

1998

**FIFTEENTH
ANNUAL MEETINGS**

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

8 -12 JUNE 1998

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REPORT OF THE

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

NORTH AMERICAN COMMISSION

8-12 JUNE 1998
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

CHAIRMAN: DR RAY B OWEN, JR. (USA)

VICE-CHAIRMAN: MR PIERRE TREMBLAY (CANADA)

RAPPORTEUR: MR MIKE CALCUTT (CANADA)

SECRETARY: DR MALCOLM WINDSOR

NAC(98)12

NAC(98)12

Report Of The Fifteenth Annual Meeting Of The North American Commission Of The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization 8-12 June 1998, Edinburgh, Scotland

1. Opening Of The Meeting

- 1.1 The Chairman, Dr Ray B Owen Jr. (USA), opened the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the North American Commission and welcomed delegates to Edinburgh.
- 1.2 A list of participants at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions is included on page xxx of this document.

2. Adoption Of The Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, NAC(98)11 (Annex 1).

3. Nomination Of A Rapporteur

- 3.1 The Commission nominated Mr Mike Calcutt (Canada) as rapporteur.

4. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The Commission re-elected Dr Ray B Owen Jr. (USA) as Chairman and Mr Pierre Tremblay (Canada) as Vice-Chairman.

5. Review Of The 1997 Fishery And ACFM Report From ICES On Salmon Stocks In The Commission Area

- 5.1 The representative of ICES, the Chairman of the ACFM, Mr Jean-Jacques Maguire, presented the scientific advice from ICES relevant to the North American Commission area (CNL(98)12) prepared in response to a request from the Commission at its Fourteenth Annual Meeting. He highlighted the rank of 1997 estimated returns in the 1971-97 time series for six regions in North America. The percentage (mid-point) of 2SW spawners as a proportion of escapement requirements ranged from a low of 6% (USA) to 120% (Newfoundland). With the exception of Newfoundland, all other areas were below 100%. The ACFM report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page xxx of this document.

6. Review And Discussion Of The 1998 Canadian And US Salmon Management Measures As They Relate To The Mandate Of The Commission And To The Findings Of The ACFM Report From ICES

6.1 The representative of Canada tabled a report on Canadian Conservation Actions for Atlantic Salmon, NAC(98)9 (Annex 2). He indicated that there is widespread and increasing concern about declining Atlantic salmon stocks in Canada. Last year a report was made to the Commission on the measures introduced by Canada including a Long Term Strategy and Management Plan for Rebuilding Labrador's Salmon Stocks. The smolt runs in 1995 and 1996 were good but returns in 1997 were below forecast in most Canadian rivers and there is uncertainty about the returns for 1998. It was recognised that there was, therefore, a need for further immediate action apart from the in-season measures taken during the 1997 season. He advised the Commission that during the fall of 1997 the Atlantic salmon became one of six conservation priorities adopted by the Minister. The representative of Canada referred to the elements of an Atlantic Salmon Action Plan for 1998 which includes application of the Precautionary Approach and support for adoption of stronger international conservation measures at NASCO. In addition, a Special Scientific Workshop had been held in February 1998 to examine the reasons for the poor returns. Following consultations with the provinces and stakeholders, separate Management Plans have been developed for each region of Canada. These included a moratorium extension in the commercial salmon fishery in Newfoundland. The plans for the recreational fisheries introduce further reductions in retention in Newfoundland and Labrador, closures of some rivers in all provinces, as well as further restrictions in hook and release fisheries. In Quebec, a voluntary commercial licence retirement offer worth \$1.4 million has been announced which will result in a reduction of approximately 50% of the total Quebec salmon harvest. In Labrador, the 1998 Management Plan, announced on 9 June, means that there is now no remaining commercial fishery.

6.2 The representative of the US complimented Canada on the actions taken and its responsiveness to the crisis in salmon stocks. He indicated that it was very positive to receive news of these significant developments at the start of the NASCO meeting. The representative of the US tabled document NAC(98)10 (Annex 3) detailing the Conservation Measures for Atlantic Salmon in the United States. The commercial fishery for salmon ended in the US in 1948 and there is catch and release fishing only in the recreational fishery. He referred to a number of noteworthy actions in 1997. These include:

- the withdrawal by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service of a proposal to list a number of Atlantic salmon populations as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act, since it was determined that, due to the protective measures in place, the species was not likely to be endangered in the foreseeable future;
- acceptance by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service of a Conservation Plan, submitted by the State of Maine, of a comprehensive collaborative approach for the protection of Atlantic salmon and their habitat. Implementation of this plan is now ongoing;

- the issue of an order for the decommissioning and removal of Edwards Dam, the lowermost dam on the Kennebec River, for fish habitat reasons.

6.3 The representative of Canada thanked the representative of the US for his presentation and action taken. He indicated that he had found the summary of research activities contained in NAC(98)10 particularly helpful and he would undertake to provide a similar summary for Canada at future meetings. He sought clarification of the reasons for the differences in the figures for returns and numbers of fish caught and released in Maine rivers in 1998 presented in the report by the US. The representative of the US indicated that these are both preliminary numbers and that one set of the figures was derived from trap data and the other from catch and release information. The Secretary indicated that the order for the removal of Edwards Dam had been widely covered in the European media and he congratulated the US on this measure to restore salmon habitat.

7. St Pierre et Miquelon Salmon Fisheries

7.1 The Secretary introduced document NAC(98)4 (Annex 4) providing catch statistics for the salmon fisheries on St Pierre et Miquelon. The catch provided to NASCO for 1997 was 1,491 kg (644 salmon). No information on the catch at St Pierre et Miquelon had been made available to ICES in 1997. A further document, NAC(98)7 (Annex 5), was presented, which contained correspondence from the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche in Paris on the St Pierre et Miquelon fishery, including the regulations concerning salmon fishing and a time series of catch data for the period 1990-1997.

7.2 Last year the representative of Canada had advised the Commission that he was the representative of Canada on the Advisory Group for the Canada-France Fisheries Agreement and he would explore reasons for the increased catches of salmon at St Pierre et Miquelon in 1996 and other issues at the next bilateral meeting. The representative of Canada indicated that he had now raised these issues with France and noted that while the statistics for St Pierre et Miquelon refer to "commercial" and "recreational" catches, the "commercial" fishery is conducted by fishermen from communities which are heavily dependent on fishing. These fisheries should more appropriately be described as "subsistence" fisheries as indicated in the correspondence from the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche (NAC(98)7). He advised the Commission that the enforcement of the salmon fishery regulation is very thorough and the French authorities have agreed to improve their reporting procedures so as to avoid the discrepancies in the statistics noted by the Commission in the past. The representative of the US thanked the representative of Canada for this explanation.

8. Salmonid Introductions and Transfers

8.1 The Co-Chair of the NAC Scientific Working Group (SWG) on Salmonid Introductions and Transfers, Mr Rex Porter (Canada), presented a report on the activities of the Group in 1997/98, NAC(98)8, (Annex 6).

8.2 The Working Group met several times during the year and had prepared an inventory of introductions and transfers of salmonids in the Commission Area, had developed a

Discussion Document for Revisions to the Protocols for the Introduction and Transfer of Salmonids, and had reviewed the need to establish a database for aquaculture escapees for rivers in the NAC area. The Co-Chair advised the Commission that there had been a large increase in transfers in 1997 compared to the previous year. Most of the transfers were for aquaculture and were principally rainbow trout and Atlantic salmon. A number of notable transfers of Atlantic salmon with respect to the fish genetics protocols were referred to.

- 8.3 The Commission agreed that the SWG should continue to review the nature of the data necessary for effectively monitoring introductions and transfers as well as aquaculture escapees encountered in the NAC area salmon rivers, and provide recommendations at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting.
- 8.4 The representative of the US asked for information on the serious disease problems associated with ISA in New Brunswick. He asked if it was possible for the SWG to determine the source of the disease and its potential impact on the US salmon farming industry. Mr Porter indicated that this problem had been discussed in the Working Group but there had been no investigation as to the source of the disease.
- 8.5 The representative of Canada indicated that Canada now has an investigation being carried out under a contract with a veterinarian at the Atlantic Veterinary College in Prince Edward Island to investigate the epidemiology of ISA in the Bay of Fundy including its possible origin and the vehicle by which it may be transmitted to other fish and cage sites. The report is expected to be available by September, at which time it could be provided to the US representatives and the SWG. He also suggested that given the importance to the protection of health of wild salmon stocks and to aquaculture, the SWG on Introductions and Transfers establish a map of the distribution of the emergency and restricted diseases listed in the NAC Protocols and that this map be updated annually along with the Inventory of Introductions and Transfers.
- 8.6 The representative of the US noted a proposal for a study by the University of Maine and the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Centre to monitor the prevalence of viruses in Maine. The results of this work would be provided to the SWG. The Chair indicated that linkage of the two studies might be useful and that a report back to the Commission next year was warranted.
- 8.7 The Co-Chair of the NAC Scientific Working Group on Salmonid Introductions and Transfers, Dr Dan Kimball (USA), provided an overview of the Discussion Document for Revisions to the Protocols for the Introduction and Transfer of Salmonids, NAC(98)6 (Annex 7). Proposed revisions included a shift from a geographic to a river basin classification system, use of a protected zone rather than an exclusion zone, increased emphasis on risk analysis and new protocols addressing transgenics.
- 8.8 The Commission agreed that the recommendations for modifications to the Discussion Document for Revisions to the Protocols for the Introduction and Transfer of Salmonids be provided to the SWG during the calendar year so that revised protocols and a compact quick-reference protocols handbook can be presented to the Commission for approval at its Sixteenth Annual Meeting. The representative of the US proposed that the Protocols be made available to the Council or the other

Commissions so as to encourage feedback on the Protocols. Both representatives agreed to follow up with industry meetings in their countries followed by a Canada/US meeting later. The representatives of Canada and the US thanked the SWG for its work.

- 8.9 The representative of the US provided an update on the “Landcatch” issue. He indicated that there had not been compliance with existing protocols. He advised that officials were addressing the situation and felt this situation could be resolved satisfactorily in the near future. He sought confirmation of the situation in Canada in the light of US industry concerns. The representative of Canada indicated that this was a concern in Canada as well and that it was important that industry competed on a level playing field. He requested that the US provide a timetable for their actions to remove the “Landcatch” strain. He indicated that the existing supplies of the “Landcatch” strain in Canada have been disposed of or are in secure, landbased, contained facilities in compliance with the protocol and will not be allowed in marine cages. If there are other supplies, they were outside the law and action would be taken to address this.
- 8.10 The representative of the US agreed to provide a timetable and requested a copy of the relevant correspondence from Canada confirming actions taken with respect to eliminating use of the “Landcatch” strain in the North American Commission area.
- 8.11 The North American Commission requested that the SWG investigate the feasibility of routine testing of salmon for continent of origin, prior to transferring to grow-out cages at the same time as disease testings. This investigation should also consider the cost involved in testing.

9. Recommendations To The Council On The Request To ICES For Scientific Advice

- 9.1 The Commission appointed Mr Mike Calcutt (Canada) to serve on the Standing Scientific Committee.
- 9.2 The Commission reviewed the relevant sections of document SSC(98)5 and agreed to recommend them to the Council as part of the annual Request to ICES for Scientific Advice. The request to ICES, agreed by the Council, CNL(98)13, is contained in Annex 8.

10. Announcement Of The Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 10.1 The Chairman announced that the draw for the prizes in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditors at NASCO Headquarters on 1 June 1998. The winner of the Commission’s \$1,500 prize was Mr Tom Cooper, Newstead, Newfoundland. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

11. Other Business

- 11.1 The representative of the US referred to the two very positive bilateral meetings with Canada held during the year. He congratulated Canada on the very difficult

conservation measures it had taken. The representative of Canada indicated that his delegation wished to continue to improve communication and exchange of information in this way.

12. Date And Place Of The Next Meeting

- 12.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting during the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Council during 7-11 June 1999, in Ireland.

13. Consideration Of The Draft Report Of The Meeting

- 14.1 The Commission agreed a draft report of the meeting, NAC(98)5.

REPORT OF THE

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC COMMISSION

8-12 JUNE 1998
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

CHAIRMAN: MR PEKKA NISKANEN (EU)

VICE-CHAIRMAN: DR ALEXANDER ZELENTSOV (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

RAPPORTEUR: MR DAGFINN GAUSEN (NORWAY)

SECRETARY: DR MALCOLM WINDSOR

NEA(98)9

NEA(98)9

Report Of The Fifteenth Annual Meeting Of The North-East Atlantic Commission 8-12 June 1998, Edinburgh, Scotland

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

- 1.1 The Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission was opened by the Chairman, Mr Pekka Niskanen (EU), who welcomed delegates to Edinburgh.
- 1.2 A list of participants at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions is included on page xxx of this document.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, NEA(98)8 (Annex 1).

3. NOMINATION OF A RAPPORTEUR

- 3.1 The Commission nominated Mr Dagfinn Gausen (Norway) as its Rapporteur for the meeting.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 4.1 The Commission elected Dr Vladimir Moskalenko (Russian Federation) as its Chairman and Mr Arni Isaksson (Iceland) as its Vice-Chairman. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the out-going Chairman for his service over the last four years.

5. REVIEW OF THE 1997 FISHERY AND ACFM REPORT FROM ICES ON SALMON STOCKS IN THE COMMISSION AREA

- 5.1 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) referred to the ACFM Report from ICES which described events at Faroes in 1996/97. There had been no commercial fishery or research fishing at Faroes in 1996/97 but in January 1998 there had been a combined commercial/research fishery and the catch was 5.6 tonnes (approximately 1800 salmon) including discards.
- 5.2 The Chairman of the ACFM, Mr Jean-Jacques Maguire, presented the scientific advice from ICES relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission, CNL(98)12, prepared in response to a request from the Commission at its Fourteenth Annual Meeting. The ACFM report from ICES, which contains the scientific advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page xxx of this document.
- 5.3 The representative of the European Union referred to the fact that the Spawning Escapement Reserve (SER) shown in Figures 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2 of the ACFM report represents an absolute minimum. In view of the very serious state of the stocks, as

indicated in the ACFM report, he believed that this was not a safe approach. He suggested that the Commission should be inspired by the UN Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks which, although it does not apply to salmon, recommends the use of an SER based on MBAL together with a buffer or security zone to take account of uncertainties and which is used to trigger management action. He appreciated that ICES could not have proceeded in any other way but he believed there is a need for a common sense approach and adherence to the Precautionary Approach should apply. In this case the SER should perhaps be set at least 50% above the level shown by ICES. He asked if ICES agreed with this interpretation.

- 5.4 The representative of ICES confirmed that it would be precautionary to set the SER line at a higher level and if the Commission proposed to use a higher level this would indicate that NASCO was applying the Precautionary Approach.
- 5.5 The representative of the European Union stressed that the salmon stocks are in a serious condition and that all Parties must face their responsibilities. He believed that the advice, which is based on the SER, should be modified to clearly reflect the serious situation and the need for precautionary management.
- 5.6 The representative of Iceland shared the views expressed by the European Union. While Icelandic stocks are not included in either the northern or southern stock complexes used by ICES, the returns to Iceland of both grilse and 2SW salmon have been low for a number of years. He stressed the need for a Precautionary Approach and supported the proposal to raise the level of the SER. He suggested that an increase of 20-25% might be appropriate.
- 5.7 The representative of the USA asked for permission from the Commission to address a question to ICES. The Commission agreed to this request. He asked ICES if it would be appropriate for the North-East Atlantic Commission advice to use similar wording to that for the West Greenland and North American Commission which indicated the need to conserve any and all spawners irrespective of the fisheries in which they are caught. The Chairman of ACFM confirmed that it would be appropriate to protect all spawners irrespective of where the catches occur.
- 5.8 The representative of the European Union asked if there were any positive aspects to the scientific advice concerning the status of the stocks in the North-East Atlantic Commission. The representative of ICES responded that it depends on the scale at which you look but in some individual rivers the situation might be better. However, when the stocks are combined the situation is not very encouraging.

6. SALMONID INTRODUCTIONS AND TRANSFERS

- 6.1 Last year, the Commission adopted a Resolution to Protect Wild Salmon Stocks from Introductions and Transfers, NEA(97)12. However there was concern that action to prevent, for example, the spread of diseases and parasites might be in conflict with international trade agreements. In order to better clarify the opportunities to protect the wild stocks in the many international agreements, the Commission had asked the Secretary to liaise with the World Trade Organization and other relevant

organizations dealing with international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity with a view to arranging consultative meetings.

- 6.2 The Secretary introduced document NEA(98)4 (Annex 2) which provided a report on a meeting with representatives of the World Trade Organization. These consultations had indicated that there is scope under the WTO Agreements to restrict or prevent trade to protect fish life and health and to prevent or limit other damage taking into account internationally agreed standards. NASCO is the relevant organization to deal with salmon conservation issues and the consultations had indicated that if measures are agreed to protect wild salmon stocks there is nothing in the WTO Agreements to prevent the resolution of disputes within NASCO rather than through WTO procedures. WTO procedures would only be likely to apply in the unlikely event that NASCO was unable to resolve a dispute internally.
- 6.3 The representative of the European Union referred to the complex legal issues concerning introductions and transfers. He asked for clarification of the WTO position on trade involving NASCO and non-NASCO Parties. The Secretary indicated that if a dispute arose which was raised within the World Trade Organization, measures developed by NASCO would probably be taken into account. The representative of the European Union referred to a recent World Trade Organization ruling concerning a dispute between Australia and Canada concerning trade in salmon. The World Trade Organization had ruled in favour of Canada, and Australia would be required to lift a ban on exports from Canada. The Secretary indicated that in this case the trade was in fresh chilled salmon rather than live salmon and Australia has no wild Atlantic salmon stock which could be at risk from the trade.
- 6.4 The Commission agreed that in the interests of transparency it would be desirable to introduce a regular reporting system for measures taken in accordance with the Resolution, NEA(97)12. The Secretary was asked to develop a format for the return of this information for the next meeting of the Commissions. The representative of Norway referred to document CNL(98)35 which contains a summary of measures taken by Norway in relation to the North-East Atlantic Commission Resolution. The representative of the European Union indicated that he would undertake to provide a brief summary of measures in place so that there could be more substantial discussions on this issue at the next annual meeting.

7. REGULATORY MEASURES

- 7.1 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that each year the focus is on the Faroese quota but in accordance with a Precautionary Approach other regulatory measures should also be discussed. He stressed the right of the Faroe Islands as a fishing nation to fish for salmon. The quotas agreed by the North-East Atlantic Commission have been cautious measures and by allocating only a proportion of these quotas the Faroe Islands had exercised caution. He proposed that the existing measure should be continued but, in addition, regulatory measures for unreported catches and by-catch should be considered.
- 7.2 The representative of the European Union noted the very poor condition of the stocks and stressed that all Parties need to do more. He noted that last year the Faroe Islands had indicated that they supported the Precautionary Approach and that it was their

intention to work towards adapting the size of their quota to reflect their historical share of catches in the Commission area. He referred to section 1.1 of the ACFM Report which stated that much of the decline in catches could be accounted for by management measures which have reduced fishing effort in several countries. The reduction in catches between 1996 and 1997 amounted to approximately 26%. This decline was a result of reduced catches in the States where the spawning grounds for salmon are located since there has been no catch at Faroes in recent years. He stressed that this situation must be reflected in this year's regulatory measure and it would be irresponsible not to do so. There must, therefore, be a further reduction in the quota to reflect statements made by the Faroese last year and the reductions in catches in homewaters.

- 7.3 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that the Faroese fully complied with the Precautionary Approach. He noted that there were many reasons for the decline in catches but the decline was not related to the Faroese quota. His delegation fully agreed with the principle of burden sharing but there was a need to look at regulatory measures in other areas before considering the Faroes.
- 7.4 The representative of Norway supported the views of the European Union and agreed that in accordance with a Precautionary Approach there should also be strong regulatory measures in homewaters. He noted with concern the very serious condition of the stocks and the fact that, last year, the Faroese share of the total catch had increased. It is very hard for Norway to accept that the Faroese share should continue to increase but he would be willing to consider a method by which a regulatory measure was linked to the Faroese share of the catch in the Commission area.
- 7.5 The representative of Iceland indicated that he shared the views expressed by Norway and the European Union. In Iceland there has been a buy-out of netting rights at a cost of £500,000. To be consistent with the Precautionary Approach, Iceland would wish to see a considerable reduction in the quota for the Faroe Islands and further measures developed in homewaters, which take account of the serious state of the stocks.
- 7.6 The representative of the European Union referred to the Report of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting (pages 116-122) which included summaries by each Party of their management measures. Furthermore, he asked that the communication to Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) in relation to the West Greenland Commission on measures in homewaters be made available to the Parties. The effect of these measures is referred to in section 1.1 of the ACFM Report which indicates there was a 26% reduction in catch in 1997 compared to the previous year. If a similar percentage reduction was applied to the Faroese quota there would be a reduction of the order of 100 tonnes.
- 7.7 The representative of Russia supported the views expressed by the European Union. When the Faroese fishery was initiated in 1979 it was estimated that there was a reduction of one third in the Russian homewater catch and in 1982 fisheries were closed in the majority of rivers in the Barents Sea area. He would not wish to see a similar situation today since there are now recreational fishing programmes in

Russian rivers. The Faroese share of the total catch must, therefore, be as low as possible.

- 7.8 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) restated the view that the Commission focuses on only one fishery, that at Faroese, but there should also be measures concerning unreported catches and by-catches. The representative of Norway agreed that unreported catches were a concern and tabled a document, NEA(98)7, on unreported catches in Norway and the measures taken to address the problem. The representative of the European Union agreed that it was important to eliminate unreported catches but noted that unreported catches and by-catch were being addressed by the Council. The representative of Norway stated that these issues needed to be addressed but they should not be used as a reason for failing to take the conservation measures that are needed, as it is the task of the North-East Atlantic Commission to establish regulatory measures for the Faroese fishery. The representative of Iceland supported the statement from Norway.
- 7.9 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that ICES had indicated that the estimated increase in MSW salmon returns to homewaters in Europe as a result of suspension of commercial fishing activity at Faroese was 6-12%. He indicated that his delegation wished to cooperate but the Faroese are totally dependent on fishing. He remains very concerned about the high level of unreported catch and the potential by-catch of salmon.
- 7.10 The Commission considered a proposal from the Chair for a Regulatory Measure for Fishing of Salmon in the Faroe Islands for the calendar year 1999, NEA(98)6. The Chair indicated that the Faroese authorities had confirmed that they will allocate no more than 290 tonnes if there is a fishery in 1999.
- 7.11 The representative of the European Union thanked the Chairman for the proposal. He indicated that the proposal was not entirely to his satisfaction but, taken together with the statement that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) would not allocate licences for more than 290 tonnes, could be accepted by the European Union.
- 7.12 The representative of Norway indicated that his delegation would have liked to have seen a greater reduction in the quota but in view of the statement from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) he could accept the proposal.
- 7.13 The representative of Iceland indicated that Iceland would have liked to have seen a greater reduction in the quota but it was a step in the right direction. In a spirit of cooperation Iceland would abstain from the vote.
- 7.14 The representative of the Russian Federation indicated that his delegation would prefer that there was no fishing in the sea but in view of the history of the Faroese fishery he was willing to accept a compromise and would be willing to accept the proposal.
- 7.15 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that the Faroe Islands took the first step in measures to conserve the North Atlantic salmon stocks, with an internal agreement between countries then involved in the salmon fisheries. This agreement, and later measures taken under NASCO's

jurisdiction, resulted in a continuous reduction of the Faroese quota share from 1200 tonnes in 1981 to the present quota in 1999 of 330 tonnes. He indicated that when the 1999 fishery starts the allocation will not exceed 290 tonnes. When stocks are in bad condition, as indicated by ICES, particularly for the southern rivers, there is a duty to comply with all the precautionary approach principles. This has been achieved in the Faroese quota share. In addition to allocating only 290 tonnes to the fishery he advised that there will also be restrictions on the number of boats licensed, fishing effort and season restrictions. Taking into account the fact that the Faroe Islands are totally dependent upon fishing today, Faroese fishermen have suffered because of these strong regulatory measures which, together with the regulatory measures for West Greenland, are the only measures laid down by NASCO. He stated that the Faroe Islands have now reached the point where they require to see the effect of what has been done by the other NASCO Parties. He expressed appreciation for the work done by the EU and Norway in effort reduction and new regulatory measures. However, the Faroese delegation wished to see the effect on the fishery and the condition of the stock.

- 7.16 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) indicated that he believed that the reduction in the total catches has much to do with unreported catches, environmental factors and the loss of salmon smolts in by-catches in the North-East Atlantic and hoped that ICES would be able to provide more information for the fishery in the North-East Atlantic. He advised the Commission that the Faroese will start a scientific evaluation on this matter together with Russia. He indicated that having reached an agreement between the Parties the Faroe Islands will implement the regulatory measure set and will undertake not to allocate more than 290 tonnes in the fishery. Additionally, the Faroe Islands will further seek to reduce the fishing effort by 7 days in April 1999 and by 7 days in December 1999. He considered that all these measures are fully in conformity with the Precautionary Approach which the Faroe Islands, as a fishing nation, fully complies with. Furthermore, he stated that it is the intention to work towards adapting the size of the quota to reflect the real picture of the catches and the burden sharing principle in the Commission area.
- 7.17 The Chairman put the proposal to a vote. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Norway and Russia voted in favour of the proposal. Iceland abstained from the vote. The Proposal from the Chair was adopted, NEA(98)10 (Annex 3).
- 7.18 The representative of the European Union indicated that the Community regrets that it was not possible to have a more substantial reduction of the quota but could accept the compromise solution including all the elements tabled as this was a step in the right direction. He wished to note that even with this decrease the Faroe Islands have had a relative increase in their quota compared to the out-take by the countries of origin of the salmon. If, on the basis of further scientific advice, it is possible to establish a system which will assist in the decision on setting a quota, then the track record of the Faroe Islands in recent years cannot serve as a basis or an element in any agreement on sharing.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL ON THE REQUEST TO ICES FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

- 8.1 The Commission reviewed the relevant sections of document SSC(98)5 and agreed to recommend them to the Council as part of the annual request to ICES for scientific advice. The request to ICES, agreed by the Council, CNL(98)13, is contained in Annex 4.

9. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TAG RETURN INCENTIVE SCHEME PRIZE

- 9.1 The Chairman announced that the draw for prizes in the Tag Return Incentive Scheme was made by the Auditors at NASCO Headquarters on 1 June 1998. The winner of the Commission's prize was Mr Svein Bratberg, Steinkjer, Norway. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting during the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Council, 7-11 June 1999, in Ireland.

12. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE MEETING

- 12.1 The Commission agreed the draft report of the meeting, NEA(98)5.
- 12.2 In closing the meeting the Chairman thanked the Parties for their contributions and the Rapporteur for his work in preparing the report. The representative of Norway thanked the Chairman for his excellent service to the Commission.

REPORT OF THE

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

WEST GREENLAND COMMISSION

8-12 JUNE 1998
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

CHAIRMAN:	MR ROBERT JONES (USA)
VICE-CHAIRMAN:	MR ANDREW THOMSON (EU)
RAPPORTEUR:	MR DAVID DUNKLEY (EU)
SECRETARY:	DR MALCOLM WINDSOR

WGC(98)8

WGC(98)8

REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WEST GREENLAND COMMISSION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION 8-12 JUNE 1998, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Robert Jones (USA) opened the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission and welcomed delegates to Edinburgh.
- 1.2 A list of participants at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions is included on page xxx of this document.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- 2.1 The Agenda which had been circulated was adopted without amendment, WGC(98)10 (Annex 1).

3. NOMINATION OF A RAPPORTEUR

- 3.1 Mr David Dunkley (EU) was appointed as Rapporteur for the Meeting.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 4.1 The Representative of the USA nominated Mr Andrew Thomson of the European Union for the position of Chairman of the West Greenland Commission. Mr Thomson's appointment was approved unanimously by the Commission. The Commission elected Mr Michael Calcutt of Canada for the position of Vice-Chairman of the West Greenland Commission.

5. REVIEW OF THE 1997 FISHERY AND ACFM REPORT FROM ICES ON SALMON STOCKS IN THE COMMISSION AREA

- 5.1 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reported that the quota for the West Greenland fishery in 1997, agreed at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO held in Ilulissat, Greenland, was 57 tonnes and this TAC was subsequently set by the Greenland Home Rule Government. The fishery began on 18 August 1997 and ended on 23 September. The catch taken was 58 tonnes, the majority being taken in the first three weeks. Private sales and unreported catches amounted to 5 tonnes.
- 5.2 The Representative of the USA asked whether the 5 tonnes of private sales and unreported catches was included in the 58 tonnes reported catch or in addition to it. The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reported that it was in addition to the 58 tonnes of reported catch. He said that the fishery was closely monitored throughout the fishing period. After the fishery had

closed, reports had been received of sales to hotels and restaurants. These catches had been added to the reported catches from the fishery.

- 5.3 The Representative of Canada asked for further clarification of the split between reported and unreported catches. The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that in addition to fish sold through the fish factories, some were sold in open air markets and some to hotels and restaurants. Of these latter groups, those which were reported were included in the 58 tonnes of reported catch and those not reported were included in the 5 tonnes unreported catch. He said that of the fish caught, the factories took the majority, about 54 tonnes, about 1.4 tonnes were sold in the open air markets and about 2.8 tonnes were sold to hotels and restaurants.
- 5.4 The representatives of the other Parties congratulated the Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for the progress made in increasing the accuracy of catch reporting in the West Greenland fishery.
- 5.5 The Chairman of the ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM), Mr J-J Maguire, presented the scientific advice relevant to the West Greenland Commission, NASCO document CNL(98)12. The ACFM report from ICES which contains the scientific information relevant to all Commissions is included on page xxx of this document.
- 5.6 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) thanked Mr Maguire for his clear presentation of the ACFM report, although he regretted that the report did not present a very bright picture for the future. He said that there seemed to be a slight improvement in the situation as the estimated pre-fishery abundance of non-maturing 1SW salmon for 1998 was bigger than that for 1997, if the 1997 figure was calculated using the same method as that used for 1998. He asked for confirmation that the status of the southern component of the North-East Atlantic salmon stock was poorer than that of the northern component. He also asked if it was still the assumption of ACFM that the southern component contributed more to the stock at West Greenland than the northern component. Mr Maguire agreed that these interpretations were correct.
- 5.7 With respect to the model used to provide catch advice for the West Greenland fishery, the Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if the biological parameters necessary to allow direct inclusion of the contribution of European rivers to the model were available yet. Mr Maguire said that a great deal of progress had been made, some biological reference points had been established, work on estimating the pre-fishery abundance of European salmon had progressed well but there was still some way to go. The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if it was still unfeasible to develop the same sort of analysis of the European stocks to assist with catch advice as had been developed for the North American stocks. Mr Maguire said that much progress had been made but there was still some way to go.
- 5.8 The Representative of the USA asked Mr Maguire if it was true that the stocks that contributed most to the West Greenland fishery were the southern European and southern North American components and that these were in worse condition than the

northern stocks within their respective ranges. Mr Maguire agreed that this was the case.

- 5.9 The Representative of the USA said that the data presented indicated that for the southern European stocks, both 1SW and MSW salmon were below the estimated Spawning Escapement Reserve (SER) levels. He asked for confirmation that the SER levels were minimum estimates based on lowest observed levels of spawners. He asked Mr Maguire for a view on the risk associated with such low levels and asked why ACFM had chosen these SER levels. Mr Maguire confirmed that the SER levels were minimum estimates and that in the case of MSW salmon especially, given the decline in numbers of recruits, something would have to be done to reverse the decline. As to why these SER levels had been chosen, he said that ICES had chosen the lowest recorded in the time series of data available. He said that although such a low SER level might be perceived as not very precautionary, their proposal was considered to be a necessary step to continue to make progress in implementing a Precautionary Approach.
- 5.10 The Representative of the USA agreed that the adoption of SER levels is important in that there is a need to make further progress in developing precautionary reference points. He said that there was clear evidence from both sides of the Atlantic that salmon stocks were in steep decline. He pointed out that the catch advice provided by ACFM to the North American Commission Area recommended no exploitation of either maturing or non-maturing 1SW salmon in North America. He asked why similar advice had not been given in relation to fisheries in the North East Atlantic Commission Area. Mr Maguire said that the advice given by ACFM reflected the seriousness of the situation. In the case of North America, both 1SW and MSW salmon are in great need of protection and all the eggs that can be produced will be useful. In the case of southern European stocks, such advice was certainly seen to be appropriate.
- 5.11 The Representative of the USA said that using all the information now available, the forecast of pre-fishery abundance level for 1997 was lower than had been predicted last year. If this level had been estimated last year, the catch advice would have been that no commercial fishery should take place, even under the mechanism for the Reserve Quota. The estimated pre-fishery abundance for 1998 was slightly up on 1997 but given the fact that the estimated level for 1997 had been reduced when more data became available, what was the likelihood that the same would happen in relation to the 1998 estimate. Mr Maguire said that it was clear that if there is evidence that, using the best methods available, pre-fishery abundance is consistently over-estimated, then the results should be treated with great caution. It may be that a risk level of 50% that the required number of spawners will not be achieved is too high and that a level of 40% or even 30% may be more applicable. Scientists and managers had to apply both common sense and experience to the problem.
- 5.12 The Representative of the USA agreed that there was a need for caution. He pointed out that the catch advice provided by ACFM was worded very strongly.
- 5.13 The Representative of Canada asked why there had been such a change in the estimated pre-fishery abundance for 1997 between 1997 and 1998. Mr Maguire said that there were many problems in making such forecasts. Changes could occur in a

number of factors including natural mortality rate, reporting rate and growth rate, and it was not possible to apportion the change in the estimated pre-fishery abundance between these categories.

- 5.14 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) pointed out that although it was essential to have a model to provide catch advice, changes had been made to the model over the years. He said that in the early years of using the model, estimated pre-fishery abundance had gone up when changes were made to the model but that in recent years all the changes had led to lowered estimates of pre-fishery abundance. He wondered if this was a way of using the Precautionary Approach to reduce the levels of catches at Greenland. Mr Maguire said that fishery managers should always take a precautionary line but that ICES could not become involved in precautionary science; it must continue to provide the best science possible.
- 5.15 The Representative of the USA said that there had been no changes to the structure of the model over the years. Changes made had been limited to the use of new data.

6. REGULATORY MEASURES

- 6.1 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that his delegation took the view that any regulatory measures set for Greenland had to be made in association with measures taken in home waters. He said that the model used to provide catch advice for the Greenland fishery included the provision that 40% of the harvestable surplus should be taken in Greenland and 60% should be taken in North America in the following year. However, in recent years, there had been a great disparity in the catches between Greenland and Canada. For example, in 1995 the catch taken in Greenland was 83 tonnes compared with 259 tonnes taken in Canada in 1996. Similar disparities had occurred in subsequent years.
- 6.2 The Representative of Canada said that the Canadian catch figures included both 1SW and MSW salmon. He said that the 1993 agreement on the split between Greenland and North America was based on the average of the splits recorded between 1986 and 1990 with reference to potential 2SW salmon.
- 6.3 The Representative of the USA said that there had been a lot of talk about implementation of the Precautionary Approach but it was not precautionary for each party to wait for another to take action. He said that, last year, a zero quota had been recommended for Greenland and Canada and noted that Canada had recently implemented reductions in response to the scientific advice. He asked for a description of what measures had been taken in Canada in 1998.
- 6.4 The Representative of Canada said that further management measures to reduce exploitation had been implemented, including additional measures to control fishing in Labrador. Fuller details would be given in reports to the North American Commission. He said that in recent years, a number of actions had been taken, at great public and private expense, to reduce fishing levels and improve habitat in fresh waters; some Canadian \$160 million of public funds had been spent. Such activities may partly explain the good smolt output figures for 1996. Measures to control fishing had included the replacement of gill-net fishing by the use of trap-nets in the

food fishery and the mandatory release of large salmon. There was, however, a need to continue with regulatory measures. Given the excellent smolt output figures for 1995 and 1996, it had been thought that there would be good returns of grilse in 1996 and 1997. However, this had not happened and it had been necessary to close recreational fisheries in some rivers which had previously been fished on a catch-and-release basis. He said that it was important to note that Canada had not waited for detailed information from ICES before closing these fisheries but had adopted the Precautionary Approach. He said that a Workshop which had been held in February 1998 recommended that a cautious approach to fishery management be adopted. As a consequence, discussions on further regulatory measures were under way in Newfoundland, Labrador and Quebec. Action was being taken at both Federal and Provincial level. This would include closure of commercial fishing in Labrador, commercial licence buy-back schemes in Quebec and measures to reduce exploitation in the recreational fisheries. He said that it had been estimated that about 50 fish of US origin had been intercepted by Canadian fisheries and that the USA had pointed out the importance of these fish to US stocks. This was acknowledged by Canada and was reflected in the measures taken to reduce interceptory fisheries. He said that Canada had taken steps to improve assessment of unreported catches. He said that Canada would be looking for positive action within the West Greenland Commission to reduce exploitation. Canada recognised that stocks were in difficulty and will take steps to reduce exploitation, but expects other nations to do likewise.

- 6.5 The Representative of the USA said that he wished to compliment Canada for the steps that they had taken.
- 6.6 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had calculated that catches of large salmon in Canada in 1996 and 1997 were 153 tonnes and 126 tonnes respectively. These catches represented about 40 tonnes per year in the subsistence fishery, 40-50 tonnes per year in the recreational fishery and 40-50 tonnes per year in the commercial fishery. Taking the years of 1996 and 1997 together, the split between Canada and Greenland was 65% to 35%.
- 6.7 The Representative of Canada said that this was a fair summary.
- 6.8 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if the closure of the Labrador fishery now meant that there would be no commercial catch in Canada in 1998. He also asked whether all the recreational fisheries in Canadian rivers met the criteria in the catch advice from ICES that they should only be allowed where stocks were above biologically-based conservation limits.
- 6.9 The Representative of Canada confirmed that the objective was to reduce the commercial catch in Canada in 1998 to zero. He said that the operation of the recreational fishery was dependent upon there being a harvestable surplus in these rivers. This was quite independent of the 60:40 split between Canada and Greenland. In the case of Native fisheries, most fish were taken from rivers where spawning requirement levels had been set and there is a surplus available. Fisheries management measures will be taken during the fishing season, however, and fisheries could be closed. In recreational fisheries in Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces, no large salmon could be retained and in some rivers only one grilse could be retained. He reiterated that special circumstances of low abundance last year had

led to special measures. He reported that in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, fisheries in 130 out of 158 rivers will be regulated by closures; not all rivers for the whole season necessarily but where and when appropriate.

- 6.10 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that Greenland appreciated the actions taken by Canada in recent years. He said that, in contrast, not much seemed to have happened to restrict fisheries in the eastern Atlantic area since the agreement reached in 1993. He presented paper WGC(98)5 in which it was shown that whereas the average of the quotas set in 1993-1997 was 16% of the corresponding average for 1988-1992, and the average catch at Greenland in 1993-1997 was 27% of the corresponding figure for 1988-1992, the average catch in the European Union (excluding Finland and Sweden) was 82% of the average for 1988-1992. He said that this showed that Greenland had taken more and earlier action than was the case in Europe.
- 6.11 The Representative of the USA said that the measures taken in Canada would reduce the 40-50 tonnes taken in the recreational fishery. He said that in-river management measures and restrictions on recreational fisheries meant that more of the fish taken would be from rivers where stocks were above conservation limits. With respect to fisheries in the USA, he pointed out that the commercial fishery for salmon had been closed in 1948. With respect to the catches taken in the European Union, he said that the figures included significant numbers of grilse. He said that significant actions had been taken in Greenland, North America and Europe and everyone was to be commended. However, stocks were now very low and it was more important than ever to be cautious.
- 6.12 The Representative of the European Union said that a number of actions had been taken in recent years. He said that there had been a substantial reduction in catches and that ICES had stated that most of the decline could be attributed to the effects of management plans aimed at reducing catches in several countries. He agreed that the European Union should be prepared to bear its share of the cost but was not sure that the analysis presented by Greenland was useful. He agreed with the Representative of the USA that the European catch figures included grilse and that this component was high in some fisheries. For example, in England and Wales, rod catches in 1997 comprised 73% grilse and 27% MSW salmon. He said that the European Union had shown a great commitment to face the challenges of declining stocks and new measures had been introduced in every year. He said that it was important to remember that the job at hand was to set a quota for Greenland, not for homewaters. He proposed that the 1993 agreement, with the 1997 addendum (document WGC(97)7), should be implemented to set a quota. This would mean that the Reserve Quota mechanism would come into effect.
- 6.13 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that earlier this year, Greenland had received information on measures taken in recent years from the other Parties. However, the volume of papers was so great that there had been insufficient time to examine the reports fully.
- 6.14 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) proposed that the agreement reached in 1993 and amended in 1997 should be adopted

again for 1998 but that the aim should be to develop a mechanism that would last for more than one year.

- 6.15 The Representative of the USA said that the addendum made in 1997 to the 1993 agreement had been designed to apply for 1997 only and that the situation had changed since then. He drew attention to paragraph 2.5(b) of the 1997 addendum which stated that the revised quota arrangement provided greater equitability for West Greenland until such time as quota measures on stocks occurring in the West Greenland Commission area had been coordinated. He said that the various Parties had made strenuous efforts to account for all catches in the Commission area. He pointed out that when ICES had applied the catch advice model again with additional data, they found that the recalculated pre-fishery abundance for 1997 would have been less than 100,000 fish and, as a result, only a subsistence fishery would have been advised. He said that if the 1997 agreement were to be used again, each component of the addendum would have to be looked at again.
- 6.16 The Representative of the European Union said that at last year's meeting, the possibility of an inter-sessional meeting had been raised to facilitate discussion of any future quota-setting agreement. There had been no request for such a meeting. He said that this implied that the 1993 agreement, with the 1997 addendum, should be applied again this year.
- 6.17 The Representative of Canada said that he understood the difficulties Greenland had experienced in going through the material that had been sent to them. He acknowledged the observation of the Representative of the European Union that no call had been made for an inter-sessional meeting. However, circumstances had changed since last year.
- 6.18 The Representative of the European Union said that it was important that an agreement be reached. He said that it must be recognised that no party would necessarily get all it wanted but everyone would be worse off if no agreement was reached. He pointed out that the 1997 addendum suggested alternatives to a Reserve Quota, such as effort limitations, but no further progress had been made on these alternatives. He said that the European Union was prepared to go with the current agreement for one more year.
- 6.19 The Representative of the USA asked whether Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the European Union proposed that the agreement used in 1997, which adopted a 50% risk level, should be adopted even though circumstances had changed. The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that none of the parameters in the agreement should be changed.
- 6.20 The Representative of Canada said that in five of the last seven years, the level of pre-fishery abundance had been over-estimated. In fact, this had occurred in each of the last three years. When this is viewed in conjunction with the observations that smolt production had been good in recent years, there was even more reason to adopt a cautious approach. Canada had not waited for full scientific evidence but had acted to restrict exploitation because all the signs said that this was necessary. He said that it was not possible to accept that the model could still be used at a risk level as high as 50% that conservation requirements would not be met.

- 6.21 The Representative of the USA said that he could agree with the Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) that the current model could be used, but not at the 50% probability level. He proposed that the model be used again but at a probability level of 30% because of the current status of stocks. This would be in accord with adopting the Precautionary Approach. He said that when stocks were low, a risk-averse strategy should be adopted. He said that this approach recognised the need for equitability as required in the 1997 addendum.
- 6.22 The Representative of the European Union asked the Representative of the USA what his proposal would mean in terms of tonnes of salmon available to Greenland. The Representative of the USA said that as the estimated pre-fishery abundance level was lower than 100,000 fish, the quota would be limited to a subsistence fishery.
- 6.23 The Representative of the European Union said that the levels of uncertainty in the calculations made to develop catch advice must be acknowledged. He was not confident that doing the calculations again always gave the right answers. He said that he did not want to discuss what the level of a subsistence fishery should be. He had calculated that, on the basis of the estimated pre-fishery abundance and a risk level of 50%, the quota would be 33 tonnes. He said that this was a very low figure and, as a result, felt that the most practical solution would be to adopt the model again for this year. He asked the Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) how much of the catch taken in Greenland nowadays was consumed locally and how much was exported.
- 6.24 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that whereas salmon had been exported in the past, the presence of salmon produced by aquaculture and a quota for Greenland as low as 33 tonnes would mean that there would be no export. Furthermore, the drive to increase tourism would mean that more salmon would be sold locally to hotels and restaurants.
- 6.25 The Representative of the USA said that the answer from Greenland was useful. In response to the Representative of the European Union, he said that, taking confidence limits into account, when any choice of probability level gave a pre-fishery abundance of less than 100,000 fish, a high level of risk was indicated. He went on to say that the Representative of the European Union had said that a catch of 33 tonnes was a small number of fish but he must point out that stocks were at a very low level, making this size of quota relatively more important. He also pointed out the numbers involved were very high relative to stocks in US rivers. He emphasised that he was not against fishing as long as stocks could stand it, but that stocks were too weak at the moment.
- 6.26 The Representative of the European Union said that salmon grow throughout the year. He asked the Chairman of ACFM whether it was correct to assume that if the start of the fishing season at Greenland was delayed, the fishery would take fewer fish for a given quota by weight. Mr Maguire said that this was possible but that it depended upon how the fishery was operated.
- 6.27 The Representative of Canada agreed with the USA that the 1993 agreement, with the 1997 addendum, should be adopted but at the 30% probability level. He said that

although this was not really taking a precautionary approach, it did put everyone in a more cautious mode.

- 6.28 The Chairman tabled document WGC(98)7 proposing a regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery in 1998. Taking account of the advice from ICES, it was proposed that, for 1998 only, the catch at West Greenland will be restricted to that amount used for internal consumption in Greenland, which in the past has been estimated at 20 tonnes.
- 6.29 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) said that his delegation could accept this proposal although the number involved was smaller than he had proposed earlier. He said that he accepted the proposal in the light of the stock situation, which was clearly described in the first paragraph of document WGC(98)7. He said that he would like to underline that the right in principle to fish commercially for salmon at West Greenland remains unchanged. He said that Greenland was prepared to undertake this very restrictive measure as a component of a common burden sharing. He noted, however, that the principle of burden sharing had been only partially implemented. Measures had been taken in the USA and Canada but European countries, particularly in those contributing to the southern stock group, principally the member states of the European Union, were far behind the USA, Canada and Greenland, especially in the most recent years. He strongly urged the authorities responsible for the management of salmon in the European Union to take their responsibilities seriously.
- 6.30 The Representative of Canada said that he understood the position explained by the Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). He said that acceptance of the proposed regulatory measure will result in sacrifices having to be made by fishermen in Greenland. He said that similar measures were being applied to the activities of other people who have relied on the salmon resource. In this respect, there were similarities between the peoples of the north-east coast of Canada and Greenland. He said that he acknowledged the understanding that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had shown and this support for the proposed regulatory measure goes a long way to match the measures taken in Canada. He agreed with remarks the Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had made in relation to the European Union. He said that Canada and the USA had contributed heavily to the conservation of the resource at considerable cost to individual citizens.
- 6.31 The Representative of the European Union said the proposed regulatory measure was acceptable to the European Union. He wished to have it recorded that the European Union had contributed in a substantial way with regard to management of salmon stocks. He said that it was important for all Parties to realise that progress takes time. He said that there is always room for improvement, not only with respect to the European Union but with respect to all Parties.
- 6.32 The Representative of the USA thanked the Chairman for the proposal for a regulatory measure. He said that he particularly wanted to compliment Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for the contribution to the conservation of stocks. He also wished to record his compliments to Canada for their acknowledgement of the seriousness of the stock situation and for their prompt action

to protect stocks in the West Greenland and the North American Commission areas. He said that each Party was taking extraordinary steps to address the situation and that the measures taken had involved great sacrifices. He said that the USA accepted the proposed measure because of the stock situation and not as a result of any policy about who should have access to the fish. He said that the USA believed that when a sustainable harvest was available, all should be able to benefit from it. This strategy should pertain to all members of the Commission. He said that the proposal was in line with the USA's policy on management of a recovering resource and in line with the concept of burden sharing. He said that he wished to commend all Parties for the focused and productive discussions that had taken place. He said that few other international Commissions enjoy such a good spirit of cooperation.

- 6.33 The regulatory measure proposed by the Chairman was put to a vote and unanimously adopted. The regulatory measure, as adopted, WGC(98)9, is contained in Annex 2.
- 6.34 The Representative of the European Union said that the agreement made referred to 1998 only. He said that in the event that further advice from ICES next year enabled an improved estimate of pre-fishery abundance of salmon of European origin which could contribute to the fishery at Greenland, there may be a desire to convene a preparatory meeting of the West Greenland Commission prior to the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Commission in 1999 to examine the model and any possible improvement in forecasts it may provide.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL ON THE REQUEST TO ICES FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

- 7.1 The Chairman of the Standing Scientific Committee presented document SSC(98)5, which contained the draft recommendations to the Council on the request to ICES for scientific advice.
- 7.2 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) drew the Commission's attention to section 4.2 of the draft recommendations. This was a new recommendation and had been included at the request of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). He said that since the adoption of the 1993 agreement, the Greenland quota had been reduced greatly. Five years had now elapsed and any beneficial effects deriving from the measures taken in Greenland should now be seen in home waters. However, no benefit could be seen, hence this question to ICES.
- 7.3 The Commission reviewed the relevant sections of document SSC(98)5 and agreed to recommend them to the Council as part of the annual request to ICES for scientific advice. The request to ICES, agreed by the Council, CNL(98)13, is contained in Annex 3.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TAG RETURN INCENTIVE SCHEME PRIZE

- 8.1 The Chairman announced that the winner of the 1998 NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize for the West Greenland Commission area was Mr Sigurd Motzfeldt of Qaqortoq, Greenland. The tagged fish had been released in May 1984 in the

Penobscot River, USA and recaptured at Qaqortoq, West Greenland. The winner will receive a prize of \$1500. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There was no other business.

10. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting during the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Council which will be held in Westport, Ireland, from 7-11 June 1999.

11. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE MEETING

11.1 The Commission agreed a draft report of the meeting, WGC(98)4.

11.2 The Representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) thanked the Rapporteur for his valuable work and the Chairman for his helpful role in the work of the Commission.