

NEA(10)9

Draft Report of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission

Le Château Frontenac, Québec City, Canada

1 - 4 June, 2010

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Secretary opened the meeting and referred to the fact that neither the Chairman, Mr Richard Cowan (EU), nor Vice-Chairman, Mr Andras Kristiansen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)), were attending the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting. There would, therefore, need to be an election of a Chairman to serve until the close of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting. The Commission elected Dr Ciaran Byrne (European Union) as its Chairman. Dr Byrne welcomed delegates to Québec and thanked the Canadian Government for hosting the meeting and the excellent arrangements made.
- 1.2 An opening statement was made on behalf of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 1). The representative of the European Union expressed concern that the NGOs had raised the issue of Baltic salmon at a meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission which he considered to be inappropriate. He referred to ongoing negotiations to develop a salmon management plan for the Baltic.
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions is included on page **XX** of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, NEA(10)XX (Annex 2).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Ms Heidi Hansen (Norway) was appointed as Rapporteur for the meeting.

4. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The Commission elected xxx (xxx) as its Chairman and xxx (xxx) as its Vice-Chairman.

5. Review of the 2009 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 5.1 The representative of ICES, Mr Gerald Chaput, presented the scientific advice on salmon stocks relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission, CNL(10)8. The

ACOM report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page **XX** of this document.

- 5.2 At the Commission's Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting the Chairman had noted that ICES had been unable to make progress in developing quantitative catch advice because the Commission had not agreed explicit management objectives for provision of catch advice for the Faroese fishery and there is no pre-agreed sharing agreement among NASCO Parties. He had suggested that there is a need to address this issue before there is a harvestable surplus. The Commission had agreed and decided that there should be further discussions on this issue among Heads of Delegations following the Annual Meeting with a view to making arrangements to commence work on developing management objectives in advance of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting. While subsequently, there was no support for an inter-sessional meeting it had been agreed that ICES should be requested to provide an assessment of the issues that would need to be resolved before such advice could be provided in future (see NEA(10)3 for details). The Commission agreed to this proposal and accordingly the Secretary had written to ICES.
- 5.3 The ACOM report indicated that ICES had discussed a number of issues that would need to be addressed by NASCO if a risk framework is to be established for the Faroese fishery, based on the principles currently used for the West Greenland fishery. ICES had indicated that these are as follows: agreement on the management units to be employed; agreement on the management objectives for each unit; and determination of a sharing agreement.
- 5.4 The representative of the European Union asked ICES to confirm if the advice given was that the management units might be based on those currently use by ICES for assessment purposes (18 units), that the management objectives could be that there is a 75% probability of simultaneously achieving the conservation limits for these units (as is the case for the Southern European stock complex in managing the West Greenland fishery) and that a sharing allocation could be based on historical catches during the period 1986 – 1990 (as also used for the West Greenland regulatory measures). The representative of ICES confirmed that the ICES assessments are conducted on the basis of 18 units (4 in Russia, 3 in Norway, 2 in Scotland, 2 in Northern Ireland, 2 in Iceland and single units for other NEAC countries). He also confirmed that it would be consistent with the approach used in the risk framework for West Greenland if the management objective was that there was a 75% probability of achieving the conservation limits for these units simultaneously and to base a sharing agreement on the historical share of catches in the period 1986 -1990. In response to a further question from the representative of the European Union, he indicated that since the Southern NEAC stock complex is exploited at both West Greenland and at Faroes it would seem appropriate to adopt the same management objectives and baseline period for a sharing agreement.
- 5.5 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) recognised that the procedure presented by ICES could be a step forward in developing a risk framework but she believed that the stock complexes currently used by ICES are too large and that there is a need for further scientific information on the status of stocks and further work in defining conservation limits. In this regard she

hoped that the SALSEA programme would further the scientific basis for management and that the relevant Parties would continue to strengthen their work and define conservation limits for a larger number of rivers.

- 5.6 The representative of the European Union reiterated that he believed the approach outlined by ICES was the way forward. He noted that the Northern stock complex was exceeding its conservation limit but it would not be possible to consider opening a fishery until a risk framework was agreed that would allow ICES to provide quantitative catch advice. There was a need to develop a management policy for the Faroese fishery that could be further refined in the future.
- 5.7 The representative of Norway stated that conservation limits have been established for all salmon rivers in Norway so he would appreciate clarification from the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on the statement she had made. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that the view of the Faroe Islands was that the stock complexes are too large and the models used are not substantiated by adequate data. However, she was willing to discuss the matter further as there should be quantitative advice available before there is a harvestable surplus although she believed that it was unlikely that there could be a fishery in the near future taking into account the status of the stocks.
- 5.8 The representative of the European Union indicated that a fishery could only recommence at Faroes when the advice indicated there was a harvestable surplus and that was the justification for ensuring a management framework was in place. The approach outlined by ICES is working well for the West Greenland fishery and application of the Precautionary Approach would require that a risk framework is developed particularly if, as has been suggested, there is inadequate scientific information available.
- 5.9 The representative of the Russian Federation indicated that conservation limits have been established for most major rivers. While she respected the concerns expressed by the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and she appreciated the restraint exercised by the Faroes in not fishing for salmon in recent years, the Russian Federation would like to see a risk framework developed.
- 5.10 The Commission discussed whether there might be an inter-sessional meeting to take this matter forward. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that if there was to be an inter-sessional meeting it should be held in conjunction with the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting. The representative of the European Union indicated that there had been a clear indication from ICES of the way forward and that this should be used as a basis for developing a risk framework that could be further refined in the future. The representatives of Norway and the Russian Federation agreed that there was a need for a process to take this issue forward, either through an inter-sessional meeting or by correspondence. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that while she did not have a mandate to agree a risk framework she would be willing to work inter-sessionally by correspondence and if necessary return to the matter at the next Annual Meeting. The representative of the European Union questioned what

was to be gained by working inter-sessionally. The Commission decided to return to this matter at its next Annual Meeting.

6. Regulatory Measures

- 6.1 The Chairman noted that last year a Decision was adopted regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2010, NEA(09)6. Under this Decision the Commission decided not to set a quota but noted that the Faroe Islands would manage any fishery on the basis of the ICES advice and in a precautionary manner.
- 6.2 The Chairman circulated a Draft Decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2011, (NEA(10)4). The Commission adopted this Decision, NEA(10)8 (Annex 3).
- 6.3 Prior to the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting, an informal consultation meeting of the Parties had been held concerning Norwegian coastal fisheries (see NEA(09)3). At the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Commission, the representative of Norway had stated that fruitful and constructive talks on this issue had been conducted during the Annual Meeting and a further process of cooperation between Norway, the Russian Federation and the EU had been agreed.
- 6.4 The representative of Norway tabled document NEA(10)7 (Annex 4) detailing the regulatory measures to apply to the salmon fishery in 2010. Under the new regulations the fishing season for nets on the coast of Finnmark has been reduced from nine to six weeks for bag nets and from six weeks to four weeks for bend nets. In the Varanger fjord, the fishing season for bag nets has been reduced from nine to seven weeks and for bend nets from six weeks to four weeks. The representative of the European Union thanked Norway for adhering to the agreement developed last year and welcomed the measures taken. The representative of the Russian Federation also thanked Norway for following the process agreed last year but expressed disappointment that the measures were less restrictive than those proposed by the Russian Federation for Finnmark and the Varanger fjord.
- 6.5 The representative of the European Union indicated that at the last Annual Meeting there had been consultations between the European Union and Norway concerning the salmon fisheries in the Tana River and this process would continue. The representative of the NGOs thanked the European Union for its efforts in maintaining a dialogue with Norway on this topic. He asked for clarification from Norway on the anticipated effect of the reduction in the length of the fishing season on harvests in the fisheries. The representative of Norway indicated that this was difficult to assess and further assessment would be needed (but the measures agreed had been different to those made by the Directorate for Nature Management). The effectiveness of the measures in terms of achievement of spawning targets would probably be greater if any reduction was at the beginning rather than at the end of the fishing season.
- 6.6 The representative of the Russian Federation introduced document NEA(10)6 (Annex 5) which provided a review of its Atlantic salmon management measures for 2009.

7. Risk of Transmission of *Gyrodactylus salaris* in the Commission Area

- 7.1 The Chairman indicated that at its 2008 Annual Meeting, the Commission had considered a report from its Working Group on *G.salaris* in the North-East Atlantic Commission area, NEA(08)3. The Commission had agreed to retain an agenda item on this issue so as to monitor developments.
- 7.2 The representative of the European Union referred to the adoption of decision 2010/221 EU of 15 April the effect of which was that the previous measures in Article 4.3 of Directive 2006/88 relating to *G. salaris* would continue to apply. This would mean that certain jurisdictions (Ireland, UK, and specified river catchments in Finland) would be able to continue to take protective measures against the parasite. He indicated that these were the guarantees sought by NASCO and he would send details of the decision to the Secretariat.
- 7.3 The representative of Norway tabled document NEA(10)5 (Annex 6) concerning landlocked char being a potential host for *G. salaris*. The document indicated that if the parasites on char are pathogenic to salmon, Arctic char may need to be considered on an equal basis to rainbow trout in terms of risk of spreading the parasite. A review of existing regulations may be required.

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 8.1 The Chairman announced that the draw for the North-East Atlantic Commission prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditor on 4 May 2010. The winning tag was of Norwegian origin and had been applied to a smolt in the River Eira. The tag was one of a batch of tags returned from the river assumed to have been from smolts predated by gulls. The winner of the Commission's prize was Ms Marianne Nauste, Eresfjord, Norway. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

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

- 9.1 [The Commission agreed the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee in relation to the North-East Atlantic Commission area. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(10)10 (Annex 7).]

10. Other Business

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 11.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting during the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Council.

12. Report of the Meeting

12.1 [The Commission agreed a report of its meeting.]