



**North-East Atlantic Commission**

***Report of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

**NEA(21)17**

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***By Video Conference***

***1 – 3 June 2021***

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chair, Victor Rozhnov (Russian Federation), opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the video conference.
- 1.2 The Chair reminded participants that the period for inter-sessional correspondence had run from 3 May until 14 May. Members of the Commission had been able to use this time to consider the documents issued under each Agenda item and ask, and respond to, questions. He noted that no inter-sessional correspondence was received in relation to the North-East Atlantic Commission Agenda. The Chair referred participants to the Annotated Agenda, [NEA\(21\)09A](#), which was issued to all delegates on 21 May to help in their planning for the meeting. The Chair noted that the Agenda, [NEA\(21\)09](#), was adopted by correspondence on 30 April and prior to the inter-sessional correspondence period.
- 1.3 The representative of the United Kingdom provided a written Opening Statement. (Annex XX).
- 1.4 The representative of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) provided a written Opening Statement (Annex XX).
- 1.5 A list of participants at the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included as Annex XX.

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

- 2.1 A representative of ICES, Dennis Ensing, presented the scientific advice contained in the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) report, CNL(21)11, in a webinar on 28 May. Dr Ensing's presentation on the advice relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission is available as document [NEA\(21\)13](#) (Annex XX). The discussions that followed the presentation are contained in document CNL(21)60 (Annex XX).

**3. Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission**

- 3.1 The Commission noted that under the Council's 'Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO', [CNL\(13\)38](#), it was agreed that there should be an agenda item in each of the Commissions to allow for a focus on mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs).
- 3.2 The European Union, [NEA\(21\)12](#), Norway, [NEA\(21\)06](#), the Russian Federation, [NEA\(21\)11](#), and the United Kingdom, [NEA\(21\)10](#), submitted papers providing an update on the information on MSFs, including a description of any MSFs still operating,

the most recent catch data, and any changes or developments in the management of MSFs to implement NASCO's agreements.

- 3.3 A Joint Statement was provided on behalf of the European Union and Norway regarding the management of the Fisheries in the Teno Watercourse, [NEA\(21\)08](#) (Annex X). This concerned the status of work implementing the bilateral agreement between Norway and Finland on the fisheries in the Tana / Teno river, which include MSFs.
- 3.4 A Joint Statement on behalf of Norway and the Russian Federation on Coastal Fisheries Issues, [NEA\(21\)07](#) (Annex X), was also provided. It relates to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Climate and Environment (Norway) and the Federal Agency for Fishery (Russian Federation) on co-operation in management of, and monitoring and research on, wild Atlantic salmon in Finnmark County (Norway) and the Murmansk region (Russian Federation). The Commission welcomed all of the reports.
- 3.5 The representative of the NGOs acknowledged the success story of managing mixed stock fisheries in NEAC. He thanked the Commission members for their efforts. He hoped for improved control in Norway's MSF. He also noted concern about bycatch of wild salmon in southern France and asked the representative of the EU what action is being taken on this.
- 3.6 The representative of the EU said that he recalled the interventions about this from a French NGO during the Tromsø Symposium in 2019 and that there is a specific action in the French Implementation Plan to take account of this. The action is to examine the origin of these fish and to then to use this information to prepare appropriate management measures.

#### **4. Regulatory Measures**

- 4.1 The Chair reminded the Commission that in 2018 it had adopted a multi-annual Decision for the Faroese salmon fishery for 2018 / 2019, 2019 / 2020 and 2020 / 2021, [NEA\(18\)12rev\\_final](#), together with an updated Framework of Indicators (FWI). This Decision indicated that no quota would be set for the salmon fishery in the Faroese Fisheries Zone for 2018 / 2019, and that it would also apply in 2019 / 2020 and 2020 / 2021, unless the application of the FWI showed that a reassessment was warranted.
- 4.2 The Commission considered a proposal for a new 'Draft Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2021 / 2022, 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024', NEA(21)14, tabled by the Chair. The Chair noted that in previous years, the Commission agreed not to set a quota for the salmon fishery, on the understanding that the Faroe Islands would manage any salmon fishery on the basis of the advice from ICES regarding the stocks contributing to the Faroese salmon fishery and that it would be managed in a precautionary manner and with a view to sustainability, taking into account relevant factors, such as socio-economic needs. The delegation from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Faroe Islands has previously indicated that a decision that does not specify a quota is more acceptable to them and in practical terms this has worked well for all Commission members.
- 4.3 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) remains committed to the goals of NASCO and supports the Draft Decision. The representatives of the EU, UK and NGOs recognised the considerable efforts of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) over many years and thanked them for their continued

commitment to sustainable fisheries.

- 4.4 The representative of Norway acknowledged that no quota had been set for the salmon fishery in the Faroese Fisheries for many years, but noted that ICES is still using an interim approach as a basis for its advice. In the past the Commission had considered the development of a risk assessment framework for the Faroese Fishery that is needed by ICES to provide improved advice for this fishery. In previous years, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) have indicated that they would need more time to consider this issue. The representative of Norway asked about progress in this regard.
- 4.5 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that the fact that there had been no fishery in the Faroe Islands for 20 years is recognition of their commitment to salmon conservation. He said that, given ICES advice for many years had been that there were no catch options, little work has been carried out on further examination of stocks in Faroe Islands waters, due to resource constraints. There is, therefore, no update, but the Government remains committed to sustainable fisheries and taking the advice of ICES in managing the salmon fishery.
- 4.6 The representative of Norway encouraged Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to provide the required feedback, which would enable agreement on the revised approach for ICES and allow the provision of improved advice.
- 4.7 The ‘Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2021 / 2022, 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024’, NEA(21)16, was adopted (Annex XX).
- 4.8 The Commission agreed that the same procedure for applying the FWI as used during the previous multi-annual Decision would apply during the new measure. Under this arrangement, a small group comprising one representative from each member of the Commission would work by correspondence to co-ordinate the data collection and application of the FWI. The Secretariat would contact the members of the Commission to seek their nominations for the group after the meeting. The Secretariat would then liaise with the group’s chair and report the findings to the members of the Commission and to ICES in January in each year when the FWI is applied.

## **5. Report of the Working Group on *Gyrodactylus salaris***

- 5.1 The Chair reminded the Commission that it had agreed in 2018 that the Working Group on *Gyrodactylus salaris* should meet again in 2021. The Working Group on *Gyrodactylus salaris* met on 17 March 2021, by video conference, and the Report of the Working Group on *Gyrodactylus salaris* is available, [NEA\(21\)05](#). The Chair noted that the Parties’ / jurisdictions’ reports on *Gyrodactylus salaris* were included in the Annexes of the Report.
- 5.2 A member of the Working Group, Michael Millane (European Union), presented the Report of the Working Group and its recommendation to the Commission. The Chair thanked Dr Millane, and his colleagues, for their work.
- 5.3 The Commission agreed that a two-day meeting of the Working Group on *G. salaris* should take place in 2022, at a time when a face-to-face meeting was possible. The Working Group would have the same Terms of Reference as in 2021.
- 5.4 The Commission agreed that the Secretariat and the Chair of the Working Group should explore a virtual / hybrid element to the meeting to maximise participation and benefit.

## **6. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize**

6.1 The Chair announced that the winner of the North-East Atlantic Commission £1,000 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme is Mr Hans Spinner from Switzerland.

6.2 He noted that a 72 cm female salmon was tagged at Agdenes near the outlet of the Trondheimsfjord on 26 June 2020. The salmon was caught on rod and line on 8 July 2020 in the river Orkla and the fish was released back into the river after capture. This fish was tagged as part of project to estimate the number of salmon entering the Trondheimsfjord.

6.3 The Chair offered congratulations to Mr Spinner on behalf of the Commission.

## **7. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice**

7.1 The Chair of the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC), which assists the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES, Paddy Gargan, presented the relevant sections of the 'Revised Draft Request to ICES for Scientific Advice', SSC (21)02.

7.2 The Commission agreed in principle to accept the relevant section of the SSC's recommendation and referred it to the Council for adoption. The Commission noted that there may need to be adjustment to the questions depending on the outcome of discussions in another Commission and agreed that, if required, adjustments could be made to the Draft Request in Council.

## **8. Other Business**

8.1 There was no other business.

## **9. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**

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

## **10. Report of the Meeting**

10.1 The Commission agreed a report of the Meeting.

## **11. Close of the Meeting**

11.1 The Chair thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission.