



West Greenland Commission

WGCIS(18)17

***Report of the Conference Call Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland
Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

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15 May 2018

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair of the West Greenland Commission (WGC) , Mr Carl McLean (Canada), opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He thanked everyone for taking the time to participate and Canada for hosting the telephone conference. He confirmed that the discussions would constitute a formal WGC Inter-Sessional Meeting, so would require a rapporteur.
- 1.2 The Chair noted that the scheduling of a conference call prior to the Annual Meeting had been proposed at the recent WGC Inter-Sessional meeting in Copenhagen (WGCIS(18)12) to allow further consideration of written responses provided by Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland (DFG) to a number of additional questions posed by the Parties. It had also been agreed that the conference call be scheduled after the ICES advice had been received in early May. Written responses to the questions from Parties had been provided by DFG on May 9 (WGCIS(18)14). The ICES advice was published on May 4 (CNL(18)08). The Chair further noted that Greenland had only recently elected a new government, and that DFG regulators were therefore in the early stages of their new mandate.
- 1.3 A list of participants is attached at Annex 1.
- 1.4 Mr Ian Russell (European Union) was appointed Rapporteur for the meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 There were no suggested change to the draft agenda from Parties and the Commission adopted its Agenda, WGCIS(18)15 (Annex 2). The Chair noted that there were some procedural issues which he would need to raise under Other Business, point 6 of the agenda.

3. Preliminary Discussion of the Latest ICES Advice

- 3.1 The Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, CNL(18)08, was published on 4 May 2018. This document was subsequently revised on May 9 to correct figures in Table 7 and is now available as document CNL(18)08rev.
- 3.2 The Chair noted that the ICES advice had not yet been formally presented to the Commission but observed, on the basis of an initial review of the report, that this was very

similar to advice presented to the WGC in previous years. The abundance of salmon within the West Greenland area remains low compared to historical levels and ICES has advised that there are no mixed-stock fishery options at West Greenland for fishing years 2018 – 2020 consistent with meeting the management objectives agreed by NASCO and the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach.

- 3.3 ICES has advised that the relatively low abundance of stocks is broadly consistent with the general pattern of decline in marine survival in most monitored stocks. Despite major changes in fisheries management in the past few decades and increasingly more restrictive fisheries measures, returns in many regions have remained near historical lows. The continued low abundance of salmon stocks across North America and in the Northeast Atlantic, despite significant fishery reductions, further strengthens the conclusions that factors other than fisheries are constraining production. Climatic factors modifying ecosystem conditions and the impact of predators of salmon at sea are considered to be the main factors contributing to lower productivity, which is expressed almost entirely in terms of lower marine survival.
- 3.4 The Chair noted that the number of licensed fishers in Greenland in 2017 had been consistent with numbers in 2016, but that more landing reports had been received. He hoped that this was a sign that the message about the importance of reporting was being recognised by the fishers.
- 3.5 There were no initial comments from Parties regarding the ICES advice. However, the representative from the NGOs suggested that the ‘data deficiency’ section of the ICES advice (Section 1.5. page 18 and again in Section 4 on page 112) might merit particular consideration during the WGC discussions at the Annual Meeting in helping to consider possible monitoring and control provisions that might be associated with a possible new regulatory measure for the fishery.

4. Discussion of the Latest Information Received from Greenland in Response to the Eleven Questions Sent to Them After the Copenhagen Inter-Sessional Meeting

- 4.1 The Commission had held a previous Inter-Sessional Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark during 27 February – 1 March 2018. During the discussions held at that meeting, it was agreed that Parties would provide a list of questions for response by DFG; these were addressed during the meeting. It was subsequently agreed that a second set of written questions would be asked of DFG, with answers to be provided around the time of the release of the ICES advice, to facilitate further discussion by means of a conference call meeting of the Commission in advance of the Annual Meeting. This second set of questions was sent to the Secretariat, compiled and issued to DFG on 6 March 2018. DFG responded with their answers on May 9 and these were sent out to Commission delegates on the same day (WGCIS(18)14) (Annex 3).
- 4.2 The Chair noted that DFG had provided responses to seven of the questions, but had declined to answer four of the questions which DFG had considered to represent internal matters. The teleconference therefore provided an opportunity for Parties to seek further clarification on the responses provided by DFG. He highlighted the importance of engaging respectfully in discussions, and recognising the challenges faced by DFG in the management of their salmon fishery, as the Commission worked toward what he hoped

would be the successful development of a new regulatory measure during the forthcoming Annual Meeting.

- 4.3 The representative of the United States noted the concerns expressed by DFG and regretted any misunderstanding regarding the intent of questions that DFG felt were inappropriate. She highlighted that she was particularly keen to understand the constraints that DFG faced in implementing monitoring and control provisions in the fishery, noting that DFG did not implement particular requirements that had been included in the previous regulatory measure (i.e. licensing of all fishers and introducing potential penalties for non-reporting). The intention of the written questions had therefore been to work in good faith to see where there might be room to make improvements. She further noted the valuable information that can be gained from phone surveys, not only to fill the not insignificant data reporting gaps for salmon, but also with regard to things that might be affecting the salmon fishery. It was therefore disappointing to the United States that no phone survey had been completed in 2017. She was encouraged that DFG was continuing to consider the possible licensing of all sectors and indicated that the United States hoped to share some further suggestions for provisions that might be included in a potential new regulatory measure in advance of the Annual Meeting. The representative of DFG had no further comment at the current time but advised that DFG was actively considering options that they might be able to table at the Annual Meeting. He indicated that the recent elections in Greenland had raised some uncertainties but that a new Minister would be appointed soon. He recognised that there were certain elements of the previous regulatory measure which hadn't been implemented, but that DFG still had these in mind.
- 4.4 In response to a question from the NGO representative, the representative from DFG indicated that staffing issues had been responsible for the failure to complete a phone survey in 2017. There were a number of new staff at the control unit and additional resources would have been needed to deliver the survey effectively; these resources had not been available.
- 4.5 The Chair noted that, during the previous Inter-Sessional meeting, DFG had indicated that it was planning to complete a thorough review of the various monitoring and control measures, including the phone survey and responses to the 6 tenets. He wondered what progress had been made with this. The representative of DFG recognised that they now had three years' experience of the new monitoring and control requirements and of the resources needed to deliver against these. He advised that DFG would be exploring these issues further before the Annual Meeting in preparation for the development of a possible new regulatory measure. However, he highlighted the need to balance the management commitments associated with salmon, where catches are now relatively small, with the wider political agenda and other fishery management priorities. The representative of the United States recognised that current catches were relatively low, but that catches at the current level (e.g. 27 t) still posed a threat to endangered salmon stocks originating in other jurisdictions. In that regard, she underscored that significant uncertainties also still remain about the size of the unreported catch, particularly from the currently unlicensed component of the fishery.
- 4.6 The Chair hoped that there would be some further information available by the time of the Annual Meeting to provide further insight and reiterated the importance of aiming to reach agreement on a new multi-annual measure.

5. Preparations for a Further Inter-Sessional Meeting (If Required)

- 5.1 The Commission discussed the need for a further Inter-Sessional Meeting immediately prior to the Annual Meeting and agreed that this would be beneficial. All Parties were in favour of this. The representative of Canada indicated that it would be helpful to establish clear objectives for the meeting well in advance, and the representative of the United States suggested that these might include: (1) clarifying the responsibilities for monitoring and control provisions and the delivery of these; and (2) reviewing the options that might be included in a possible new regulatory measure. She reiterated that the United States had already given some thought to what might be included in such a measure and planned to circulate further details in advance of the Annual Meeting. The representative of the EU agreed there was a need for further monitoring and control provisions in the measure, beyond those outlined in the initial draft document that had developed during the previous Inter-Sessional Meeting, and that face-to-face discussion represented the best way forward.
- 5.2 The Commission discussed the benefits of having the ICES advice presented during the Inter-Sessional Meeting to both inform discussions and potentially save time during the later WGC meetings. It was noted, however, that it would probably be necessary for ICES to also report to the full WGC given the expected limited attendance at the Inter-Sessional Meeting.
- 5.3. It was agreed that the Inter-Sessional Meeting would be held on Sunday 10 June at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine, USA, from 10:00 until 17:00 hours. The Secretary would make the necessary arrangements and work with the WGC Chair to develop a Draft Agenda for the Meeting. The representative of the United States suggested this might usefully be informed by agendas from previous Inter-Sessional Meetings of the WGC, in particular from 2015 when the current regulatory measure was discussed.

6. Other Business

- 6.1 The Chair advised that he had a conflict on 13 June, so would be unable to chair one of the WGC meetings. He noted that this would normally not be an issue, since the Vice-Chair would step in. However, the current Vice-Chair is Kim Damon-Randall, who is also the Head of Delegation to NASCO for the United States. Given this new responsibility, she will be stepping down as Vice-Chair from the beginning of the Inter-Sessional Meeting. The Chair advised, therefore, that the Commission would need to elect a new Vice-Chair at the start of the Inter-Sessional Meeting, with the intention that whoever was elected to complete Kim Damon-Randall's term would take up the role with immediate effect. However, there would still need to be an election of officers at the Annual Meeting of the Commission for the next term. He noted that preliminary discussions had already taken place between the Chair, Heads of Delegation and the Secretariat about a possible way forward.
- 6.2 In response to a question from the Chair, the representative of ICES confirmed that he expected both the current Working Group Chair and an ACOM Vice-Chair to represent ICES at the NASCO Annual Meeting and that at least one of these representatives would be available for the Inter-Sessional meeting on 10 June.

7. Report of the Meeting

- 7.1 Due to a lack of time available at the meeting, the Commission agreed to approve a report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting via email in a timely manner. .

8. Close of the Meeting

- 8.1 The Chair thanked the participants for their contributions to the Inter-Sessional Meeting and closed the meeting.

List of Participants

Canada

Mr Tony Blanchard

Mr Serge Doucet

Ms Kate Johnson

Mr Carl McLean

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

Mr Emanuel Rosing

European Union

Dr Arnaud Peyronnet

Mr Ian Russell

USA

Ms Kim Blankenbeker

Ms Kim Damon-Randall

Mr Steve Gephard

Ms Alexis Ortiz

Mr Rory Saunders

Ms Julie A. Williams

Ms Rebecca Wintering

IGO

Dr David Miller

NGO

Mr Dave Meerburg

Secretariat

Dr Emma Hatfield

Ms Sarah Robinson

WGCIS(18)15

Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

By conference call

15 May 2018, 13:30 Edinburgh local time

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Preliminary Discussion of the Latest ICES Advice
4. Discussion of the Latest Information Received from Greenland in Response to the Eleven Questions Sent to Them After the Copenhagen Inter-Sessional Meeting
5. Preparations for a Further Inter-Sessional Meeting (If Required)
6. Other Business
7. Report of the Meeting
8. Close of the Meeting

Secretary
Edinburgh
15 May 2018

WGCIS(18)14

Second Q & A paper to and from Greenland

Answers on questions from members of WGC

09-05-2018
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1. Question: Can Greenland explain why the 2016 and 2017 harvests were approximately 27 t when the quotas were 32 t and 45 t respectively? For instance, are the reduced catches in 2016 and 2017 due to reduced effort or reduce fishing success? It was noted in the past that many fishers were concentrating effort on other, possibly higher value species;

Answer: The answer is likely a combination of targeting of alternative species and reduced effort, lack of factory landing and changes in salmon distribution/abundance. In 2016-17 the landings of cod in the Sisimiut (1B) and Maniitsoq (1C) area have increased substantially to more than 20.000 tonnes, but with little change in landings south of Nuuk. For Greenland halibut, landings have increased in the Sisimiut (1B), Paamiut (1E) and south Greenland (1F) area and remained at a high level in Nuuk (1D). Increased interest in other species can account for part of the decreased landings observed for salmon and wolffish. In the phone surveys fishermen in the Disko bay have reported trouble with glacier ice preventing the fishery in the last two years and others have been troubled with bycatches of cod in their salmon gillnets further south in Greenland.

2. Question: Is there a reason why private, unlicensed fishers who have provided catch reports previously are not included in the phone survey? Can they be included?

Answer: A phone survey could be made based on the group of non-licensed fishermen that have in previous years reported catch. However, such a survey would not be an independent/random subset of the potential group of non-licensed fishermen. Furthermore, unlike for the licensed segment, where we know the total number of licensed fishermen, we do not know the final/total number of non-licensed fishermen. The survey would

therefore only give an idea about whether non-licensed fishermen fish can report and fish every year or not. We are therefore considering alternative ways to gain knowledge about the unlicensed people fishing for their own consumption. The phone survey was not finalized in 2017 due to lack of resources. In spite of the phone survey conducted in 2014-2016 season, no significant change has been observed in the number of licensed fishermen reporting catches (1/3). Furthermore, estimates of non reported catch for the last 2/3 of license holders that fail to report has revealed only a limited amount of non-reported catch in this segment (about half the 10 tonnes added by ICES yearly).

3. Question: Can you expand on the reasons given for not implementing the requirement to expand licensing requirements to non-professional fishermen? For instance, why is this controversial?

Answer: We are still considering potential ways to gain knowledge about the number of unlicensed fishermen and women. Perhaps making a simple license system.

4. Question: Can you explain why implementing a penalty on a fisherman that does not provide a catch report, even if it is a zero catch report, is controversial? Are there any fisheries where a penalty of some sort is administered for non-reporting?

Answer: The question is internal matter.

5. As we understand it, the 2015 Executive Order outlines provisions for assessing penalties for non-reporting of harvest. Can you please outline the process, timeline, and actions for assessing penalties (e.g. communication with fishers, assessment of fine, etc.)?

Answer: The question is internal matter.

6. Question: What was the impact of not having factory landing on the overall harvest level in 2016 and 2017?

Answer: Most likely the harvest levels were significantly lower in 2016 and 2017 than they would have been, if factory landings had been allowed. However, data is not available to give a more precise estimate of the effect of disallowing factory landings.

7. What specific progress has been made with having the market managers reporting landings in addition to the individual fishers reporting their own landings?

Answer: A significant effort has been made by GFLKs officers to gather catch reports from market managers over the past 3 years. In general, only minor discrepancies have been found between market records and what has been reported directly by fishermen to GFLK. A side effect of receiving catch reports referring to the same catches from disparate sources (when fishermen also individually send reports of their catches) has been the need of additional quality control of catch records with regards to establishing which reports are unique and which have in effect been reported more than once. In

general, therefore, the measure has not been found to increase the quality of catch reporting in an effective manner.

8. Question: Can you provide a report on what further analysis on this year's fishery might help inform a NASCO measure for 2018 (e.g. analysis of phone surveys, estimates on the individual number of private fishers reporting over time, analysis of catches of other species to inform salmon fishery dynamics, etc.). It is important that the Parties receive this information as part of the report agreed in Paragraph 6.1 of the West Greenland Commission's inter-sessional meeting and agreed in Copenhagen to be delivered by 4 May, 2018;

Answer: The question is internal matter.

9. Can you explain the process that Greenland must go through prior to setting a quota? How is this process related to your Executive Order? What is the timing of the quota setting process?

Answer: The question is internal matter.

10. Can Greenland provide additional information on the efforts made to improve the monitoring, management control and surveillance of its salmon fishery since 2015, as per Paragraph 5 of the multi-annual regulatory measure, WGC(15)21?

Answer: Extended roundtrips to villages and fishing areas have been organized each year during the season by GFLK officers. The time on these trips has been split between meetings with fishermen, municipal fisheries consultants and market managers, and patrolling fishing grounds. Nets have been inspected and illegal nets, i.e. nets not removed after the end of the season have been confiscated.

National radio spots during the season have contributed to a high general awareness in the population on the rules surrounding salmon fisheries and catch reporting. At GFLKs offices, salmon catch records are continuously registered and the quota uptake is included in a weekly publication of coastal fisheries quotas. Effort is made to monitor the received catch records to be able to identify missing reports from certain regions and be able to act on this quickly.

11. Can Greenland explain what are the challenges it encounters in introducing a carcass tagging scheme?

Answer: Of course, it will require administrative and other challenges in connection with this form of scheme, as we are a small management in Greenland. We believe that it will be an additional burden on our administrative system and will not match what we eventually get for Greenland's salmon deal with NASCO. Especially when you think there are approx. 77 settlements and cities in Greenland. It will require a lot of logistical problems, here are the huge kilometers of coastline. So that makes no sense in this context.

Best regards

Emanuel Rosing