



West Greenland Commission

Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission, 8 – 12 March 2021

WGC(21)07

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1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Stephen Gephard (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He noted that this was the United Kingdom's (UK) first meeting of the West Greenland Commission in its own right and welcomed them.
- 1.2 The Chair noted that the Agenda (Annex 1) was adopted by correspondence on 12 February. This allowed Agenda items to be considered during the inter-sessional correspondence period, which was held between 15 – 26 February. The inter-sessional correspondence is in Annex 2.
- 1.3 The Chair stated that in 2018, the West Greenland Commission adopted the 'Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland', [WGC\(18\)11](#), for 2018, 2019 and 2020. He thanked Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) (DFG) for the progress they have made in recent years in the control and management of the salmon fisheries in their waters, and in monitoring and reporting; he also acknowledged the challenges involved in managing fisheries in northern and remote communities. Additionally, he thanked them for providing documents and information prior to the meeting, noting that it gave a firm basis for discussion.
- 1.4 He noted that the status of many stocks that mix off West Greenland is poor, many are below their Conservation Limits and the longstanding scientific advice has been for no fishery there. However, the Chair also noted the need to provide a subsistence fishery. The purpose of the meeting was to begin the process of developing a new regulatory measure for the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery for the coming years.
- 1.5 The Chair advised that there would be no verbal Opening Statements. He thanked all Commission members for their written Opening Statements (Annex 3) and the NGOs for theirs (Annex 4).
- 1.6 A list of participants is included as Annex 5.

2. Review of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland for 2018, 2019 and 2020, WGC(18)11

a) Report on the West Greenland Atlantic Salmon Fishery in 2020

- 2.1 The Chair noted that in 2018, the West Greenland Commission adopted the 'Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland', [WGC\(18\)11](#), for 2018, 2019 and 2020. A review of the 2020 fishery is essential business under Articles 13 and 14 of the Convention which require an 'annual statement of the actions' on the regulatory measure. 'The 2020 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland', [WGC\(21\)04](#), and the inter-sessional correspondence on this topic (Annex 2) was noted.

- 2.2 The representative of DFG presented an overview of the Greenland salmon fishery in 2020 (Annex 6).
- 2.3 The representative of the United States (US) asked whether the reason for the 10 t overharvest in the 2020 fishery was because around 30% of reports came in after the closure of the fishery. The representative of DFG responded that the overharvest was due to several reasons: some reports being late; the fishery was very good; and the fishery was only open for 20 days. The plan had been to close the fishery earlier than normal, but because the salmon were very big (possibly because the fishery was opened later) it was difficult to keep up with the reporting. The representative of DFG noted the distinction between two types of reports: those that reported a catch; and those that reported zero catch. Reports with positive catches were more timely but reports with zero catch were often received after the season. Just 12 reports were received beyond 30 days after the closure of the fishery. DFG stated that it is usual to announce the closure of the fishery four or five days in advance.
- 2.4 The representative of the European Union (EU) asked if it is possible that the good season reflected the greater emphasis on reporting than in previous years. He asked whether DFG was able to plan for the closure of the fishery. He noted that the catch rate showed a linear uptake, and it could, therefore, be possible to plan the closure, and prevent overfishing. The representative of DFG responded that there was a small improvement in reporting in 2020. In 2020 there had been a greater effort to ask fishers to report quickly. The representative of DFG stated that conditions were better in 2020, with better weather and better salmon. She noted they had planned to close the fishery once 75% of quota was taken. This built on experience from 2019, when the fishery closed once 85% of the quota had been taken, and yet there was still overharvest. Despite this, in 2020 there was still overfishing because there was a large harvest in the final few days.
- 2.5 The representative of Canada acknowledged the challenge in managing a fishery in northern and remote communities. He considered that Greenland has done an excellent job in recent years implementing successful measures. The representative of Canada asked what options DFG was considering for an in-season assessment of the fishery, to prevent overharvest. The representative of DFG said there is an approach used for all fisheries in Greenland, but that the salmon fishery was different as fishers themselves had to report, rather than the factories. The fishery administration does what it can, but they rely on fishers in a subsistence fishery across the biggest island in the world to report their catches. The representative of Canada offered to share with DFG its domestic practices regarding carcass tagging.
- 2.6 The representative of the UK asked about the proportion of fishers that do not report, and whether the overall catch is scaled up to account for those that do not report. The representative of DFG said there was no upscaling of the catches, but they aim to estimate non-reporting. Their analysis is that most who do not report are people who do not fish. The representative of DFG explained that the salmon fishery is a supplementary fishery. It takes place at the same time as the hunting season for reindeer and musk ox. In some years fishers go hunting and not fishing. The licence system is set up so that if a fisher has not reported in one year, their licence will not be re-issued the following year. Further, DFG is trying to make it simple to report a zero catch.
- 2.7 The representative of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) highlighted an inconsistency in the catch reported in [WGC\(20\)04](#) and DFG's presentation. The representative of DFG said the catch numbers in the presentation were correct as they

were from Greenland's Fisheries License Control Authority (GFLK), and not the number reported to ICES by the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources.

b) Progress in Implementing the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland, WGC(18)11

2.8 The Chair noted that this Agenda item allowed participants to discuss the progress made in implementing the current regulatory measure, [WGC\(18\)11](#). He referred participants to the paper 'Resumé of the Implementation of WGC(18)11 in 2018 and 2019', [WGCIS\(21\)05](#), and the inter-sessional correspondence on this topic (Annex 2).

2.9 The representative of DFG made a presentation (Annex 7) on progress achieved under each of the provisions of the current regulatory measure. Comments and questions from other members of the Commission were made against some provisions, as follows:

(2) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to open the fishery no earlier than 15 August and to close the fishery no later than 31 October each year;*

2.10 The representative of Canada commented that the fishing season was very short – just 20 days. He asked whether DFG anticipated changing the dates of the season. The representative of DFG stated that in their Draft Management Plan they have proposed having different fishing seasons in different areas of Greenland, because salmon come early to the south and later to the north. If the whole fishery has to close on a particular date, it may not allow people in the north an opportunity to fish for salmon, and given it is a subsistence fishery, that is problematic. If a season opens late, there have been complaints that by the time the fishery is open, fish are too fat to smoke. The representative of DFG therefore noted the need to vary the dates of the fishing season in different areas.

(3) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to restrict the total allowable catch for all components of the Atlantic salmon fishery at West Greenland to 30 metric tonnes. In the event of any overharvest in a particular year, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to an equal reduction in the total allowable catch in the following year, and agrees not to carry forward any under-harvest into a future year;*

2.11 The representative of the US asked whether the 10 t overharvest each year was due to delayed reporting, and what could be done to minimise this. The representative of DFG replied that their new online system took some time to develop and was completed just before the start of the 2020 season. As more fishers became familiar with it, and the system developed to be more user friendly, delayed reporting would be reduced. Although the online system would be the main method of reporting, DFG had to cater for small communities with no internet access, so alternative options must always be available.

(4) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to, in a timely manner, inform NASCO and, as appropriate, ICES, of improvements of the monitoring, management control and surveillance or any modification to the management of the Atlantic salmon fishery and to provide an annual report on the outcome of the fishery;*

2.12 The representative of the NGOs asked about problems with the online spreadsheet providing information on salmon quota and catch. The representative of DFG acknowledged that there had been some technical problems with the website in the

summer of 2020. She informed the Commission that a new system was being developed, ready for 2022. It is similar to the system in Iceland, where it is possible to look up quota, licences and vessels for all fisheries.

- 2.13 The representative of the US asked whether DFG could provide graphs of reported harvest by landing date and by reporting date for each year of the current regulatory measure. The representative agreed to provide that data. The representative of DFG noted that some locations do not have internet access and so make reports direct to the municipalities. In the past, some municipalities had not sent these reports in immediately, leading to delays in reporting. However, municipalities had now been asked to send on reports as soon as possible – and they have.

(5) *States of origin agree to share experiences with Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on monitoring, management, control and surveillance in the salmon fishery through knowledge-sharing exchange programmes;*

- 2.14 The representative of the NGOs asked Canada to comment on how unreported catch is dealt with along the coast of Labrador – to confirm that catch statistics account for the catch of those who do not report. The representative of Canada confirmed that unreported catches are pro-rated, by allocating the average catch of those who had reported.

(6) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to annually collect and verify catch data of fishing activity of all licensed fishers;*

- 2.15 The representative of the US noted the reference to Atlantic salmon bycatch in the Draft Management Plan and asked if bycatch of Atlantic salmon is recorded. The representative of DFG replied that there is an Executive Order on bycatch and all fishers have to report all bycatch. No bycatch data for Atlantic salmon had been reported, although there is some anecdotal information that it sometimes occurs in the cod fishery; however, reports on bycatch of pink salmon had been received.

(8) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also agrees to authorise only licensed full-time hunters and fishers to sell Atlantic salmon only at open air markets in communities;*

- 2.16 The representative of the NGOs asked for confirmation that fishers were not permitted to sell salmon anywhere else if there is an open-air market in an area. The representative of DFG replied that there was an Executive Order that permits the sale of salmon in open-air markets alone, unless, as in some small settlements, there is no such market. In those cases, sales can be made directly to institutions, such as an old folks' home. If there is an open-air market, institutions such as hotels and hospitals must buy salmon through the open-air market.

(11) *As a condition of the licence, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to require fishers to allow samplers from the NASCO sampling programme to take samples of their catches upon request;*

- 2.17 The representative of the NGOs asked whether managers of open-air markets were compelled to allow sampling in the markets. The representative of DFG replied that it was a condition of the licence that fishers must allow samples to be taken. So, yes, those selling salmon must allow samples to be taken. She recognised, however, that there had been some problems with sampling at Nuuk and that an arrangement had been made to sample the carcasses there, rather than whole salmon.

(12) *Information should be provided to fishers and supervisors at open air markets explaining the rationale for the sampling programme. The findings of the sampling programme should be disseminated through appropriate means, with the assistance of the Government of Greenland, as requested;*

- 2.18 The representative of DFG said that the brochure that provided information about the sampling programme could be revised, reprinted and distributed, if members of the Commission felt that to be useful.
- 2.19 Following the discussion on the specific provisions, the representative of DFG made some overall comments about unwelcome developments in the regulatory measure in recent years. She stated that the regulatory measure had become a micro-management instrument, which left Greenland without the opportunity to adjust to its real-life circumstances and prevented input from its stakeholders. DFG could no longer accept that.
- 2.20 The representative of DFG also stated that DFG will live up to its obligations to NASCO, and will continue efforts towards strong management, monitoring, control and surveillance. The development of a Management Plan is proof of that continued commitment. However, in order to ensure successful management, she stated that DFG needs flexibility to adjust management to suit the situation on the ground, something that fisheries managers from all Commission members would want. DFG welcomes constructive discussions on how to achieve a regulatory measure that addresses the concerns of other members of the Commission, and that allows DFG to manage its fishery according to its own circumstances.

3. Consideration of a New Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure to Apply to the Atlantic Salmon Fishery at West Greenland from 2021

- 3.1 The Chair explained that Agenda item 3 ‘Consideration of a New Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure...’ would be broken into three parts: a discussion of the Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland; consideration of what should be included in a new regulatory measure; and consideration of the provisions of the current regulatory measure and whether they might be retained, removed, or revised in a new regulatory measure.

Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland

- 3.2 The representative of DFG made a presentation on the ‘Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland’, [WGCIS\(21\)06](#) (Annex 8).
- 3.3 The representative of DFG informed the Commission that there was to be an election in Greenland on 6 April, and this could cause the timeline on the Draft Management Plan to slip. Consultation could only take place once Greenland has a new Government. The representative of the UK sought clarification on the earliest and latest dates. The representative of DFG clarified that the best, and most likely, case was that the Management Plan would be available for approval by mid-May. If the new Government was not formed until mid-May, however, the Management Plan would not be able to be agreed before the Annual Meeting of the Commission.
- 3.4 The Chair asked if any members of the Commission had questions of clarity related to the Draft Management Plan.
- 3.5 The representative of the NGOs asked if a fisher failed to report in one year whether they were not permitted to get a licence for only the next year, or permanently. The

representative of DFG replied that it was just for the following year.

- 3.6 The representative of the NGOs also asked whether fishers are told in the Management Plan, of the consequences of quota overages, in advance. The representative of DFG replied that this was not included, because this regulatory measure was very unpopular. She noted that, in previous years, the Fisheries Minister had been called to Parliament and asked to reinstate fishing when the season had closed; that fishers had submitted petitions against the quota and closure of the fishery, and that there had been calls to leave NASCO. Further, she noted that fishers in Greenland have accused the Government of Greenland of violating their human rights as indigenous people due to their restrictions on salmon fishing.
- 3.7 The representative of Canada noted that the Draft Management Plan applied for five years and asked whether there was provision for revision during this period. The representative of DFG informed that revisions were allowed within the Management Plan – an evaluation of the plan could be conducted and a revision made thereafter, if necessary.
- 3.8 The representative of the US asked about the link between the Draft Management Plan and the current regulatory measure, given that some elements in the regulatory measure are not reflected in the Draft Management Plan. The representative of DFG stated that the Draft Management Plan and the Executive Order complement each other. She offered to have the Executive Order translated into English so that it could be circulated to Commission members.
- 3.9 The representative of Canada asked whether the Draft Management Plan would have detail about triggers for decision making, i.e. how it is decided to limit the season as the season progresses. The representative of DFG replied that this is undertaken in the same way for salmon as it is for all fisheries in Greenland. All fisheries are monitored on a daily basis and assessed by the control authorities; they have the authority to close a fishery at any time. The representative of DFG offered to make a clearer explanation of this process in the Draft Management Plan for full disclosure for the members of the Commission. The representative of Canada said it publishes its decision rules in some areas – and could share that information, if helpful.
- 3.10 The representative of the UK asked about catch reporting under Provision 9 of the regulatory measure, noting that the regulatory measure refers to reporting on a daily basis and the Draft Management Plan refers to reporting as soon as possible, and there is also mention of 14 days for a report of zero catch. The representative of DFG replied that the Executive Order requires fishers to report every time they tend their nets, which is usually on a daily basis – unless the weather is bad.
- 3.11 The representative of the NGOs sought clarification on the limitation of the number of nets allowed to be used per fisher. He thought there was already a limit of 20 nets. The representative of DFG clarified that currently there is no limit. Fishers currently report how many nets they use and 20 is generally the highest number used. The Draft Management Plan proposes limiting the number to 20.

What Should be Included in a New Regulatory Measure?

- 3.12 Having considered the 2020 Fishery, the current regulatory measure, and the Draft Management Plan, the Chair sought members' views on what should be included in any future regulatory measure.
- 3.13 The representative of DFG stated that, in recent years, NASCO's regulatory measures

have become more complex. DFG was strongly of the view that any new regulatory measure should contain only a quota, along with some monitoring and reporting obligations. The representative of DFG argued that fisheries management measures should be included in a national management plan, and not in the regulatory measure. Management measures should be in the Management Plan and the Executive Order (which could be translated into English, if appropriate). The representative of DFG commented on the duplication of measures adopted first by NASCO and then by Greenland.

- 3.14 The representative of DFG stated that there needed to be ‘ownership’ of the Management Plan by stakeholders, and that if such measures were included in international negotiations, it may appear as if management measures were being imposed on Greenlanders from outside, which would be unpopular.
- 3.15 The representative of DFG stated that a regulatory measure that included fishery management measures was burdensome to Greenland. After each new regulatory measure is negotiated (in June), Greenland is required to change the law in Greenland in advance of the fishery in August / September. With a small administration managing a small subsistence fishery, this is burdensome. DFG seeks a long-term, stable management whilst meeting its obligations to NASCO.
- 3.16 The representative of the US said that whilst the US understood DFG’s desire for a streamlined regulatory measure, the US had concerns about that approach. The US holds the view that any regulatory measure should include not only a quota but management measures that provide confidence that effective monitoring and reporting will be implemented and the agreed quota will be respected, including an overharvest provision. She also noted that this is common practice in other RFMOs.
- 3.17 The representative of the US suggested that possibly some management measures contained in the Management Plan and Greenland’s Executive Orders could be acknowledged in the preamble text of a new regulatory measure, and the operative text of the regulatory measure itself could then consist of the quota and overharvest provision as well as essential provisions related to monitoring and reporting. The representative of DFG agreed that this could be considered.
- 3.18 The representative of the EU indicated that, after listening carefully to Greenland’s views, the EU could agree to more stability for the Greenland fishery, but he felt this did not require the removal of management measures from a new regulatory measure. He expressed concerns at the report by DFG of the political considerations taking place at a national level in Greenland. He stated that NASCO should have an opportunity to be involved in management measures, as reassurance to its Parties. He clarified that the transposition of measures agreed in RFMOs always led to duplication, but that this is not a justification to then seek the removal of the measures first agreed at international level.
- 3.19 The representative of the UK stated that the UK was keen to see more than just quota in the new regulatory measure, so there is confidence that strong management would be in place. She asked whether there could be strong cross-referencing between the regulatory measure and the Management Plan.
- 3.20 The representative of Canada commented that 30 t may be considered a small fishery quota in Greenland, but that three quarters of those fish come from Canadian rivers, and so Canada remains concerned about the level of harvest. He stated that a species-at-risk assessment of all Canadian rivers would be ready by the end of 2021.

Which Provisions Should be Retained, Removed, or Revised?

- 3.21 It was agreed to go through the current regulatory measure, [WGC\(18\)11](#), provision by provision, discussing whether or not each one could be included in a future regulatory measure. During the initial plenary session, the representative of DFG stated their position on the provisions of the current regulatory measure and whether DFG felt each could remain in a new regulatory measure. At a later session, other members of the Commission were asked to provide their views, as reflected here.
- (1) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees not to export wild Atlantic salmon or its products from Greenland and to prohibit landings and sales of Atlantic salmon to fish processing factories;*
- 3.22 The representative of DFG stated that this provision was already implemented, and she was content that it remain in any new regulatory measure. The representative of the US said it was important to keep this provision in any new regulatory measure as it helps to ensure that the Greenland fishery is for internal use only. She noted the scientific advice that there should be no fishery, so ensuring it is for internal use only is important. The representative of the UK also noted the scientific advice around fishing for salmon and recognised the need for a subsistence fishery expressed by Greenland, so agreed it was important to keep this provision in any new regulatory measure. The representatives of Canada and the EU agreed with the US and UK.
- (2) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to open the fishery no earlier than 15 August and to close the fishery no later than 31 October each year;*
- 3.23 The representative of DFG stated that this provision would be specified in the Management Plan and did not, therefore, need to be in any new regulatory measure. She also noted the intention to have different fishing seasons in different areas of Greenland but explained that this will not expand the season beyond what had been previously agreed. The representative of the EU stated that the EU was flexible about the inclusion of this provision in any new regulatory measure. However, he noted previous concerns that concentrating the fishing activities over a short period could have a detrimental impact on particular cohorts and stated that a flexible season might be useful – although that may depend on other management measures included in any new regulatory measure. The representative of the US indicated it was important that fishing effort was not able to expand but noted flexibility on how the fishing season could be addressed in the regulatory measure. Other members of the Commission were also flexible in relation to this measure, whilst noting its importance.
- (3) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to restrict the total allowable catch for all components of the Atlantic salmon fishery at West Greenland to 30 metric tonnes. In the event of any overharvest in a particular year, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to an equal reduction in the total allowable catch in the following year, and agrees not to carry forward any under-harvest into a future year;*
- 3.24 The representative of DFG stated that a provision on quota could be retained in a new regulatory measure. The representative of Canada stated that having the quota and provision to deal with overharvest across years is important and within NASCO's mandate. The representative of the UK agreed, stating that any overharvest provision should incentivise management to quota. The representative of the EU agreed that this provision should be retained, possibly alongside additional measures to prevent

overharvest successfully, since this had not worked fully in recent years. The representative of the US agreed that this provision is essential in any new regulatory measure. She agreed that the overharvest payback provision was needed to help prevent overharvest. In addition, she stressed the US view that a quota of 30 t was too high given the imperilled status of many of the stocks.

(4) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to, in a timely manner, inform NASCO and, as appropriate, ICES, of improvements of the monitoring, management control and surveillance or any modification to the management of the Atlantic salmon fishery and to provide an annual report on the outcome of the fishery;*

3.25 The representative of DFG stated that this provision could be retained in a new regulatory measure. All other members of the Commission agreed that it was important to retain this provision, especially in light of the request to change the format of a new regulatory measure.

(5) *States of origin agree to share experiences with Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on monitoring, management, control and surveillance in the salmon fishery through knowledge-sharing exchange programmes;*

3.26 The representative of DFG did not comment on this provision. The representative of the UK said the spirit of the provision was implicit in the way NASCO works. Other Commission members agreed and had no strong preference in retaining or removing it. The representative of the EU stated that the EU is flexible, but noted that in the past, support has not been provided to DFG as might have been expected. He suggested that DFG might be more proactive in seeking support and other members of the Commission more proactive in offering support for DFG.

(6) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to annually collect and verify catch data of fishing activity of all licensed fishers;*

3.27 The representative of DFG stated that although this provision was redundant in their view, it could be retained in a new regulatory measure. The representative of the UK noted that this provision is typical in fisheries management and that in light of recent overharvest, members of the Commission need to be confident that appropriate management measures are in place so that the quota is not exceeded. However, she stated that the UK was flexible about how that confidence was achieved. Canada agreed with the UK. The representative of the US stated that it was fundamental to retain this provision to help with management of the quota. The representative of the EU was flexible about whether this provision was included in the Management Plan or a new regulatory measure.

(7) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to require all fishers for Atlantic salmon to have a licence to fish, and to prohibit fishing for Atlantic salmon without a licence;*

3.28 The representative of DFG stated that this provision had already been implemented and there was no need to retain it in a new regulatory measure. The representative of Canada was flexible about whether this provision was included in the Management Plan or a new regulatory measure. The representative of the UK agreed and restated that members needed confidence that overharvest could be addressed and was flexible about how that was achieved. Both the US and the EU representatives stated that this provision should be retained, with the representative of the US noting that it was

essential to know the potential participants of the fishery and the EU representative noting that a proper licensing scheme is needed in a new regulatory measure.

(8) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also agrees to authorise only licensed full-time hunters and fishers to sell Atlantic salmon only at open air markets in communities;*

3.29 The representative of DFG stated that this provision had already been implemented and there was no need to retain it in a new regulatory measure. All other members of the Commission were flexible about whether this provision should be included in the Management Plan or in a new regulatory measure. The representative of the US stated that it was important that there is a required authorisation for selling Atlantic salmon, but they were flexible as to where the fish could be sold domestically.

(9) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to require all licensed fishers for Atlantic salmon to provide a full accounting of fishing activity and harvest. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also agrees to require reporting on a daily basis to allow for in-season monitoring of the total allowable catch;*

3.30 The representative of DFG stated that this provision had already been implemented and there was no need to retain it in any new regulatory measure. All other members of the Commission were flexible about whether this provision should be included in the Management Plan or in a new regulatory measure.

(10) *Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to prohibit all licensed fishers for Atlantic salmon who have not provided a full accounting of their catches, including reports for zero catches, within one month of the end of the fishing season at the latest, from acquiring a licence for the following season until required reporting is received. Within one month after the fishing season, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to follow up with fishers who have not provided a full accounting of their catches, including zero catches;*

3.31 The representative of DFG stated that this provision had already been implemented and there was no need to retain it in a new regulatory measure. The representative of the US indicated that this was a fundamental provision as imposing consequences for non-reporting is critical to enable the US to have better confidence in the quota. The representatives of Canada, the EU and the UK were flexible about whether this provision should be included in the Management Plan or in a new regulatory measure.

(11) *As a condition of the licence, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to require fishers to allow samplers from the NASCO sampling programme to take samples of their catches upon request;*

3.32 The representative of DFG stated that this provision had already been implemented and DFG could retain it in a new regulatory measure. The representative of Canada said that this was an important provision for a new regulatory measure, but it may require revision to take account of changing circumstances. The representative of the EU agreed that this is an important provision and acknowledged DFG's co-operation on this. The UK agreed it was important. The representative of the US noted some flexibility stating that although sampling is an essential requirement for science-based management, it is a requirement of the licence and there have been no access problems over the last several years.

- (12) *Information should be provided to fishers and supervisors at open air markets explaining the rationale for the sampling programme. The findings of the sampling programme should be disseminated through appropriate means, with the assistance of the Government of Greenland, as requested; and*
- 3.33 The representative of DFG stated that this provision could be retained in a new regulatory measure. The representative of the US noted flexibility on this and how it is recognised in any new regulatory measure. She offered to work with DFG to provide products about the sampling programme if needed. The representatives of Canada and the UK stated this provision may not need to be in a new regulatory measure.
- (13) *The Commission agrees to apply this regulatory measure to the fishery at West Greenland in 2018. The Commission also agrees to apply this measure in 2019 and 2020 unless:*
- a. *any member of the Commission requests its reconsideration based on the review of the annual report pursuant to Paragraph 4 and / or*
 - b. *the application of the Framework of Indicators indicates that there has been a significant change to the indicators and, therefore, a reassessment is warranted.*
- 3.34 The representative of DFG did not comment on this provision. The representative of the EU noted two issues. First that there should be the possibility for the Commission to review any new regulatory measure, especially given the possible new format. Second, that a longer period for the regulatory measure might lead to increased stability, which should facilitate the implementation of the measure. The representative of the UK was comfortable with the potential for a longer-term measure, but said it was essential to be able to reconsider the regulatory measure if necessary. The representative of the US indicated that it could potentially consider a longer-term measure, but this would depend on what the rest of the regulatory measure looked like. She also stressed that, for any multi-annual measure agreed, a reconsideration clause would be essential. The representative of Canada said this provision should be retained and would consider the length of the measure and the working of the Framework of Indicators.
- 3.35 The members of the Commission agreed that a Working Group should be convened to produce a strawman multi-annual regulatory measure for consideration by the Commission. The Working Group comprised the following delegates:
- Canada: Doug Bliss and Carl McLean;
 - DFG: Katrine Kærgaard and Maria Strandgård Rasmussen;
 - EU: Arnaud Peyronnet and Ignacio Granell;
 - UK: Ruth Allin and Alan Walker;
 - US: Kim Damon-Randall and Tim Sheehan; and
 - NGOs: Dave Meerburg.
- 3.36 The Chair presented the document ‘Working Group’s Proposal for a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon [at West Greenland]’, developed for consideration by the Commission members. The bracketed text indicated provisions where the Working Group suggested further discussion is required. The Commission discussed the draft and further changes were made.
- 3.37 The Chair noted that the revised document, WGCIS(21)10, should be considered a draft

and no Commission member has agreed to its contents (Annex 9). Members of the Commission can consider it prior to the next meeting of the Commission.

4. Other Business

- 4.1 The representative of the US requested discussion of the West Greenland Sampling Programme. She noted that restrictions due to the global pandemic remain, and it may not be possible, once again, for external samplers to travel to Greenland to collect biological data on Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland.
- 4.2 A representative of the US, Tim Sheehan, gave details of the sampling programme in 2020 which had been revised due to the pandemic. The sampling programme had three elements to it. First, sampling kits were provided to wildlife officers, so that they could collect samples while on control duties. Second, sampling kits were provided to the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, so their officers could collect samples in addition to their normal duties. Third, a citizen-science programme was developed, where small kits were provided for licence holders to collect when they applied for their licence, to allow them to take samples voluntarily. All samples were returned to the US for analysis. Mr Sheehan noted that the programme was not as successful as hoped. Only around 100 samples were collected. Challenges due to the pandemic and around organization of the programme were encountered.
- 4.3 Mr Sheehan stated his wish to initiate conversations in order to ensure the programme is more successful in 2021. The representative of DFG agreed it would be useful to decide how to proceed as soon as possible.
- 4.4 The representative of the US raised the issue of the funding source for having the sampling programme brochure reprinted; the Secretary indicated that in the past NASCO has organized the production of the brochure and, looking forward, the Secretary noted it would be helpful to know how many brochures would be required.
- 4.5 The Chair noted that discussions on the sampling programme would now begin subsequent to the meeting. He thanked those involved in co-ordinating and conducting the programme.

5. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 5.1 The Commission agreed to hold further inter-sessional meetings on 29 and 30 May 2021, from 13:30 – 16:30 hrs UK time.

6. Report of the Meeting

- 6.1 The Commission agreed a report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting.

7. Close of the Meeting

- 7.1 The Chair closed the meeting.

List of Annexes

- Annex 1 Agenda, WGCIS(21)04
- Annex 2 Inter-Sessional Correspondence
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- Annex 6 Presentation on the 2020 Subsistence Fishery in Greenland
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WGCIS(21)07

Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

By Video Conference

8 – 12 March 2021

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the Meeting**
- 2. Review of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland for 2018, 2019 and 2020, [WGC\(18\)11](#)**
 - a) Report on the West Greenland Atlantic Salmon Fishery in 2020
 - b) Progress in Implementing the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland, WGC(18)11
- 3. Consideration of a New Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure to Apply to the Atlantic Salmon Fishery at West Greenland from 2021**
- 4. Other Business**
- 5. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**
- 6. Report of the Meeting**
- 7. Close of the Meeting**

West Greenland Commission Inter-Sessional Meeting – Inter-Sessional Correspondence

The West Greenland Commission held a period of inter-sessional correspondence from 15 – 26 February, prior to its Inter-Sessional Meeting held during 8-12 March 2021. The correspondence is set out below, under the relevant Agenda item. If an Agenda item is not listed, no inter-sessional correspondence took place for that item.

2. Review of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland for 2018, 2019 and 2020, WGC(18)11

a) Report on the West Greenland Atlantic Salmon Fishery in 2020

Licensed fishers who did not report

Q1. The United States asked DFG (19 February 2021):

Similar to 2019, a little under 20% of license holders did not report in 2020. We are wondering if licensed fishers who did not report have been denied a license in the subsequent year?

○ ***A1. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

Yes, as explained earlier our licensing system is set up to catch any fishermen that has not reported and prevent that a new license is issued to them. This is automatic.

Q2. The NGOs asked DFG (21 February 2021):

For the 2018-2020 fisheries, one might have expected to see the numbers of both professional and private fishermen decrease from one year to the next, as Greenland has said that they would not provide licenses to those fishermen who did not report. This does not seem to have been the case however, as for example, 235 professional fishermen reported in 2018, 302 professional licences were issued in 2019; of these, 276 reported and 340 professional licenses were issued in 2020. Similarly, for the private fishermen, 322 reported in 2018, 415 private licenses were issued in 2019; of these, 361 reported and 419 private licenses were issued in 2020. As there has not been 100% reporting by either group in any of the 3 years, and noting numbers of licenses are not decreasing annually, then either Greenland has not been able to implement this regulation, or possibly there are new entrants coming into the fishery annually, or a combination of these two possibilities; could Greenland please clarify?

○ ***A2. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

As explained earlier, our licensing system is set up to catch any fishermen that has not reported and prevent that a new license is issued to them. This is done automatically. New entrants enter the fishery annually. Which is quite normal for this sort of subsistence fishery as e.g. most professional fishermen or hunters use the salmon fishery as an supplementary income and thus, does not always apply for a license each year. Furthermore, new fishermen, especially young fishermen enter the coastal fishery each year. Concerning, the private fishermen there is a constant influx of new people.

Online reporting system

Q3. The United States asked DFG (19 February 2021):

Greenland instituted an online reporting system prior to the 2020 fishery. We appreciate and acknowledge the significant effort expended to develop this online tool. We are wondering if Greenland believes expanded use of this tool will reduce the likelihood of overharvest occurring in the future?

○ A3. DFG response (24 February 2021):

Yes. In 2020, the time from the fishermen reporting, to the reports being received by GFLK was reduced compared to 2019 and we believe that as the use of the online reporting tool increases, the reporting will become more timely. We are currently revising the online reporting system to make it even more user friendly.

3. Consideration of a New Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure to Apply to the Atlantic Salmon Fishery at West Greenland from 2021

Implementation of measures other than quota

Q4. The United States asked DFG (19 February 2021):

According to [WGCIS\(21\)02](#), there is a stated desire to “return to having multi-annual regulatory measures that just include a quota as previously.” If a new multi-annual regulatory measure only established a quota, how would Parties to the WGC be assured that other measures that they consider to be important will continue to be implemented (such as maintaining the option to request reconsideration of the regulatory measure)?

○ A4. DFG response (24 February 2021):

What is important for Greenland is that all regulatory and management measures that will apply to the fishery should be covered by the management plan in order to ensure full transparency for the fishermen and indeed all parties and stakeholders. Therefore, we do not see a need to have them as part of the regulatory measure. All management plans are publicly available at the Government website and of course fully implemented. Greenland will of course report yearly to the West Greenland Commission based on the management plan as per usual.

Greenland does not see any issue in having a regulatory measure that includes e.g. a possibility to request reconsideration of the regulatory measure.

Furthermore, it would only make sense to keep the reference to e.g. the West Greenland Sampling Programme, which is an agreement made in the West Greenland Commission.

East Greenland

Q5. The United States asked DFG (19 February 2021):

According to the [WGCIS\(21\)06](#), there is a proposed 3 mt annual quota for East Greenland. The management plan noted that this fixed annual quota for East Greenland is not a WGC issue, but rather a NAC issue. We are wondering if this should be NEAC instead? Additionally, in previous years, the East Greenland harvest has counted towards the quota negotiated in the WGC. Has Greenland considered how the East Greenland quota should be considered when negotiating within the WGC?

○ A5. DFG response (24 February 2021):

Indeed, if that is what the draft management plan says, it is a mistake that should be corrected.

Yes, in previous years everything caught in Greenlandic waters, both in West and East Greenland was counted against the quota set for West Greenland. No, that has not been considered at this stage.

Q6. The NGOs asked DFG (21 February 2021):

The proposed management plan has described how a West Greenland quota, (whether agreed through NASCO WGC, or if no agreement, set by Greenland) would be divided between North and South Greenland and then by user group (professional or private). When it comes to East Greenland however, the proposed management plan states that the quota will be 3 t and divided equally between professional and private fishermen. This proposed quota seems to be larger than the reported catch in that area in any recent years and there is no mention that the quota for an East Greenland mixed stock salmon fishery would have to be proposed and agreed by the NEAC of NASCO. For this area, Canada and the US would also have opportunity to propose and vote on such a regulatory measure. Such an agreement would seem to require unanimity between 7 NASCO Parties (Russia, Norway, EU, UK, DFG, Canada and USA). As background, there seems to be no genetic sampling from East Greenland however a review of tagging over 50 years documented that there has been salmon from USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, UK (E&W) and UK (Scotland) reported by fishermen from this area ([ICES Cooperative Research Report #343](#), page 45).

○ ***A6. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

East Greenland is a special area, which have political attention and it is important for the Government of Greenland to ensure any opportunity for the people in East Greenland to provide for themselves. However, the size of the population of East Greenland does make managing the fishery particularly difficult. Maybe further adjustments need to be made in the management of East Greenland in order to ensure the need of the people in East Greenland in the best possible way as well as any obligations in NASCO. As mentioned in our letter, this is only a draft version and the management plan is still a work in progress, which has not yet undergone public consultation.

Q7. Canada commented (24 February 2021):

Canada supports the questions already raised by the U.S. and NGOs regarding DFG's implementation approach to the 3 tonne annual quota for East Greenland proposed in the Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland ([WGCIS\(21\)06](#)). We also agree that this proposal may be better addressed by North Eastern Atlantic Commission.

○ ***A7. DFG response (26 February 2021):***

The Government of Greenland does not have any plans to become a member of more Commissions or to make the management of salmon even more burdensome than it already is. In fact, the point of having a management plan is to make the management less burdensome for both the authorities and the fishermen. We will continue to work with the management plan in that effect.

Five-year regulatory measure linked to three-yearly ICES advice forecast

Q8. The United States asked DFG (19 February 2021):

According to [WGCIS\(21\)02](#), there is a suggestion that the NASCO regulatory measure could be extended to 5 years to align it with the timeline of the proposed management plan. Has Greenland considered how this could be accomplished given the scientific advice provided by ICES is currently based on a 3 year forecast of abundance?

○ ***A8. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

The scientific advice has been no fishery at West Greenland for a long period. In case, that changes within the 5 year period and it is deemed necessary to change the regulatory measure on that basis, then we find the parties can request a reconsideration of the regulatory measure as is currently a possibility.

ICES advice in Draft Management Plan

Q9. The NGOs asked DFG (21 February 2021):

Concerning the proposed management plan that Greenland has produced, it mentions that the ICES advice is that there should be “no direct fishing” at Greenland and then its states that the advice is also for “no direct fishing along North America”. The ICES advice given for 2018-2020 (not 2019-2021 as misstated in the document) would be more correctly stated as “ICES advises that, in line with the management objectives agreed by NASCO and consistent with the MSY approach, there are no mixed-stock fishery options at West Greenland for the fishing years 2018 to 2020.” For North America, the advice was “ICES advises that, in line with the management objectives agreed by the North Atlantic Salmon Organization (NASCO) and consistent with the MSY approach, there are no mixed-stock fishery options on 1SW non-maturing salmon and 2SW salmon in North America in the period 2018 to 2021.”

Q10. Concerning the proposed management plan that Greenland has produced, it makes reference to this being a 5 year plan; how will this be reconciled with the request that Greenland has agreed with the other WGC Parties that ICES advice has been requested only for the next 3 years (2021-2023).

○ ***A9 & 10. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

The scientific advice has been no fishery at West Greenland for a long period. In case, that changes within the 5 year period and on that basis it is deemed necessary to change the regulatory measure, then we find the parties can request a reconsideration of the regulatory measure as is currently a possibility. Furthermore, it is of great importance to the Government of Greenland to ensure a long-term and stable management of the salmon fishery. The constant changes every 3-years has caused a huge burden for the authorities and for fishermen. This has made it more difficult to properly implement new measures and manage the fishery consistently.

Kapisillit River

Q11. The NGOs asked DFG (21 February 2021):

Greenland proposes to exclude the catch of the Kapisillit River salmon from being part of the quota for West Greenland. What has been the catch of salmon within the Kapisillit River by year for however many years that this information is available; has such catch been by professional or private fishermen and by what gear and has such catch been taken within the fishing season for salmon that has been established by Greenland? Even if excluded from the WGC quota considerations, the catch of salmon within the Kapisillit River would need to be included as part of the total catch at Greenland reported to NASCO.

○ ***A11. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

The fishery in Kapisillit River is very small and has not be report on separately, so we do not have any data on that specific fishery. However, currently it is managed in the same way as the rest of the salmon fishery concerning fishing period, gear etc. However, that is not the intention moving forward. It is the plan to include specific management measures for the Kapisillit River in the revised executive order on fishery for salmon. Furthermore, the entire area will be covered by the coming conservation plan for Kapisillit. It is important for the Government of Greenland and the local people in Kapisillit to protect the only Greenlandic salmon stock.

Quota overage

Q12. The NGOs asked DFG (21 February 2021):

There is no mention within the proposed management plan on how the quota overage from 2020 will affect any quota for 2021 to be agreed by the WGC, and also no mention on how any overages starting in 2021 will affect the following years quotas.

○ ***A12. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

Only regulatory measures outlined in the management plan is planned at this stage.

Plans to close the fishery as the quota is approached

Q13. The NGOs asked DFG (21 February 2021):

In the past two years, Greenland has closed the fishery when a % of the quota had been reported (90% in 2019 and 80% in 2020) to allow for the delay in catches being reported, yet in both years, the quota was still exceeded. Does Greenland have similar plans to close the fishery as the quota is approached in future years and if so, at what % of the quota?

○ ***A13. DFG response (24 February 2021):***

This is normal procedure for any fishery in Greenland. The % will be adjusted each year by GFLK depending on the development of the past years' fishery.

Q14. Canada asked DFG (24 February 2021):

Similar to questions from the U.S. and NGOs, Canada would appreciate further clarification on the Draft Management Plan as to how Greenland proposes to manage and prevent overharvests? While we acknowledge the improvements to the reporting mechanism, the timing for closing the fishery nor the enhanced reporting does not seem to prevent annual overharvesting.

○ ***A14. DFG response (26 February 2021):***

Again, we must stress that the management regime for salmon is completely different than any other fishery and the fact that regulatory measures continuously changes has not assisted the implementation very well. Greenland is convinced that a more stable, long-term management and continued improvements of our systems, i.e. we are currently enhancing our online reporting by using social security validation in order to improve accuracy and automatisation of the reporting process in order to improve the completeness. For instance this year the salmon registration platform will be available in a cell phone friendly version. These initiatives will further enhance the process and

ease the reporting task for the fishermen as well as a cautionary approach to closing the fishery will prevent overharvest.

4. Other Business

West Greenland Sampling Programme 2020

Q15. Canada asked DFG (24 February 2021):

Following the cancellation of the 2020 Sampling Programme, a Contingency Sampling Programme was developed and implemented. We understand that this modified programme was only marginally successful in collecting samples in 2020. Assuming that a traditional sampling program (with external samplers travelling to Greenland) will not be possible in 2021, can DFG please indicate if changes would be proposed within Greenland to ensure better success in sample collection? We also wonder whether such activities would or should be captured under your Management Plan?

o A15. DFG response (26 February 2021):

Greenland does not have any proposal for changes to the sampling programme. In case, it will not be feasible for external samplers to come to Greenland this year either, we would however, suggest that the sampling kits arrive much earlier in Greenland. That would ensure that we have time for the distribution across Greenland as well as information about this possibility. However, in many municipalities most fishermen get their license via mail, they do not go to the municipal office and therefore was not offered a sampling kit.

Opening Statements Submitted by Parties

Opening Statement to the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission submitted by Canada

The Canadian delegation is looking forward to contributing to this week's inter-sessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission. These discussions provide an important opportunity to review progress from the previous regulatory measure and lay the groundwork for implementing a new measure this year.

Atlantic salmon represent a significant cultural, economic, and environmental symbol for eastern Canada. They are a species at the heart of our nation, with a long history as key resources for Indigenous food, social, and ceremonial requirements.

Given salmon population's continued decline both in Canada and around the world, the conservation and rebuilding of wild Atlantic salmon stocks is a shared responsibility. This long-term process requires the continued and concerted efforts of all those involved.

We thank Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for providing its [2020 report](#) and [Draft Management Plan on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland](#) to the Commission, especially with the additional challenges the pandemic posed for data collection and analysis. Canada values the significant work Greenland is investing to improve the monitoring and control of its fishery. We hope this meeting continues to ensure all members of the Commission work together to support Greenland's progress, particularly its efforts in managing and preventing overharvests.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Chairman, Ms. Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greenland welcomes the opportunity to present the continued significant improvements that the Government of Greenland have made and is making in the management and control of the Atlantic salmon fishery in Greenland.

Greenland continues to be committed to improving our management and control of the subsistence fishery and it is our belief that a management plan is a significant step forward as it will serve as a collective and transparent plan for the management, Greenland Fisheries License Control Authority, the Greenlandic people and external partners. It is a massive change in the management of subsistence fishery in Greenland, which is such an essential part of our livelihood. More than any other Party, we live of the land and the sea and therefore, it is vital that we create strong but realistic management measures to ensure that our people can continue to sustain themselves.

Greenland is also looking forward to receive accounts of which measures States of origin are taking, especially considering that ICES clearly states that “a range of problems in the freshwater environment play a significant role in explaining the poor status of the stocks. In many cases, river damming and habitat deterioration have had a devastating effect on freshwater environmental conditions.”

We hope that our work with a long-term management plan will inspire other Parties to make long-term plans for improvements to their own management, control and conservation efforts. Greenland look forward to some constructive discussions.

Thank you.

Opening Statement to the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission submitted by the European Union

Mr Chairman, Ms Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The European Union is looking forward participating to this Intersessional Meeting of the NASCO West Greenland Commission and we would like to thank the Secretariat for organising this meeting in these challenging conditions. This intersessional meeting provides us with an opportunity to improve our understanding of the latest state of play of the fishery at West Greenland, and of the conservation and management measures in place throughout the Commission, their relevance and potential scope for improvement.

The European Union has a strong interest in promoting the sustainable management of the fishery at West Greenland. This mixed stock fishery exploits important components of often vulnerable European populations of Atlantic salmon. This occurs in the context of continued demands from many European coastal communities to reconsider the closure of several fisheries and to seek more coherence in the management of the various populations at the NASCO level. Therefore, while the European Union acknowledges the specificities and importance of the fishery at West Greenland, it is also important for us to ensure the rationality and effective implementation of the measures agreed in NASCO.

The European Union would also like to acknowledge the significant progress made by Denmark (in respect of Greenland) over the years, and the important efforts consented. We believe that it is important to build on these positive developments to find a balanced and ambitious agreement on how to best manage this fishery.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, the European Union is looking forward to working constructively with all Parties towards the effective regulation of this fishery and improving the tools we have at hand to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainability of Atlantic salmon stocks, in line with the NASCO's objectives.

***Opening Statement to the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland
Commission submitted by the United Kingdom***

The United Kingdom is delighted to have the opportunity to work with our partners during this important intersessional meeting of the West Greenland Commission, and looks forward to better understanding the latest developments within the fishery at West Greenland whilst working together towards the sustainable management and conservation of the Atlantic salmon.

Despite major reductions in fisheries exploitation across the UK, salmon numbers have continued to decline significantly over recent decades, therefore the UK recognises the importance of shared responsibilities in safeguarding salmon stocks within the convention area.

The UK would thank Greenland for the information provided in its 2020 report and appreciates the extensive work to date that Greenland has undertaken to strengthen management of its fishery, notably introducing mandatory licensing for all salmon fishers and continuing improvement of the reporting process.

We also recognise the efforts to develop a multi-annual management plan and look forward to working with all Commission Parties to see a plan that is effective and efficient, as well as making progress in working towards a regulatory measure that can be agreed by all.

The UK firmly believes in the importance of the work carried out by this West Greenland Commission and all Parties in support of sustainable salmon stocks. We look forward to a productive meeting that will continue to build on the efforts made so far, and to working successfully with all in 2021 and beyond.

***Opening Statement to the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland
Commission submitted by the United States***

The United States recognizes and appreciates the significant changes that the Government of Greenland has implemented to improve the management of the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery since the regulatory measure was last negotiated in 2018, including the efforts that have focused on improving monitoring and reporting. The 2018 regulatory measure included a number of important provisions that should help inform, and even serve as a basis for, our discussions this week on a new regulatory measure.

Given the poor status of many stocks that mix off West Greenland and the longstanding scientific advice for no fishery there, the United States considers that any new regulatory measure for the fishery must ensure catches are kept to a minimum, to balance, to the extent possible, stock conservation needs with Greenland's interest in maintaining a fishery. In addition, any harvest that is allowed should be part of a broader, multilaterally agreed regulatory framework that ensures effective management of the fishery. The United States remains concerned that the quota for the West Greenland fishery has been overharvested in each year of the three-years covered by the 2018-2020 regulatory measure. We look forward to discussing how this matter can be effectively addressed going forward.

In closing, the United States thanks Greenland for its responsiveness to questions raised during the intersessional correspondence period. We look forward to a productive virtual meeting that

advances discussions so that a new regulatory measure for the West Greenland salmon fishery can be agreed at the NASCO Annual Meeting in June.

Opening Statement submitted by NASCO's accredited Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

The NGOs of NASCO welcome the agreement of the West Greenland Commission for us to participate in this meeting to discuss upcoming regulatory measures for the salmon fishery at West Greenland for 2021 and beyond. We have also appreciated the opportunity to ask questions of the Commission's members in advance of this meeting and receive answers to those questions.

Three years ago, at the conclusion of this Commission's meeting in Portland Maine, the NGOs, noting the ongoing endangered status of many of the contributing stocks and the ICES advice, expressed disappointment, at that time, on the level of quota that was agreed by this Commission for the West Greenland fishery for 2018-2020. The NGOs noted that this quota was even higher than the reported catch had been in the previous two years and we had hoped for an annual quota that recognized the long-standing subsistence needs generally accepted by NASCO to be in the range of 20 t, not a quota 50% higher than that.

Now, with three years of catch that have in each year exceeded the agreed quota, we are here to discuss what a new quota should be. There has not been any change in the scientific advice we have from ICES and the state of far too many Atlantic salmon stocks in the USA, Canada, the EU and the UK remains precarious. The NGOs acknowledge and commend Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for the numerous improvements that they have made in Greenland for the control and monitoring of the fishery, but it is obvious that more needs to be done in this regard, considering the quota overruns each year.

The NGOs also welcome the request made by DFG that all other Parties involved in the WGC report progress towards achieving NASCO goals for salmon conservation and management in their home states. While the NGOs wish to see a subsistence quota set for West Greenland that acknowledges the precarious status of salmon stocks across the North Atlantic, we also believe that efforts are not sufficient in the home waters of the other Parties to protect those salmon saved from the harvest at West Greenland.

The NGOs also recognize and support the Conservation Agreement between ASF, NASF and KNAPK and believe it compliments the work of NASCO and WGC. The financial support the Conservation Agreement provides to professional fishermen to help support their transition to other more sustainable fisheries, education, assistance with the monitoring of the salmon fishery, and salmon research in Greenland should also be taken into consideration.

We therefore hope that this Commission will be able to agree on a quota and other management measures for West Greenland in 2021 (and beyond) that balances Greenland's need for a subsistence fishery with the scientific advice. The NGOs also look for renewed commitment to achieving NASCO goals for salmon conservation from all Parties of the WGC.

***List of Participants
for the 2021 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission***

* Denotes Head of Delegation

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The 2020 subsistence fishery in Greenland

West Greenland Commission Inter-sessional



2020 Subsistence Fishery

- Start: 1. September (new start date)
- Closed: 20. September
- Quota: 20.7 tonnes
- Total catch: 30.7 tonnes

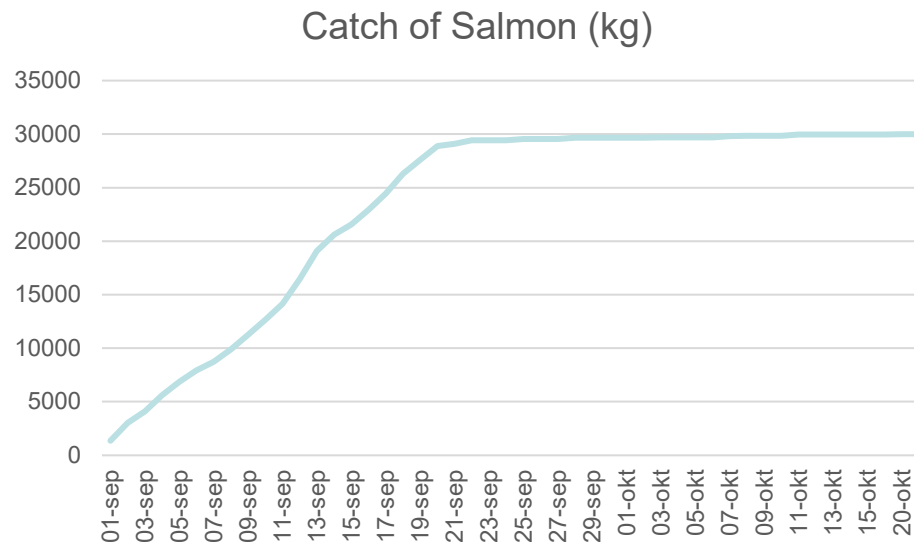


Figure 1. Catches of salmon (in kilograms) caught during the season.



2020 Subsistence Fishery

- Reporting percentage: 81 %
- 40 % reported within the season, improved from 17 % in 2019
- 2 % of reports were received late compared to 7 % in 2019

Table 3. Summary of the fishery in 2018-2020

Year	2018	2019	2020
Reporting percentage	73.7 %	81.6 %	81.4 %
Quota uptake (tonnes)	40.6	28.8	30.7
Number of fishing days in the season	77	42	20



2020 Subsistence Fishery

- New measures in 2020:
 - Deadline for 0-catch reporting 30 days after closure vs. 1. December
 - Online reporting option provided
 - No longer legal to use drift nets
 - SMS-campaign became permanent
 - Article in KNAPKs newspaper
 - Article in outdoor magazine in national newspaper
 - Use of Facebook ads to promote online reporting



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

West Greenland Commission Intersessional



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **DFG agrees not to export wild Atlantic salmon or its products from Greenland and to prohibit landings and sales of Atlantic salmon to fish processing factories**
 - Export and landings banned in 2018 – 2020

- **DFG agrees to open the fishery no earlier than 15 August and to close no later than 31 October each year**
 - 2018: opened 15 August. Private fishery closed 19 October and professional fishery 31 October
 - 2019: Opened 15 August – closed 25 September
 - 2020: Opened 1. September – closed 20 September



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **DFG agrees to restrict the total allowable catch for all components of the Atlantic salmon fishery at West Greenland to 30 metric tonnes. In event of any overharvest in a particular year, DFG agrees to an equal reduction in the total allowable catch in the following year, and agrees not to carry forward any under-harvest into a future year**
 - 2018: Quota 30 tonnes
 - 2019: Quota 19.5 tonnes to compensate for overharvest in 2018
 - 2020: Quota 20.7 tonnes to compensate for overharvest in 2019



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **DFG agrees to, in a timely manner, inform NASCO and, as appropriate, ICES, of improvements of the monitoring, management, control and surveillance or any modification to the management of the Atlantic salmon fishery and to provide an annual report on the outcome of the fishery**
 - 2018: NASCO informed on management measures and outcome of the fishery
 - 2019: NASCO informed on management measures and outcome of the fishery
 - 2020: NASCO informed on management measures and outcome of the fishery



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **DFG agrees to annually collect and verify data of fishing activity of all licensed fishers**
 - 2018: Normal procedure. Data collected and verified
 - 2019: Normal procedure. Data collected and verified
 - 2020: Normal procedure. Data collected and verified

- **DFG agrees to require all fishers for Atlantic salmon to have a license to fish, and to prohibit fishing for Atlantic salmon without a license**
 - 2018 – 2019: Implemented in 2018 Executive Order on fishery for Salmon
 - 2020: Implemented in 2020 Executive Order on fishery for Salmon



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **DFG also agrees to authorize only licensed full-time hunters and fishers to sell Atlantic salmon only at open-air markets in communities**
 - 2018 – 2019: 2018 Executive Order authorizes only professional fishers and hunters to sell salmon to open-air markets or other outlet, if no open-air market exists
 - 2020: 2020 Executive Order keeps this authorisation in place.

- **DFG agrees to require all licensed fishers for Atlantic salmon to provide a full account of fishing activity and harvest. DFG also agrees to require reporting on a daily basis to allow for in-season monitoring of the total allowable catch**
 - 2018 – 2019: Implemented in 2018 Executive Order on fishery for Salmon
 - 2020: Implemented in 2020 Executive Order on fishery for Salmon



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **DFG agrees to prohibit all licensed fishers for Atlantic salmon who have not provided a full accounting of their catches, including reports for zero catches, within one month of the end of the fishing season at the latest, from acquiring a license for the following season until required reporting is received. Within one month after the fishing season, DFG agrees to follow up with fishers who have not provided a full accounting of their catches, including zero catch**
 - 2018: Implemented in 2018 Executive Order on fishery for salmon. An automatic block was implemented in the licensing system.
A letter was sent to all fishers who had not reported within the deadline
 - 2019: A letter was sent to all fishers who had not reported within the deadline
 - 2020: Implemented in 2020 Executive Order. PR + SMS sent to fishers



Regulatory Measure 2018 - 2020

- **As a condition of the license, DFG agrees to require fishers to allow samplers from the NASCO sampling programme to take samples of their catches upon request**
 - 2018-2020: has been a condition in the license since 2015

- **Information should be provided to fishers and supervisors at the open air markets explaining the rationale for the sampling programme. The findings of the sampling programme should be disseminated through appropriate means, with the assistance of the Government of Greenland, as requested**
 - 2018: A brochure about the sampling programme was issued with each license and forwarded to open-air markets
 - 2019: No information was provided to fishers or open-air markets
 - 2020: Article about the sampling programme in KNAPK newspaper.



Draft Management Plan for Atlantic salmon in Greenland

West Greenland Commission Inter-sessional



Why a management plan?

- Ensures full transparency with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders as well as a public consultation
- Stakeholder ownership
- Long-term management ensures stronger implementation
- Reduction in the resources used for constantly changing management measures
- All management and regulatory measures collected in 1 plan for ease for administration, control, people of Greenland and external partners
- Will provide better and more focused reporting to NASCO



Process for management plan

- Ministry called for representatives to working group
- Working group consisting of:
 - Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture
 - GFLK
 - Ministry of Research and Environment
 - Greenland Institute of Natural Resources
 - KNAPK
 - Greenland Business Association
 - The Municipalities
 - Recreational fishers associations
- Draft to be sent in public consultation
- Adjustment of draft after consultation
- Working group agrees on a proposal for a management plan to GoG
- Government of Greenland approves the management plan



Draft Management Plan

- Based on the Guidelines for Management Plans
- Building on existing management and regulatory measures
- Following measure will remain in place:
 - Requirement to have a license in order to be allow to fish for salmon
 - Requirement to give a full account of fishing activity, including 0-catch
 - If no report is received, a license will not be issued in the coming year
 - Only professional fishers and hunters will be allowed to sell their catch
 - No landing to fish processing factories
 - Export ban in place
 - Private fishers can only fish for their own consumption



Draft Management Plan

- Following suggested measures are new:
 - Management areas (3)
 - Quota divided into management areas
 - Differentiated fishing period per management area
 - Division of quota into components in the fishery (private + professional)
 - Limitation on number of nets form professional fishers (20)
 - Deadline for reporting, including 0-catch reduced from 30 days to 14 days after closure of the fishery



Timeline for Management Plan

- Working group meeting 26 March
- Adjustments to management plan – Danish and Greenlandic
- Public Consultation approx mid-April
- Adjustment to the management plan after consultation: primo-May
- Final meeting in Working Group: primo-May
- Approval by Government of Greenland: mid-May

WGCIS(21)10

Working Group's Proposal for a 'West Greenland Commission Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure'

RECALLING the longstanding scientific advice from ICES that, in line with the management objectives agreed by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) and consistent with the MSY approach, there are no mixed-stock fishery options at West Greenland;

RECOGNISING that Greenland has been conducting an internal-use fishery that exploits many different Atlantic salmon stocks from other States of origin, including populations that are at risk of extinction;

[RECOGNISING the dependence of the people of Greenland on fisheries and the importance of the Atlantic salmon subsistence fishery to the people of Greenland;]

RECOGNISING the responsibilities that the NASCO Convention confers on the West Greenland Commission[, including Article 9];

CONSIDERING the interest to balance, to the extent possible, stock conservation needs with a fishery and the scientific advice provided to NASCO by ICES;

ACKNOWLEDGING the regulatory measure adopted by the West Greenland Commission in 2018, which included important monitoring, control, and reporting provisions, and Greenland's significant efforts in implementing those provisions;

[NOTING the existence of Greenland's national legislation for Atlantic salmon and welcoming the development of a new management plan for Atlantic salmon in Greenland, and Greenland's commitment to its effective implementation]; and

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of minimising impacts to salmon stocks exploited by the Greenland fishery;

Thus, the members of the Commission agree as follows:

- [(1) The provisions within this regulatory measure shall apply to all mixed-stock Atlantic salmon fisheries along the coast of Greenland;]
- (2) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to maintain and further develop, if necessary, monitoring, management, control and surveillance of the salmon fishery, [including specifying a fishing season, full and timely catch data reporting to ensure effective in-season monitoring and quota management, licensing of all fishers, prohibiting fishing without a licence or after a failure to report catch data, including zero catches, and that only professional fishers can sell to open-air markets,] in accordance with Greenland's national legislation and obligations within NASCO;
- [(3) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to continue the requirement for all fishers for Atlantic salmon to have a licence to fish, and to prohibit fishing for Atlantic salmon without a licence;]
- (4) As a condition of the licence, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to continue to require fishers to allow sampling of their catches on request, in support of the NASCO sampling programme;
- (5) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to continue the ban on export of wild Atlantic salmon and its products from Greenland and the prohibition of landings and sales of Atlantic salmon to fish processing factories;

- [(6) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to restrict the total allowable catch for all components of the Atlantic salmon fishery at [West] Greenland to XX metric tonnes. In the event of any overharvest in a particular year, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to an equal reduction in the total allowable catch in the following year, and agrees not to carry forward any underharvest into a future year;]
- [(7) In the event of an overharvest in two or more consecutive years, West Greenland Commission members agree to reopen the regulation as per Paragraph 10a. to review the circumstances and quota for the remaining term of the regulation;]
- (8) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to, in a timely manner, inform NASCO and, as appropriate, ICES, of significant changes in the monitoring, management, control and surveillance of the Atlantic salmon fishery and to provide an annual report on the outcome of the fishery;
- (9) Commission members agree to share experiences on monitoring, management, control and surveillance in their salmon fisheries through knowledge sharing such as management plans, conservation strategies or other relevant information as appropriate; and
- (10) This regulatory measure will apply to the fishery at Greenland starting in 2021 and will continue to apply up to and including XX, unless:
 - a. any member of the Commission requests its reconsideration based on the review of the reporting pursuant to Paragraph 8; and / or
 - b. the application of the Framework of Indicators indicates that there has been a significant change to the indicators and, therefore, a reassessment is warranted.