

WGC(16)8

Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

Steigenberger Hotel, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Germany

7 - 10 June 2016

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Ted Potter (European Union), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler.
- 1.2 A written Opening Statement on behalf of the NGOs was distributed (Annex 1).
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Thirty-Third Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included on page **XX** of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, WGC(16)4 (Annex 2).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Dr Michael Millane (European Union) was appointed as Rapporteur.

4. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The Commission unanimously elected Mr Carl McLean (Canada) as its Chair and Ms Kim Damon-Randall (USA) as its Vice-Chair.

5. ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 5.1 The representative of ICES, Dr Jonathan White, presented a report on the scientific advice on salmon stocks in the West Greenland Commission area, CNL(16)9. His presentation to the Commission is available as document WGC(16)5. The ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) report, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page **xx** of this document. The Chairman thanked the representative of ICES for the presentation. The Chairman noted that the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had presented a report on the 2015 fishery at the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission.
- 5.2 The representative of the United States asked for clarification on how the adjustment to the phone survey results had been conducted. The representative of ICES indicated that the adjusted figure had been provided in a working paper from Greenland and had

been considered and accepted by the Working Group.

6. Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission to review the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2015, 2016 and 2017, WGC(15)21

- 6.1 The Chairman introduced the report of the 2016 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission, (WGCIS(16)7) (Annex 3). He presented a brief summary of the information and issues considered at that meeting.
- 6.2 He indicated that two questions remained open from the Inter-Sessional Meeting. Firstly, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) was asked whether any further efforts had been made to contact those licensed fishermen who could not be contacted during the telephone survey. Secondly, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) was asked whether any further details could be provided about the harvest in the municipality in NAFO Division 1F that resulted in the quota being exceeded due to late reporting. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that at this stage he could not provide additional information on either of these questions, but he would follow up when he returned to Greenland.
- 6.3 The representative of the United States commended Greenland on the progress made since last year. However, he noted that the United States remained concerned at the level of harvest at West Greenland, given that the scientific advice from ICES is clear that there are no harvest options that will allow management objectives to be met. He asked for clarification on how settlements and communities are grouped into municipalities and what information was provided to ICES. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that he was not aware of the detail, but the incident in NAFO Division 1F occurred in one town in one municipality and was extraordinary. He indicated that this had occurred because although the catch reports had been gathered, they had not been forwarded to the central authority. As a result, the quota was exceeded by 11 tonnes and the catch in NAFO Division 1F was 14 tonnes in total. Measures will be taken to ensure this does not happen again in the future.
- 6.4 The Chairman reminded the Commission that there had been widespread recognition of what Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had achieved over the last year.
- 6.5 The representative of the United States noted that there had been discussions at the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the exceedance of the quota, how the catch at East Greenland is handled and regarding the additional tonnage in the light of the phone survey proration (2.94 tonnes). Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had indicated that the quota for 2016 of 32 tonnes is based on reported catches and does not include the 2.94 tonne proration. The representative of the United States noted that the United States looks forward to working with Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and asked if the Commission could be informed of these prorations before measures are adopted by the Greenland Government for the 2017 fishery and prior to any Inter-Sessional Meeting.

- 6.6 The Chairman indicated that he understood that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had used the official statistics in the form of reported landings and cannot use estimates in official statistics.
- 6.7 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that given the changes that have been made since last year and the small size of the administration, consideration was being given to simplifying the system for next year so as to have only one total catch figure.
- 6.8 The representative of the European Union commended Greenland for the large efforts made since last year and the level of transparency in reporting. She asked for clarification from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on what a simplified system might entail; one figure rather than two figures, or one figure reported to NASCO and another to ICES that includes proration.
- 6.9 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that there would be a need for discussions with the Control Unit.
- 6.10 The representative of Canada also acknowledged the significant effort made and the transparency of reporting. She indicated that she did not underestimate the significance of the challenges faced by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) in setting a reduced quota. However, she noted that Canada remained concerned at the level of the harvest and, although they did not wish to re-open the measure, Canada felt that the Commission should consider what may be contained in the next measure given the advice from ICES. She noted that it would be an extremely important step forward if Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) decided not to authorise factory landings and operate only as a subsistence fishery.

7. Mixed-Stock Fisheries conducted by Members of the Commission

- 7.1 Under the Council's 'Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the Review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO', CNL(13)38, it was agreed that there should be Agenda items in each of the Commissions to allow for a focus on mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs).
- 7.2 The European Union, NEA(16)4 (Annex 4) and Canada, NAC(16)3 (Annex 5), tabled papers providing a description of any MSFs still operating, the most recent catch data, any updates to the Implementation Plans (IPs) relating to MSFs and any changes or developments in the management of MSFs in the IP period to implement NASCO's agreements.
- 7.3 The representative of the NGOs noted that the Labrador salmon fishery is a mixed-stock fishery and the advice from ICES is that fishing should only take place on salmon from rivers where stocks have been shown to be at full reproductive capacity. She encouraged Canada to increase monitoring in Labrador.
- 7.4 The representative of the NGOs commended Scotland for the measures introduced to its fishery in 2015, noting that this increased focus on the coastal fishery in England.

8. Regulatory Measures

- 8.1 At its Thirty-Second Annual Meeting, the Commission adopted a Multi-Annual Measure for Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2015, 2016 and 2017, WGC(15)21. This measure had applied to the 2015 fishery, and, subject to the result of running the Framework of Indicators (FWI), would also apply to the 2016 and 2017 fisheries at West Greenland. The Commission had agreed that the procedure for applying the FWI that was used previously should continue under the new Decision. The Report on the Use of the Framework of Indicators in 2016, WGC(16)3, was presented by the Group's Chairman, Mr Gérald Chaput (Canada). The Group had concluded that 'the FWI does not show that there has been a significant change in the indicators used and, therefore, a re-assessment of the ICES management advice for the 2016 fishery is not required'.
- 8.2 The Chairman noted that the multi-annual regulatory measure adopted in 2015 would continue to apply to the 2016 fishery.
- 8.3 The representative of the United States indicated that there was a harvest of 60 tonnes over a period of 9 weeks of the fishery in 2015. For 2016, the quota will be 32 tonnes and the representative of the United States asked if Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) intended to shorten the season or adjust the start date to manage the smaller quota.
- 8.4 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) responded that the start of the fishery in 2015 had been postponed by 2 weeks to 15 August. When the fishery started there were no landings to factories and the development of the fishery was slow. For this year, it is expected that the fishery will again open on 15 August with no factory landings, but the development of the fishery will be monitored.

9. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

- 9.1 The West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme provides valuable biological data to the stock assessments conducted by ICES that inform science-based management decisions for this fishery. The Parties to the West Greenland Commission have worked cooperatively over the past three decades to collect these biological data.
- 9.2 The Commission adopted a West Greenland Fishery Sampling Agreement for 2016, WGC(16)9 (Annex 6). The West Greenland Commission expressed its appreciation to the coordinator of the Sampling Programme, Mr Tim Sheehan (USA), for his continuing management of the programme.

10. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 10.1 The Chairman announced that the winner of the West Greenland Commission US\$1,500 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Mr Kristian Isbosethsen, Qaqortoq, Greenland. The winning tag had been applied to a fin-clipped reared smolt released in the River Nissan in Sweden in 2014 as part of a stock rebuilding programme and to support recreational harvests of hatchery-reared salmon. The fish was recaptured at West Greenland in September 2015. The Commission

offered its congratulations to the winner.

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

- 11.1 The Commission agreed that the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee in relation to the West Greenland Commission area should be considered by the Council. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(16)12 (Annex 7).

12. Other Business

- 12.1 The Commission appointed Dr Niall Ó Maoileidigh (European Union) to serve on the Standing Scientific Committee to replace Mr Ted Potter.

13. Date and Place of Next Meeting

- 13.1 The Commission agreed to hold an Inter-Sessional Meeting prior to the Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Commission, in order to undertake a review of the regulatory measure pursuant to paragraph 9 of WGC(15)21, including implementation of the Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland and the review of the self-assessments made by Parties/jurisdictions against the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery. The representative of the United States asked for consultation on the fishery prior to setting the measures for 2017.
- 13.2 The Commission agreed to hold its next Annual Meeting during the Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Council.

14. Report of the Meeting

- 14.1 The Commission agreed a report of its meeting.
- 14.2 The Chairman thanked the Parties and observers for their contributions and made the following statement:

When I accepted the role of chair of this Commission 4 years ago, I had no idea that it would be such an interesting and challenging task! But I am very pleased that, with your very considerable help, we have made good progress in advancing the management of the West Greenland salmon fishery.

I would like to thank all Members of the Commission for all your help and hard work over the past 4 years in taking forward this work – and particularly the issues around the monitoring and control of the fishery.

I would particularly like to commend Greenland for your engagement in this process. We are all aware that you have a very small staff dealing with many species and salmon comprise only a small part of your fisheries. I also understand the considerable internal pressures that you have been under. So I am very grateful for

the efforts of you and your colleagues in recent years.

Finally, in closing, I would like to wish you and your new Chair all the best in continuing the work of this Commission.

14.3 The Chairman closed the Thirty-Third Annual Meeting.