

WGC(07)3

Draft Report of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

Harborside Hotel & Marina, Bar Harbor, Maine, USA

4-8 June, 2007

1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 The Chair, Mr. Guy Beaupre (Canada) opened the meeting.

1.2 There were no initial statements from the Parties. The NGO Chair, Mr. Chris Poupard, designated Ms. Sue Scott of the Atlantic Salmon Federation to make an opening statement on behalf of the NGOs (Annex 1). The NGOs recommended to the Parties that the West Greenland Commission achieve a multi-year agreement for Greenland's commercial fishery, a reduction of the present 20 tonne allowance for Greenland's subsistence fishery, and better monitoring to control all fisheries, including unreported catch.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, WGC(07)1 (Annex 2).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

3.1 The Commission appointed Ms. Jessica Pruden (United States) as its Rapporteur for the meeting.

4. Review of the 2006 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

4.1 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) presented a paper on the 2006 fishery at West Greenland, WGC(07)04.

4.2 The representative of ICES, Mr. Tim Sheehan, presented the scientific advice from ICES relevant to the West Greenland Commission, prepared in response to a request from the Commission at its Twenty-Third Annual Meeting. The ACFM report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions is found in CNL(07)07. The overhead presentation is included in CNL(07)X.

4.3 The Chair thanked the representative of ICES for his presentation.

4.4 The representative of the European Union asked why there was a disparity between the level of catch reported by West Greenland in paper WGC(07)04 (22.8 tonnes) and the level reported by ICES in the ACFM report (21.7 tonnes). The representative from the European Union commented on the relationship between the disproportionately high

level of catch reported in the final weeks of the fishery and the public education television campaign that ran at the end of the season. The representative from the European Union also commented upon the catch distribution ratio, specifically noting that there seemed to be a higher proportion of salmon of European origin in Division 1A. The representative from ICES stated that he was unsure as to why there is a discrepancy in the reported catch values, but that it may be attributed to how the catch is reported (i.e, gutted weight vs. whole). The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that the discrepancy between the two values resulted from the initial report of the catch being expressed in gutted weight. With respect to the continent of origin distribution question, the ICES representative stated that he could not give any explanation as to why more salmon of European origin were found in Division 1A. The ICES representative agreed that there appears to be a strong link between the television campaign and the high levels of reported catch at the end of the season; however, there was no representative from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) at the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon meeting to confirm this. The representative from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that it was likely that the television campaign did influence the level of reported catch at the end of the season. The NGO Chair asked for clarification from the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) as to whether the catch being reported after the television campaign was from earlier in the season or a reflection of higher catch at the end of the season. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that it was likely the catch was from earlier in the season, but that he would have to verify that information.

- 4.5 The ICES representative presented an overview of the Framework of Indicators (FWI). The representative of the US expressed appreciation to ICES on the development of the FWI and stated that the US was confident in recommending that there should be no catch. The representative from the US asked the ICES to characterize the robustness of the FWI. The representative of ICES stated that the FWI is very robust; it was drafted by an ICES study group and then sent to and reviewed by the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon and finally reviewed and approved by ACFM. The representatives from Canada and the European Union commended ICES on development of the FWI. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also commended ICES on the FWI.

5. Regulatory Measures

- 5.1 The Chairman stated that last year the Parties agreed to request a finalized FWI from ICES. The Chairman stated that the Parties now have the FWI and must make a decision on whether it is satisfactory or not. If the FWI is satisfactory to all Parties then the multi-annual regulatory measures would apply for 2007 and 2008. The representative of Canada stated that they accept the FWI and are ready to move forward. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) proposed that the agenda item stay open and that the Commission continue with other items. The representative of the US stated that there appear to be two options: 1) retain the agreement from last year since it was contingent upon completion of the FWI; or 2) the Parties could adopt new measures for 2007-2009, given that ICES completed a full assessment. The representative of Canada stated that the second option proposed by the

US should be considered. The representative of the European Union stated that they would like the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to pose their questions on the FWI so that discussions on regulatory measures could proceed. The Chairman stated that other agenda items would be pursued to allow time for more questions.

- 5.2 The Chairman subsequently reopened the discussion on regulatory measures. The representative of Canada asked if the Chair of ICES could comment on the sensitivity of the FWI. The Chair of ICES stated that the FWI is sensitive because it incorporates 32 indicator variables, each having a probability of at least 80% of identifying a true high or a true low state of abundance.
- 5.3 The Chairman then asked the Parties if anyone had a proposal for moving forward. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) proposed that the agenda item be kept open because they still had questions on the FWI. The Chairman proposed that the Parties leave the agenda item open until the WGC meeting the next day. The representative of the European Union stated that when discussions proceed Parties should respect the agreement from last year rather than agree to a new multi-annual regulatory measure. The Chairman stated that the rest of the agenda items would be covered and the discussion on regulatory measures would be discussed again the following day in the meeting of the WGC.
- 5.3 Upon reconvening, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that he had additional question and comments about the FWI. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) commented that the FWI does not include all rivers relevant for the FWI and does not find the FWI fully developed in terms of covering the entire WGC area. In addition, the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that they wanted to draw attention to the fact that adopting a multi-year catch advice is giving up a legitimate right of Greenland to utilize its own resources by setting a quota. Therefore, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) considers it of vital importance that new management measures, such as adopting the multi-annual advice, are closely linked to a high probability of recovering the state of salmon stock. Considering the ICES report which states less than a 3% probability of meeting the management objectives if there is no catch taken in Greenland, it is the Greenlandic point of view that there must be other and more vital factors influencing the mortality of the salmon stocks in the Canadian and USA rivers than the Greenlandic catch. Examples of these factors include river pollution, hydropower, and climate change. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) then went on to pose two questions to the ICES chair: 1) does the FWI take into consideration marine mortality; 2) how essential is adopting the multi-annual catch advice compared to the influences of other factors that might affect salmon stocks in the North Atlantic. The ICES chair stated that the FWI does take into account marine survival by utilizing the entire time series of datasets available, which cover stock performance across varying survival scenarios. With respect to the second question, the ICES chair stated that ICES is not prepared to rank the effects of other factors. However, ICES notes that the fish harvested off of West Greenland have already successfully completed one half of their marine life cycle.

5.5 The Chairman asked the Parties to agree to continue with multi-annual catch advice. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that they would accept the FWI for a fixed period of 2006-2008. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also stated that the Greenlandic government will consider accepting new multi-annual advice at the NASCO annual meeting in 2009 in light of further development of the FWI, the continued research of the mortality of salmon stocks and possible improvement of the stocks. The representatives of the US, Canada, and the EUROPEAN UNION all stated that it would be acceptable to continue the 2006 agreement. Given agreement by all Parties, the Chairman stated that he considered the regulatory measures to be accepted.

6. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

6.1 There was support from all Parties to continue the sampling program in the West Greenland Fishery. The Sampling Agreement was approved provided that the typo was corrected in the last three bullets referencing 2006 instead of 2007 (WGC(07)05). The Chairman highlighted the West Greenland sampling brochure and poster.

7. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

7.1 The draw for the West Greenland Commission Prize was made on May 9, 2007. The winning tag was of Canadian origin. The tag was applied to a wild male grilse (55.6 cm) on August 22, 2005, at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada tagging net at Millerton, New Brunswick on the Main Southwest Miramichi River. It was recaptured at West Greenland in 2006. The Commission prize of 1500.00 US dollars goes to Mr. Jorgen Dalager of Qasigianguit, Greenland.

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

8.1 The Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES, SSC(07)4, was presented by the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Peter Hutchinson. The Assistant Secretary noted that the Scientific Advice was slightly different this year due to the completion of the FWI. The Assistant Secretary asked the Parties if they could agree to move questions 3.3, 3.4, and 4.2 above the italicized text so that it is reported on annually. This resulted in a significant discussion as to whether ICES or NASCO would be responsible for applying the FWI and the collection of data. The Parties ultimately agreed that it should be NASCO's responsibility to collect the data from all Parties and apply the FWI when necessary. Therefore, question 1.3 should be removed from the Draft Request. It was further agreed that there would be a representative from each of the Parties to coordinate the collection of data and application of the FWI. NASCO would then communicate the results to ICES.

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-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Council from XX.

11. Report of the Meeting

11.1 The Commission agreed a report of its meeting, WGC(07)X