

WGC(05)8

*Report of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of
the West Greenland Commission of
the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
Palais des Congrès, Vichy, France
6-10 June, 2005*

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Ms Patricia Kurkul (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to Vichy.
- 1.2 There were no initial statements from the Parties. An opening statement was made on behalf of the NGOs by their Chair, Mr Chris Poupard (Annex 1). The NGOs urged the adoption of regulatory measures consistent with the ICES scientific advice to the Commission that no fishery should take place at West Greenland. The NGOs also urged continuing support and assistance from the Parties for the ongoing conservation agreement negotiated by the North Atlantic Salmon Fund and others in the private sector with the Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland (KNAPK).
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included on page 173 of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, WGC(05)9 (Annex 2).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 The Commission appointed Dr Malcolm Beveridge (European Union) as its Rapporteur for the meeting.

4. Review of the 2004 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 4.1 The representative of the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon, Dr Walter Crozier, presented the scientific advice from ICES relevant to the West Greenland Commission, prepared in response to a request from the Commission at its Twenty-First Annual Meeting. The ACFM report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page 123 of this document. Dr Crozier's overhead presentation to the Commission is contained in document CNL(05)44.
- 4.2 The Chair thanked the representative of ICES for the clear and comprehensive presentation of the ICES advice, noting that this would be Dr Crozier's last presentation as his term as Chair of the ICES North Atlantic Salmon Working Group has ended.

- 4.3 The representative of the European Union noted that 151 licences for salmon fishing were issued, that there were 66 reported landings and that 24 of those were by professional fishermen and licence holders. The representative of the European Union asked the representative of ICES whether it was possible to allocate salmon landings between licensed and unlicensed fishermen, but was advised that present data didn't permit this. The representative of ICES expressed a commitment to further examine this issue, proposing that working with local fishermen may help improve the data.
- 4.4 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that many professional fishermen and hunters applied for licences to maintain their rights to exploit salmon. The Chair agreed that this may be one of the reasons for the high number of licences. The representative of the European Union asked whether there were more fishermen now than in the recent past and stated that the lack of sound data increased the uncertainties associated with the salmon landings. The representative of ICES stressed that it was not assumed that there was a large unreported catch, but that the unreported catch figure needs to be improved. Data are required on both licensed and unlicensed fishermen and on those who report and don't report catches. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that the Greenland authorities are committed to improving the catch reporting.
- 4.5 A paper on the 2004 fishery at West Greenland was tabled by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, WGC(05)5 (Annex 3).

5. Regulatory Measures

- 5.1 No Parties made initial statements or proposals.
- 5.2 Following consultations, the Chair submitted a draft Regulatory Measure for the Fishing of Salmon at West Greenland, WGC(05)4. The draft Regulatory Measure was consistent with present ICES scientific advice and with earlier measures and proposed that catches be restricted to amounts for internal consumption in Greenland, which had previously been estimated at 20 tonnes. In the spirit of the 'Next Steps' process it was proposed that the regulatory measure would be automatically extended yearly to cover successive fishing seasons, unless a member of the West Greenland Commission gives written notice to other members by 25 April yearly of its intent to terminate the regulatory measure agreement.
- 5.3 Canada asked whether in agreeing to the regulatory measure this would commit the country to participate in the sampling programme. The Chair stated that the actual arrangements for the sampling programme were the subject of separate negotiations among Parties. Canada asked for clarification of the April 25 deadline for members giving notice to terminate their agreement to the regulatory measure. The Chair responded that the date coincided with the conservation agreement and that while the ACFM had not completed its work, the Working Group would have completed its work by April 20, thereby providing members with information on the status of stocks. The United States gave its support to the multi-year commitment, stating that it was consistent with the 'Next Steps' process, and that setting catches at an amount for internal consumption in Greenland was also consistent with the scientific advice, which has consistently highlighted the very poor state of the salmon stocks being exploited.

- 5.4 After further consultation among the Parties, a revised proposal for a 2005 regulatory measure was tabled.
- 5.5 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) made a formal statement in which he requested that before the Commission proceeded to decide upon the proposal, he wished to reiterate that Greenland can accept the measure for 2005 in the light of the prevailing biological circumstances and in the light of fisheries limitations undertaken by other Parties. However, it wished to use the opportunity to reiterate that the measure is without prejudice to the basic rights of Greenland to harvest a reasonable portion of this shared resource, which feeds in its waters. It was hoped that the strict measures taken in 2005 in West Greenland and taken or contemplated elsewhere will contribute to improve the stock situation, so Greenland again will be able to reopen its salmon fishery, with due regard to socio-economic needs, and based upon the best available scientific advice. With these words, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) accepted the proposal.
- 5.6 The Chair noted that an important change in the 2005 measure from 2004 was a commitment to explore the possibilities to adopt regulatory measures on a multi-annual basis, subject to unforeseeable developments, as suggested within the 'Next Steps' process, during the Annual Meeting in 2006. Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) will inform the other Parties on the outcome of the 2005 fishery. The Parties adopted the Regulatory Measure, WGC(05)7 (Annex 4).

6. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

- 6.1 The United States presented a report on the North American, European Union and Greenland sampling programme at West Greenland in 2004. In view of the findings, the representative of the European Union reiterated that the salmon catch data may be an underestimate and should be treated with caution. The Chair agreed. The representative of ICES stated that the salmon catch data were amended in the light of the sampling work for modelling purposes. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also thanked the samplers for their work, stating that he believed the temporal and spatial coverage of the fishery was now excellent. The results highlighted the fact that greater efforts needed to be made to improve catch reporting in Nuuk, where the majority of fish appearing in local markets are sold. Adding its thanks to the samplers, the representative of the European Union asked whether Canada intended to contribute to sampling efforts in 2005. Canada replied that although it had sent no samplers in 2004, it had done so for many years and continued to contribute to the scale analysis work.
- 6.2 The West Greenland Sampling Agreement, WGC(05)6 (Annex 5), was tabled for discussion. All Parties external to Greenland with interests in the mixed stock fishery at West Greenland (Canada, the European Union and the United States) agreed to contribute to the cooperative sampling programme for the 2005 season. In addition, there was a commitment by the Greenland Home Rule Government to support the sampling programme.

7. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 7.1 Two tags were returned from Greenland in 2004. The prize winner was a fisherman, Mr Vittus Jerimiassen, Nuuk, who caught the salmon on 17 October 2004. The fish had

been tagged with an anchor tag on the Miramichi River, Canada. No biological data were recorded.

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

- 8.1 The Chair of the Standing Scientific Committee, Dr Peter Hutchinson, indicated that Mr Per Kannevorff had retired and was no longer able to continue as a Commission representative on that Committee. The Commission agreed to appoint a replacement for Mr Kannevorff prior to next year's meeting. He also indicated that one of the Next Steps for NASCO Working Group's recommendations had been that in the event that biennial or multi-annual regulatory measures could be agreed, then the request to ICES might only be needed on a biennial or multi-annual basis. He asked for the Commission's advice as to what information it would require in the event that there is no request for advice from ICES.
- 8.2 The Commission members reviewed the relevant section of document SSC(05)2. The main change from the advice request of previous years was the move to seek multi-annual catch advice (2006-2008). This change was initiated in response to the recommendation from the Next Steps for NASCO Working Group to consider the feasibility of adopting multi-annual regulatory measures. It was recognized, however, that if there was interest in adopting such measures, the overall nature and scope of the request for scientific advice to ICES may be affected, but that the decision would need to be taken by the Council at the 2006 Annual Meeting.
- 8.3 The Chair invited comments from Parties and as there were none, the Commission agreed to recommend the draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES to the Council. The request, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(05)12 (Annex 6).

9. Other Business

- 9.1 There was no other business.

10. Date and Place of Next Meeting

- 10.1 The next meeting of the West Greenland Commission will be held during the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the Council from 5-9 June 2006.

11. Report of the Meeting

- 11.1 The Commission agreed a report of its meeting, WGC(05)8.

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page 107, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of North American Commission papers is included in Annex 7 on page 121 of this document.