had decided not to set a quota for the salmon fishery and that the Faroe Islands will manage any salmon fishery on the basis of the advice from ICES regarding the stocks contributing to the fishery in a precautionary manner and with a view to sustainability. Accordingly, the Chairman circulated a Draft Decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2013, 2014 and 2015, NEA(12)5. The Commission adopted this Decision, NEA(12)6 (Annex 3) on the assumption that the Faroe Islands would again manage any fishery on the basis of the ICES advice and in a precautionary manner.

7.3 The Commission agreed to adopt the same procedure as the West Greenland Commission in order to apply the FWI. Under this arrangement a small group comprising one representative from each member of the Commission would be established towards the end of this year and would work by correspondence to coordinate the data collection and application of the FWI. The Secretary will contact the Parties to seek their nominations for the Group and liaise with the Chairman of the Commission. He would also report the Group's findings to the Parties and to ICES in January in each year when the FWI is used.

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

8.1 The representative of Norway informed the Commission that out of a total of 48 rivers that had been infected with *G. salaris*, 20 rivers are now free from the parasite after successful rotenone treatments and 3 rivers have been treated and are being monitored for five years to assess the success of the treatment. It had been planned to treat the Vefsna region in northern Norway in 2010 and 2011. There are 10 infected rivers in

this region. *G. salaris* had been found on Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) in lakes. An extensive survey carried out in 2010 had found the parasite on Arctic char in a total of three lakes located in the same catchment area. The largest lake has an area of 10 square kilometers and a depth of 68 meters and a lake of this size had not been previously treated with rotenone. Studies indicated that the best time for lake treatment is in the autumn before the fall turnover. The plan is to treat all 10 infected rivers in this region twice; the first treatment was conducted in 2011 and the second treatment will take place in 2012. The lakes will be treated once.

- 8.2 The representative of Norway further reported that in 2011, a new attempt was made to eliminate *G. salaris* by the use of acid aluminum in the River Lærdalselva. The treatment will be repeated in 2012. While it has not yet been possible to eradicate *G. salaris* in an infected river using this treatment method there have been some significant development concerning the use of acid aluminium in the last two years.
- 8.3 He indicated that in the river Driva, in the central part of Norway, salmon can migrate 90 km upstream. To reduce the area to be treated with rotenone it is planned to build a fish barrier at a point 30 km upstream in the river. If all the permits are granted and funding obtained, the barrier will be built during the winter of 2013/2014. In the Rauma region, in western Norway, there are 5 infected rivers; surveys are being conducted and planning is underway with the aim of carrying out rotenone treatment in 2013 and 2014. The Norwegian programme to eradicate *G. salaris* has cost £14 million pounds to date.
- 8.4 The representative of the NGOs commended Norway for the measures it has taken in relation to this parasite.

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

- 9.1 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 9 May. The winning tag was applied to a 7lb salmon on 6 May 2011 and was recaptured by fly on the Dongray Hall beat of the River Dee in Wales on 11 October 2011. The fish was returned to the water. The winner of the Commission's prize of \$1500 was Mr B. Green, Wrexham, Wales. 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(12)10 (Annex XX).

## **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 during the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Council.

**13. Report of the Meeting**

13.1 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**.