REPORT OF THE
THIRTY-SEVENTH
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
WEST GREENLAND COMMISSION

By Video Conference

1 – 5 June 2020

Chair: Carl McLean (Canada)

Vice-Chair: Stephen Gephard (USA)

Secretary: Emma Hatfield

WGC(20)13

WGC(20)13

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

By Video Conference

1 – 5 June 2020

1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 The Chair, Carl McLean (Canada), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to the video conference.

1.2 He noted that for the first time ever, NASCO's face-to-face Annual Meeting had been cancelled, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Parties had agreed that NASCO's business would be conducted through inter-sessional correspondence, video conference and an Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council to be held in autumn. He thanked all delegates for their flexibility and willingness to participate in this extraordinary year.

1.3 The Chair reminded delegates that the period for inter-sessional correspondence had run from 8 May until 27 May. Members of the Commission had been able to use this time to consider the documents issued under each Agenda item and ask, and respond to, questions on the various Agenda items. The aim of this inter-sessional correspondence had been to streamline the work of the video conference as much as possible to enable the Commission members to work as effectively as possible under the circumstances. An Annotated Agenda, WGC(20)07A, which included a summary of the inter-sessional correspondence, was issued to all delegates on 31 May to inform planning for the meeting. Where issues were raised during the inter-sessional correspondence period, they have been noted in this report and the correspondence can be found in full in Annex 1. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for their work in preparing for the Annual Meeting.

1.4 The Chair advised that there would be no verbal Opening Statements this year. Written Opening Statements were tabled by Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the United States (Annex 2).

1.5 A list of participants at the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included as Annex 3.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda via correspondence on 8 May, WGC(20)07 (Annex 4).

3. Election of Officers

3.1 The Commission elected Stephen Gephard (USA) as its Chair (proposed by the representative of the European Union, seconded by the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) and Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) as its Vice-Chair (proposed by the representative of Canada, seconded by the representative of the United States).

3.2 The members of the Commission, NGOs and Secretary thanked Mr McLean for his

guidance and excellent work as Chair of the Commission over the past four years.

3.3 The Chair stated that he had enjoyed the role. He noted that progress had been made in the Commission over the past four years and that he was sure this progress would continue into the future.

4. Review of the 2019 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

4.1 A representative of ICES, Martha Robertson, presented a report on the scientific advice on salmon stocks in the West Greenland Commission area based on the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) report, CNL(20)10rev, in a webinar. Dr Robertson's presentation on the advice relevant to the West Greenland Commission is available as document WGC(20)10 (Annex 5). The discussions held on the presentation during the webinar are contained in document CNL(20)53 (Annex 6). The Chair thanked Dr Robertson for the presentation.

4.2 The Chair noted that a new three-year regulatory measure came into effect in 2018, WGC(18)11. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had provided a report describing the events in the 2019 fishery, WGC(20)04.

4.3 The Chair noted that the members of the Commission had agreed that the review of the 2019 salmon fishery at West Greenland would be conducted via inter-sessional correspondence, and that any decisions could be adopted during the video conference.

4.4 The Chair thanked Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for the improvements in the management of their fishery. He noted that there had been a discrepancy in the reporting of the harvest in 2019, and that this had been addressed in the inter-sessional correspondence (see Annex 1 for full details).

4.5 The representative of the United States thanked Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for the open and helpful exchange during the inter-sessional correspondence which had answered the majority of questions from the United States. She asked whether the unreported catch estimate of 5.8 t was due to knowing the pool of participants, given the mandatory license requirements, and whether it included all potential fishers.

4.6 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) referred to the answer given in the inter-sessional correspondence. The unreported catch estimate was based on knowing the pool of participants. As the number of fishers who did not report was known, it was possible to use the average catch of those who did report to calculate the likely catch of those who did not report.

4.7 The representative of the United States asked whether applications for salmon licenses are evenly distributed across cities and both large and small communities or whether there was potential for unlicensed fishing in small communities that would not be accounted for in this unreported catch estimate.

4.8 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that there will always be people who fish without a license. This happens in all fisheries. She noted that Greenland is the largest island in the world and has only 16 fishery inspectors so it is not possible for them to cover everything.

4.9 The Chair noted that there had been substantial discussion of the fishery in the inter-sessional correspondence and thanked Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for their commitment and co-operation. He noted appreciation for the

clarity on the 2019 fishery thanks to the questions and answers received.

5. Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission

5.1 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 an agenda item in each of the Commissions to allow for a focus on mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs).

5.2 The Chair referred the Commission to the papers submitted by Canada (NAC(20)07) and the European Union (NEA(20)10). These provided a description of the MSFs still operating in their jurisdictions, 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. The United States did not report as there are no directed wild Atlantic salmon fisheries in the United States.

6. Regulatory Measures

6.1 The Chair reminded the Commission that at its Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting (2018), the Commission had adopted a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2018, 2019 and 2020, WGC(18)11. The Commission had agreed that the regulatory measure would continue to apply in 2019 and 2020 unless any member of the Commission requested its reconsideration based on the review of the annual report on the fishery, and / or the application of the Framework of Indicators indicated that there had been a significant change to the indicators and, therefore, a reassessment was warranted.

6.2 The Chair noted that there had been substantial inter-sessional correspondence on this Agenda item and this is included in Annex 1. The Chair reminded the Commission that the members of the Commission had agreed that discussion of the regulatory measure would be conducted via inter-sessional correspondence, and that any decisions could be adopted during the video conference. The Chair thanked the Commission members for the inter-sessional exchange on this item.

6.3 The Chair noted that there had been discussion in the inter-sessional correspondence under this item on holding an inter-sessional meeting of the Commission. He stated that this would be considered under item 11.

6.4 The Chair then referred to a paper tabled by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) that contained the measures to be applied in the 2020 salmon fishery at West Greenland, WGC(20)09. Other measures to apply in 2020 had been outlined in document WGC(20)04.

6.5 The representative of the United States noted that there was some confusion regarding the level of catch in the 2019 fishery given that ICES reported 29.8 t (an overharvest of 10.3 t), the report on the fishery (WGC(20)04) reported a 30.4 t harvest (an overharvest of 10.9 t) and the APR for Greenland, CNL(20)40, included a reported catch of 28.8 t (an overharvest of 9.3 t). She asked whether Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had plans to simplify the reporting process in the future to avoid possible confusion about the final reported catch.

6.6 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) replied that, as indicated in WGC(20)09, the Government of Greenland had adopted a quota of 20.7 t for the 2020 fishery, based on the 2019 catch of 28.8 t. She indicated that

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had sent a proposal to NASCO earlier this year to include an item on the Commission's Agenda on the issue of the timing of Greenland's reporting. However, following discussion with the Secretary and Chair of the West Greenland Commission, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had agreed to defer this proposal until 2021, given the special nature of this year's Annual Meeting.

6.7 The representative of the United States noted that the 2019 report on the fishery, WGC(20)04, stated that improvements would be made to the calculation model for when to close the fishery, and that Hunter T. Snyder will present his results in June. She asked for further information on the improvements to the model and other approaches to be used to monitor and control landings in 2020 to ensure that there is no overharvest. She noted that the United States is hopeful that the planned steps to improve monitoring and control will be effective in preventing an overharvest in 2020 and that there will be no need to have to apply the overharvest payback provisions of the regulatory measure to the 2021 fishery.

6.8 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) advised the Commission that there had been no further work on the calculation model as yet. She indicated that further improvements would be considered following Hunter T. Snyder's survey results. Consideration will be given to implementing suggestions from his survey in the 2020 fishery. This may be possible as the season start date has been delayed. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the Commission would be advised of any changes to the fishery.

6.9 The Chair referred to the report of the Framework of Indicators (FWI) Working Group, WGC(20)05. The Group's overall conclusion was that 'the FWI does not show that there has been a significant change in the indicators used, and therefore a reassessment of the ICES management advice for the 2020 fishery is not required.' The Chair thanked the FWI Working Group for their work.

6.10 The Commission confirmed that the regulatory measure adopted in 2018 would continue to apply to the West Greenland salmon fishery in 2020.

7. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

7.1 The Chair indicated that details of the 2019 sampling programme at West Greenland had been included in the presentation from ICES. Proposals for the sampling programme in 2020 had been drafted and circulated as document WGC(20)08rev – 'Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2020'.

7.2 The Chair noted that there had been inter-sessional correspondence on this Agenda item and this is included in Annex 1. He reminded the Commission that the Commission members had agreed that discussion of the Sampling Programme would be conducted via inter-sessional correspondence prior to the video conference and any decisions would be adopted at the Annual Meeting.

7.3 The Commission adopted a Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2020, WGC(20)11 (Annex 7).

7.4 The Chair noted that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was possible that the international samplers may not be able to travel to Greenland in 2020. He stated that there may, therefore, need to be a 'Plan B'. The members of the Commission agreed with this and noted that it would be important to begin discussion on what Plan B may

entail as soon as possible.

7.5 The representative of Canada indicated that Canada could name an individual familiar with the programme to serve on a Working or Technical Group, to ensure that work on an alternative plan could start immediately, if required. The United States agreed with this suggestion and nominated Tim Sheehan, the Sampling Programme Co-ordinator, to serve on such a Technical or Working Group. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also agreed with this suggestion.

7.6 The Commission agreed that it would be pragmatic to establish these technical discussions as soon as possible. The Commission agreed that Martha Robertson (Canada), Rasmus Nygaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Michael Millane (European Union) and Tim Sheehan (USA) would be the leads to work together to develop an alternative plan for the Sampling Programme, to be implemented in the event that the international samplers were not able to travel to Greenland.

7.7 The representative of the NGOs indicated that they would like to be part of these technical discussions. The representatives of Canada, the United States and Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed that this would be desirable. The NGO contact would be Dave Meerburg.

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

8.1 The Chair announced that the winner of the West Greenland Commission £1,000 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Paul Zeeb, Maniitsoq, Greenland. The winning tag had been applied at Hunt River, Labrador on 27 August 2017 and was recaptured approximately 25 km south / southeast of Maniitsoq on 25 September 2019. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

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

9.1 The Chair noted that the Commission needed to appoint a representative to the Standing Scientific Commission (SSC). The Commission appointed Sissel Fredsgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) to the SSC. The Commission's representatives on the SSC are Niall Ó Maoiléidigh (European Union) and Sissel Fredsgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)).

9.2 The request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) in relation to the West Greenland Commission area was deferred to the Council. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(20)13 (Annex 8).

10. Other Business

10.1 The Chair noted that there had been inter-sessional correspondence on this Agenda item (WGC(20)14) and this is included in Annex 1.

10.2 The representative of the NGOs noted that the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had raised the issues of the impacts of habitat and predator concerns in home waters in Canada and the United States. The NGOs felt that aquaculture in the United States, Canada and the European Union could also have been mentioned. He noted that the representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) could also have asked what the homewater countries are doing to deal with these threats.

10.3 The representative of the European Union reminded the Commission that their Opening Statement had noted that the EU felt it was unfortunate that the Theme-based Special Session on aquaculture could not go ahead. He indicated that more discussion is needed on NASCO's role in relation to the management of aquaculture activities and the EU looks forward to that discussion.

11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

11.1 The Chair noted that there had been inter-sessional correspondence on this Agenda item and this is included in Annex 1.

11.2 The representative of the United States indicated that they would prefer an in-person inter-sessional meeting if conditions allow. The representative of the European Union noted that a review of the regulatory measure will require time and effort. The EU is particularly interested in this as it has stakeholders who have taken measures to close fisheries and it is important for them to see progress. He noted that progress has been made over a number of years, but that there have been challenges in implementing the current regulatory measure. The EU would like to discuss this, so an inter-sessional meeting is likely to be required but it should focus on facilitating the implementation of existing measures. The representative of Canada noted support for the interventions from the United States and European Union. He noted that the discussion of a new regulatory measure should start sooner rather than later, and not well into 2021. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that they were happy to have a virtual or face-to-face inter-sessional meeting, but that due to financial restrictions Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) would prefer any face-to-face meeting to be held in Greenland.

11.3 The Commission agreed that the Secretary should work with the new Chair to establish a process for an inter-sessional meeting of the Commission. The representative of the United States noted that there may need to be flexibility in terms of timing and location.

11.4 The Commission agreed to hold its next Annual Meeting at the same time and place as the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Council.

12. Report of the Meeting

12.1 The Commission agreed a report of its Meeting.

13. Close of the Meeting

13.1 The Chair thanked the members of the Commission and observers for their contributions and closed the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission (Annex 9).

Note. The annexes mentioned above begin after the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of West Greenland Commission papers is included in Annex 10.

WGC(20)13

Compte rendu de la trente-septième session annuelle de la Commission du Groenland Occidental de l'Organisation pour la conservation du saumon de l'Atlantique Nord

Par vidéoconférence

1 – 5 juin 2020

1. Ouverture de la session

1.1 Le Président, Carl McLean (Canada), a ouvert la session et accueilli les délégués à la vidéoconférence.

1.2 Il a souligné que pour la toute première fois, la session annuelle en face-à-face de l'OCSAN avait été annulée du fait de la pandémie de Covid-19. Les Parties ont convenu que les affaires de l'OCSAN seraient menées via une correspondance en intersessions, par vidéoconférence et une réunion d'intersessions du Conseil qui aurait lieu à l'automne. Il a remercié tous les délégués pour leur flexibilité et leur disponibilité pour participer en cette année extraordinaire.

1.3 Le Président a rappelé aux participants que la période pour la correspondance en intersessions avait couru du 8 au 27 mai. Les membres de la Commission avaient été à même d'employer ce temps pour étudier les documents émis en vertu de chaque point d'ordre du jour et poser et répondre à des questions sur les différents points de l'ordre du jour. L'objectif de cette correspondance en intersessions avait été de rationaliser le travail de vidéoconférence pour permettre aux membres de la Commission de travailler de façon aussi efficace que possible dans ces circonstances. Un ordre du jour annoté, WGC(20)07A, incluant un résumé de la correspondance en intersessions, a été remis à tous les délégués le 31 mai pour informer la planification de la session. Lorsque des questions ont été soulevées au cours de la période de correspondance en intersessions, elles ont été notées dans le présent rapport et l'intégralité de la correspondance se trouve en Annexe 1. Le Président a remercié le Secrétariat pour leur travail de préparation pour la session annuelle.

1.4 Le Président a annoncé qu'il n'y aurait pas de déclaration d'ouverture verbale cette année. Des déclarations d'ouverture écrites ont été présentées par le Canada, le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) et les États-Unis (Annexe 2).

1.5 Une liste des participants aux trente-septièmes sessions annuelles du Conseil et des Commissions de l'OCSAN est incluse en Annexe 3.

2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour

2.1 La Commission a adopté son ordre du jour par correspondance le 8 mai, WGC(20)07F.

3. Election des Membres du Bureau

3.1 La Commission a élu Stephen Gephard (États-Unis) en tant que Président (proposé par le représentant de l'Union européenne, secondé par la représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland)) et Katrine Kærgaard (Danemark pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) en tant que Vice-Présidente (proposée par le représentant du Canada,

secondé par la représentante des États-Unis).

3.2 Les membres de la Commission, les ONGs et la Secrétaire ont remercié M. McLean pour sa direction et son excellent travail en tant que Président de la Commission au cours de quatre dernières années.

3.3 Le Président a déclaré qu'il avait apprécié tenir ce rôle. Il a noté que des progrès avaient eu lieu à la Commission au cours des quatre dernières années et qu'il était certain que ce progrès se poursuivrait à l'avenir.

4. Examen de la pêcherie de 2019 et du rapport du Comité d'Avis du CIEM (ACOM) sur les stocks de saumons dans la zone de la Commission

4.1 Une représentante du CIEM, Martha Robertson, a présenté un rapport sur les conseils scientifiques sur les stocks de saumon dans la zone de la Commission du Groenland occidental fondé sur le rapport du comité d'Avis du CIEM (ACOM), CNL(20)10rev, dans un webinaire. La présentation du Dr Robertson sur les conseils scientifiques pertinents pour la Commission du Groenland occidental est disponible dans le document WGC(20)10 (Annexe 5). Les discussions ayant eu lieu sur la présentation au cours du webinaire sont incluses dans le document CNL(20)53 (Annexe 6). Le Président a remercié Dr Robertson pour la présentation.

4.2 Le Président a souligné qu'une nouvelle mesure de règlementation de trois ans est entrée en vigueur en 2018, WGC(18)11. Le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) avait fourni un document décrivant les événements dans la pêcherie de 2019, WGC(20)04.

4.3 Le Président a souligné que les membres de la Commission avaient convenu que la révision de la pêcherie de saumon au Groenland occidental de 2019 serait menée par correspondance en intersessions, et que toutes décisions pourraient être adoptées pendant la vidéoconférence.

4.4 Le Président a remercié le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) pour les améliorations de la gestion de leur pêcherie. Il a souligné qu'il y avait eu un écart dans les rapports sur les prises en 2019, et que ceci avait été traité dans la correspondance en intersessions (voir l'Annexe 1 pour l'intégralité des informations).

4.5 La représentante des États-Unis a remercié le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) pour l'échange ouvert et utile au cours de la correspondance en intersessions qui avait répondu à la majorité des questions des États-Unis. Elle a demandé si l'évaluation de 5,8 t des prises non déclarées était due au fait que l'on connaissait l'ensemble des participants, compte tenu du caractère obligatoire des exigences en matière de permis et si celle-ci incluait tous les pêcheurs potentiels.

4.6 La représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a fait référence à la réponse donnée dans la correspondance en intersessions. L'évaluation des prises non déclarées était basée sur la connaissance de l'ensemble des participants. Puisque le nombre de pêcheurs n'ayant pas effectué de déclaration était connu, il était possible d'utiliser la prise moyenne de ceux qui ont déclaré pour calculer la prise probable de ceux qui n'avaient pas effectué de déclaration.

4.7 La représentante des États-Unis a demandé si des demandes de permis pour le saumon étaient répartie de façon égale dans les villes et aussi bien dans les communautés de grande et de petite taille et s'il existait un potentiel pour la pêche sans permis dans les

petites communautés qui ne seraient pas prise en compte dans l'évaluation des prises non déclarées.

4.8 La représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a déclaré qu'il existerait toujours des personnes pêchant sans permis. Cela est le cas dans toutes les pêcheries. Elle a souligné que le Groenland est la plus grande île du monde et ne dispose que de 16 inspecteurs de la pêche et qu'il ne leur était donc pas possible de tout couvrir.

4.9 Le Président a souligné qu'une discussion importante de la pêcherie avait eu lieu dans la correspondance en intersessions et a remercié le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) pour leur engagement et leur coopération. Il a dit apprécier la clarté sur la pêcherie de 2019 grâce aux questions et réponses reçues.

5. Pêcheries de stocks mixtes menées par des Membres de la Commission

5.1 Selon le 'Plan d'action pour mettre en œuvre les conseils de l'étude externe des performances et la révision des 'Prochaines étapes' pour l'OCSAN', CNL(13)38, il était convenu qu'il devrait y avoir des points d'ordre du jour dans chacune des Commissions pour permettre de se concentrer sur les pêcheries de stocks mixtes (MSFs).

5.2 Le Président a référé la Commission aux articles soumis par le Canada (NAC(20)07) et l'Union européenne (NEA(20)10). Ceux-ci fournissaient une description des MSFs opérant encore dans leurs juridictions, les données sur les prises les plus récentes, et les mises à jours éventuelles des Plans d'application (IPs) concernant des MSFs et tous changements ou développements dans la gestion des MSFs au cours de la période IP pour mettre en œuvre les accords de l'OCSAN. Les États-Unis n'ont pas effectué de rapport car aucune pêcherie de Saumon atlantique sauvage n'est visé aux États-Unis.

6. Mesures de réglementation

6.1 Le Président a rappelé à la Commission que lors de sa trente-cinquième session annuelle (2018), la Commission avait adopté une mesure règlementaire pluriannuelle pour la pêche du saumon au Groenland occidental pour 2018, 2019 et 2020, WGC(18)11. La Commission avait convenu que la mesure de règlementation continuerait de s'appliquer en 2019 et 2020, à moins qu'un membre de la Commission ne demande son réexamen sur la base de l'examen du rapport annuel sur la pêche et / ou l'application du Cadre d'indicateurs indiquait qu'il y avait eu une modification importante des indicateurs et, par conséquent, qu'une réévaluation était justifiée.

6.2 Le Président a souligné qu'une correspondance importante avait eu lieu en intersessions sur ce point de l'ordre du jour et que celle-ci est incluse en Annexe 1. Le Président a rappelé à la Commission que les membres de la Commission avaient convenu que la discussion relative à la mesure de règlementation serait menée via correspondance en intersessions et que toutes décisions pourraient être adoptées pendant la vidéoconférence. Le Président a remercié les membres de la Commission pour l'échange en intersessions sur ce point.

6.3 Le Président a noté qu'une discussion avait eu lieu dans la correspondance en intersessions sur ce point sur la question de tenir une réunion d'intersessions de la Commission. Il a déclaré que ceci serait envisagé en point 11.

6.4 Le Président a ensuite fait référence à un article déposé par le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) qui contenait les mesures devant être appliquées dans la pêcherie de saumon de 2020 au Groenland occidental, WGC(20)09. D'autres mesures à

appliquer en 2020 ont été présentées dans le document WGC(20)04.

6.5 La représentante des États-Unis a noté qu'une confusion avait eu lieu quant au niveau de prises dans la pêcherie de 2019 compte tenu que le CIEM a rapporté 29,8 t (une surpêche de 10,3 t), le rapport sur la pêcherie (WGC(20)04) a rapporté une récolte de 30,4 t (une surpêche de 10,9 t) et le Rapport de progrès annuels pour le Groenland, CNL(20)40, a inclus 28,8 t de prises déclarées (une surpêche de 9,3 t). Elle a demandé si le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) avaient projeté de simplifier le processus de rapports à l'avenir pour éviter une confusion possible du total des prises déclarées.

6.6 La représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a répondu que, comme cela était indiqué dans le document WGC(20)09, le gouvernement du Groenland avait adopté un quota de 20,7 t pour la pêcherie de 2020, sur la base des prises de 28,8 t en 2019. Elle a indiqué que le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) avait envoyé une proposition à l'OCSAN plus tôt cette année pour inclure un point sur l'ordre du jour de la Commission sur la question des délais pour les rapports du Groenland. Cependant, suite à une discussion avec la Secrétaire et le Président de la Commission du Groenland occidental, le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) avait convenu de reporter cette proposition à 2021, compte tenu de la nature particulière de la session annuelle de cette année.

6.7 La représentante des États-Unis a noté que le rapport sur la pêcherie de 2019, WGC(20)04, déclarait que le modèle de calcul afin de savoir quand fermer la pêcherie serait amélioré, et que Hunter T. Snyder présenterait ses résultats en juin. Elle a demandé un supplément d'informations sur les améliorations apportées au modèle et autres approches devant être employées pour effectuer un suivi et un contrôle des débarquements en 2020 pour s'assurer d'une absence de surpêche. Elle a noté que les États-Unis espèrent que les étapes prévues pour améliorer le suivi et le contrôle seront efficaces pour prévenir une surpêche en 2020 et qu'il ne sera pas nécessaire de devoir appliquer les dispositions de remboursement des surpêches de la mesure de règlementation à la pêcherie de 2021.

6.8 La représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a informé la Commission qu'il n'y avait pas pour l'instant de travail supplémentaire sur le modèle de calcul. Elle a indiqué que des améliorations supplémentaires seraient envisagées suite aux résultats d'enquête de Hunter T. Snyder. Il sera envisagé de mettre en œuvre les suggestions de son enquête dans la pêcherie de 2020. Il se peut que cela soit possible puisque la date de l'ouverture de la saison a été reportée. La représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a noté que la Commission serait informée de tous changements sur la pêcherie.

6.9 Le Président a fait référence au Rapport du Groupe de travail sur le Cadre d'Indicateurs (FWI), WGC(20)05. La conclusion générale du Groupe était que 'le FWI ne montre pas un changement important des indicateurs utilisés et qu'il n'est donc pas nécessaire de réévaluer les conseils de gestion du CIEM pour la pêcherie en 2020.' Le Président a remercié le Groupe de travail sur le Cadre d'Indicateurs pour leur travail.

6.10 La Commission a convenu que la mesure de règlementation adoptée en 2018 continuerait de s'appliquer à la pêcherie au saumon au Groenland occidental en 2020.

7. Echantillonnage dans la pêcherie du Groenland occidental

7.1 Le Président a indiqué que les détails du Programme d'échantillonnage de 2019 au

Groenland occidental avaient été inclus dans la présentation du CIEM. Des propositions provisoires pour le programme d'échantillonnage de 2020 avaient été communiquées sous la forme du document WGC(20)08rev – 'Déclaration provisoire de coopération concernant le programme d'échantillonnage de la pêcherie au Groenland occidental pour 2020'.

7.2 Le Président a noté qu'une correspondance en intersessions avait eu lieu sur ce point de l'ordre du jour et que celle-ci était incluse en Annexe 1. Il a rappelé à la Commission que les membres de la Commission avaient convenu que la discussion du Programme d'échantillonnage serait effectuée via une correspondance en intersessions avant la vidéoconférence et que toutes décisions seraient adoptées lors de la session annuelle.

7.3 La Commission a adopté une déclaration de coopération concernant le programme d'échantillonnage de la pêcherie au Groenland occidental pour 2020, WGC(20)11 (Annexe 7).

7.4 Le Président a noté qu'en raison de la pandémie de Covid-19, il était possible que les échantillonneurs internationaux ne soient pas en mesure de se rendre au Groenland en 2020. Il a déclaré qu'il pourrait donc être nécessaire d'élaborer un 'plan B'. Les membres de la Commission étaient d'accord avec cela et ont noté qu'il serait important d'entamer une discussion sur ce que le plan B pourrait impliquer dès que possible.

7.5 Le représentant du Canada a indiqué que le Canada pourrait nommer une personne familière avec le programme pour siéger à un Groupe de travail ou à un groupe technique, afin de s'assurer que les travaux sur un autre plan pourraient commencer immédiatement, si nécessaire. Les États-Unis ont accepté cette suggestion et ont nommé Tim Sheehan, le coordinateur du Programme d'échantillonnage, pour siéger audit groupe de travail ou groupe technique. Le Danemark (pour les îles Féroé et le Groenland) a également approuvé cette suggestion

7.6 La Commission a convenu qu'il serait pragmatique d'établir ces discussions techniques dès que possible. La Commission a convenu que Martha Robertson (Canada), Rasmus Nygaard (Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland), Michael Millane (Union européenne) et Tim Sheehan (États-Unis) dirigeraient ensemble le travail pour développer un programme alternatif au Programme d'échantillonnage, devant être appliqué dans le cas où les échantillonneurs internationaux n'étaient pas à même de se déplacer au Groenland.

7.7 Le représentant des ONGs a indiqué qu'elles souhaiteraient participer à ces discussions techniques. Les représentants du Canada, des États-Unis et du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) ont convenu que cela serait souhaitable. Le contact pour les ONGs serait Dave Meerburg.

8. Annonce du gagnant du prix du Programme incitatif au renvoi des étiquettes

8.1 Le Président a annoncé que le gagnant du prix de la Commission du Groenland occidental de £1,000 du Programme incitatif au renvoi des étiquettes de l'OCSAN était Paul Zeeb, Maniitsoq, Groenland. L'étiquette gagnante avait été appliquée sur la rivière Hunt, au Labrador le 27 août 2017 et a été recapturé à environs 25 km au Sud / Sud-Est de Maniitsoq le 25 Septembre 2019. La Commission a présenté ses félicitations au gagnant.

9. Recommandations au Conseil concernant la demande de conseils scientifiques auprès du CIEM

9.1 Le Président a noté que la Commission devait nommer un représentant au Comité scientifique permanent (CSP). La Commission a nommé Sissel Fredsgaard (Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland)) au CSP. Les représentants de la Commission au CSP sont Niall Ó Maoiléidigh (Union européenne) et Sissel Fredsgaard (Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland)).

9.2 La demande de conseils scientifiques auprès du CIEM établie par le CSP concernant la zone de la Commission du Groenland occidental a été différée au Conseil. La demande auprès du CIEM, comme convenu par le Conseil, est incluse dans le document CNL(20)13 (Annexe 8).

10. Divers

10.1 Le Président a noté qu'une correspondance en intersessions avait eu lieu sur ce point de l'ordre du jour, et que celle-ci est incluse en Annexe 1.

10.2 Le représentant des ONGs a noté que la représentante du Danemark (pour les îles Féroé et le Groenland) avait soulevé les questions des impacts sur l'habitat et des préoccupations relatives aux prédateurs dans les eaux territoriales du Canada et des États-Unis. Les ONGs ont estimé que l'aquaculture aux États-Unis, au Canada et dans l'Union européenne aurait également pu être mentionnée. Il a noté que la représentante du Danemark (pour les Îles Féroé et le Groenland) aurait également pu demander ce que font les pays des eaux territoriales pour gérer ces menaces.

10.3 Le représentant de l'Union européenne a rappelé à la Commission que sa déclaration d'ouverture avait souligné que l'UE estimait regrettable que la séance spéciale thématique sur l'aquaculture ne puisse pas se poursuivre. Il a indiqué que des discussions supplémentaires étaient nécessaires sur le rôle de l'OCSAN concernant la gestion des activités aquacoles et l'UE attend avec intérêt cette discussion.

11. Date et lieu de la prochaine session

11.1 Le Président a noté qu'une correspondance en intersessions avait eu lieu sur ce point de l'ordre du jour, et que celle-ci est incluse en Annexe 1.

11.2 La représentante des États-Unis a indiqué qu'elle préférerait une réunion d'intersessions en face-à-face si les conditions le permettaient. Le représentant de l'Union européenne a noté qu'un réexamen de la mesure de règlementation nécessiterait du temps et des efforts. L'UE s'y intéresse particulièrement, car elle a des parties prenantes qui ont pris des mesures pour fermer les pêcheries et il est important qu'elles voient des progrès. Il a noté que des progrès avaient été réalisés sur plusieurs années, mais que l'application de la mesure de règlementation actuelle posait des problèmes. L'UE souhaiterait en discuter, si bien qu'une réunion d'intersessions sera probablement nécessaire, mais elle devrait se concentrer sur la facilitation de l'application des mesures actuelles. Le représentant du Canada a noté un soutien aux interventions des États-Unis et de l'Union européenne. Il a noté que la discussion d'une nouvelle mesure de règlementation devrait commencer le plus tôt possible, et non pas courant 2021. La représentante du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) a indiqué qu'elle était satisfaite d'une solution virtuelle ou bien d'une réunion d'intersessions en face-à-face, mais qu'en raison de restrictions financières, le Danemark (pour les îles Féroé et le Groenland) préférerait que toute réunion en face-à-face ait lieu Groenland.

11.3 La Commission a convenu que la Secrétaire devrait travailler avec le nouveau Président pour établir un processus de réunion d'intersessions de la Commission. La représentante des États-Unis a noté qu'il faudrait faire preuve de souplesse concernant le calendrier et le lieu.

11.4 La Commission a convenu de tenir sa prochaine session annuelle à la même période et lieu que la trente-huitième session annuelle du Conseil.

12. Compte rendu de la session

12.1 La Commission a accepté un compte rendu de la session.

13. Clôture de la session

13.1 Le Président a remercié les membres de la Commission et les observateurs pour leurs contributions et a clos la trente-septième session annuelle de la Commission du Groenland occidental (Annexe 9).

Note. Une liste des articles de la Commission du Groenland occidental est incluse en Annexe 10.

List of Annexes

Annex 1

WGC(20)14

West Greenland Commission Inter-sessional Correspondence

The West Greenland Commission's inter-sessional correspondence took place from 8 - 27 May. It is set out below, under the relevant Agenda item. If an Agenda item is not listed, no inter-sessional correspondence took place.

4. Review of the 2019 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

4.1 2019 Harvest: The NGO representative referred to the '2019 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland', WGC(20)04, that shows the catch at Greenland in 2019 as 30.4 tonnes. He noted that in the ICES advice and the WGNAS report, the catch in 2019, with input by the Greenland member of the ICES Working Group, was 29.8 tonnes. He also noted that in Greenland's Annual Progress Report CNL20(40), the catch in 2019 is shown as 28.8 tonnes. The NGO representative said that although these are small differences in the reported harvest for Greenland, it is necessary to determine which number is to be used in the calculation of the 2020 quota, considering the overrun in 2019. The ICES WGNAS was advised by the Greenland member that the catch of 30.4 tonnes initially reported was reduced due to duplication noted in 26 catch reports. The NGO representative asked whether there are specific reasons for a further reduction in the estimated harvest in 2019 to 28.8 tonnes.

4.2 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) (DFG) agreed that the initial catch in WGC(20)04 was 30.4 tonnes. She clarified that later on an analysis was made of the catch reports and some double reporting was identified. The Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and GFLK had slightly differing numbers because some reports were kept in the Institute's catch estimate, which were estimated by the GFLK as double reports. The representative of DFG underlined the fact that the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources is an independent institution and the official catch is always GFLK's catch estimate, in salmon and all other fisheries. The representative of DFG concluded that the official catch for 2019 was 28.8 tonnes and it is from this amount that the TAC for 2020 will be calculated.

4.3 The representative of the United States understood from the information provided that at least part of the reason for the overharvest in 2019 was because of an almost two-week delay between harvest by fishers and receipt of catch reports by GFLK. She asked if this was correct and whether there are any other aspects that contributed to this situation.

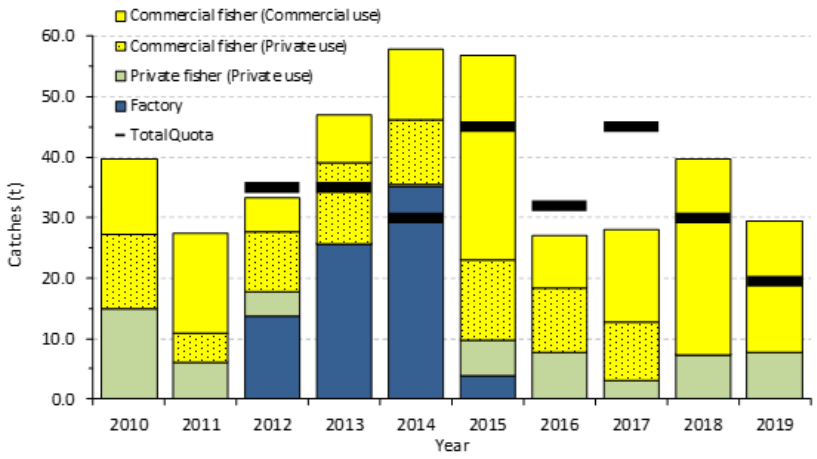
4.4 The representative of DFG replied that there were several factors to the delay in the reporting in 2019, some more difficult to manage than others. Firstly, she noted that reports may be late if the license holder is acting slowly in the reporting and does not report immediately after catching salmon. She reported that the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture encourages fishermen to report continuously during the season and has several ways to give reminders throughout the fishing season. Secondly, she said that reports may be late according to the processing at the municipalities. She reported that they are working continuously on improving the timing of reporting from fishermen, but it was still quite a new requirement, that will inevitably take time to

implement.

4.5 Unreported Catch Estimate for 2019: The representative of the NGOs noted that the ICES advice and ICES WGNAS report identify the unreported catch estimate for Greenland to be 10 tonnes for 2019. From the advice, 'The Greenlandic authorities indicated a further 10 tonnes of unreported harvest.' This value is used in the assessments by ICES. In Greenland's Annual Progress Report CNL(20)40, the unreported catch is estimated to be 5.8 tonnes in 2019. The representative of the NGOs asked how the estimate of 5.8 tonnes was determined.

4.6 The representative of DFG noted that for a number of years ICES has estimated the unreported catch in Greenland to be 10 tonnes. However, she reported that since Greenland now has a known pool of participants in the fishery, GFLK has made an attempt to estimate the unreported catch in the Annual Status Report based on the reporting from the 2019 salmon fishery. The representative of DFG stated that there are several methods to provide an estimate of this and GFLK chose a simple method in order to limit the time used for this matter, as the salmon fishery is not a commercial fishery. She reported that it was assumed that the distribution of catch reports and 0-catch reports are more or less similar among the license holders that did not report. Then, there is an average number of reports per license (that reported a catch), and average amount of catch per report. These numbers combined, led to the estimate of 5.8 tonnes of under-reported catches. She noted that each number could have been calculated with standard deviations but this was not done in order to keep the task as simple as possible.

4.7 Location and Magnitude of Sales by Professional Fishermen: The representative of the NGOs noted that at the meeting of the WGC in 2019, the representative of DFG advised in section 4.6 of the report that 'professional fishers were allowed to sell fish to outlets other than open-air markets where there was no open-air market in the local community'. The ICES WGNAS report indicates that professional fishermen sold 21.8 tonnes of their catch and retained 0.1 tonnes for personal use. In the past, professional fishermen often reported about 10 tonnes of salmon retained for personal use in the years prior to 2018 as per the figure below from ICES.



4.8 The representative of the NGOs asked the representative of DFG why professional fishermen are no longer retaining salmon for their personal use and if the representative of DFG can also identify how much of the catch of professional fishermen was sold

through open-air markets and how much was sold elsewhere (as only approx. 100 kg of their harvest was retained for personal use of a total catch of 21.8 tonnes). He also asked the representative of DFG to provide a list of the open-air markets in 2019 and the catch at each.

4.9 The representative of DFG reported that it is not within the power of the Government of Greenland to explain how fishermen conduct their business. However, it could be assumed that they sell all they can and keep the rest for themselves. She said that 100 kg should keep you and your family very well fed for the rest of the year.

4.10 The representative of DFG reported that there are open-air markets in most cities and settlements in Greenland which often consist of nothing more than a table, perhaps with a canopy to keep the sellers dry. Fishermen can sell their catch to the locals and thus, most often sales notes are not drafted. She stated that it is part of the cultural heritage of Greenland, that you can go to the local open-air market and buy the catch of the day from fishermen and hunters. She noted that this is how professional fishermen and hunters can sell products that cannot be sold to the factories and how locals that do not fish or hunt can still maintain a traditional Greenlandic diet. Therefore, the Government of Greenland cannot provide numbers for sales in open-air markets.

4.11 In follow up correspondence the representative of the NGOs thanked the representative of DFG for the answers. He sought clarification in the response to the question on Location and Magnitude of Sales by Professional Fishermen when DFG had stated '*It is not within the power of the Government of Greenland to explain how fishermen conduct their business, however, as business men it could be assumed that they sell all that they can and keep the rest for themselves. 100 kg should keep you and your family very well feed for the rest of the year*.'

4.12 The representative of the NGOs stated that this response indicates a misunderstanding of the request for clarification by the NGOs. He noted that in 2019, the catch information provided to ICES by DFG indicated that 276 professional fishermen retained 100 kg for personal use and sold 21,800 kg (Table 5.1.1.3 of the ICES WGNAS report) and in previous years between 2010-2017, this same group of fishermen reported retaining about 10,000 kg for personal use (Figure 5.1.1.2 of the ICES WGNAS report). He noted that in 2019 the retained catch per professional fisherman would be 0.4 kg and not 100 kg as DFG has implied. The representative of the NGOs asked for clarification to explain what has changed in either fishermen's food preferences or more likely how the catch data was being collected, i.e. are professional fishermen now expected to show all of their catch as sold?

4.13 The representative of DFG replied that as stated in the previous reply, the Government of Greenland cannot explain why this change has occurred as it is not within their power to explain how the fishermen choose to conduct their business. She stated, for information, that there has been no change in the reporting or the collection of catch data in this period.

6. Regulatory Measures

6.1 <u>2020 Catch Limit, Monitoring and Management of the 2020 Fishery:</u> The representative of the United States noted that despite additional efforts to improve monitoring, control, and reporting of the West Greenland fishery, an overharvest occurred again this year. She said that the United States would appreciate it, if the representative of DFG would confirm prior to the WGC video conference that, in line with the current regulatory measure, the 2020 quota will be reduced by the amount of its 2019 overharvest. The

representative of the United States asked the representative of DFG to explain what its understanding of that level should be.

6.2 The representative of DFG replied that, due to an overharvest of 9.3 tonnes in 2019, it has been recommended to the Government of Greenland that it approve a catch limit of 20.7 tonnes for 2020. Due to the reduction of the quota, it has further been recommended to the Government of Greenland, in agreement with KNAPK, to move the start of the fishing season to 1st September in 2020 in order to ensure that the fishermen in North Greenland also get a chance to fish for salmon in 2020.

6.3 The representative of the United States also noted appreciation of the additional steps being taken to improve monitoring and reporting in 2020 to help ensure closure of the fishery in time to avoid a third year of overharvest. While the implementation of those efforts is underway, the United States wondered if it might also be prudent to consider other steps to ensure effective in-season monitoring and quota management. For instance, she asked if it might be possible to pause the fishery at an appropriate time (perhaps based on the progress of catches during the 2019 fishery) to allow latent catch reports to arrive and be counted or to lower the initial quota by an appropriate amount to provide a sufficient buffer to ensure no overharvest occurs should similar delays in reporting occur again in 2020?

6.4 The representative of Canada had similar questions on whether there could be any practical process amendments to this summer's harvest reporting that could be taken to ensure an overharvest does not occur in 2020.

6.5 The representative of DFG thanked the United States for the suggestion of pausing the fishery during the season. She reported that this option has been considered, however, there are some challenges in doing so. A large proportion of the license holders in the Greenlandic salmon fishery are recreational fishermen who may not have the same habits of keeping track of information regarding closing and opening of fisheries, as private fishermen do. This increases the risk of an illegal fishery, if recreational fishermen are fishing for salmon in good faith, when the fishery is paused. In addition, this is not a management measure that is used in other fisheries and, thus, might be very difficult to implement both for the administration and the fishermen. The representative of DFG reported that for every fishery, GFLK estimates when the quota will be exhausted considering the catch effort throughout a fishing season and announces the closure in due time. She noted that last year, the salmon fishery was closed when it was estimated to reach 90% utilisation. At that time, she reported, they did not have an estimate of the delay in the reporting – as the 2018 season could not be used as a baseline. However, this year they do have an estimate of the delay in the reporting and that will be part of the estimation of when to close the fishery.

6.6 Following up, the representative of the United States said that she appreciated the responses provided by DFG and reported first that she appreciated the difficulties with instituting a 'pause' during the 2020 fishery to ensure quota compliance and thanked DFG for the explanation. Second, she noted that the United States appreciated the explanation of how quota compliance is managed in other fisheries (i.e. 90%). She stated that the information on reporting and reporting delays gained from 2019 should be useful in devising guidelines for the salmon fishery in 2020, and said that the United States is interested in learning about the proposed approach in more detail.

6.7 <u>Process to Develop the Next Regulatory Measure:</u> The representative of the United States noted that the current regulatory measure ends in 2020. She suggested that the

WGC agree to an inter-sessional process aimed at beginning discussion of new management measures for the West Greenland fishery for adoption in 2021. Specifically, she said that the United States would support a process where the WGC holds an inter-sessional meeting, virtually if necessary, in the winter / spring 2021 and, if needed, a second inter-sessional meeting just before the start of the 2021 NASCO Annual Meeting. The representative of the United States sought other views on this prior to the video conference.

6.8 The representative of Canada supported the proposal to begin the process of discussing new management measures through inter-sessional meetings, most likely initially via video conference.

6.9 The representative of DFG noted that given the amount of meetings that have been moved from 2020 to 2021 and financial restrictions, due to Covid-19, it would be preferred either not to have an inter-sessional meeting before the Annual Meeting or to have an inter-sessional meeting via video conference. She said alternatively, a physical meeting could be held in Greenland.

7. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

7.1 Sampling at Nuuk: The representative of the NGOs stated that in the ICES Advice, NAFO Division 1D, where Nuuk is the major community, accounts for almost 30% of the harvest in 2019 (8 tonnes of 28 tonnes in West Greenland). The ICES WGNAS report (end of section 5.2) identifies the importance of sampling in the Nuuk market to represent this important area of the fishery. The representative of the NGOs noted his understanding that only two weeks were sampled out of a total of a six week fishing season in 2019. He asked, therefore, if the representative of DFG could provide further details on the difficulties encountered obtaining weekly samples at Nuuk in 2019, and what will be done to improve the level of sampling there in 2020.

7.2 The representative of DFG reported that, in recent years, hygiene requirements at the modern market in Nuuk have made it increasingly difficult to obtain samples, as sampling would require removing salmon from the refrigerated display coolers and sampling with lab equipment (DNA vials full of preservatives) in front of customers. She noted that this had in the past led to customer reluctance and resentment from fishermen. The representative of DFG said that for this reason, carcass sampling (DNA samples from discarded heads and skeletons, after the removal of fillets) was initiated in 2019 as an alternative to normal sampling. She noted that the main advantage of this method is the lack of conflict with fishermen and customers and no increased fishery for sampling, but it also means that scale samples and weight data cannot be obtained. However, a DNA sample and individual length is obtained.

7.3 The representative of DFG stated that other alternatives could be scientific surveys, or purchase of salmon for scientific sampling, but that would potentially increase total catches. Therefore, the carcass sampling tested in 2019 seemed a reasonable way to move forward as it can be scaled up in 2020. The representative of DFG said that as the start of the fishing season will most probably be moved to 1 September, it will be feasible to take samples in more weeks than in 2019 as it will not collide with this year's survey cruise.

7.4 Covid-19: The representative of the United States asked for DFG's view on whether the 2020 sampling program could continue despite the pandemic. She said that if it were not possible to deploy foreign samplers this year, whether DFG have ideas for how samples might be taken and whether Greenland has the resources to undertake

additional sampling this year. The United States was pleased to see that Greenland was able to sample at Nuuk on two occasions last year and wondered if there might be a possibility of expanding that effort. If so, the representative of the United States asked whether sampling would be restricted to Nuuk or would there be a possibility of collecting samples from other communities? The representative of the United States asked whether it would be possible to collect the full suite of samples (i.e. length, weight, scale sample, tissue sample) or just length and tissue samples as collected in 2019.

7.5 The representative of Canada also expressed concern about whether foreign samplers should or would be able to travel to Greenland. He questioned whether flights would be available and affordable, what the rules would be concerning quarantining of visitors, and, as experienced in Canada's northern communities, whether foreign visitors would be welcome by local communities. He asked the representative of DFG if they would advise that planning for visiting samplers should proceed as in the past. If not, whether Greenland would be in a position to provide all the personnel necessary to collect the required samples.

7.6 The representative of DFG reported that at this stage the borders of Greenland are closed and the Government has yet to announce when they will be opened and whether any restrictions will be implemented, when open. Further, the countries where the samplers originate from might also have restrictions on travel. The representative of DFG therefore said that at this stage she could not say whether it will be possible for the samplers to come to Greenland. Having a season start on 1 September might assist in planning, as later in the summer she may have a better idea of the possibilities.

7.7 The representative of DFG reported that Greenland does not have a contingency plan as such but has discussed some options that might be explored if the foreign samplers cannot come to Greenland this year. One option could be that a number of scale envelopes and guidelines for how to take samples are issued together with licenses for professional license holders in the areas where the samplers normally sample. A video could explain how to take samples. Another option, which might be combined with the first is that the wildlife officers / fisheries inspectors could take samples in the chosen areas. The representative of DFG noted that the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources would continue to take samples in Nuuk as in 2019.

7.8 Following up, the representative of the United States said that she appreciated the responses provided by DFG and made the following replies:

- the United States certainly understands the difficulties in planning for the sampling of the 2020 fishery given their current global situation;
- the United States is hopeful that the members of the WGC will be supportive of considering and agreeing to the WGC(20)08rev (Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Program for 2020), while also collectively working on an alternative plan(s) in case travel by foreign samplers is restricted;
- the United States is very appreciative that sampling in Nuuk will continue in 2020;
- the United States also appreciates the other alternatives referenced by DFG (providing scale envelope guidelines with licenses for professional fishers and wildlife officers / fisheries inspectors taking some samples);
- the United States looks forward to furthering this discussion and working with DFG more closely to identify options that will have a high likelihood of success; and

- the United States remains committed to the Sampling Program and will work co-operatively with all Parties involved to design and implement a program that will collect the required data to inform the assessment and management of this stock complex.

10. Other Business

10.1 The representative of DFG said that DFG recognises the work that the United States has been doing in connection with the restoration of habitat for salmon in the rivers of origin. She referred to the United States' Annual Progress Report, CNL(20)27 stating that they are pleased that the United States has a goal of opening up a further 5,000 units (1 unit = 100 square meters) of natural salmon habitat, considering the importance of habitat for the survival of salmon. She noted however, that only 18,600 units of 397,092 units, or less than 5%, is currently accessible in the important Penobscot River used as an index of salmon mortality at sea. She noted that even if the goal is achieved and all the effort is used in the current period, 94% of the Penobscot River would remain inaccessible to salmon. The representative of DFG therefore asked the representative of the United States whether there is currently access to any natural salmon spawning habitats in either Penobscot River or any of its connected rivers. The representative of DFG asked, alternatively, whether there are any suitable parr locations with direct migration paths to the ocean, without migrating smolts having to pass either dams or hydropower plants.

10.2 The representative of the United States replied that the 18,600 units of habitat referenced in the question are the sum of unimpeded Atlantic salmon juvenile rearing habitat in the Penobscot River only, which is completely accessible to the ocean (i.e. with no dams or other barriers to downstream passage). She said that this accounts for a fraction of the rearing habitat located within the Penobscot River as it represents only the habitat below the lowermost dam (Milford Dam).

10.3 The representative of the United States noted that their Implementation Plan (IP) addresses connectivity on two separate fronts given the significant differences in their regulatory authorities for dams that generate power compared to dams that do not. For non-hydroelectric dams and other barriers that are generally much smaller than hydroelectric dams and block less habitat, the goal in their IP is to restore access to 5,000 units of habitat over five years. Whereas for hydroelectric dams, which are much larger and typically block more habitat, their goal is to restore access to 10,000 units of habitat over five years. The representative stated that the United States considers habitat to be accessible above dams when passage of adults and juveniles is safe and effective to allow for both survival and recovery. She noted that many of the hydroelectric dams in the Penobscot River are working towards meeting criteria that would allow the United States to consider the dams accessible to adult and juvenile salmon. The United States acknowledged that these 5-year gains are small compared to the amount of habitat located above their lower most dams, but these are aggressive goals that the United States feels are achievable given the recent track record working on connectivity issues within their salmon rivers. She said that improving the connectivity of salmon rivers will take years of dedicated effort as well as financial resources to address, but the United States remains committed to this program.

10.4 The representative of the United States stated, as noted above, that the Penobscot River is heavily impacted by dams and approximately 95% of its juvenile rearing habitat is located above one or more dams. However, she reported that this is not the case for all of their salmon rivers. The salmon rivers located in Eastern Maine (collectively referred

to as the Downeast Salmon Habitat Recovery Unit) have a total of approximately 40,000 units of juvenile rearing habitat and currently approximately 28,500 units (71%) have unimpeded access to the ocean. She noted that even with this high percentage of habitat with direct access to the ocean, their restoration program is still heavily focused on improving connectivity projects located within these rivers.

10.5 The representative of DFG also noted that the United States had not listed cormorant predation as a potential threat to migrating smolts, although cormorants are documented to predate up to 50% of smolt cohorts or more in other parts of the North Atlantic, particularly near dams with poor migration conditions for salmon. She therefore asked the United States to provide information on changes in cormorant population over the last two to three decades or inform DFG whether there have been any recent investigations related to smolt predation by cormorants in the United States and whether there is any management plans for cormorants.

10.6 In response, the representative of the United States reported that double-crested cormorants have been federally protected in the United States under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act since 1972, and as a consequence, their abundance in coastal Maine waters has increased sharply since that time. Double-crested cormorants are known predators of Atlantic salmon out-migrating smolts. She referred to a 1996 publication which estimated that cormorants preyed upon 7.5-9.2% of stocked smolts in the Penobscot River between the years 1992 through 1994. The authors noted that much of this predation occurred within the vicinity of hydroelectric dams or during the freshwater to saltwater transition, a period when smolts are known to be vulnerable to predation.

10.7 The representative of the United States also reported that in 2013, NOAA Fisheries Service scientists published a study describing a cormorant harassment project and its impact on smolt predation. The authors concluded that there was a reduction in smolt mortality during harassment events, but also noted that low sample sizes and other shortcomings of the project prevented sweeping conclusions from being made (e.g. sources of mortality were not identified with only one of the thirty tags from unsuccessful fish recovered from a cormorant rookery). The representative of the United States reported that the authors concluded that non-lethal harassment appeared to be an effective means to reduce loss of emigrating smolts, but that ongoing restoration activities should result in increased abundance of multiple diadromous species populations within the river, which may increase the prey field for piscivores and result in a higher percentage of smolts successfully entering the marine environment. The authors also stated that recent declines in cormorant populations may be attributable to populations exceeding their carrying capacity and a concurrent resurgence of cormorant predators. As such, there is a possibility for trending towards lower cormorant predation rates on smolts. She noted that a follow-up investigation has not been conducted.

10.8 The representative of the United States also stated that wide-spread cormorant harassment or eradication programs are not feasible from a resource or legal standpoint. Given that cormorant predation appears to be focused on constriction points, such as dams, one aspect of the connectivity restoration strategy is to make dams ‘invisible’ to migrating smolts. As noted above, the United States is working to include strict survival and passage standards on relicensing activities for federally licensed dams. She noted that enabling a high proportion of migrating smolts to survive a dam and to pass through a dam quickly is hypothesised to increase the likelihood of the smolt being able to avoid a predation event by minimising interrupted / delayed migration. She stated that the

United States have seen that recently enacted regulatory measures that have led to operational changes at the dams in the Penobscot River have increased smolt survival from a range of 52-94% survival to greater than 96% survival. The United States is also working to restore the suite of coevolved diadromous fish populations within Maine, which were once abundant and co-occurred with Atlantic salmon (e.g. alewife and blueback herring). It is hypothesised that increasing and complicating the prey field during the time of Atlantic salmon smolt out-migration may increase smolt survival during this critical phase as the other coevolved diadromous species may serve as alternate prey for predators such as double crested cormorants.

10.9 The representative of DFG thanked the representative of the United States for her comprehensive reply.

10.10 The representative of DFG said that DFG recognised the work that Canada has been doing in connection with the restoration of habitat for salmon in the rivers of origin. She referred to Canada's initial Annual Progress Report, CNL(20)44. She noted that Canada has not listed dams as a potential threat to migrating salmon at various life stages although dams are known to lead to water warming, increased smolt mortality and blocking adult salmon from returning to spawning grounds. She asked Canada therefore, whether dams or hydropower plants are considered to have no negative impacts on local salmon stocks in Canada.

10.11 The representative of Canada replied stating that there are dams and hydropower plants on a number of rivers with Atlantic salmon populations in eastern Canada and some are having impacts on local salmon populations. Throughout most of the middle and northern range of Atlantic salmon populations in eastern Canada, dams and hydropower facilities are not impacting Atlantic salmon. The rivers with the most important fish passage threats are located in the southern areas of the Atlantic salmon distribution, on the Atlantic coast portions of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

10.12 The representative of Canada reported that there are four population designatable units (DU) in the Scotia-Fundy Region: the Outer Bay of Fundy, Inner Bay of Fundy, Southern Uplands, and eastern Cape Breton. All four salmon designatable units in the Scotia-Fundy area have been assessed by an independent scientific body (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) as endangered, meaning that the risk of extirpation for these populations is high.

10.13 He stated that Recovery Potential Assessments have been conducted for the three DUs that produce multi-sea-winter salmon that undertake long distance high seas migrations to the Labrador Sea and to Greenland. The representative of Canada referred first to the eastern Cape Breton DU which has major threats associated with marine survival, exacerbated by land use activities. He said that fish passage and acidification of freshwaters are not considered to be important threats to salmon in this area.

> *'Freshwater habitat supply is not thought to be limiting salmon abundance in Eastern Cape Breton rivers at present, and evidence of significant habitat loss was not found during this Recovery Potential Assessment. Threats in freshwater environments with a medium level of overall concern are (importance not implied by order): infrastructure (roads, power lines, etc.); culverts; genetic effects of small population size; forestry; illegal targeting of Atlantic Salmon while fishing under a general license; stocking of rainbow, brown and brook trout; salmon stocking for fisheries enhancement; changes in predator or prey abundance; non-native fish; silt and sediment; and altered hydrology.*' (DFO.

2014. Recovery Potential Assessment for Eastern Cape Breton Atlantic Salmon. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2013/072.)

10.14 The representative of Canada then referred to the southern Uplands DU which is located in the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia. In this region, Atlantic salmon abundance has shown a precipitous decline. The recovery potential assessment for this DU (DFO 2013) identified fish passage constraints and acidification of freshwaters as major threats to salmon and factors limiting recovery.

> *'Threats to persistence and recovery in freshwater environments identified with a high level of overall concern include (importance not implied by order): acidification, altered hydrology, invasive fish species, habitat fragmentation due to dams and culverts, and illegal fishing and poaching. River acidification has significantly contributed to reduced abundance or extirpation of populations from many rivers in the region during the last century. Although most systems are not acidifying further, few are recovering and most are expected to remain affected by acidification for more than 60 years. Acidification and barriers to fish passage are thought to have reduced the amount of freshwater habitat by approximately 40%, an estimate that may be conservative. However, given the low abundance of salmon at present, habitat quantity is not thought to be currently limiting for populations in rivers where barriers and acidification are not issues. Whether freshwater habitat becomes limiting in the future depends on the dynamics of recovered populations*.' (DFO. 2013. Recovery Potential Assessment for Southern Upland Atlantic Salmon. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2013/009).

10.15 In response to these threats, mitigation programs have been initiated, including modifications to upstream and downstream fish passage (e.g. bypass facilities for smolts at the Morgan Falls facility on the LaHave River) as dams and hydropower facilities authorisations are renewed and pilot liming project on the West River Sheet Harbour to determine the effectiveness of such actions on recovering salmon populations.

10.16 Finally, the representative of Canada referred to the Outer Bay of Fundy DU which is located in the Bay of Fundy area of the province of New Brunswick and borders Maine (USA). This DU is also assessed as endangered.

> *'In freshwater, hydroelectric dams and illegal fishing activities are identified as the threats of highest concern. Potential freshwater mitigation measures/actions for high level threats include: implement/improve downstream fish passage, remove or refurbish reservoirs/dams, increase education and awareness activities, public outreach, and increased enforcement in areas of concern. The larger rivers of the Outer Bay of Fundy DU have had a century or more of industrial development that has severely impacted Atlantic Salmon habitat. Dams, regulated flows, headponds, other habitat alteration, as well as inputs of point-source pollutants, have limited the accessibility and reduced the connectivity on the main stem Saint John River (and some tributaries) between Mactaquac Dam and Grand Falls. In total, there is an estimated 41.75 million m2 of historically accessible productive freshwater habitat available in the area occupied by Atlantic Salmon in this DU of which, 40.4 million m2 (97%) remain currently accessible. Fish passage facilities provide access to 41.1% of the habitat considered currently accessible.*' (DFO. 2014. Recovery Potential Assessment for Outer Bay of

Fundy Atlantic Salmon. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2014/021.)

10.17 The representative of Canada concluded that in response to these threats, mitigation programmes have been initiated, including modifications to downstream fish passage for smolts at dams in the Saint John River. A detailed multi-year study is near completion on the options for refurbishment / replacement / removal of the Mactaquac Dam on the Saint John River, including considerations of the ecosystem consequences of options.

10.18 The representative of DFG noted that at least three of the index rivers (LaHave, Saint John River and de la Trinité) which are important since they are used as input data to ICES through the Framework of Indicators report, are either blocked or partly blocked by different types of dams or hydropower plants. She asked if there are dams in those rivers, potentially blocking or partly blocking migration to spawning grounds and smolt migration paths.

10.19 The representative of Canada replied that the representative of DFG was correct that the LaHave River, Nova Scotia (in Salmon Fishing Area 21 of the Scotia-Fundy area) and the Saint John River, New Brunswick (Salmon Fishing Area 23 of the Scotia-Fundy area) have dams with associated hydropower facilities. He explained that:

- upstream fish passage with integrated counting facilities is provided at these facilities by means of a fishway for the LaHave River and by a trap / lift / transport system for the Saint John River;
- downstream fish passage of salmon smolts is enhanced on the LaHave River using a bypass facility to circumvent passage through the turbine, that is also used as the monitoring platform for assessing smolts; and
- for the Saint John River, a large spillway diverts fish away from turbines and provides downstream passage.

10.20 For the River de la Trinité on the Quebec lower north shore of the St. Lawrence River, the representative of Canada explained that there is a low head dam near the outlet of the river but it does not have hydropower generating facilities:

- upstream passage is provided by means of a fishway with an integrated counting facility; and
- downstream fish passage occurs readily by spillage over the lower level dam and is not considered to be an impediment to smolt or post-spawned salmon downstream migration.

10.21 The representative of Canada reported that these dams have existed on these rivers since at least the late 1970s and early 1980s. They provide important monitoring data for salmon populations in their respective regions and due to the length of the monitored times series of adult returns and the variations noted over time, they provide significant indicators of the status of salmon in the larger assessment areas of eastern Canada and are used in the Framework of Indicators for monitoring interim year Pre-Fishery Abundance.

10.22 The representative of DFG noted that Canada had listed acidification, warming water and predation by invasive species, as the greatest threat to wild Atlantic salmon stocks, but not whether these are local or global problems in Canada. She asked Canada to provide information on development in cormorant populations in Canada in the last two to three decades and whether there has been any recent investigations related to smolt

predation by cormorant in Canada and whether there is any management plans for cormorants.

10.23 The representative of Canada replied that, as described in the response to the earlier question, acidification is an important threat in the Southern Uplands DU of the Scotia-Fundy area. He said that this is the result of the poor buffering capacity of the underlying geology which was severely reduced during the 1970s and early 1980s due to atmospheric distribution of industrial compounds and low pH precipitation. Although there are localised and periodic low pH events associated with snow melt in the spring in a few areas, the threat of acidification is much less than for the Southern Uplands area.

10.24 The representative of Canada reported that non-native species predation and more importantly interactions including competition, displacement, pathogens and parasites, by invasive species tends to be more localised, and of more concern in the southern areas with larger human populations and road access to entire watersheds that facilitates the illegal transfers and introductions. Regarding cormorants, these migratory aquatic birds are native to eastern Canada and localised populations (rookeries) are found in all provinces. He explained that:

- in Environment and Climate Change Canada (2019) reports on the Trends in Canada's bird populations (www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/trends-birdpopulations.html), seabird species that are indicated to be increasing or stable include the Double-crested cormorant and the Great Cormorant, both species native to eastern Canada;
- predation on salmon smolts by cormorants and other aquatic birds is often highlighted by salmon fishing groups as a major impediment to salmon abundance. Predation by seabirds in Europe and in the eastern United States appears most important in rivers where fish migrations are impeded by in-river barriers and artificial headponds. In most areas of eastern Canada, such impediments to free passage of salmon smolts are not a global concern with local exceptions;
- there are a limited number of studies on seabird abundances and predation. Cairns (2001) conducted a review of diet of several seabirds in eastern Canada (Cairns, D.K. 1998. Diet of cormorants, mergansers, and kingfishers in eastern North America. Can. Tech. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci. No. 2225);
- a recent study of diet of cormorants conducted on a major salmon producing river (Restigouche) by Carrier *et al*. indicated that salmon smolts were a minor component of cormorant diet (see abstract of poster presented at the Atlantic Salmon Ecosystem Forum, 2016); hence
- cormorant or other seabird predation is not considered to be an important threat to wild Atlantic salmon in eastern Canada and there are no management plans to address such a low threat.

10.25 The representative of Canada concluded that Canada cannot comment on the status of cormorant plans in the United States. Within Canada, cormorants are not a federal jurisdiction and are managed by provinces.

10.26 The representative of DFG thanked the representative of Canada for his comprehensive reply.

11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

11.1 Process to develop the next Regulatory Measure: The representative of the United States noted that the current regulatory measure ends in 2020. She suggested that the WGC agree to an inter-sessional process aimed at beginning discussion of new management measures for the West Greenland fishery for adoption in 2021. Specifically, she said that the United States would support a process where the WGC holds an inter-sessional meeting, virtually if necessary, in the winter / spring 2021 and, if needed, a second inter-sessional meeting just before the start of the 2021 NASCO Annual Meeting. The representative of the United States sought other views on this prior to the video conference.

11.2 The representative of Canada supported the proposal to begin the process of discussing new management measures through inter-sessional meetings, most likely initially via video conference.

11.3 The representative of DFG noted that given the amount of meetings that have been moved from 2020 to 2021 and financial restrictions, due to Covid-19, it would be preferred either not to have an inter-sessional meeting before the Annual Meeting or to have an inter-sessional meeting via video conference. She said alternatively, a physical meeting could be held in Greenland.

Annex 2

Written Opening Statements submitted by the Members of the Commission

Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission submitted by Canada

With the exception of some areas in Labrador, Atlantic salmon stocks in eastern Canada continue to show long-term declines over the past 40 years despite continued support by the Government of Canada, provincial governments and local jurisdictions with habitat conservation programs and increasingly restrictive fisheries management measures, including reduced or eliminated retention limits in recreational fisheries and reduced harvests in Indigenous fisheries.

We appreciate the extensive work that Greenland has done in recent years, notably eliminating factory landings, and introducing mandatory licence requirements for everyone fishing for Atlantic salmon. Canada will work through the West Greenland Commission to support Demark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to further strengthen its monitoring, control, reporting, and sampling measures going forward to ensure that agreed total allowable catches are respected.

We welcome the continued improvement in the number of fishers reporting catches and the timeliness of reporting in Greenland in 2019. However, we note with concern the over-harvest in the fishery in 2019, following an over-harvest in 2018. We encourage Greenland to improve measures to better quantify, monitor and control the subsistence fishery at West Greenland.

In the upcoming year, as we have done in the past, Canada is committed to work with other parties to reach decisions on NASCO regulatory measures that are effective, practical, and above all address our common conservation objectives for wild Atlantic salmon with mutually agreeable catch limits and effective monitoring regimes.

In 2019, Canada continued to support and to participate in the international sampling program of the fishery at Greenland by providing one sampler for a two week period to collect samples, to conduct DNA analyses on tissue collected from harvested salmon, to age scales collected from the fishery, and to maintain the sampling database.

International participation in sampling programs in 2020 will likely prove to be more challenging given the coronavirus pandemic and consequent restrictions on travel. Nevertheless, Canada remains committed to assisting with this important work to the extent possible given the evolving constraints imposed by the pandemic.

The importance of this West Greenland Commission meeting continues to be reinforced by the continued decline of many of our salmon stocks in Canada. In terms of work carried out under the framework of this Commission, Canada would like to thank the Government of Greenland for reports it submitted this year. We look forward to continue to work together to ensure successful sampling in 2020, and the establishment of an effective new Regulatory Measure in 2021.

Thank you

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Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission submitted by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

Mr Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greenland would like to begin by thanking the Secretariat for the enormous preparation and coordination work that has been executed in order to get this year's meeting conducted in spite of the COVID-19 limitations.

For more than two decades, Greenland has restrained itself from commercial fishery, limiting our fishery to just a fraction of what it historically was. Greenland retain our rights to conduct fishing in accordance with NASCO's guidelines. Fishing and hunting is a vital part of the Greenlandic way of life, and the fishery for salmon remains an important part of the subsistence in Greenland. Therefore, Greenland continues to set a small quota for the subsistence fishery that has been going on for generations and is of high importance namely for the small and remote settlements.

It is our belief that the limited subsistence fishery, close to 1 % of the historic fishery in Greenland, is not preventing the recovery of the Atlantic salmon. Despite the extensive reductions in catch, strict management regimes and increased monitoring and control, with great sacrifices made by our small coastal communities, we have not seen any recovery of the stocks and it must thus, be concluded that we need to consider other factors and measures in order to improve the stock.

It is important to focus on all aspects of the lifecycle of the salmon. Therefore, Greenland continues to emphasise the importance of focusing on the local factors that affect the Atlantic salmon stock. We urge other nations to increase their efforts to remove dams hindering migration, destroying habitat, heating the water in rivers and creating perfect feeding sites for predators like cormorants.

Considering, the extensive improvements that Greenland has introduced into our management and control of the subsistence fishery, we once again urge the river nations to step up and keep their side of the bargain too and create the best possible conditions for rebuilding the salmon stock. Additionally, the number of seals, and cormorants often protected by national legislation although their numbers are record high - yet, predations is hardly touched upon in the scientific advice.

Our colleagues in Denmark has been very successful in their work rebuilding the almost lost salmon stocks in Denmark. In fact, Denmark has moved away from believing their salmon stocks were extinct in most rivers, to having returns of about 15.000 wild salmon per year, in just a handful of small river systems. Yet, this success story does not get the attention it deserves by ICES and their multi-faceted management strategy is not copied in other States, although the Danish rivers are facing the same or even greater challenges than other States of Origin; Habitat destruction through canalization and dams, sedimentation, water warming, invasive species, cormorant and seal predation. So, what was the magic trick in Denmark? The answer is there was no magic trick. Denmark focused on all aspects of the known threats to salmon and implemented a comprehensive action plans such as changing their stocking programs, removing dams, changing the legislation and especially training and involving the public in salmon conservation and habitat reconstruction. Find out more about Denmark's approach here: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/fme.12385

Denmark has proven that it is possible to obtain a ten-fold increase in returning Atlantic salmon once the in-river problems are taken care of. Greenland therefore call on all States of Origin to look towards Denmark for inspiration and start acting!

Mr Chair, Greenland is looking forward to productive meetings in the West Greenland Commission under these special circumstances. We assure you and our colleagues that as always, we are prepared to work in a constructive way so that we collectively can contribute to a successful outcome.

Thank you.

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Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission submitted by the United States

Chair McLean, Secretary Hatfield, Assistant Secretary Kenyon, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen:

The United States appreciates the work that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) has undertaken since we last met in Tromso, Norway, to strengthen management of the West Greenland salmon fishery. The significant steps taken are important for the effective conservation and management of Atlantic salmon. Given the overharvest of the quota again in 2019, however, it is clear that the efforts taken to date to improve monitoring and control of the fishery need additional refinement. We are encouraged by the actions the Government of Greenland is planning to take for 2020 to avoid a third year of overharvest, and we look forward to exchanging views on those and other ideas for effectively controlling the harvest this year. We also greatly appreciate the continued strong communication on the implementation of the 2018-2020 regulatory measure and, in particular, the exchange that has already occurred between members of the Commission in support of the 2020 WCG meeting, which, in this extraordinary year, is being undertaken by video conference.

With regard to sampling the fishery in 2020, we are hopeful that the longstanding program will be able to continue as usual this year. If not, we appreciate the willingness of the Government of Greenland to look at options for obtaining samples through other means.

In closing, the United States looks forward to continuing to work with all members of the WGC to strengthen the management of the West Greenland salmon fishery to balance, to the extent possible, stock conservation needs with an internal use fishery.

Annex 3

2020 List of Participants

* Denotes Head of Delegation

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Annex 4

WGC(20)07

Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

By Video Conference

1 – 5 June 2020

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Election of Officers
4. Review of the 2019 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area
5. Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission
6. Regulatory Measures
7. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery
8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize
9. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice
10. Other Business
11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting
12. Report of the Meeting
13. Close of the Meeting

Annex 5

West Greenland Commission

WGC(20)10

Presentation of the ICES Advice on Atlantic Salmon to the West Greenland Commission

sal.wgc.all

Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland

Photo by Tim Sheehan

Terms of Reference

4. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland Commission area:

4.1 describe the key events of the 2019 fisheries;

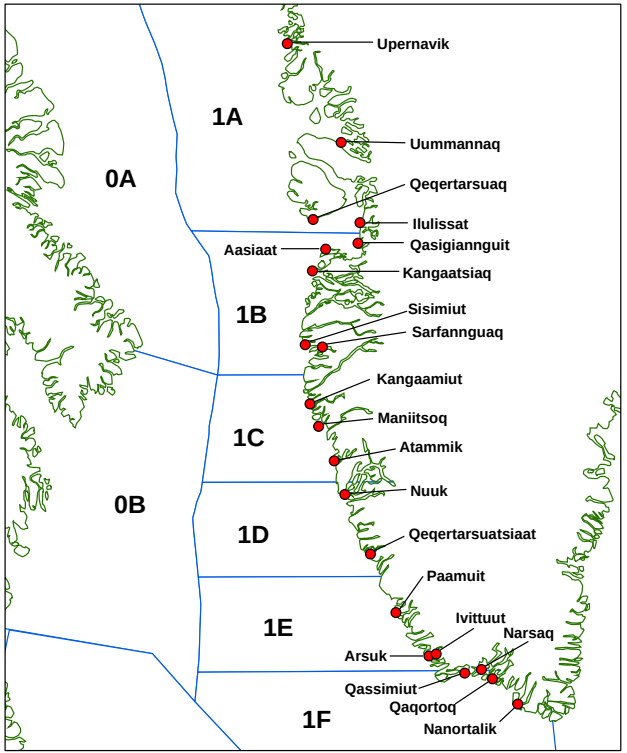
4.2 describe the status of the stocks;

- ICES advises that when the Framework of Indicators (FWI) was applied in early 2020, a full reassessment was not required and the 2018 ICES advice remains valid
- no mixed-stock fishery options at West Greenland for the fishing year 2020
- 2020 marks the final year of NASCO's three-year multi-annual regulatory measure for fishing Atlantic salmon at West Greenland

4.1 Key Events 2019 Fishery

- 2019 quota was 19.5 t, reduced from 30 t due to overharvest in 2018
- No sales to factories permitted
- All fishers required to have a license and mandatory reporting requirements
- Fishing season: 15 August to 31 October

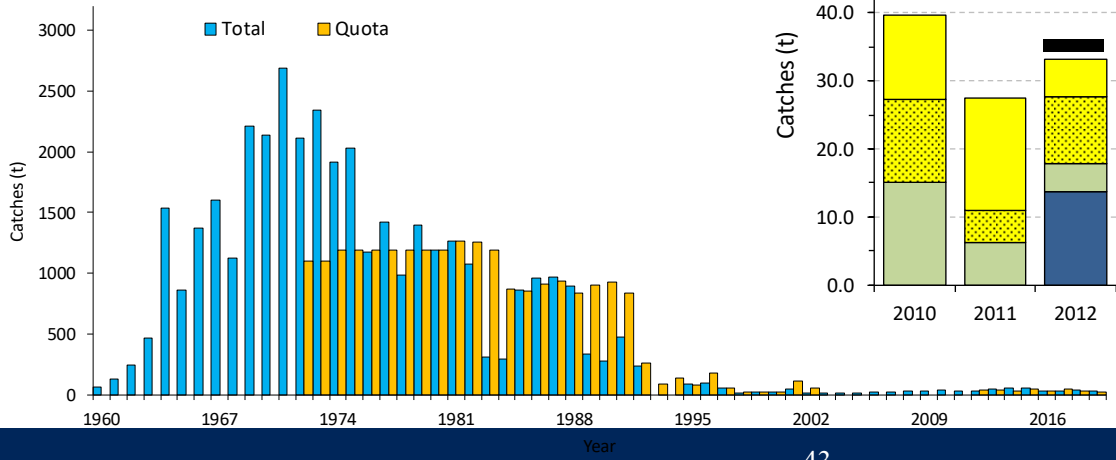
Figure 1: sal.wgc.all

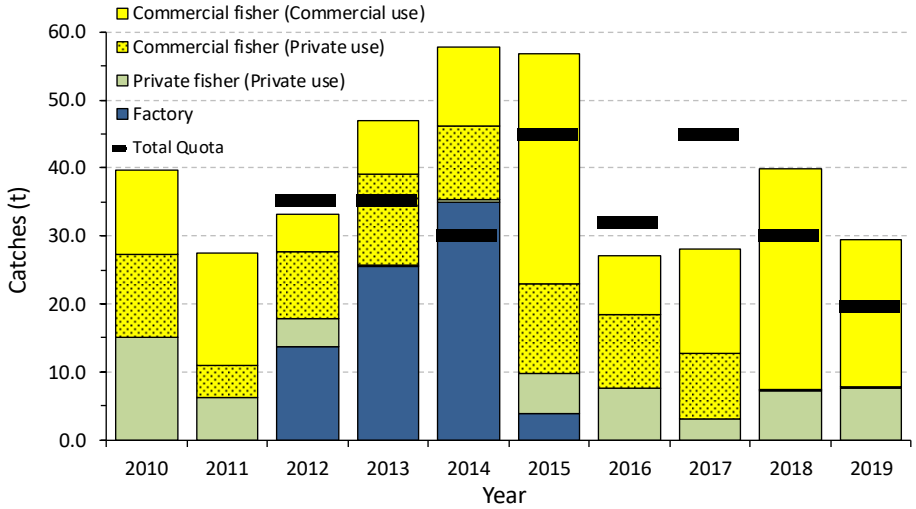


4.1 Key Events 2019 Fishery: Catch

- fishery closed on 25 September as 19.5 t of landings had been registered
- catch later revised to 29.8 t, resulting in an overharvest of approximately 10.3 t
  - 74% commercial use 26% private use
- unreported catch: 10 t

Figure 2: sal.wgc.all





4.1 Catch: Continent of Origin

- International sampling programme continued in 2019
  - 1119 samples collected
  - 71.5% North American (~6800 salmon)
  - 28.5% European (~2600 salmon)

Figure 3: sal.wgc.all

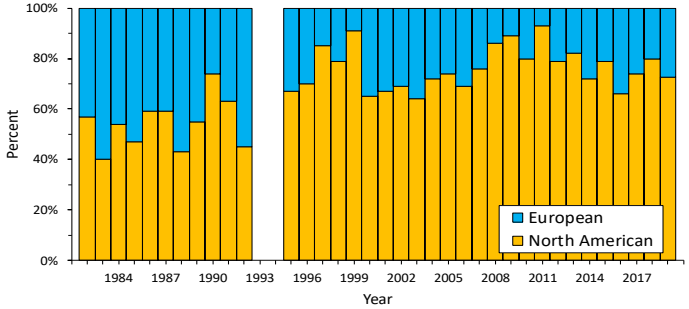
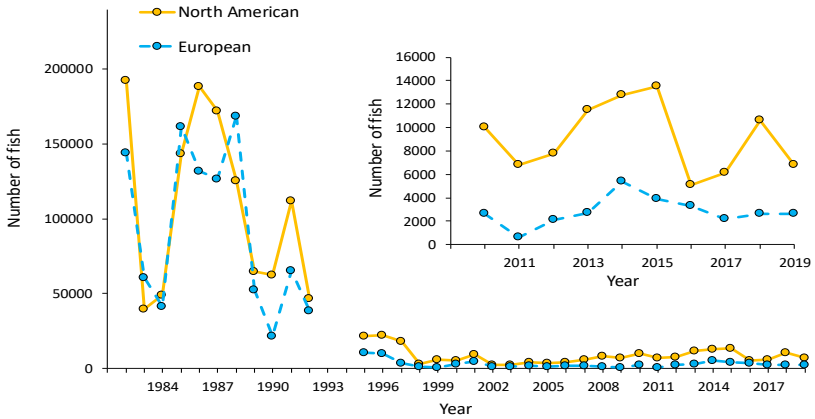


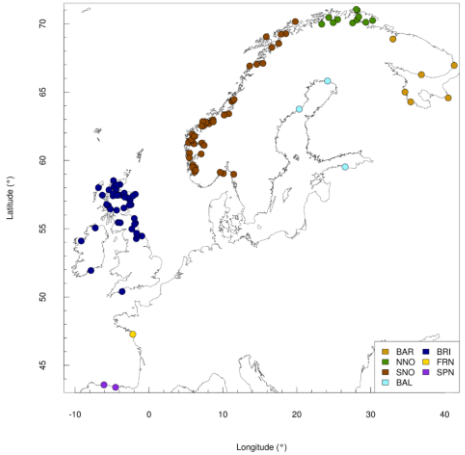
Figure 4: sal.wgc.all

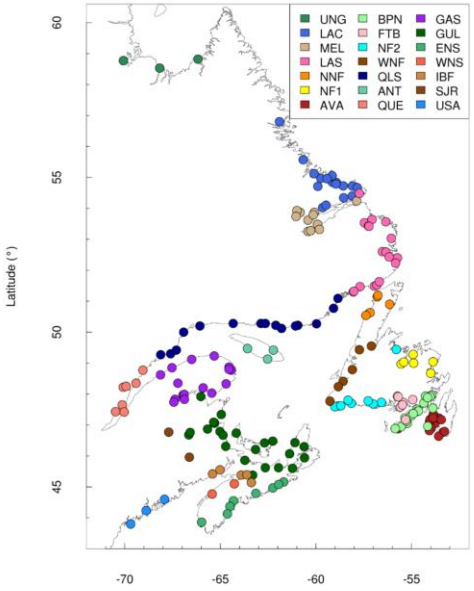


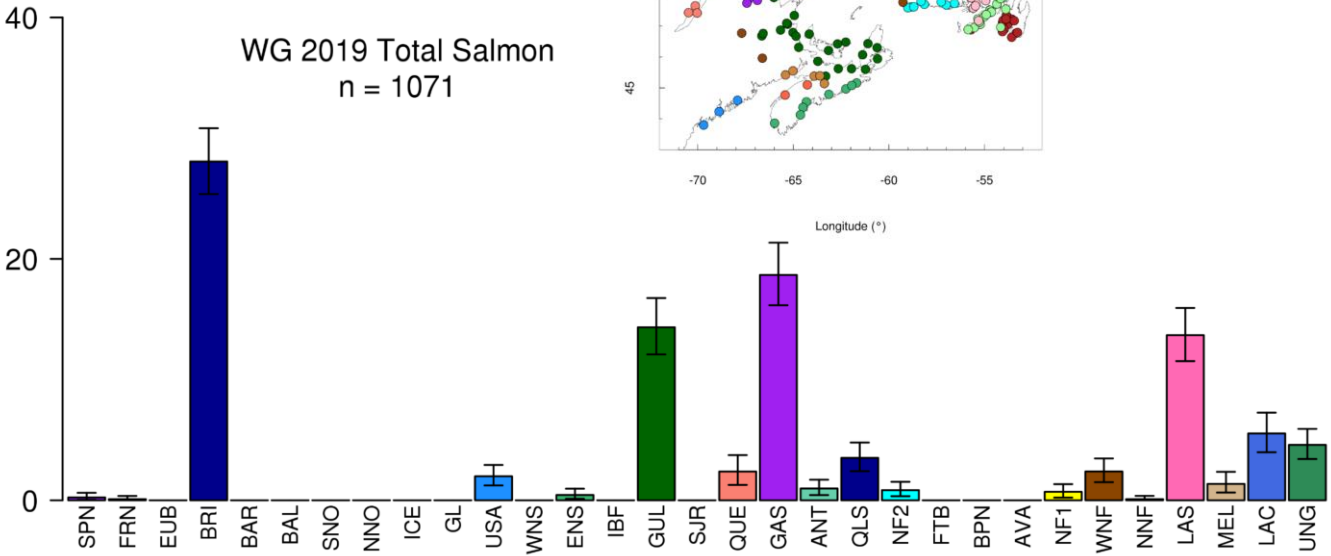
4.1 Catch: Region of Origin

- Genetic Baseline: 31 reporting groups
- European origin: 99% Ireland and United Kingdom group
- North American origin: 65% to three groups
  - Gulf, Gaspe and Labrador South

Figure 5 and Table 7: sal.wgc.all



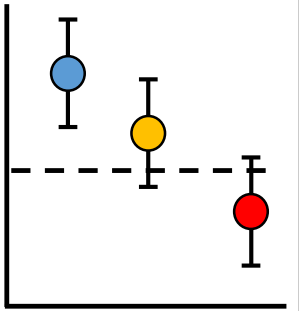




4.2 Status of Stocks: Risk Assessment Framework

- Management advice for West Greenland fishery based on non-maturing 1SW salmon (return as 2SW/MSW) from North America (NAC) and Southern-Northeast Atlantic (S-NEAC)
  - Pre-Fishery Abundance (PFA) relative to Spawner Escapement Reserve (SER)
    - SERs - CLs adjusted for natural mortality (3% per month at sea)
  - Spawners (2 SW NAC and MSW S-NEAC) relative to Conservation Limits (CLs)

- Full Reproductive Capacity :
  - lower bound of the 90% confidence interval of the estimate above reference point
  - equivalent to a probability of at least 95% of meeting reference point
- At Risk of Suffering Reduced Reproductive Capacity:
  - lower bound of the confidence interval is below reference point, but the midpoint is above
- Suffering Reduced Reproductive Capacity:
  - midpoint is below reference point



4.2 Status of Stocks: Pre-Fishery Abundance (PFA)

Figure 6: sal.wgc.all

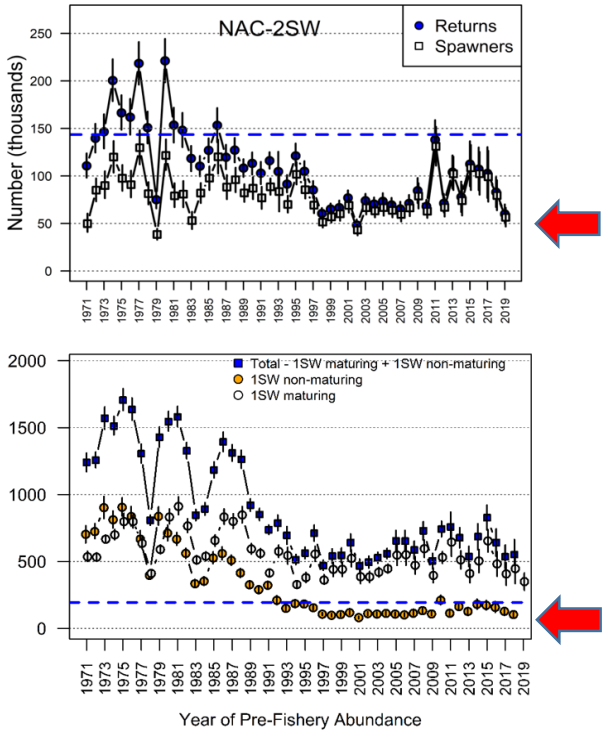
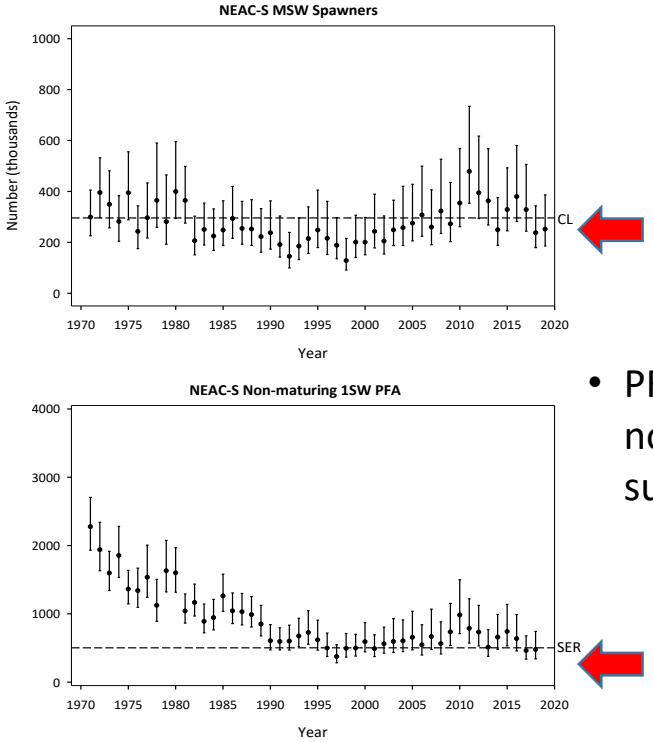


Figure 7: sal.wgc.all

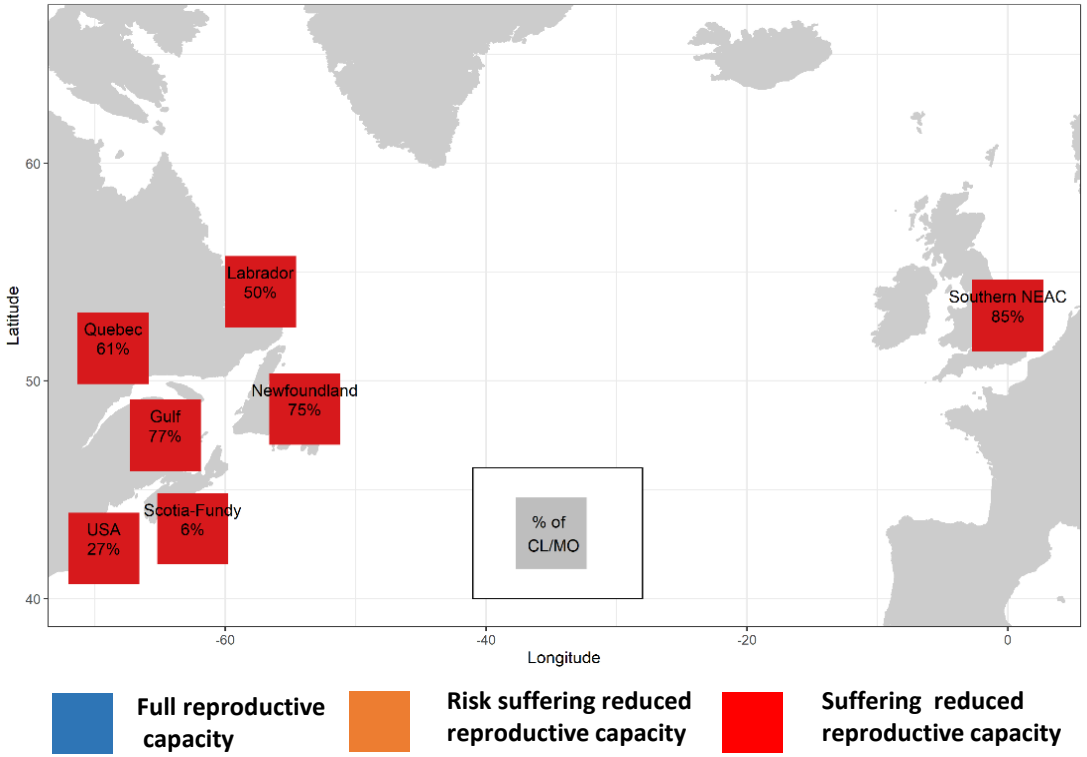


- PFA estimates of non-maturing 1SW salmon suggest continued low abundance
  - North America: suffering reduced reproductive capacity
  - Southern-NEAC: suffering reduced reproductive capacity

4.2 Status of Stocks: Spawners

- 2019 Spawners
- Median estimate < CLs
  - 6 of 6 North American 2SW stocks
  - Southern-NEAC MSW stock

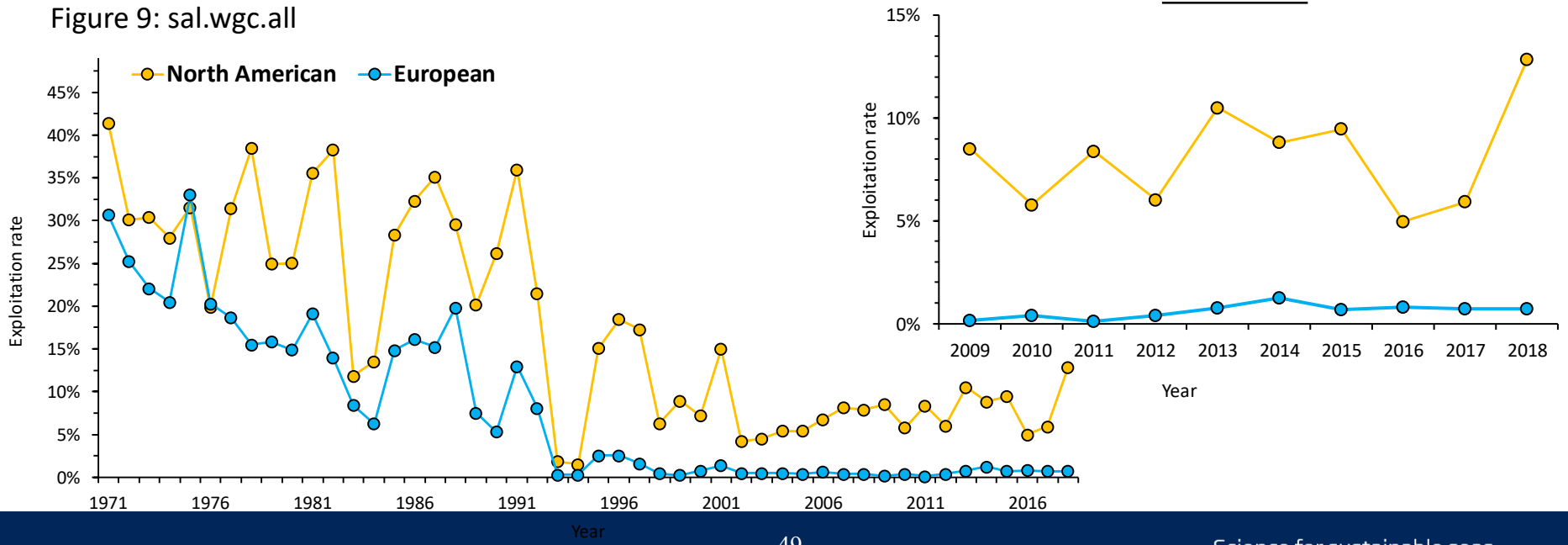
Figure 8: sal.wgc.all



4.2 Status of Stocks: Exploitation Rate

- Exploitation rate = Greenland Catch ÷ Pre-Fishery Abundance (PFA)
  - North America: 12.9% Southern NEAC: 0.7%

Figure 9: sal.wgc.all



4.2 Status of Stocks: Summary

- Despite major changes in fisheries management in the past few decades and increasingly more restrictive fisheries measures, salmon returns have remained near historical lows
- It is likely, therefore, that other factors besides fisheries are constraining production.

Photo by Tim Sheehan

ICES CIEM

Annex 6

CNL(20)53

Summary of Discussions held during the ICES Advice Webinar

Monday 1 June 2020

Dave Meerburg (Atlantic Salmon Federation): noted Dr Robertson's conclusion that factors other than fisheries were affecting stocks. He stated that Dr Robertson had mentioned that the returns of two-sea-winter (2SW) salmon in 2019 were the lowest in the time series from 1971. However, the graph on the 'Exploitation Rate' slide appeared to show a steadily increasing exploitation rate on 2SW North American salmon at West Greenland since around 2001. The most recent year assessed showed the highest level of exploitation of these fish at West Greenland since 2001, yet the home waters had the second lowest returns they have ever had. He questioned the conclusion that the fisheries are not having an effect if there is an increase in exploitation rate in one place, yet a decrease in returns at another. He felt that there may be a problem there.

Martha Robertson (ICES): agreed that fisheries is one component but that survival of salmon at sea has a large unexplained component.

Dave Meerburg (Atlantic Salmon Federation): agreed with Dr Robertson, but pointed out that she had not highlighted the fact that the exploitation at Greenland was the highest it has been since 2001 on North American stocks, despite the fact that that year, 2018, saw a much reduced fishery from some previous years. He also indicated that the quota was exceeded by about a third in the year 2000.

Gennady Zharkov (Russian Federation): asked whether there were any estimates of escaped farmed fish.

Martha Robertson (ICES): responded that the ICES advice does mention the production of farmed salmon, but the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) does not provide a summary of reports of escapees. This is not within the Working Group's Terms of Reference.

Paul Knight (Salmon and Trout Conservation UK): noted that the NGOs are extremely worried about introgression and asked whether this is something that could be modelled or calculated so that it could come through the advice models in future. He stated that Norwegian rivers are becoming more and more 'polluted' with introgression, and lots of NGOs believe that many other European rivers are the same. He asked if this would be a reasonable or credible question to ask of ICES.

Martha Robertson (ICES): advised that there is already a separate Working Group within ICES looking at the impacts of introgression on wild Atlantic salmon. She noted that Ian Bradbury, a geneticist, and member of the WGNAS, is also part of that Group.

Arnaud Peyronnet (European Union): thanked Dr Robertson for her presentation. He noted that Dr Robertson had shown the reproductive stock complex in North America, and that there is reduced reproductive status for all the different rivers. However, a large number of those rivers were shown to be attaining their conservation limits. He found it difficult to reconcile these two elements, how it was possible to have attained conservation limits while also having reduced reproductive status and asked Dr Robertson for further clarification.

Martha Robertson (ICES): agreed that this is difficult to understand.

Gérald Chaput (Canada): commented that the conservation limit attainment for individual rivers is for all sea-ages, whereas the reduced reproductive capacity shown in Figure 3.3 in the presentation is specifically for 2SW salmon.

Martha Robertson (ICES): reiterated this point, indicating that a river may have lots of one-sea-winter (1SW) fish returning, but may not have many 2SW fish returning. So the river is healthy, but the MSW fish component is not so healthy. MSW fish are the only fish from North America that travel to Greenland, so while, in general, North American stocks are healthy with 1SW fish, the MSW stock component that travels to Greenland is not as healthy.

Alan McNeill (Canada): asked whether the recreational catch included caught and released fish or only harvested salmon?

Martha Robertson (ICES): replied that in North America 'catch' or 'harvest' means those fish that are retained, and that the advice document includes how many fish were released. She noted that a large number of fish are released, but they are not considered part of the harvest.

Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): noted that ICES concludes that factors other than fisheries must affect the decline in the stock and asked if it would it be possible for ICES to map which other factors affect the stock.

Martha Robertson (ICES): stated that the end of the advice document contains an 'other factors for consideration' section, which she believes requires updating. She indicated that she would raise this with the WGNAS in 2021. The advice document does not specify the other factors, although given the poor returns and restrictions on fisheries, we know that there must be other factors. There is a large at-sea mortality but at this point, the mechanisms of that mortality cannot be explained.

Gennady Zharkov (Russian Federation): asked whether there was any progress in respect of new measures concerning mixed-stock fisheries in Norway.

Martha Robertson (ICES): stated that she was unaware of new management measures for coastal fisheries in Norway, and that this would be a question for Norway.

Paul Knight (Salmon and Trout Conservation UK): noted Dr Robertson's comment about at-sea mortality, and that most people are in agreement that this is a problem. He felt that some scientists now think that more fish are lost in the freshwater environment than was previously thought, before they go to sea. He asked if this were something that ICES was aware of and whether it could be investigated further.

Martha Robertson (ICES): replied that ICES does have estimates of smolt production on many rivers. There is a decline in output for some rivers, and this is going to become a bigger concern as populations decline and they go below the point at which freshwater production will decline. At the moment, most of the focus is still on the marine environment as there are rivers which are considered to be at full reproductive capacity, but to which the fish are not returning. This is the key issue for many populations at present. The good thing about freshwater is that freshwater issues can be managed. Most freshwater declines are site specific, although some relate to climate change in the south. Different jurisdictions are looking at the freshwater issues in their own rivers, and there is a wide range of issues such as predation, warm water, or hydro dams. From the North Atlantic perspective, the focus is on impacts in the marine environment.

Dave Meerburg (Atlantic Salmon Federation): thanked Dr Robertson for her very informative presentation. He noted that this would be the last year she presented the ICES

advice to NASCO as her term as Chair of the WGNAS was coming to an end; he thanked her for her work over the past three years in this role.

Gennady Zharkov (Russian Federation): noted that a complete ban on netting was being discussed in Norway.

Martha Robertson (ICES): indicated that she was not part of those discussions but stated that there are constant reductions in marine fisheries. Each year there seem to be more and more restrictions on marine fishing.

Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): asked whether the planned predation workshop had taken place in 2019, and if ICES could use that information in its advice.

Martha Robertson (ICES): stated that she recalled there being a predation workshop in 2019, but it was not part of the ICES WGNAS. She suggested it may have been part of the Likely Suspects Project.

Ken Whelan (Atlantic Salmon Trust): noted that while predation is being looked at in the context of the Likely Suspects Framework, he was not aware of any workshop being held or planned on the issue. He indicated that there was extensive work planned in the Moray Firth in Scotland which would specifically look at predatory birds. Marine Scotland would also be involved in this work.

Martha Robertson (ICES): noted that there are now a lot of jurisdictions looking at predation in the freshwater environment. She thanked everyone for their comments and questions.

Emma Hatfield (NASCO and Webinar Chair): thanked Dr Robertson for her presentation and for her sterling work as the Chair of the WGNAS in recent years. She also thanked everyone for being willing to participate in this unusual way of presenting the advice from ICES in this unusual year.

Annex 7

WGC(20)11

Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2020

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 members of the West Greenland Commission have worked co-operatively over the past five decades to collect biological data on Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland. These data provide critical inputs to the stock assessment completed by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) North Atlantic Salmon Working Group annually.

The objectives of the sampling programme in 2020 are to:

- continue the time series of data (1969-2019) 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; and
- collect information on the recovery of internal and external tags.

To this end, members participating in the sampling programme in 2020 plan to 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; and
- other biological data requested by the ICES scientists and NASCO co-operators.

Members of the West Greenland Commission plan to provide the following staff inputs to the co-operative sampling programme at West Greenland during the 2020 fishing season:

- the European Union[1]: provide a minimum of eight person weeks[2] to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2020 fishing season;
- Canada: provide a minimum of two person weeks[2] to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2020 fishing season;
- the United States: provide a minimum of two person weeks[2] to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2020 fishing season;
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources: sample Atlantic salmon from the city of Nuuk on a weekly basis during the 2020 fishing season;

[1] Ireland (2 samplers) and the United Kingdom (2 samplers).
[2] For the purposes of this statement of co-operation, 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 seven days.

- the United States: provide a Sampling Programme Co-ordinator to co-ordinate the sampling programme for 2020; and
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Programme Co-ordinator: provide support for the sampling programme by facilitating the sampling of Atlantic salmon by the samplers identified above.

Members of the West Greenland Commission plan to provide the following technical support for sample analysis and data collected at West Greenland during the 2020 fishing season:

- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Programme Co-ordinator: work with any factories receiving harvested salmon (if factory landings are allowed) to collect biological characteristics data and samples from a proportion of the landed fish via factory staff;
- the United States: provide oversight for the processing of all collected biological samples;
- the United States: 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: co-ordinate the publishing of a report that details the results of the sampling programme in co-operation with institutes participating in the sampling programme via a participating institution's official report series;
- Canada: provide single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) analysis of tissue samples collected from Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland;
- Canada: provide ageing of scale samples collected from Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland;
- Canada: maintain the historical West Greenland sampling database; and
- the European Union (UK (England & Wales)): act as a clearing house for coded wire tags recovered from the fishery.

Members of the West Greenland Commission plan to provide the following co-ordination activities in support of the co-operative sampling programme at West Greenland during the 2020 fishing season:

- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland): 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 as needed;
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland): inform persons designated by co-operating members of the West Greenland Commission 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 United States: the Sampling Programme Co-ordinator is expected to determine the allocation of available scientific sampling personnel to ensure spatial and temporal coverage to characterise both the fishery and the Atlantic salmon populations along the West Greenland coast; and

- all members of the West Greenland Commission participating in the sampling programme are expected to share access to resulting data and work co-operatively in the publication of information.

Performance of activities set forth in this Statement of Co-operation is subject to the availability of appropriated funds under domestic law. Each member should make reasonable and good faith efforts to secure the necessary funds to implement fully its intended activities identified in this Statement of Co-operation. If compliance with domestic law and / or the lack of sufficient funds or other legitimate circumstances prevailing at the time impair a participating member's ability to implement this Statement of Co-operation, the participating member should notify the other members as soon as possible.

Annex 8

CNL(20)13

Request for Scientific Advice from ICES

1. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic area:

1.1 provide an overview of salmon catches and landings by country, including unreported catches and catch and release, and production of farmed and ranched Atlantic salmon in 2020[1];

1.2 report on significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, salmon conservation and management[2];

1.3 provide a compilation of tag releases by country in 2020;

1.4 identify relevant data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements;

1.5 review and update the General Considerations section (Annex 2) of the ICES Commissions' advice documents to include 'Environmental and other influences on the stock'.

2. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North-East Atlantic Commission area:

2.1 describe the key events of the 2020 fisheries[3];

2.2 review and report on the development of age-specific stock conservation limits, including updating the time series of the number of river stocks with established CLs by jurisdiction;

2.3 describe the status of the stocks, including updating the time series of trends in the number of river stocks meeting CLs by jurisdiction;

2.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for the 2021 / 2022 – 2023 / 2024 fishing seasons, with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding[4]; and

2.5 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

3. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North American Commission area:

3.1 describe the key events of the 2020 fisheries (including the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon)[3];

3.2 update age-specific stock conservation limits based on new information as available, including updating the time series of the number of river stocks with established CLs by jurisdiction;

3.3 describe the status of the stocks, including updating the time series of trends in the number of river stocks meeting CLs by jurisdiction;

3.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2021 – 2024 with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding[4]; and

3.5 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

4. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland Commission area:

4.1 describe the key events of the 2020 fisheries[3];

4.2 describe the status of the stocks[5];

4.3 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2021 – 2023 with an assessment of risk relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding[4];

4.4 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

Notes:

1. *With regard to question 1.1, for the estimates of unreported catch the information provided should, where possible, indicate the location of the unreported catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Numbers of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries should be provided.*

2. *With regard to question 1.2, ICES is requested to include reports on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on any new research into the migration and distribution of salmon at sea and the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.*

3. *In the responses to questions 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1, ICES is asked to provide details of catch, gear, effort, composition and origin of the catch and rates of exploitation. For homewater fisheries, the information provided should indicate the location of the catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Information on any other sources of fishing mortality for salmon is also requested. For 4.1, if any new surveys are conducted and reported to ICES, ICES should review the results and advise on the appropriateness of incorporating resulting estimates into the assessment process.*

4. *In response to questions 2.4, 3.4 and 4.3, provide a detailed explanation and critical examination of any changes to the models used to provide catch advice and report on any developments in relation to incorporating environmental variables in these models. Also provide a detailed explanation and critical examination of any concerns with salmon data collected in 2020 which may affect the catch advice considering the restrictions on data collection programmes and fisheries due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*

5. *In response to question 4.2, ICES is requested to provide a brief summary of the status of North American and North-East Atlantic salmon stocks. The detailed information on the status of these stocks should be provided in response to questions 2.3 and 3.3.*

Attendees:

Sergey Prusov (NEAC, manager representative)
Peder Fiske (NEAC, scientist representative)

Tony Blanchard (NAC, manager representative)
Tim Sheehan (NAC, scientist representative)

Sissel Lindhart Fredsgaard (WGC, manager representative)
Niall Ó Maoiléidigh (WGC, scientist representative)

Martha Robertson (ICES representative, observer)
Patrick Gargan (Co-ordinator)

New questions, originator:

1.5 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

Annex 9

Closing Statement to the West Greenland Commission submitted by Carl Mclean (Chair)

I would like to thank the delegates for their diligence in advancing the agenda items in this first ever video conference Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission.

When you showed confidence in me to become Chair at the meeting in Germany in 2016 I knew at that time it would be a good challenge and learning experience. And it certainly was.

I do feel that we have made good progress in improving the monitoring and reporting of the West Greenland fishery in this time. I feel there are aspects of the West Greenland fishery initiatives on Greenland's management, monitoring and reporting we can all look to learn from to improve our own fishery.

I wish to thank Greenland for their commitment and willingness to advance these issues over these four years and I know this will continue as we go forward.

We need to remember that the salmon fishery in Greenland is a food fishery and is a valued component in addressing the food security issues of the small remote communities that dot their coast. The marine, ice and land species are their grocery store.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to Chair this commission. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

With that I will close the meeting.

Annex 10

WGC(20)00

List of West Greenland Commission Papers

WGC(20)00	List of West Greenland Commission Papers
WGC(20)01	Provisional Agenda (English and French)
WGC(20)02	Covid-19 WGC Agenda Planning
WGC(20)03	Draft Agenda (English and French)
WGC(20)04	2019 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland
WGC(20)05	Report on the Use of the Framework of Indicators in 2020
WGC(20)06	Explanatory Memorandum on the Agenda
WGC(20)07	Agenda (English and French)
WGC(20)08	Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2020
WGC(20)09	Report to the West Greenland Commission on the Measures for the 2020 Salmon Fishery
WGC(20)10	Presentation of the ICES Advice on Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland to the West Greenland Commission
WGC(20)11	Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2020
WGC(20)12	Draft Report of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
WGC(20)13	Report of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
WGC(20)14	West Greenland Commission Inter-Sessional Correspondence