

	Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission <i>Annotated Agenda</i>	WGCIS(21)07A
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Annotated Agenda

The purpose of this paper is to provide the background, links to papers, and the inter-sessional correspondence for each item on the Agenda for the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission.

Papers for the meeting are on the [website](#).

Timings of the Video Conference

The West Greenland Commission will meet by video conference from Monday 8 March until Friday 12 March from 13:30 to 16:30 hours each day (GMT).

Heads of Delegations and their Advisers

Chair	Stephen Gephard
Vice Chair	Katrine Kærgaard
Canada	Doug Bliss Dave Dunn Carl McLean
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)	Katrine Kærgaard Signe Bork Hansen Maria Strandgård Rasmussen
European Union	Arnaud Peyronnet Ignacio Granell Isabel Teixeira
United Kingdom	Ruth Allin Antje Branding Seamus Connor
United States	Kim Damon-Randall Tim Sheehan
NGOs	Dave Meerburg Steve Sutton
IGOs	Anne Cooper (ICES) Cathal Gallagher (EIFAAC)
Secretariat	Emma Hatfield Wendy Kenyon

The Heads of Delegations and their Advisers will participate in the meeting with their video on. Other delegates will be able to observe the meeting by video conference. Their video and sound will be off.

Adoption of the Agenda

The [Agenda](#) was adopted by correspondence in advance of the agreed deadline of 12 February and prior to the inter-sessional correspondence period, which ran from 15 – 26 February.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chair, Stephen Gephard (United States) will open the meeting and set out the

procedures.

The Chair will ask the Commission members if there are any items to be raised under Agenda item 4. Other Business.

Any written Opening Statements will be distributed in advance of the meeting, as they are received.

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this 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

The 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, ([WGC\(18\)11](#)). Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) (DFG) is required to report its fishery measures under the regulatory measure annually.

The following papers are available:

- [WGC\(21\)04](#). 2020 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland;
- [WGC\(20\)09](#). Report to the West Greenland Commission on the Measures for the 2020 Salmon Fishery in Greenland; and
- [WGC\(20\)04](#). 2019 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland.

Inter-Sessional Correspondence

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?

o AI. 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.

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

This Agenda item affords the opportunity to discuss the progress made and challenges faced in implementing the current regulatory measure.

The following papers are available:

- [WGC\(21\)04](#). 2020 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland;
- [WGCIS\(21\)05](#). Resumé of the Implementation of the ‘Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland’, WGC(18)11, in 2018 and 2019;
- [WGC\(20\)04](#). 2019 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland;
- [WGC\(19\)04](#). Report on the Greenland Salmon Fishery in 2018;
- [WGC\(19\)05](#). Report to the West Greenland Commission on the Evaluation of the Salmon Fishery in Greenland in 2018 and Measures for the 2019 Salmon Fishery; and
- [Concerning the Salmon Fishery in Greenland 2018](#) (DFG’s letter, 30 August 2018)

No inter-sessional correspondence has taken place under this item.

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

The functions of the West Greenland Commission with regard to its respective areas, as set out in Article 8 of the [Convention](#) shall be (see Box below):

- (a) to provide a forum for consultation and co-operation among the members concerning the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks subject to this Convention;
- (b) to propose regulatory measures for fishing in the area of fisheries jurisdiction of a member of salmon originating in the rivers of other Parties; and
- (c) to make recommendations to the Council concerning the undertaking of scientific research.

In exercising its functions, the West Greenland Commission shall take into account the points detailed in Article 9 of the [Convention](#) (see Box below):

ARTICLE 9

In exercising the functions set out in articles 7 and 8, a Commission shall take into account:

- (a) the best available information, including advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea and other appropriate scientific organizations;
- (b) measures taken and other factors, both inside and outside the Commission area, that affect the salmon stocks concerned;
- (c) the efforts of States of origin to implement and enforce measures for the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks in their rivers and areas of fisheries jurisdiction, including measures referred to in article 15, paragraph 5 (b);
- (d) the extent to which the salmon stocks concerned feed in the areas of fisheries jurisdiction of the respective Parties;
- (e) the relative effects of harvesting salmon at different stages of their migration routes;
- (f) the contribution of Parties other than States of origin to the conservation of salmon stocks which migrate into their areas of fisheries jurisdiction by limiting their catches of such stocks or by other measures; and
- (g) the interests of communities which are particularly dependent on salmon fisheries.

The Commission agreed to hold this Inter-Sessional Meeting as a starting point for discussions on a potential new regulatory measure to apply to the West Greenland Salmon Fishery from 2021.

DFG has tabled its Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland, [WGCIS\(21\)06](#). DFG has stated in a letter to NASCO that it hopes that the plan will allow the Commission to adopt a multi-annual regulatory measure containing a quota only, as in previous years, [WGCIS\(21\)02](#). In its letter DFG indicated that it would like

the Commission to consider increasing the period of validity of any multi-annual regulatory measure to five years to align with that of the management plan.

Since 2006, the Commission has agreed three-year measures, as posted on the [NASCO website](#).

With respect to point ‘(a) best available information including advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)...’ the Commission requested that ICES provide catch options or alternative management advice and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding, in its request for scientific advice agreed in 2020, [CNL\(20\)13](#). This will be available in early May. A representative of ICES will attend the Meeting.

The following papers are available:

- [WGCIS\(21\)06](#). Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland;
- [WGCIS\(21\)02](#). Letter from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Greenland to the West Greenland Commission on the Future Management of Salmon in Greenland; and
- [WGC\(18\)11](#). Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland

No decision is required at this meeting. However, a decision on the adoption of a new regulatory measure for the West Greenland salmon fishery will be required at the Annual Meeting of the Commission in June.

Inter-Sessional Correspondence

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)?

o 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 it 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 been reported 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 automatised 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

Inter-Sessional Correspondence

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.

5. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

The Commission will be asked to consider whether it wishes to hold a further inter-sessional meeting prior to the Annual Meeting of the Commission in June.

- a decision on the date of any further inter-sessional meeting may be required.

6. Report of the Meeting

A Draft Report of the Meeting will be circulated for review. It is the intention of the Chair to agree the Report by the end of the Meeting.

- a decision to adopt a Report of the Meeting is required.

7. Close of the Meeting

The Chair will close the meeting.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
1 March 2021