



***Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the
West Greenland Commission, 29 – 30 May 2021***

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Stephen Gephard (United States), opened the meeting and welcomed participants.
- 1.2 The Chair noted that the aim of the meeting was to continue discussion on the development of a multi-annual regulatory measure for fishing for Atlantic salmon at West Greenland in the coming years. He reminded participants of earlier discussions. In March 2021, the West Greenland Commission (WGC) met inter-sessionally to begin the process of developing a new regulatory measure. At that meeting, the Commission reviewed the ‘Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland for 2018, 2019 and 2020’, [WGC\(18\)11](#). The Commission began consideration of a new multi-annual regulatory measure to apply from 2021. A Working Group was convened to produce a strawman multi-annual regulatory measure for consideration by the Commission. The Commission discussed the initial draft and further changes were made, although the document was considered a draft and no Commission member had agreed to its contents. The Working Group’s Proposal for a ‘West Greenland Commission Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure’, WGCIS(21)10, was included in the ‘Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission, 8 – 12 March 2021’, [WGCIS\(21\)11](#).
- 1.3 The Chair reminded participants that although there had been no inter-sessional correspondence period for this Inter-Sessional Meeting, there had been an inter-sessional correspondence period for the West Greenland Commission Annual Meeting which would begin on 31 May 2021. This could be found in the Annotated Agenda, [WGC\(21\)09A](#). During that period, the United States had provided edits and comments on WGCIS(21)10, which were circulated to members of the WGC in document WGCIS(21)14.
- 1.4 A list of participants is included as Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, [WGCIS\(21\)18](#) (Annex 2).

3. Update from Greenland on the Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland

- 3.1 The Chair reminded participants that prior to the West Greenland Commission Inter-Sessional Meeting in March, a ‘Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland’, [WGCIS\(21\)06](#) was circulated. Since then Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) (DFG) has circulated a revision of the Draft Management Plan, [WGCIS\(21\)16](#), and the English translation of the Draft Executive Order for the salmon fishery, [WGCIS\(21\)17](#). The Chair noted how unusual it was for such documents, that had yet to be agreed by the Government of Greenland, to be shared, and said he very much appreciated this. All members of the Commission thanked DFG for sharing these documents.

- 3.2 The representative of DFG indicated that since March, the Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland had been through a three-week public consultation period and some revisions had been made in response. It is hoped that the Draft Management Plan will be approved by the Government of Greenland in the coming weeks, as it has already been submitted for governmental approval. The following elements were revised in the latest version of the Draft Management Plan: the setting of quota and management areas have been expanded to include East Greenland; a start and end date for the potential period for the fishing season in the different management areas, as the fishing season may change annually depending on when the salmon arrive in an area; and some fine tuning of the language.
- 3.3 The representative of DFG said that the Draft Executive Order had been translated into English and circulated, [WGCIS\(21\)17](#). It has completed a four-week public consultation and minor changes may take place before it is agreed by the Government of Greenland (expected in June). She also noted that communication on the documents would take place with the stakeholders through the Greenlandic interest group for fishing and hunting, KNAPK.
- 3.4 Members asked a number of questions related to the Draft Management Plan. The representative of Canada asked whether the first sentence of paragraph 3.2 of the Draft Management Plan referred to the East Greenland fishery being included in the management plan and quota, as well as the West Greenland fishery. The representative of DFG confirmed this, with the total allowable catch (TAC) for both East and West Greenland being based on the agreement in the WGC.
- 3.5 The representative of the United States noted that the Draft Management Plan states that quotas cannot be transferred between areas or years. She asked whether this means that any unused quota from one management area in a given year cannot be utilised by any other fisher within a different management area. The representative of DFG confirmed this understanding of the Draft Management Plan.
- 3.6 The representative of the UK asked whether section 3.4 of the Draft Management Plan meant that bycatch of salmon must be landed and would be subtracted from the quota. The representative of DFG agreed that this was the case.
- 3.7 The representative of the NGOs asked about technical conservation measures in section 3.3.5 of the Draft Management Plan, noting that the number of knots allowed in nets was defined for non-commercial fishing, but not for commercial fishing. The representative of DFG replied that there is another Executive Order on technical measures which contains the specific technical conservation measures for commercial fishing, including the salmon fishery. She stated that the length of the nets, and other measurements, are the same for the commercial and non-commercial nets.
- 3.8 The representative of DFG also provided responses to questions about the Draft Executive Order. The representative of the United States asked how DFG will implement the regulatory measure including the TAC and overharvest payback provisions, which did not appear to be in the Draft Management Plan or Draft Executive Order. The representative of DFG replied that in the current regulatory measure there is an overharvest provision, although there is not one in national legislation. She noted that in Greenland the overharvest provision is unpopular, and DFG would prefer not to have it at all – a matter which may arise later in discussions.
- 3.9 Regarding the Draft Executive Order, the representative of DFG clarified that the term ‘on-shore first sales plants,’ referred to factories. She also agreed with the

representative of the United States' interpretation of paragraph 7.5 that this allowed potential future export of salmon outside Greenland, if such a new Executive Order on export would be produced and approved by Government. The paragraph states that the Government has the power to allow it, but not that it is currently allowed. She noted that this paragraph had been included in the Executive Order for many years and not been used. It allowed the Government of Greenland flexibility and allowed stable legislation over time.

- 3.10 The representative of Canada asked about Paragraph 1 in the Scope of the Draft Executive Order. The representative of DFG noted that the Draft Executive Order defined the fishing territory in general, but that the salmon fishery is an inshore fishery and therefore was conducted within three nautical miles of the baseline.
- 3.11 The representative of the NGOs noted that in previous Executive Orders there been information on whether drift net fishing is allowed. He noted that this did not appear in the Draft Executive Order. The representative of DFG stated that in 2020 drift nets were banned and this is in the Draft Executive Order, but that this may have been missed in the translation of the document.
- 3.12 A representative of Canada asked for clarification on the meaning of 'local booths and local institutions' in Paragraph 6 of the Draft Executive Order. The representative of DFG stated that a local booth is an open-air market, and local institutions are kindergartens, old people's homes and so on.
- 3.13 The representative of DFG explained that the English translation is not the official Executive Order but offered to ensure consistency in the English translation with the terminology used in the regulatory measure.
- 3.14 A representative of the EU noted that Paragraph 8 of the Draft Executive Order only related to the closure of commercial fishing when the set quota begins to approach its limit. The representative for DFG replied that paragraph 14.3 is the relevant provision for non-commercial fisheries with the same intent.

4. Consideration of the Working Group's Proposal for a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure, WGCIS(21)10

- 4.1 The Chair stated that in order to make progress with the development of the proposal for a multi-annual regulatory measure, the members of the Commission would consider the version of WGCIS(21)10 that contained edits and comments submitted by the United States, which were circulated as WGCIS(21)14. This document was considered in detail.
- 4.2 At the end of the Inter-Sessional Meeting, three key issues remained outstanding, the duration of the regulatory measure, the level of the annual TAC, and whether or not to include a provision on the payback of overharvest. DFG argued strongly for the elimination of the payback provision. Given that the TAC had been overharvested in all three years of the previous regulatory measure, the four other members of the Commission considered the payback provision essential and pressed to retain it. They also noted that there was a linkage between the payback provision and the level of the TAC. With respect to the duration of the measure, DFG expressed its continued preference for a five-year measure that would align with its domestic management plan but indicated it had some flexibility on this. The other members of the Commission noted that it was premature to decide on the duration of the measure until it was clear what the other provisions of the measure would look like.

- 4.3 The document ‘Draft Regulatory Measure Arising from the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission’, WGC(21)11, was developed for further consideration during the West Greenland Commission Annual Meeting (Annex 3).

5. Other Business

- 5.1 No other business was discussed.

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 Participants – WGCIS

Canada

Doug Bliss
David Dunn
Carl McLean
Tony Blanchard
Cindy Breau
Simon Cridland
James Goudie
Marie-Pier Levesque
Dale Marsden
Dave Meerburg
Isabelle Morisset
Martha Robertson
Justin Turple

Denmark (in respect of FI & G)

Katrine Kærgaard
Maria Strandgård Rasmussen
Magnus Thunn Hansen

European Union

Arnaud Peyronnet
Ignacio Granell
Ciaran Byrne
Cathal Gallagher
Denis Maher
Niall Ó Maoiléidigh

United Kingdom

Ruth Allin
Seamus Connor
Alan Walker

United States

Kim Damon-Randall
Steve Gephard (Chair)
Tim Sheehan
Kimberley Blankenbeker
Julie Crocker
Dan Kircheis
Mavish Madad
Rebecca Wintering

NGOs

Thomas Chrosniak
Dave Meerburg

Secretariat

Emma Hatfield
Wendy Kenyon

WGCIS(21)18

Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

By Video Conference

29 – 30 May 2021

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Update from Greenland on the Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland
4. Consideration of the Working Group's Proposal for a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure, WGCIS(21)10
5. Other Business
6. Report of the Meeting
7. Close of the Meeting

WGC(21)11

Draft Regulatory Measure Arising from the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

RECALLING the responsibilities that the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean confers on the West Greenland Commission (WGC), including Article 9;

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

RECOGNISING the dependence of Greenland on fisheries and that Greenland has been conducting an internal-use fishery that is important to the people of Greenland and that exploits many different Atlantic salmon stocks from other States of origin, including populations that are at risk of extinction;

CONSIDERING the interest to balance, to the extent possible, both the scientific advice provided to NASCO by ICES and stock conservation needs – in particular, those related to minimising impacts on the weakest salmon stocks – with the prosecution of a fishery.

ACKNOWLEDGING the regulatory measure adopted by the WGC in 2018, which included, *inter alia*, important monitoring, control, and reporting provisions and noting Greenland's significant efforts to implement those and other provisions broadly to ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to management; and

NOTING Greenland's national legislation for Atlantic salmon, its development of a new management plan for Atlantic salmon, and its commitment to their effective implementation;

Thus, the Members of the Commission agree as follows:

- (1) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to maintain and further develop, where necessary, monitoring, management, control and surveillance measures for the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery. At a minimum, these shall include: (a) specifying a fishing season within the period between August and November; (b) ensuring full and timely catch data collection and reporting to ensure effective in-season monitoring and quota management; (c) requiring all fishers for Atlantic salmon to have a licence to fish; (d) prohibiting fishing for Atlantic salmon without a licence or after any failure by fishers to report catch data as required, including zero catches; and (e) permitting only professional fishers to sell their catch and only to open-air markets and local institutions.
- (2) 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.
- (3) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to continue (a) the ban on export of wild Atlantic salmon and its products from Greenland and (b) the prohibition of landings and sales of Atlantic salmon to fish processing factories.

- [(4) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to restrict the total allowable to catch (TAC) 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 Island and Greenland) agrees to implement an equal reduction in its TAC~~the total allowable catch for~~ the following year, and agrees not to carry forward any underharvest into a future year.;
- [(5) In the event of an overharvest in two or more consecutive years, ~~West-Greenland Commission~~ members agree to reopen the regulatory~~ion~~ measure as per Paragraph 810a: below to review the circumstances leading to the overharvest and the amount of TAC~~quota~~ available for the remaindering~~ing-term~~ of the regulatory~~ion~~.;]
- (6) Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to, in a timely manner, inform NASCO and, as appropriate, ICES, of any significant changes in the monitoring, management, control and surveillance of the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery and to provide an annual report on the implementation of this measure and the outcome of the fishery.
- (7) 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.
- (8) This regulatory measure will apply to the fishery at West 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 6; and / or
 - b. the application of the Framework of Indicators indicates that there has been a significant change to the indicators and, therefore, a re-assessment is warranted.