

WGC(15)22

West Greenland Fishery Sampling Agreement, 2015

The West Greenland Commission recognises the important contribution of sound biological data to science-based management decisions for fisheries prosecuted in the West Greenland Commission area. The Parties in the West Greenland Commission have worked cooperatively over the past four decades to collect biological data on Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland. These data provide critical inputs to the stock assessment completed annually by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea's (ICES) Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon.

The objectives of the sampling programme in 2015 are to:

- Continue the time series of data (1969-2014) on continent of origin and biological characteristics of the Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland fishery
- Provide data on mean weight, length, age, and continent of origin for use in the North American and European Atlantic salmon run-reconstruction models
- Collect information on the recovery of internal and external tags

To this end, the sampling programme in 2015 will collect:

- Biological characteristics data, including lengths and weights of landed fish
- Information on tags, fin clips and other marks
- Scale samples to be used for age and growth analyses
- Tissue samples to be used for genetic analyses
- Other biological data requested by the ICES scientists and NASCO co-operators

External Staffing Inputs:

Parties external to Greenland with interests in the mixed-stock fishery at West Greenland, including Canada, the European Union and the United States, have historically provided personnel and analytical inputs into the cooperative sampling programmes. The NASCO Parties agree to provide the following inputs to the cooperative sampling programme at West Greenland during the 2015 fishing season:

- The European Union¹ agrees to provide a minimum of 8 person weeks² to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2015 fishing season;
- Canada agrees to provide a minimum of 2 person weeks² to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2015 fishing season;
- The United States agrees to provide a minimum of 2 person weeks² to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2015 fishing season;
- The Government of Greenland, in cooperation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, will sample Atlantic salmon from the city of Nuuk on a weekly basis during the 2015 fishing season;

¹ Ireland (2 samplers) and the United Kingdom (2 samplers).

² For the purposes of this agreement, a person week of sampling is defined as a trained individual who works on site in West Greenland to collect samples of Atlantic salmon for a period of 7 days.

- The United States agrees to co-ordinate the sampling programme for 2015; and
- The Government of Greenland, in cooperation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, agrees to provide support for the sampling programme by facilitating the sampling of Atlantic salmon by the samplers identified above.

In addition, NASCO Parties agree to provide the following technical support for sample analysis and data collected at West Greenland:

- The Government of Greenland, in cooperation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Programme Coordinator, will work with all factories receiving harvested salmon to collect biological characteristics data and samples from a proportion of the landed fish via factory staff;
- The United States agrees to provide microsatellite DNA analysis of tissue samples collected from Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland;
- The United States agrees to provide oversight for the processing of all collected biological samples;
- The United States agrees to report the sampling programme results to the ICES North Atlantic Salmon Working Group in support of the stock assessment completed by this group;
- The United States agrees to coordinate the publishing of a report that details the preliminary results of the sampling programme. The report will be compiled in cooperation with institutes participating in the sampling programme and will be published via a participating institution's official report series;
- Canada agrees to provide ageing of scale samples collected from Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland;
- Canada agrees to maintain the historical West Greenland sampling database; and
- The European Union (UK (England & Wales)) agrees to act as a clearing house for coded wire tags recovered from the fishery.

Government of Greenland Coordination Efforts:

The Government of Greenland agrees to identify a mechanism to provide sampling access to landed Atlantic salmon before grading/culling and before fish are subject to health regulations that would restrict or prohibit activities associated with sampling.

The Government of Greenland agrees to inform persons designated by cooperating NASCO Parties of important developments in the management of the West Greenland fishery including planned openings and closures of the Atlantic salmon fishery at West Greenland.

The allocation of available scientific sampling personnel will be determined annually by the Programme Coordinator to provide spatial and temporal coverage to characterise both the fishery and the Atlantic salmon populations along the West Greenland coast. Parties participating in the cooperative sampling programme will share access to resulting data and work cooperatively in the publication of information.