



**REPORT OF THE
THIRTY-EIGHTH
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
WEST GREENLAND COMMISSION**

By Video Conference

27 May – 4 June 2021

Chair: Stephen Gephard (USA)

Vice-Chair: Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the
Faroe Islands and Greenland))

Secretary: Emma Hatfield

WGC(21)19

WGC(21)19

Report of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

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1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Stephen Gephard (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to the video conference.
- 1.2 The Chair reminded delegates that the Commission had adopted its Agenda, [WGC\(21\)09](#), (Annex 1) by correspondence on 30 April 2021, in advance of the period for inter-sessional correspondence which ran from 3 – 21 May. An Annotated Agenda, [WGC\(21\)09A](#), which included the inter-sessional correspondence, was issued to all delegates on 24 May to inform planning for the meeting. The inter-sessional correspondence can be found in full in Annex 2.
- 1.3 Written Opening Statements were provided by Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) (DFG), the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (Annex 3).
- 1.4 A written Opening Statement was provided on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) attending the Annual Meeting (Annex 4).
- 1.5 The Chair expressed appreciation for these Opening Statements.
- 1.6 A list of participants at the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included as Annex 5.

2. 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. Dr Ensing's presentation on the advice relevant to the West Greenland Commission is available as document [WGC\(21\)10](#) (Annex 6). The discussions held on the presentation during the webinar are contained in document [CNL\(21\)60](#) (Annex 7). The Chair thanked Dr Ensing for his presentation.
- 2.2 The representative of the NGOs noted that the ICES presentation included a total catch figure of 31.7 t and an unreported catch figure of 10 t for the fishery in 2020. However, the Draft Management Plan submitted by DFG and the Annual Progress Report (APR) for Greenland for the 2020 calendar year included a total catch figure of 30.7 t and an unreported catch figure of 6.1 t. He asked for clarification on this discrepancy.
- 2.3 The representative of DFG stated that, as previously explained to the Commission, the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources, who provides the information to ICES, is an independent institution and she was unaware of how the Institute calculated its figures. She indicated that the official figures are those supplied by Greenland's Fishery License Control Authority (GFLK), as contained in the APR and Draft Management Plan. With regards to the unreported catch figures, the 10 t is the figure used by ICES for a number

of years. However, as all salmon fishers in Greenland are now licensed, there is a known pool of participants and GFLK have been able to estimate the unreported catch as 6.1 t.

3. Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

- 3.1 The Chair advised the Commission that there had been two inter-sessional meetings of the Commission in the lead up to the Annual Meeting. A meeting had been held in March 2021, [WGC\(21\)07](#), and another immediately prior to the Annual Meeting of the Commission, [WGC\(21\)12rev](#).
- 3.2 The Chair reminded the Commission that it had met in March to begin the process of developing a new regulatory measure for the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery for the coming years. The Commission had reviewed the 2020 salmon fishery at West Greenland and considered progress made in implementing the ‘Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland’ for 2018, 2019 and 2020, [WGC\(18\)11](#). The Commission also began discussions on a new regulatory measure to apply from 2021. The representative of DFG had given a presentation on its ‘Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland’. The Commission had established a Working Group to draft proposed text for inclusion in a new multi-annual regulatory measure for the fishery. This text is included in the document ‘Working Group’s Proposal for a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon [at West Greenland]’. This proposal was considered at the March Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission and the output of those discussions is reflected in the revised document ‘Working Group’s Proposal for a ‘West Greenland Commission Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure’’, WGCIS(21)10.
- 3.3 The Chair noted that, during the inter-sessional correspondence period preceding the Annual Meeting (see Annex 2), suggested edits to the revised Working Group’s Proposal, WGCIS(21)10, were proposed. These suggested edits are contained in ‘United States Edits on Revised Working Group Proposal for a Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure’, WGCIS(21)14.
- 3.4 The Chair reminded the Commission that, at the May Inter-Sessional Meeting, the members of the Commission had discussed the proposed text and edits suggested by the United States (as contained in WGCIS(21)14) in detail. DFG had also provided an updated version of the Draft Management Plan and a draft of a new Executive Order, both translated into English. The representative of DFG had advised the Commission that the Draft Management Plan had been submitted to the Government of Greenland for approval but could still be subject to minor changes. The Commission had thanked DFG for sharing these internal government documents with the Commission before they had been approved by the Government, noting that it was very unusual to do so. The Commission felt that this had been very beneficial to its work. The outputs of the discussions held during the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission were contained in the ‘Draft Regulatory Measure Arising from the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission’, WGC(21)11, for consideration at the Commission’s Annual Meeting.

4. Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin

- 4.1 This item had replaced the usual item ‘Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members

of the Commission’ on the 2021 Agenda, to inform the discussions required for the negotiation of a new regulatory measure under Agenda item 6.

4.2 The Chair referred to the ‘Compilation of Responses Submitted by West Greenland Commission members / jurisdictions in Relation to Questions 1.2 and 4.1 of the Annual Progress Reports for the Calendar Years 2018, 2019 and 2020’, [WGC\(21\)08](#), and the inter-sessional correspondence that had taken place on this item (Annex 2).

4.3 There was no further discussion under this Agenda item at the Meeting.

5. Proposal from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on Reporting on the West Greenland Salmon Fishery

5.1 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) had requested that a supplementary item be added to the Agenda for the Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission. This request was accompanied by an Explanatory Memorandum (contained in document [WGC\(21\)06](#)). In accordance with Rule 15 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure, this item, ‘Proposal from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on Reporting on the West Greenland Salmon Fishery’, was added as item 5 on the Agenda for the Meeting.

5.2 The Chair introduced the proposal from DFG and noted that there had been inter-sessional correspondence on this item (see Annex 2).

5.3 The representative of DFG indicated that it wished to streamline the reporting requirements for the West Greenland Fishery. However, the other members felt that such a change was premature and should be reconsidered under a future multi-annual regulatory measure.

6. Regulatory Measures

6.1 The Chair noted that Commission members had been able to consider the ‘Draft Regulatory Measure Arising from the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission’, [WGC\(21\)11](#), following the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Commission.

6.2 The representative of the United States recognised the resources invested in Greenland to improve the monitoring and control of the fishery and acknowledged that it takes time to implement new systems successfully. However, she noted that there had been an approximately 10 t overharvest in each of the three years of the 2018 – 2020 regulatory measure. The position of the United States was, therefore, that it was premature to remove the overharvest payback provisions in the regulatory measure, while keeping the quota at the same level as sought by Greenland. The representative of the United States reminded the Commission that Canada, the EU, the UK and the United States had all indicated at the May Inter-Sessional Meeting that the overharvest payback provision was an essential part of any regulatory measure going forward, but DFG had indicated that it was unable to accept a regulatory measure that contained such a provision. The representative of the United States had subsequently proposed language which she had hoped would be acceptable to Greenland, but, after consultations, the representative of DFG had indicated that Greenland could not agree to the proposed text. The representative of the United States asked DFG to propose an alternative that it believed would work for all members of the Commission.

6.3 The representatives of Canada, the EU and the UK supported the comments made by the United States.

- 6.4 The representative of DFG noted that DFG had previously drafted text that it believed would be agreeable to the other Commission members during the inter-sessional correspondence period. However, the proposed text had not been accepted by the other members of the Commission. She reiterated that Greenland could not accept a payback provision in a new regulatory measure for the fishery.
- 6.5 The members of the Commission used the intervals between sessions of the Meeting to try to reach agreement on the elements of a regulatory measure that would be acceptable to all members of the Commission.
- 6.6 At the fourth session of the Annual Meeting, the representative of the United States made the following statement:

Throughout the two Inter-Sessional Meetings and this Annual Meeting, the United States has been working to try to find a solution to the significant issues of disagreement in the draft regulatory measure – the level of annual TAC and how to address the ongoing issue of overharvest. The United States has provided several options for consideration that we felt would satisfy DFG’s concerns while still meeting the mandates of the other members. However, DFG has rejected every proposal we have put on the table. We are extremely disappointed in this. The other members have shown great flexibility and willingness to compromise and their options have also been rejected by DFG. It appears to me that DFG is not willing to negotiate to adequately address all members’ concerns which leads me to question DFG’s commitment to living up to its obligations under the NASCO convention.

I understand DFG’s position in seeking a 30 t quota for this measure. However, that is not acceptable to the United States given the payback provision in the previous regulatory measure and the 10 t overharvest that occurred in 2020. The United States expects DFG to honor the provisions of the agreed 2018 – 2020 regulatory measure and fully expects the 10 t overharvest from 2020 to be deducted from any proposed TAC for 2021. Additionally, having a 20 t TAC for 2021 would provide a buffer should the typical overharvest of about 10 t occur again this year.

I am very uncomfortable with DFG’s unwillingness to address the overharvest issue as overharvest has occurred in each year of the previous three-year regulatory measure. The United States appreciates the effort and resources that have been invested into the management of the Atlantic salmon fishery at Greenland over the past decade or so. We believe that this investment is paying dividends, and the monitoring and control of the fishery has improved greatly. However, DFG has not yet demonstrated an ability to manage the fishery within the allocated quota, yet the other members of this commission are expected to accept a quota that is inconsistent with the scientific advice which is that there are no available catch options and does not contain best practice management measures around overharvest. This approach is counter-intuitive, and I am struggling to understand DFG’s logic. From our perspective, the removal of an overharvest provision should only be considered after it has been demonstrated that the fishery can be managed within the agreed upon TAC.

Bringing any concept proposal that includes a 30 t TAC and that is significantly weakened with no overharvest provision to my leadership is very difficult as our administration in office today is very different to the administration we had in

2018. Our current government has openly expressed an agenda that focuses on addressing climate change, the environment and species at risk, such as Atlantic salmon. These issues are a prominent concern within the current administration, and I do expect this to be very politically sensitive, both domestically and internationally, given the proposed approach to this regulatory measure.

At the end of the day, I have to go back to my leadership and stakeholders and defend the decisions that are made here. The United States is investing significant resources in recovering our Atlantic salmon populations and addressing known threats to the species. Our indigenous groups have had to give up fishing for Atlantic salmon in our waters for sustenance purposes that date back time immemorial. It has been mentioned in previous discussions within NASCO that Atlantic salmon caught in Greenland are not only used to feed people but also to feed sled dogs. That is a very difficult thing to accept for our indigenous people and those investing such significant efforts to prevent the extinction of this species in the United States. In the past, a 20 t quota was sufficient to meet the needs of the people in Greenland. It is not clear to me why that now is no longer the case and why DFG is unable to show any flexibility with regard to the TAC, honoring commitments from past regulatory measures or implementing measures to ensure current harvest limits are respected. I truly hope that we can find a way forward that is more acceptable to all the members of this Commission.

6.7 The representative of Canada also made a statement to the Commission as follows:

Canada came to this year's West Greenland Commission meetings with some concerns, mostly centred around two issues. First, as all are aware, despite hard work and progress by Greenland to improve the management of their salmon fishery, there have been recurrent overharvests in the Greenland fishery in each year that the previous regulatory measure was in place. Secondly, we have advice from ICES that catch in the Greenland fishery for 2021, 2022 and 2023 be zero as the majority of contributing stocks are suffering reduced reproductive capacity. This advice has not changed for some years.

Given this context, we hoped that all West Greenland Commission members would come to the Commission meetings this year ready to recognise the survival challenges faced by Atlantic salmon and discuss the potential contributions to its conservation that can be offered by the Greenland fishery. We had hoped that members would be ready to engage in a flexible way to find solutions that would meet the needs and concerns of all members while supporting better salmon conservation.

Unfortunately that is not the way the discussions have played out. We have seen, effectively, no flexibility from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) with respect to the specific Total Allowable Harvest, despite the status of the stocks, particularly stocks from Canada and United States, from which the majority of the salmon fished originate. Perhaps more concerning – there has been no acceptance that past overharvests need to be accounted for, despite a clear commitment to such accountability under the last regulatory measure, and despite other members having taken strong action for conservation in their own fisheries, most notably the closure of commercial fisheries. Other Commission members have proposed constructive ways

forward and sought middle ground, but this approach has not been reciprocated by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). Canada has found this lack of flexibility, and this unwillingness to live up to a fundamental commitment under the previous regulatory measure, quite disappointing, and it calls into question the credibility of any future commitments DFG might make with respect to the fishery.

In the course of the discussions, DFG has referred repeatedly to the importance of the fishery to their people, and to the challenges in managing the fishery. We are not deaf to these concerns: many Canadians have a strong reliance on salmon for subsistence purposes, and we understand well the challenges of managing remote, northern fisheries with indigenous peoples. We have appreciated DFG's openness to discussing these challenges in recent years, and to working with other Parties to address them. And we have appreciated the strides DFG has taken in recent years in strengthening the monitoring and control of its fishery.

We hope this co-operative work can continue in this year's fishery and into the future. We know that the stresses on Atlantic salmon populations are many and varied, not the least of which are the changes undergoing to the world's marine and freshwater ecosystems. But this should not prevent us from taking action to control our impact on the species. Such action will have limited value if too many fish are still being caught, and it is disappointing that DFG has shown so little responsiveness to that fundamental need to ensure the sustainability of any harvest. We want to state quite clearly, however, that we do not consider the matters of future total allowable harvests, of overharvest during the last measure, or of accounting for future overharvests to be closed or agreed.

6.8 The representative of the EU stated that the EU shared the disappointment and frustration expressed by the United States and Canada. He noted that the EU had also tried to provide solutions, acknowledging the needs of the various Commission members, and was disappointed that a solution had not been found. He stated that the issue of the overharvest taken in 2018 – 2020 was not closed. This was a very clear commitment from DFG, under an international agreement, to pay back any overharvest and the EU expected that commitment to be honoured. He indicated that the EU would continue to revisit this issue for as long as necessary. The representative of the EU also felt that this was a missed opportunity. He reminded the Commission that there had been several years of improvement and major effort invested, and he felt it was a pity now to be back in this unanticipated situation. He stated that a bad regulatory measure, with a 30 t quota and no overharvest measures, both of which were very difficult for the EU to accept in an agreement, could be rediscussed in 2022. He indicated that it was important that the members of the Commission work together to consider ways to monitor the quota better to avoid an overharvest.

6.9 The representative of the UK made the following statement:

The UK had come into these negotiations hoping to agree a new regulatory measure for West Greenland that would both recognise the efforts that have taken place in Greenland to strengthen the management of the salmon fishery, but that would also strengthen the protection of North Atlantic salmon by acknowledging and helping to drive down the consistently high levels of overharvest. We are disappointed not to have been able to agree such a measure.

Given the level of effort that has been put into developing Greenland's salmon management plan and improved monitoring of catches, to enable responsive management, to quota, which we are assured should result in reduced overharvest in 2021, we are willing to consider a one-year temporary measure. We strongly support the EU's suggestion to review fisheries management in preparation for next year's discussions.

- 6.10 The representative of DFG noted that DFG was also disappointed in the negotiations. She indicated that the Greenlandic Government was adamant that it could not agree to any payback provision or a quota of less than 30 t. She noted that pressure to leave NASCO was increasing in Greenland, and the Government could not see how Greenland could stay and agree to lower and lower quotas and payback provisions and satisfy the stakeholders in Greenland. However, she indicated that Greenland was still committed to improving management, monitoring and control in the fishery and to continue the work on the Management Plan. Given the measures and actions already implemented, DFG was confident that this would result in better management and control. DFG would continue to improve measures and this would not change, whether or not a regulatory measure was agreed. However, she reiterated that DFG could not accept a quota of less than 30 t.
- 6.11 The representative of the United States asked the representative of DFG what steps would be taken if the Commission were to agree to a one-year regulatory measure with an agreed TAC, and the TAC was exceeded. The representative of DFG indicated that, as in previous years, the reasons for the overharvest would be examined and consideration would be given to how to prevent this happening again in future.
- 6.12 The representative of the EU reiterated that it was important to come to an agreement. He indicated that the EU may be able to accept a one-year regulatory measure, with a 30 t TAC and no overharvest provision, but this would require an inter-sessional meeting to be held to discuss possible monitoring measures for the TAC. He asked whether such a temporary measure, which would allow consideration of additional monitoring to ensure no future overharvest, would be acceptable to the other Parties.
- 6.13 The representative of Canada thanked the representative of the EU for continuing to try to find a solution to the impasse. He noted that Canada was supportive of continuing discussions and felt that inter-sessional meetings will be required for various reasons. However, he noted that the proposal on the table was not the preferred option for Canada in terms of the quota. Canada could agree to a one-year regulatory measure with a 20 t TAC.
- 6.14 The representative of the United States indicated that the United States could support a one-year regulatory measure, but not with a 30 t TAC. She stated that an inter-sessional meeting, as proposed by the EU, is essential. She asked if the Commission could consider a 27 t TAC, deducting the 3 t allocated to East Greenland.
- 6.15 The representative of the UK stated that, given the limited possibilities, the UK could support a one-year regulatory measure.
- 6.16 The representative of DFG asked the EU whether it envisaged holding the proposed inter-sessional meeting after the 2021 fishery. In response, the representative of the EU indicated that this was flexible, but it may be necessary to hold the meeting before the end of 2021, noting that it was likely the Commission would need to hold further inter-sessional meetings in advance of the 2022 Annual Meeting to discuss future regulatory measures.

- 6.17 The representative of DFG asked the representative of the United States whether it could agree to a 27 t quota for the fishery at West Greenland, which would allow a 30 t quota to be set for Greenland, including the 3 t quota for East Greenland. In response, the representative of the United States noted that DFG had indicated that it would set a 30 t quota and allocate 3 t of this to East Greenland. Since this is outside the purview of the West Greenland Commission, the United States felt that this should be deducted from whatever TAC is specified in a West Greenland measure.
- 6.18 The representative of DFG indicated that DFG could agree to a one-year regulatory measure that allowed a quota of 30 t for the entire fishery in Greenland, with no payback provision. DFG was also willing to agree to hold one or more inter-sessional meetings if the other members of the Commission felt this was necessary. The representative of DFG stated that DFG has been completely transparent and will continue to keep members of the Commission updated on the fishery.
- 6.19 The Commission considered the text contained within the ‘Draft Regulatory Measure Arising from the May Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission’, WGC(21)11. The Commission discussed how the text in document WGC(21)11 could be adapted to reflect the discussions held at the Meeting. The proposed amendments are contained in the ‘Draft Interim Regulatory Measure of the West Greenland Commission’, WGC(21)17.
- 6.20 The Commission considered further amendments to the ‘Draft Interim Regulatory Measure of the West Greenland Commission’, WGC(21)17.
- 6.21 The representatives of the United States and Canada expressed concerns over the level of TAC and lack of an overharvest payback provision, noting that while they would not block the adoption of this measure, they would not agree to it.
- 6.22 The representative of the UK also expressed disappointment at the outcome of the negotiations but indicated that it would support a one-year regulatory measure.
- 6.23 An ‘Interim Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland in 2021’, [WGC\(21\)18](#), (Annex 8) was adopted by the Commission.

7. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

- 7.1 The members of the West Greenland Commission have worked co-operatively over the past five decades to collect biological data on Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland. These data provide critical inputs to the stock assessments conducted annually by the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon.
- 7.2 A representative of the United States, Tim Sheehan, provided details on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme in 2020. He reminded the Commission that a contingency plan for the sampling programme had been developed in case travel restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic prevented the international samplers from travelling to Greenland. The decision was taken in mid-July 2020 to proceed with the contingency plan.
- 7.3 Mr Sheehan indicated that, despite the hard work in getting the sampling supplies to Greenland, the contingency plan had not been as successful in 2020 as had been hoped. However, following subsequent discussions there was agreement to continue with the contingency plan in 2021, especially the citizen-science element. This involved the fishers collecting samples from their fish and returning them for analysis. He noted that time and effort would need to be invested to develop the citizen-science aspect, and, in the meantime, it was hoped that the international samplers could continue to be

involved.

- 7.4 Mr Sheehan then introduced the ‘Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2021’, WGC(21)13, noting that the most substantive change from 2020 was the inclusion of an additional bullet linked to the citizen science sampling programme.
- 7.5 The representative of the UK noted that the UK would provide two samplers. The representative of the EU indicated that EU – France would provide one sampler in addition to the two samplers from EU – Ireland. A ‘Revised Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme’, WGC(21)14, was tabled to address this additional contribution from the EU.
- 7.6 The Commission adopted a ‘Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2021’, [WGC\(21\)15](#), (Annex 9).

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 8.1 The Chair announced that the winner of the West Greenland Commission £1,000 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Maren Levisen, Maniitsoq, Greenland. The winning tag had been applied to a two-year old hatchery smolt that was released in mid-May 1981 below the Howland Dam on the Penobscot River in the United States. The Commission offered its congratulations to the winner.
- 8.2 In response to a question from the representative of the NGOs, a representative of the United States noted that seven tags had been returned from the West Greenland Commission area for inclusion in the 2021 draw. Six of these had been from historical tag releases and recaptures. The winning tag had been caught in the early 1980s.
- 8.3 The representative of DFG noted that only one tag had been returned from the West Greenland Commission area for inclusion in the 2020 draw. She noted that while the tag awards are always publicised in Greenland, the 2020 award had been given increased publicity to encourage fishers to return all their tags, including old tags. She noted that this increased publicity will continue, which, it is hoped, should encourage more fishers to return their tags in future.

9. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice

- 9.1 The Commission agreed to the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) in relation to the West Greenland Commission area. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document [CNL\(21\)14](#) (Annex 10).

10. Other Business

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

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

12. Report of the Meeting

- 12.1 The Commission agreed the report of its Meeting.

13. Close of the Meeting

- 13.1 The representatives of Canada, the EU and the United States provided written Closing Statements (Annex 11). The representative of the UK noted agreement with the Statement provided by the EU.
- 13.2 The Chair thanked the members of the Commission and observers for their contributions and closed the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission.

WGC(21)19

Compte rendu de la trente-huitième session annuelle de la Commission du Groenland occidental de l'Organisation pour la Conservation du Saumon de l'Atlantique Nord

Par vidéoconférence

27 mai – 4 juin 2021

1. Ouverture de la session

- 1.1 Le Président, Stephen Gephard (États-Unis), a ouvert la session et accueilli les délégués à la vidéoconférence.
- 1.2 Le Président a rappelé aux délégués que la Commission avait adopté son Ordre du jour, [WGC\(21\)09](#), (Annexe 1) par correspondance le 30 Avril 2021, avant la période de correspondance inter-sessionnelle qui courait du 3 au 21 mai. Un Ordre du jour annoté, [WGC\(21\)09A](#), incluant la correspondance inter-sessionnelle, a été transmis à tous les délégués le 24 mai pour communiquer l'organisation de la session. La correspondance inter-sessionnelle complète se trouve en Annexe 2.
- 1.3 Des déclarations d'ouverture écrites ont été fournies par le Canada, le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) (DFG), le Royaume-Uni (RU) et les États-Unis (Annexe 3).
- 1.4 Une déclaration d'ouverture écrite a été transmise au nom des organisations non-gouvernementales (ONGs) participant à la session annuelle (Annexe 4).
- 1.5 Le Président a exprimé ses remerciements pour ces déclarations d'ouverture.
- 1.6 Une liste des participants aux trente-huitièmes sessions annuelles du Conseil et des Commissions de l'OCSAN figure à l' Annexe 5.

2. Rapport du Comité d'Avis du CIEM (ACOM) sur les stocks de saumons dans la zone de la Commission

- 2.1 Un représentant du CIEM, Dennis Ensing, a présenté en webinaire l'avis scientifique figurant dans le Rapport du Comité d'Avis (ACOM), [CNL\(21\)11](#). La présentation du Dr Ensing sur l'avis relatif à la Commission du Groenland occidental est disponible sous la cote [WGC\(21\)10](#) (Annexe 6). Les discussions tenues sur la présentation au cours du webinaire se trouvent dans le document [CNL\(21\)60](#) (Annexe 7). Le Président a remercié le Dr Ensing pour sa présentation.
- 2.2 Le représentant des ONGs a fait remarquer que la présentation du CIEM incluait un chiffre total de captures de 31,7 t et un chiffre de prises non déclarées de 10 t pour la pêcherie en 2020. Toutefois, le Plan de Gestion Projet transmis par DFG et le Rapport de Progrès Annuel (APR) du Groenland pour l'année calendaire 2020 incluait un chiffre total de captures de 30,7 t et un chiffre de prises non déclarées de 6,1 t. Il a demandé une clarification de cette divergence.
- 2.3 La représentante de DFG a déclaré que, comme expliqué précédemment à la Commission, l'Institut des Ressources Naturelles du Groenland, qui transmet l'information au CIEM, est une institution indépendante et qu'elle ne savait pas

comment l'Institut calculait ses chiffres. Elle a indiqué que les chiffres officiels sont ceux qui sont fournis par l'Autorité groenlandaise de contrôle des permis de pêche (GFLK), figurant dans l'APR et le Plan de Gestion Projet. En ce qui concerne les chiffres de captures non déclarées, 10 t est le chiffre utilisé par le CIEM depuis plusieurs années. Toutefois, tous les pêcheurs de saumon du Groenland sont maintenant licenciés, il y a un pool connu de participants et la GFLK a été en mesure de faire une estimation des prises non déclarées à 6,1 t.

3. Rapport de la réunion d'inter-session de la Commission du Groenland occidental

- 3.1 Le Président a indiqué à la Commission qu'il y avait eu deux réunions inter-sessionnelles de la Commission dans la période précédant la session annuelle. L'une s'était tenue en mars 2021, [WGC\(21\)07](#), et l'autre juste avant la session annuelle de la Commission, [WGC\(21\)12rev](#).
- 3.2 Le Président a rappelé à la Commission qu'elle s'était réunie en mars pour débiter la procédure d'élaboration d'une nouvelle mesure de réglementation pour la pêcherie de saumon Atlantique du Groenland occidental pour les prochaines années. La Commission avait passé en revue la pêcherie de saumon de 2020 au Groenland occidental et examiné les progrès réalisés dans la mise en oeuvre de la 'Mesure pluriannuelle de réglementation pour la pêche du saumon Atlantique au Groenland occidental' pour 2018, 2019 et 2020, [WGC\(18\)11](#). La Commission avait aussi entamé des discussions sur une nouvelle mesure de réglementation à appliquer à partir de 2021. La représentante de DFG avait fait une présentation sur son 'Plan de Gestion Projet pour la Pêcherie de Saumon au Groenland'. La Commission avait mis en place un Groupe de Travail pour rédiger une proposition de texte à inclure dans une nouvelle mesure de réglementation pluriannuelle pour la pêcherie. Ce texte figure dans le document 'Proposition du Groupe de Travail pour une mesure de réglementation pluriannuelle pour la pêche du saumon de l'Atlantique [au Groenland occidental]'. Cette proposition a été examinée lors de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mars de la Commission et les résultats de ces discussions sont pris en compte dans le document révisé 'Proposition du Groupe de Travail pour une mesure de réglementation pluriannuelle de la Commission du Groenland occidental', WGCIS(21)10.
- 3.3 Le Président a indiqué que des suggestions de modifications à la proposition révisée du Groupe de Travail, WGCIS(21)10, avaient été proposées pendant la période de correspondance inter-sessionnelle précédant la session annuelle (voir l'Annexe 2). Ces modifications suggérées figurent dans les 'Modifications des États-Unis sur la proposition révisée du Groupe de Travail pour une mesure de réglementation pluriannuelle', WGCIS(21)14.
- 3.4 Le Président a rappelé à la Commission que, lors de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai, les membres de la Commission avaient discuté en détail du texte proposé et des modifications suggérées par les États-Unis (telles que figurant dans le document WGCIS(21)14). DFG avait aussi fourni une version actualisée du Plan de Gestion Projet et un projet de nouveau Décret, tous deux traduits en anglais. La représentante de DFG avait informé la Commission de la soumission du Plan de Gestion Projet au gouvernement du Groenland pour approbation, Plan qui pouvait encore faire l'objet de changements mineurs. La Commission avait remercié DFG pour avoir partagé ces documents internes du gouvernement avec la Commission avant qu'ils ne soient approuvés par le gouvernement, notant qu'il était très inhabituel de procéder ainsi. La Commission avait le sentiment que cela avait été très bénéfique à son travail. Les

résultats des discussions tenues lors de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai de la Commission figuraient dans la ‘Mesure de Réglementation Projet issue de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai de la Commission du Groenland occidental’, WGC(21)11, pour examen lors de la session annuelle de la Commission.

4. Progrès dans la gestion des pêcheries de saumon, la protection et la restauration de l'habitat et l'aquaculture et activités liées dans les États d'origine

4.1 Ce point avait remplacé le point habituel ‘Pêcheries de stocks mixtes menées par des Membres de la Commission’ sur l'Ordre du jour 2021, afin d'éclairer les débats indispensables à la négociation d'une nouvelle mesure de réglementation sous le point 6 de l'Ordre du jour.

4.2 Le Président a fait référence à la ‘Compilation des Réponses Soumises par les membres/juridictions de la Commission du Groenland occidental en rapport avec les Questions 1.2 et 4.1 des Rapports de Progrès Annuels pour les années calendaires 2018, 2019 et 2020’, [WGC\(21\)08](#), et la correspondance inter-sessionnelle qui avait eu lieu sur ce point (Annexe 2).

4.3 Il n'y a pas eu de nouvelle discussion sous ce point de l'ordre du jour lors de la session.

5. Proposition du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) sur le Reporting sur la pêche du saumon du Groenland Occidental

5.1 Le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) avait demandé l'ajout d'un point supplémentaire à l'Ordre du jour de la session annuelle de la Commission du Groenland occidental. Cette demande s'accompagnait d'un Exposé des Motifs (figurant dans le document [WGC\(21\)06](#)). En conformité avec la Règle 15 des Règles de Procédure de la Commission, ce point, ‘Proposition du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) sur le Reporting sur la pêche du saumon du Groenland occidental’, avait été ajouté en tant que point 5 à l'Ordre du jour de la session.

5.2 Le Président a présenté la proposition de DFG et indiqué qu'il y avait eu une correspondance inter-sessionnelle sur ce point (voir Annexe 2).

5.3 La représentante de DFG a indiqué qu'elle souhaitait simplifier les exigences de reporting pour la pêche du Groenland occidental. Cependant, les autres membres ont estimé qu'un tel changement serait prématuré et devrait être reconsidéré dans le cadre d'une future mesure de réglementation pluriannuelle.

6. Mesures de réglementation

6.1 Le Président a indiqué que les membres de la Commission avaient eu la possibilité d'étudier la ‘Mesure de Réglementation Projet issue de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai de la Commission du Groenland occidental’, WGC(21)11, à la suite de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai de la Commission.

6.2 La représentante des États-Unis a reconnu l'investissement en ressources fait au Groenland pour améliorer le suivi et le contrôle de la pêche et a admis qu'il faut du temps pour mettre en œuvre avec succès de nouveaux systèmes. Toutefois elle a souligné qu'un dépassement de quota d'environ 10 t avait eu lieu lors de chacune des trois années de la mesure de réglementation 2018 – 2020. En conséquence, la position des États-Unis était qu'il serait prématuré de supprimer les dispositions de remboursement du dépassement du quota (‘payback’) dans la mesure de réglementation

tout en conservant le même niveau de quota, comme le sollicitait le Groenland. La représentante des États-Unis a rappelé à la Commission que le Canada, l'UE, le RU et les États-Unis avaient tous indiqué à la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai que la disposition de remboursement 'payback' était une partie essentielle de toute mesure de réglementation pour aller de l'avant, mais que DFG avait indiqué qu'il ne pouvait accepter une mesure de réglementation incluant une telle disposition. La représentante des États-Unis avait alors proposé une formulation qu'elle espérait acceptable par le Groenland mais, après consultations, la représentante de DFG avait indiqué que le Groenland ne pouvait pas accepter le texte proposé. La représentante des États-Unis a demandé à DFG de faire une proposition alternative dont il penserait qu'elle pourrait être efficace vis à vis de tous les membres de la Commission.

- 6.3 Les représentants du Canada, de l'UE et du RU ont soutenu les commentaires faits par les États-Unis.
- 6.4 La représentante de DFG a indiqué que DFG avait auparavant élaboré un texte dont elle pensait qu'il serait acceptable par les autres membres de la Commission pendant la période de correspondance inter-sessionnelle. Toutefois le texte proposé n'avait pas été accepté par les autres membres de la Commission. Elle a réaffirmé que le Groenland ne pouvait pas accepter une disposition de 'payback' dans une nouvelle mesure de réglementation pour la pêche.
- 6.5 Les membres de la Commission ont utilisé les intervalles entre les sessions de la réunion pour tenter de parvenir à un accord sur les éléments d'une mesure de réglementation qui soit acceptable par tous les membres de la Commission.
- 6.6 A la quatrième session de la session annuelle, la représentante des États-Unis a fait la déclaration suivante :

Tout au long des deux réunions inter-sessionnelles et de cette session annuelle, les États-Unis ont travaillé à tenter de trouver une solution aux points de désaccord majeurs dans le projet de mesure de réglementation – le niveau de TAC annuel et comment traiter la question persistante du dépassement de quota. Les États-Unis ont fourni plusieurs options à examiner, dont nous pensions qu'elles pourraient satisfaire les préoccupations de DFG tout en restant en conformité avec les mandats des autres membres. Cependant, DFG a refusé chacune des propositions que nous avons mises sur la table. Nous en sommes extrêmement déçus. Les autres membres ont fait preuve d'une grande flexibilité et de volonté de compromis, et leurs options ont aussi été rejetées par DFG. Il me semble que DFG ne souhaite pas négocier pour prendre en compte les préoccupations de tous les membres, ce qui me conduit à m'interroger sur l'engagement de DFG à respecter ses obligations dans le cadre de la convention de l'OCSAN.

Je comprends la position de DFG consistant à chercher à obtenir un quota de 30 t pour cette mesure. Toutefois, cela n'est pas acceptable pour les États-Unis compte-tenu de la disposition de 'payback' dans la mesure de réglementation précédente et du dépassement de quota de 10 t qui s'est produit en 2020. Les États-Unis attendent de DFG qu'il respecte les dispositions de la mesure de réglementation adoptée pour 2018 – 2020, et comptent bien que le dépassement de quota de 10 t de 2020 soit déduit de tout TAC proposé pour 2021. De plus, avoir un TAC de 20 t pour 2021 assurerait une protection au cas où le dépassement habituel d'environ 10 t se produise de nouveau cette année.

Je suis très mal à l'aise face au refus de DFG de traiter la question du dépassement de quota puisqu'il y a eu un dépassement lors de chacune des années de la mesure de réglementation précédente. Les États-Unis apprécient l'effort et les ressources investis dans la gestion de la pêcherie de saumon de l'Atlantique au Groenland pendant, en gros, la décennie passée. Nous pensons que cet investissement porte ses fruits, et le suivi et le contrôle de la pêcherie se sont sensiblement améliorés. Cependant, DFG n'a pas encore démontré une capacité à gérer la pêcherie dans la limite du quota alloué, or il est attendu des autres membres de cette commission qu'ils acceptent un quota en contradiction avec l'avis scientifique qui est qu'il n'y a pas d'options de captures disponibles et où ne figurent pas de mesures de meilleures pratiques de gestion pour traiter un dépassement de quota. Cette approche est contre-intuitive, et j'éprouve des difficultés à comprendre la logique de DFG. De notre point de vue, la suppression d'une disposition sur un dépassement ne devrait être envisagée qu'après démonstration que la pêcherie peut être gérée dans la limite du TAC adopté.

Transmettre tout concept de proposition incluant un TAC de 30 t, et sensiblement affaiblie par l'absence de disposition pour le dépassement, à ma direction est très difficile car notre administration en place aujourd'hui est très différente de celle que nous avons en 2018. Notre gouvernement actuel a exprimé publiquement un programme qui se focalise sur la lutte contre le changement climatique, l'environnement et les espèces menacées, comme le saumon de l'Atlantique. Ces questions sont l'une des préoccupations principales de l'administration actuelle, et je m'attends à ce que ceci soit très sensible politiquement tant au niveau national qu'international, vu l'approche proposée pour cette mesure de réglementation.

Au bout du compte, je dois retourner vers ma direction et les parties prenantes pour défendre les décisions qui sont prises ici. Les États-Unis investissent des ressources significatives dans le rétablissement de nos populations de saumon de l'Atlantique et la lutte contre les menaces connues envers l'espèce. Nos populations autochtones ont dû abandonner la pêche du saumon de l'Atlantique dans nos eaux à des fins de subsistance, qui remonte à des temps immémoriaux. Il a été mentionné dans des discussions antérieures à l'OCSAN que le saumon de l'Atlantique capturé au Groenland est utilisé non seulement pour nourrir les personnes mais aussi pour l'alimentation des chiens de traîneau. C'est quelque chose de très difficile à accepter pour nos peuples autochtones et pour ceux qui investissent des efforts aussi importants dans la prévention de l'extinction de cette espèce aux États-Unis. Par le passé, un quota de 20 t suffisait aux besoins des personnes qui peuplent le Groenland. Il n'est pas clair pour moi pourquoi ce n'est plus le cas aujourd'hui, ni pourquoi DFG est dans l'incapacité de faire preuve de la moindre flexibilité en ce qui concerne le TAC, en honorant les engagements de mesures de réglementation précédentes ou en mettant en œuvre des mesures pour garantir le respect des limites actuelles de captures. J'espère sincèrement que nous pouvons trouver une issue qui soit plus acceptable par tous les membres de cette Commission.

6.7 Le représentant du Canada a aussi fait une déclaration à la Commission comme suit:

Le Canada est venu aux réunions de la Commission du Groenland occidental de cette année avec des préoccupations centrées principalement sur deux

questions. Premièrement, comme nous en sommes tous conscients, malgré le dur travail et les progrès du Groenland pour améliorer la gestion de leur pêcherie de saumon, des dépassements récurrents de quota ont eu lieu dans la pêcherie groenlandaise chaque année où la précédente mesure de réglementation était en vigueur. Deuxièmement, nous avons un avis du CIEM pour zéro captures dans la pêcherie du Groenland en 2021, 2022 et 2023 puisque la majorité des stocks contributeurs souffrent d'une capacité reproductive réduite. Cet avis est inchangé depuis plusieurs années.

Étant donné ce contexte, nous espérons que tous les membres de la Commission du Groenland occidental viendraient aux réunions de la Commission de cette année prêts à admettre les défis de survie auxquels est confronté le saumon de l'Atlantique et à discuter les contributions potentielles à sa conservation qui peuvent être apportées par la pêcherie du Groenland. Nous avons espéré que les membres seraient prêts à s'engager avec flexibilité pour trouver des solutions conformes aux besoins et aux préoccupations de tous les membres tout en soutenant une meilleure conservation du saumon.

Malheureusement ce n'est pas ainsi que les discussions se sont déroulées. Nous n'avons dans les faits vu aucune flexibilité de la part du Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland) en ce qui concerne un total admissible de captures, malgré l'état des stocks, particulièrement les stocks du Canada et des États-Unis, d'où est originaire la majorité des saumons pêchés. Peut-être plus préoccupant – il n'y a eu aucune acceptation du besoin de prise en compte des dépassements antérieurs de quota alors même qu'un engagement clair à cette prise en compte a été pris dans la dernière mesure de réglementation, et que les autres membres ont adopté des actions fortes pour la conservation dans leurs propres pêcheries, la plus notable étant la fermeture des pêcheries commerciales. Les autres membres de la Commission ont proposé des avancées constructives et recherché un compromis, mais cette approche n'a pas été partagée par le Danemark (pour les Iles Féroé et le Groenland). Le Canada a jugé ce manque de flexibilité et ce refus de se conformer à un engagement fondamental dans le cadre de la mesure de réglementation précédente tout à fait décevants, et mettant en question la crédibilité de tous les engagements futurs que DFG pourrait prendre en ce qui concerne la pêcherie.

Au cours des discussions, DFG a fait référence de façon répétée à l'importance de cette pêcherie pour sa population, et aux défis rencontrés dans la gestion de la pêcherie. Nous ne sommes pas sourds à ces préoccupations : de nombreux Canadiens dépendent fortement du saumon pour leur subsistance, et nous comprenons bien les difficultés à gérer des pêcheries nordiques éloignées avec des populations autochtones. Nous avons apprécié l'ouverture de DFG à discuter de ces défis au cours des récentes années, et à travailler avec les autres Parties pour les traiter. Et nous avons apprécié les avancées faites par DFG ces dernières années pour renforcer le suivi et le contrôle de sa pêcherie.

Nous espérons que ce travail en coopération pourra continuer dans la pêcherie de cette année et à l'avenir. Nous savons que les pressions sur les populations de saumon de l'Atlantique sont nombreuses et variées, et que les moindres d'entre elles ne sont pas les changements en cours des écosystèmes marins et d'eau douce mondiaux. Mais ceci ne devrait pas nous empêcher d'agir pour contrôler notre impact sur l'espèce. Le bénéfice de telles actions restera limité

s'il y a encore trop de poissons capturés, et il est décevant que DFG ait fait preuve de si peu de réaction à cette nécessité fondamentale de garantir la durabilité de tout prélèvement. Nous voulons toutefois déclarer clairement que nous ne considérons pas les questions de futur total admissible de captures, de dépassements du quota pendant la période de la mesure précédente, ou de prise en compte de futurs dépassements du quota, comme closes ou faisant l'objet d'un accord.

6.8 Le représentant de l'UE a déclaré que l'UE partageait la déception et la frustration exprimées par les États-Unis et le Canada. Il a indiqué que l'UE avait aussi tenté de fournir des solutions, en prenant acte des besoins des différents membres de la Commission, et avait été déçue qu'une solution n'ait pas pu être trouvée. Il a déclaré que la question du dépassement de captures pris en 2018 – 2020 n'était pas close. Il s'agissait d'un engagement très clair de la part de DFG, dans le cadre d'un accord international, de rembourser tout dépassement de captures et l'UE s'attend à ce que cet engagement soit honoré. Il a indiqué que l'UE continuerait à revenir sur cette question aussi longtemps que nécessaire. Le représentant de l'UE a aussi estimé qu'il s'agissait d'une opportunité manquée. Il a rappelé à la Commission qu'il y avait eu des années d'amélioration et un effort majeur investi, et estimait regrettable de se retrouver aujourd'hui dans cette situation imprévue. Il a déclaré qu'une mauvaise mesure de réglementation, avec un quota de 30 t et une absence de mesures de dépassement, dont l'un et l'autre étaient très difficilement acceptables par l'UE dans le cadre d'un accord, pourrait être rediscutée en 2022. Il a souligné l'importance du travail conjoint des membres de la Commission pour rechercher des moyens de mieux suivre le quota afin d'éviter un dépassement.

6.9 La représentante du RU a fait la déclaration suivante :

Le Royaume-Uni est venu à ces négociations en espérant trouver un accord sur une nouvelle mesure de réglementation pour le Groenland occidental qui tout à la fois prendrait acte des efforts réalisés au Groenland pour renforcer la gestion de la pêcherie du saumon, et renforcerait la protection du saumon de l'Atlantique Nord en reconnaissant et en contribuant à abaisser les niveaux constamment élevés de dépassement des captures. Nous sommes déçus de ne pas avoir pu trouver un accord sur une telle mesure.

Etant donné le degré d'effort mis dans le développement du plan de gestion du saumon au Groenland et dans l'amélioration du suivi des captures, pour permettre une gestion réactive, au quota, dont on nous assure qu'elle devrait avoir pour résultat une diminution du dépassement de captures en 2021, nous sommes prêts à envisager une mesure temporaire pour un an. Nous soutenons fortement la suggestion de l'UE de réviser la gestion des pêcheries en préparation des discussions de l'année prochaine.

6.10 La représentante de DFG a noté que DFG était aussi déçu par les négociations. Elle a indiqué que le gouvernement groenlandais était déterminé à refuser un accord sur une quelconque disposition de 'payback' ou sur un quota inférieur à 30 t. Elle a souligné que la pression pour quitter l'OCSAN se renforçait au Groenland, et que le gouvernement ne voyait pas comment le Groenland pourrait rester et accepter des quotas de plus en plus faibles et des dispositions de 'payback' tout en satisfaisant les parties prenantes au Groenland. Toutefois, elle a indiqué que le Groenland maintenait son engagement à améliorer la gestion, le suivi et le contrôle de la pêcherie et à poursuivre le travail sur le Plan de Gestion. Étant donné les mesures et les actions déjà

mises en œuvre, DFG a la certitude qu'il en résultera une gestion et un contrôle améliorés. DFG continuerait à améliorer les mesures, et ceci ne changerait pas, qu'il y ait accord ou pas sur une mesure de réglementation. Cependant, elle a réaffirmé que DFG ne pouvait pas accepter un quota inférieur à 30 t.

- 6.11 La représentante des États-Unis a demandé à la représentante de DFG quelles mesures pourraient être prises si la Commission se mettait d'accord sur une mesure de réglementation annuelle avec un TAC agréé, et si ce TAC était dépassé. La représentante de DFG a indiqué que, comme lors des années précédentes, les causes du dépassement seraient examinées et une réflexion serait menée sur les moyens d'éviter que ceci se reproduise à l'avenir.
- 6.12 Le représentant de l'UE a réaffirmé qu'il était important d'arriver à un accord. Il a indiqué que l'UE pourrait être en mesure d'accepter une mesure de réglementation annuelle avec un TAC de 30 t et sans disposition de dépassement, mais que ceci rendrait nécessaire la tenue d'une réunion inter-sessionnelle pour discuter de mesures possibles de suivi pour le TAC. Il a demandé si une telle mesure temporaire, permettant d'étudier un suivi additionnel pour garantir l'absence de futur dépassement, serait acceptable par les autres Parties.
- 6.13 Le représentant du Canada a remercié le représentant de l'UE de continuer d'essayer de trouver une issue à l'impasse. Il a indiqué que le Canada soutenait la poursuite des discussions et pensait que des réunions inter-sessions étaient nécessaires pour différentes raisons. Cependant, il a souligné que la proposition sur table n'était pas l'option que préférait le Canada en termes de quota. Le Canada pouvait accepter une mesure de réglementation pour une année avec un TAC de 20 t.
- 6.14 La représentante des États-Unis a indiqué que les États-Unis pouvaient soutenir une mesure de réglementation pour une année, mais pas avec un TAC de 30 t. Elle a déclaré qu'une réunion en inter-session, comme proposée par l'UE, était indispensable. Elle a demandé si la Commission pourrait étudier un TAC de 27 t, déduisant les 3 t allouées au Groenland oriental.
- 6.15 La représentante du RU a déclaré qu'en raison des possibilités limitées le RU pouvait soutenir une mesure de réglementation pour une année.
- 6.16 La représentante de DFG a demandé à l'UE si elle envisageait la tenue de la réunion inter-sessionnelle proposée après la campagne de pêche 2021. En réponse, le représentant de l'UE a indiqué que c'était flexible, mais qu'il pourrait être nécessaire de tenir la réunion avant la fin de 2021, notant qu'il était probable que la Commission doive tenir d'autres réunions inter-sessionnelles préalablement à la session annuelle de 2022, pour discuter les futures mesures de réglementation.
- 6.17 La représentante de DFG a demandé à la représentante des États-Unis s'ils pourraient accepter un quota de 27 t pour la pêcherie du Groenland occidental, ce qui permettrait la fixation d'un quota de 30 t pour le Groenland, incluant le quota de 3 t pour le Groenland oriental. En réponse, la représentante des États-Unis a noté que DFG avait indiqué qu'il fixerait un quota de 30 t et allouerait 3 t au Groenland oriental. Comme ceci est hors du champ de compétence de la Commission du Groenland occidental, les États-Unis ont estimé que cela devrait être déduit de tout TAC spécifié dans une mesure pour le Groenland occidental.
- 6.18 La représentante de DFG a indiqué que DFG pouvait accepter une mesure de réglementation pour une année allouant un quota de 30 t pour la pêcherie entière du Groenland, sans disposition de 'payback'. DFG était aussi disposé à accepter la tenue

d'une, ou plus d'une, réunions inter-sessionnelles si les autres membres de la Commission l'estimaient nécessaire. La représentante de DFG a déclaré que DFG s'était montré entièrement transparent et continuerait de tenir les membres de la Commission informés sur la pêche.

- 6.19 La Commission a examiné le texte figurant dans la 'Mesure de Réglementation Projet issue de la réunion inter-sessionnelle de mai de la Commission du Groenland occidental', WGC(21)11. La Commission a débattu de comment le texte de ce document WGC(21)11 pouvait être adapté pour refléter les discussions tenues lors de la session. Les amendements proposés se trouvent dans la 'Mesure de Réglementation Provisoire Projet de la Commission du Groenland occidental', WGC(21)17.
- 6.20 La Commission a étudié des amendements supplémentaires à la 'Mesure de Réglementation Provisoire Projet de la Commission du Groenland occidental', WGC(21)17.
- 6.21 Les représentants des États-Unis et du Canada ont exprimé des préoccupations quant au niveau de TAC et à l'absence d'une disposition de remboursement d'un dépassement de quota, indiquant que tout en ne bloquant pas l'adoption de cette mesure, ils ne pouvaient pas l'approuver.
- 6.22 La représentante du RU a elle aussi exprimé sa déception quant à l'issue des négociations, mais a indiqué que le RU soutiendrait une mesure de réglementation pour une année.
- 6.23 Une 'Mesure de Réglementation Provisoire pour la Pêche du Saumon de l'Atlantique au Groenland occidental en 2021', [WGC\(21\)18](#), (Annexe 8) a été adoptée par la Commission.

7. Echantillonnage dans la pêche du Groenland occidental

- 7.1 Les membres de la Commission du Groenland occidental ont travaillé en coopération pendant les cinq décennies passées à collecter des données biologiques sur le saumon de l'Atlantique pêché au Groenland occidental. Ces données apportent annuellement des contributions essentielles aux évaluations des stocks menées par le Groupe de Travail du CIEM sur le Saumon de l'Atlantique Nord.
- 7.2 Un représentant des États-Unis, Tim Sheehan, a fourni des détails sur le Programme d'Échantillonnage de la Pêche du Groenland occidental en 2020. Il a rappelé à la Commission qu'un plan d'urgence pour le programme d'échantillonnage a été établi pour le cas où les restrictions de voyage liées à la pandémie du Covid-19 empêcheraient les échantillonneurs internationaux de se rendre au Groenland. Il a été décidé mi-juillet de passer au plan d'urgence.
- 7.3 M. Sheehan a indiqué que, malgré le gros travail d'acheminement du matériel d'échantillonnage au Groenland, le plan d'urgence n'avait pas été le succès espéré en 2020. Toutefois, les discussions qui ont suivi ont abouti à un accord pour continuer le plan d'urgence en 2021, particulièrement la composante science citoyenne. Celle-ci implique les pêcheurs dans la collecte d'échantillons sur leurs poissons et dans leur envoi pour analyse. Il a souligné qu'il serait nécessaire d'investir du temps et des efforts pour développer l'aspect science citoyenne, et, entre-temps, on espère le maintien de l'implication des échantillonneurs internationaux.
- 7.4 M. Sheehan a ensuite présenté la 'Déclaration Projet de Coopération pour le Programme d'Échantillonnage de la Pêche du Groenland occidental en 2021', WGC(21)13, indiquant que le changement le plus significatif par rapport à 2020 était l'ajout d'un

bullet-point lié au programme d'échantillonnage science citoyenne.

- 7.5 La représentante du RU a indiqué que le RU fournirait deux échantillonneurs. Le représentant de l'UE a indiqué que UE – France fournirait un échantillonneur en plus des deux fournis par UE – Irlande. Une ‘Déclaration Projet Révisée de Coopération pour le Programme d’Échantillonnage de la Pêcherie du Groenland occidental’, WGC(21)14, a été déposé pour prendre en compte cette contribution complémentaire de l'UE.
- 7.6 La Commission a adopté une ‘Déclaration de Coopération pour le Programme d’Échantillonnage de la Pêcherie du Groenland occidental en 2021’, [WGC\(21\)15](#), (Annexe 9).

8. Annonce du prix du Programme Incitatif au renvoi des marques

- 8.1 Le Président a annoncé que la gagnante du prix de £1,000 de la Commission du Groenland occidental du Programme Incitatif au renvoi des marques de l'OCSAN était Maren Levisen, Maniitsoq, Groenland. La marque gagnante avait été apposée à un saumoneau d'écloserie de deux ans relâché mi-mai 1981 sous le Barrage Howland sur la rivière Penobscot, aux États-Unis. La Commission a présenté ses félicitations à la gagnante.
- 8.2 En réponse à une question du représentant des ONGs, un représentant des États-Unis a indiqué que sept marques avaient été renvoyées de la zone de la Commission du Groenland occidental pour inclusion dans le tirage de 2021. Six d'entre elles étaient issues d'anciens relâchages-recaptures après marquage. La marque gagnante avait été prise au début des années 1980.
- 8.3 La représentante de DFG a indiqué qu'une seule marque avait été renvoyée de la zone du Groenland occidental pour inclusion dans le tirage 2020. Elle a souligné que bien qu'il y ait toujours une publicité sur les prix pour les marques au Groenland, le prix 2020 avait bénéficié d'une publicité accrue pour encourager les pêcheurs à renvoyer toutes leurs marques, y compris les anciennes. Elle a indiqué que cette publicité supplémentaire serait poursuivie, avec l'espoir qu'à l'avenir davantage de pêcheurs renvoient leurs marques.

9. Recommandations au Conseil concernant la demande de conseils scientifiques auprès du CIEM

- 9.1 La Commission a approuvé la demande de conseils scientifiques auprès du CIEM préparée par le Comité scientifique permanent (CSP) concernant la zone de la Commission du Groenland occidental. La demande auprès du CIEM, telle qu'acceptée par le Conseil, figure dans le document [CNL\(21\)14](#) (Annexe 10).

10. Divers

- 10.1 Aucune autre question n'a été soulevée.

11. Date et lieu de la prochaine session

- 11.1 La Commission a convenu de tenir sa prochaine session annuelle à la même période et au même lieu que la trente-neuvième session annuelle du Conseil.

12. Compte rendu de la session

- 12.1 La Commission a accepté un compte rendu de la session.

13. Clôture de la session

- 13.1 Les représentants du Canada, de l'Union européenne et des États-Unis ont transmis des déclarations écrites de clôture (Annexe 11). La représentante du RU a indiqué qu'elle approuvait la déclaration de l'Union européenne.
- 13.2 Le Président a remercié les membres de la Commission et les observateurs pour leurs contributions et a clos la trente-huitième session annuelle de la Commission du Groenland occidental.

List of Annexes

- Annex 1 Agenda, WGC(21)09
- Annex 2 West Greenland Commission Inter-Sessional Correspondence
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WGC(21)09

Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission

By Video Conference

31 May – 4 June 2021

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area
3. Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the West Greenland Commission
4. Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin
5. Proposal from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on Reporting on the West Greenland Salmon Fishery
6. Regulatory Measures
7. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery
8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize
9. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice
10. Other Business
11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting
12. Report of the Meeting
13. Close of the Meeting

West Greenland Commission Inter-sessional Correspondence

The West Greenland Commission’s inter-sessional correspondence took place from 3 – 14 May. It is set out below, under the relevant Agenda item. If an Agenda item is not listed, no inter-sessional correspondence took place.

4. Progress in the Management of Salmon Fisheries, Habitat Protection and Restoration and Aquaculture and Related Activities in States of Origin

Q1. DFG asked the United States (6 May):

In section 1.2 of the APR from the calendar year 2020 from the United States, conservational measures are listed as having implemented regulatory requirements for hydroelectric dams at Ellsworth in Union river and Weldon in Penobscot river. Furthermore, a draft regulatory requirement for a hydroelectric dam built in 2007 in Kennebec river is listed as conservational efforts. However, it is only reported that Penobscot is habitat for salmon.

o A1. The United States responded (13 May)

Given that salmon habitat exists in areas other than the Penobscot River, we did not report in our APR or elsewhere that the only habitat for salmon is in the Penobscot River. It also appears that our statement in Section 1.2 of our APR about the pending requirement for new fishway improvements on the Kennebec River was not understood. That draft regulatory requirement was filed in 2020 as part of the relicensing of the Shawmut Hydroelectric Project. The Shawmut Dam was built in 1924 not 2007. The Kennebec River has substantial habitat for Atlantic salmon, which is acknowledged in the critical habitat designation that affords protection of habitats for salmon that are considered essential for their recovery (see 74 FR 39903 cited below).

‘74 FR 39903. (August 10, 2009, August 10). Endangered and Threatened species; Designation of critical habitat for Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment; Final Rule.’

Q2. DFG asked the United States (6 May):

Has there been reportings of salmon currently present as a spawning stock in Union or Kennebec river and is there any artificial stocking to support the salmon recovery in these rivers?

o A2. The United States responded (13 May)

The U.S. recovery plan for Atlantic salmon focuses on restoring Atlantic salmon in a number of rivers (identified as three Salmon Habitat Recovery Units - Downeast, Merrymeeting Bay, and Penobscot). Significant efforts to recover salmon in all three areas are ongoing. A link to the Recovery Plan is included in Section 1.2 of our APR.

A small number of pre-spawn salmon (generally, less than 3 fish) stray to the Union River annually from nearby rivers. In recent years, no, or very limited, stocking in the Union River has occurred because of juvenile mortality associated with the

hydroelectric dam in Ellsworth. A new license for the Ellsworth project is pending, which will require significant improvements to upstream and downstream passage. We expect that stocking will resume once these fishway improvements are in place.

The Kennebec River has a recently established small, naturally-reared salmon run (less than 100 fish) supported by stocking in the Sandy River, a large tributary located above four mainstem dams. Work is underway to make significant fishway improvements at all four of these dams with the goal of improving upstream and downstream passage throughout the Kennebec River.

Q3. DFG asked the United States (6 May):

If these rivers have already lost their local stock, how will such regulatory requirement actions benefit the recovery of Atlantic Salmon in the United States in general?

○ **A3. The United States responded (13 May)**

The river-specific genetic stocks from the Union and Kennebec rivers have been extirpated, but both rivers are located within the range of the Gulf of Maine population, both rivers contain an abundance of high quality habitat that can support populations of wild Atlantic salmon, and both rivers are considered within the scope of the U.S. restoration program. Restoring connectivity to these rivers will allow for salmon to recolonize and will help support the recovery of wild Atlantic salmon in the United States. This habitat has been designated as critical for the survival and recovery of the species; restoring it will help achieve our recovery goals.

5. Proposal from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) on Reporting on the West Greenland Salmon Fishery

Q4. Canada asked DFG (13 May):

Canada understands the burden that comes with preparing several reports for similar purposes. Understanding that the mid-February timeframe for submitting Greenland's report on its previous year's fishery is most useful in years when the regulatory measure needs to be renewed, could DFG suggest an appropriate timeframe for submitting a single comprehensive/up-to-date report ahead of the Annual Meeting?

○ **A4. DFG responded (18 May)**

If your inquiry is when the best time of the year for report submission is, then I can answer that the timing is not the issue. The issue is more focused on the increased amounts of reports required by Greenland that essentially serve similar purposes. The purpose of this agenda point is whether we could come to some sort of agreement that perhaps it is not necessary for Greenland to submit extra reports.

However, I am a little in doubt if you are asking whether it would be possible to make comprehensive reports about the fishery on a multi-annual basis (perhaps following the 5 year proposal for regulatory measure reviews), if that is the case that is something we have not yet discussed internally. I cannot at this point make a statement about that, but we can definitely review this prior to the meeting.

6. Regulatory Measures

Q5. Canada asked DFG (13 May):

Canada would like to congratulate Greenland on electing a new Government April 6. At the March 8-12 inter-sessional meeting of the WGC, DFG indicated that its draft

Management Plan would likely be available for approval by mid-May, unless the new Government was not formed by then. Could DFG please provide an update on the status of the draft Management Plan, and whether it will be made available to WGC members before the May 29-30 inter-sessional meeting.

○ ***A5. DFG responded (18 May):***

We have already made the translated management plan available to NASCO and it can be found in the meeting document [WGCIS\(21\)06](#) 'Draft Management Plan for the Salmon Fishery in Greenland'. This management plan has now been in public consultation and we are currently working on that small potential revisions, though nothing major will be changed. We will then submit it to our fisheries minister by the 27th of May, and it will then be submitted for governmental approval by the 3rd of June.

This is our current timeframe. If any changes are submitted due to the public consultation, we will of course edit the English version as well. It would be no trouble to submit the newest version to NASCO should there be any alterations. Prior to the salmon fishing season the finished products will be available online as well.

Q6. Comment from the United States on its proposed amendments to document WGCIS(21)10 (13 May)

Many of our edits are grammatical in nature and/or intended to improve the clarity, flow, and overall readability of the text without changing its meaning, including efforts to streamline where possible by co-locating related concepts and making a few structural adjustments.

Q7. Comment from the United States on its proposed amendments to document WGCIS(21)10 (13 May)

Several of our edits are related to the scope of the proposal. The United States undertook a legal review of the draft proposal after the close of the March intersessional meeting. The proposed removal of references to the West Greenland fishery from the proposal would expand its scope to fisheries for which the WGC does not have regulatory authority. The United States is unable to agree to a measure that is inconsistent with the authority provided to the WGC under the Convention. Toward that end, we have suggested reinserting or retaining references to “West” and “West Greenland” throughout the document and in the case of paragraph 1, removing that paragraph altogether. If paragraph 1 were to be retained, it would need to be rephrased to reference the West Greenland fishery, but, in that case, it would be duplicative of the chapeau text of paragraph 10 (new 9 in the attached¹). Given that, we do not think paragraph 1 is needed.

Q8. Comment from the United States on its proposed amendments to document WGCIS(21)10 (13 May)

Some of our edits are intended to address the relationship between NASCO’s regulatory authority and Greenland’s domestic management authorities and practices. In particular, we have suggested text at the end of the 4th preambular paragraph (Acknowledging...) that notes the important steps taken by Greenland to implement NASCO’s regulatory measure as well as its longstanding domestic policy and practice

¹ Please note, ‘attached’ refers to the attachment to the original communication from the United States. This comment is now incorporated in document WGCIS(21)14.

of applying the rules applicable to the West Greenland fishery broadly in Greenland, including to its small fishery off East Greenland. In addition, we tried to improve the clarity of the final preambular paragraph, which highlights both Greenland's national legislation and its pending salmon fishery management plan and notes Greenland's commitment to their implementation. We have also suggested deleting the references to NASCO obligations and Greenland's national legislation at the end of operative paragraph 1 (formerly 2). These references did not seem to us necessary or relevant to include in the operative portion of the proposal. We consider these aspects are adequately and appropriately covered in the preamble.

Opening Statements Submitted by Members of the Commission

Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by Canada

Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair, Fellow Delegates:

Canada would first like to thank the members of the West Greenland Commission (WGC) for having demonstrated exceptional collegiality during both inter-sessional meetings of the WGC, as well as in the recent correspondence period leading up to the Annual Meeting. This is an important year for the WGC as we must discuss and determine a new Regulatory Measure for the West Greenland Atlantic salmon fishery.

Canada acknowledges the challenges that come with managing a fishery in Arctic areas with remote communities. Greenland's efforts in implementing measures in recent years are recognized and appreciated. Nonetheless, Canada remains concerned with recurrent overharvest during the last three years. We look forward to finalizing the discussions with Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the other members of the WGC in establishing a new Regulatory Measure which is acceptable to all.

Canada believes that increased conservation efforts are still needed to reverse declining trends across the range of Atlantic salmon, which includes reducing harvest to sustainable levels. For the fourth consecutive year, ICES has advised that there should be no catch in Greenland fisheries, to allow the contributing regions of Eastern North America and Southern Europe to meet their corresponding spawning requirements back in home waters. As Canada has indicated on many occasions, Atlantic salmon represent a significant cultural, economic, and environmental symbol, and is a key resource for food, social, and ceremonial requirements for the Indigenous peoples in eastern Canada. Recognizing that a majority of salmon harvested in the West Greenland mixed stock fishery and a significant portion of harvest in the East Greenland fishery originate from Canada, whose stocks show troubling trends in some areas, we encourage Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to continue to fully engage in fisheries management control, and in reducing harvest.

Canada's hope is that this year's negotiation will truly make a difference in the conservation of Atlantic salmon for the years to come. We remain confident that all members of the WGC can work together toward a positive conclusion of the negotiation of the new Regulatory Measure.

***Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)***

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

This year is a milestone for Greenland, as massive efforts have been exerted to complete a full management plan for the fishery for Atlantic salmon in West Greenland along with an executive order to implement our strategies. This process has been prolonged slightly by the sudden election period causing a political standstill, however, the management plan has now

been submitted to the government for expected approval. To ensure complete transparency, both the management plan and executive order have been translated into English and have been circulated amongst the commission members. This strategy is another massive step made by Greenland, which entails enormous sacrifices by our small, isolated communities whose livelihood is based on fishery and hunting.

However, even though, the fishery of Atlantic salmon has been subject to restrictive measures and decreasing quotas for multiple decades, the general trend for the Atlantic salmon is still degrading. With this observation in mind, Greenland would like to encourage further research of alternative factors contributing to the poor state of the Atlantic salmon. It has become increasingly clear that it is not the fishery in Greenland that is the culprit and that NASCO must expand its focus to include other factors such as migratory obstacles, predation, effects of aquaculture, pollution and climate change. Here, especially the States of Origin has a vital job to do!

Mr. Chairman, Greenland are looking forward to a productive week, and we anticipate constructive discussions hopefully leading to action plans for the continued conservation of Atlantic salmon stocks.

Thank you.

Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by the United Kingdom

Chair Doucet, Secretary Hatfield, Distinguished Delegates, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The United Kingdom is delighted to have the opportunity to work with our partners at this the 38th Annual meeting of the West Greenland Commission. We look forward to working together constructively to more towards our goal of sustainable management and conservation of the Atlantic salmon.

The UK has reduced retained salmon catches by a factor of over 30 between 2000 and 2020. This reduction has not been easy to achieve. Each Administration has implemented its own measures, generally as a combination of voluntary and mandatory restrictions, driven by performance against conservation limits or management targets. Measures have included local and national level restrictions, the cessation of all salmon take from mixed stock fisheries, commercial buy outs and a move towards catch and release for both recreational and heritage fisheries, with all administrations achieving overall catch and release rates of at least 90%. With the now limited scope to reduce fisheries exploitation further we are working hard to mitigate the other pressures that North Atlantic salmon face.

Despite the implementation of such measures to significantly reduce exploitation, important management measures to support conservation and stock rebuilding, as well as major reductions in fisheries exploitation, both across the UK and the entire range, salmon numbers have continued to decline significantly over recent decades.

It is important to highlight the reduced survival at sea that is likely a key component of the continuing low stock levels despite the many actions taken. We monitor this on River Bush stock and we have seen the average return rate drop from 30% to 5%.

Therefore, the UK recognises the importance of shared responsibilities in safeguarding salmon stocks within the convention area, and the need for all parties to work together constructively to ensure we leave this iconic species in a better state than we found it, for the future generations.

Already this year the West Greenland Commission (WGC) have held important intersessional meetings to develop a vital draft regulatory measure for the mixed stock fishery at West Greenland. We would like to thank DFG for their open-ness in sharing, at an early stage, their management plan and executive order, which are so key to managing this fishery. We remain keenly aware that the ICES catch advice continues to be that there are no catching options and that we have seen significant overfishing in recent years. Against this challenging backdrop the UK seeks to continue working collaboratively with Greenland and other members of the West Greenland Commission to find a way forward that balances improved protection for salmon with respecting Greenland's cultural heritage.

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 West Greenland Commission Submitted by the United States

Mr. Chair, Madam Secretary, distinguished delegates, observers, ladies, and gentlemen:

The United States looks forward to finalizing an agreement in this Commission this week that continues to improve the management of the West Greenland Fishery, including monitoring and reporting.

It bears repeating that, given the very poor status of many stocks that mix off West Greenland, including endangered U.S. populations, and the longstanding scientific advice for no fishery there, the regulatory measure must ensure that any future catches are kept to a minimum and that any catch limits that are agreed are not exceeded. An essential aspect in that regard is to ensure that a significant overharvest in one year is paid back in the next. This type of accountability is common in fisheries management, both at the domestic and international levels; this concept remains essential to the United States as we continue to consider the terms of a new regulatory measure, including its duration and total allowable catch level.

We appreciate the cooperation among all members shown during both 2021 WGC intersessional meetings. The resultant working proposal clearly identifies the remaining issues and gives us a good basis to focus our work to enable us to find a way forward.

In closing, Mr. Chair, we look forward to a productive and successful virtual meeting.

***Opening Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by
NASCO's Accredited Non-Governmental 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 participate in the two intersessional meetings of this Commission and to ask questions of the Commission's members in advance of these meetings 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.

2021 List of Participants

* Denotes Head of Delegation

CANADA

Mr Serge Doucet – President	<i>Serge.Doucet@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, New Brunswick
*Mr Doug Bliss – Representative	<i>doug.bliss@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Moncton, New Brunswick
Mr David Dunn – Representative	<i>dunnd@nb.sympatico.ca</i>	Canadian Commissioner, Shediac, New Brunswick
Mr Carl McLean – Representative	<i>mcleanc351@gmail.com</i>	Canadian Commissioner, North West River, Newfoundland and Labrador
Ms Melanie Ang	<i>melanie.ang@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Dr Julien April	<i>julien.april@mffp.gouv.qc.ca</i>	Ministère des Forêts de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec, Québec
Mr Tony Blanchard	<i>Tony.blanchard@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, St John's, Newfoundland & Labrador
Ms Cindy Breau	<i>cindy.breau@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Moncton, New Brunswick
Mr John Campbell	<i>John.Campbell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Jon Carr	<i>jcarr@asf.ca</i>	Atlantic Salmon Federation Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development,
Mr Chris Connell	<i>Chris.Connell@gnb.ca</i>	Fredericton, New Brunswick
Mr Simon Cridland	<i>Simon.Cridland@international.gc.ca</i>	Global Affairs Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Peter Cronin	<i>pjcronin18@gmail.com</i>	New Brunswick Salmon Council, Fredericton, New Brunswick
Mr Aaron Dale	<i>aaron.dale@torngatsecretariat.ca</i>	Torngat Secretariat, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador
Ms Shelley Denny	<i>shelley.denny@uinr.ca</i>	Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, Eskasoni, Nova Scotia
Mr James Goudie	<i>Jim.Goudie@nunatsiavut.com</i>	Government of Nunatsiavut,

		Newfoundland & Labrador
Ms Susan A. Farquharson	<i>s.farquharson@atlanticfishfarmers.com</i>	Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association, Letang, New Brunswick
Ms Natalie Her	<i>Natalie.her@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Ross Hinks	<i>rhinks@mfn.gov.ca</i>	Miawpukek First Nation, Conne River, Newfoundland and Labrador
Ms Marie-Pier Lévesque	<i>marie-pier.levesque@justice.gc.ca</i>	Justice Canada (DFO Legal Services), Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Dale Marsden	<i>Dale.Marsden@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Alan McNeill	<i>alan.mcneill@novascotia.ca</i>	Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture, Pictou, Nova Scotia
Mr Dean Medeiros	<i>dean.medeiros@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Ms Isabelle Morisset	<i>Isabelle.morisset@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Robert Otto	<i>rotto@asf.ca</i>	Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada
Dr Martha Robertson	<i>martha.robertson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, St. Johns, Newfoundland & Labrador
Mr Graham Roome	<i>graham.roome@nf.sympatico.ca</i>	Salmon Preservation Association for the Waters of Newfoundland, Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr Stephen Rose	<i>srose@qalipu.ca</i>	Qalipu First Nation, Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr George Russell Jr	<i>grussell@nunatukavut.ca</i>	Nunatukavut Community Council, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr Jamie Snook	<i>Jamie.snook@torngatsecretariat.ca</i>	Torngat Secretariat, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr Craig Taylor	<i>craig.taylor@torngatsecretariat.ca</i>	Torngat Secretariat, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador

Ms Zoë Tupling	<i>zoe.tupling@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr Justin Turple	<i>Justin.turple@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</i>	Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa, Ontario

DENMARK (In respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

*Ms Katrine Kærsgaard	<i>katk@nanoq.gl</i>	Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, Nuuk, Greenland
Ms Maria Strandgård Rasmussen	<i>masr@nanoq.gl</i>	Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, Nuuk, Greenland
Mr Svein Magnason - Representative	<i>sveinm@uvmr.fo</i>	Faroese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands
Mr Siverth Amondson	<i>siam@KNAPK.gl</i>	KNAPK, Nuuk, Greenland
Mr Bjarne Lyberth	<i>bjarne@knapk.gl</i>	KNAPK, Nuuk, Greenland
Mr Magnus Thuun Hansen	<i>msth@nanoq.gl</i>	Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, Nuuk, Greenland

EUROPEAN UNION

*Dr Arnaud Peyronnet – Representative	<i>arnaud.peyronnet@ec.europa.eu</i>	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Mr Ignacio Granell – Representative	<i>ignacio.granell@ec.europa.eu</i>	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Ms Ida Ahlbeck Bergendahl	<i>ida.ahlbeck.bergendahl@slu.se</i>	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
Dr Ciaran Byrne	<i>ciaran.byrne@fisheriesireland.ie</i>	Inland Fisheries Ireland, Dublin, Ireland
Mr Håkan Carlstrand	<i>hakan.carlstrand@havochvatten.se</i>	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, Gothenburg, Sweden
Dr Jaakko Erkinaro	<i>jaakko.erkinaro@luke.fi</i>	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Oulu, Finland
Mr Clemens Fieseler	<i>clemens.fieseler@ble.de</i>	Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, Bonn, Germany
Dr Cathal Gallagher	<i>cathal.gallagher@fisheriesireland.ie</i>	Inland Fisheries Ireland, Dublin, Ireland
Mr Julián García Baena	<i>jgbaena@mapa.es</i>	Spanish General Secretariat of Fisheries, Madrid, Spain
Dr Paddy Gargan	<i>paddy.gargan@fisheriesireland.ie</i>	Inland Fisheries Ireland, Dublin, Ireland

Mr Tapio Hakaste	<i>tapio.hakaste@mmm.fi</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Helsinki, Finland
Mr Francois Head	<i>francois.head@consilium.europa.eu</i>	EU Council Secretariat, Brussels, Belgium
Mr Kevin Hodnett	<i>kevin.hodnett@agriculture.gov.ie</i>	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dublin, Ireland
Mr Denis Maher	<i>denis.maher@dccae.gov.ie</i>	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Cavan, Ireland
Mr John McCartney	<i>john.mccartney@loughs-agency.org</i>	Loughs Agency, Derry, Northern Ireland
Dr Michael Millane	<i>michael.millane@fisheriesireland.ie</i>	Inland Fisheries Ireland, Dublin, Ireland
Mr Arnaud Ngadja-Santhe	<i>arnaud.ngadja-santhe@agriculture.gouv.fr</i>	Ministry of Agriculture, Paris, France
Ms Geraldine O'Donovan	<i>Geraldine.ODonovan@agriculture.gov.ie</i>	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dublin, Ireland
Dr Niall Ó Maoiléidigh	<i>niall.omaoleidigh@marine.ie</i>	Marine Institute, Newport, Ireland
Mr Mika Oraluoma	<i>mika.oraluoma@ely-keskus.fi</i>	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Rovaniemi, Finland
Mr Neil Ruane	<i>neil.ruane@marine.ie</i>	Marine Institute Ireland, Galway, Ireland
Ms Vesa Ruusila	<i>vesa.ruusila@mmm.fi</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Helsinki, Finland
Ms Soizic Schwartz	<i>soizic.schwartz@agriculture.gouv.r</i>	French Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Aquaculture department, Paris, France
Ms Bénédicte Valadou	<i>benedicte.valadou@ofb.gouv.fr</i>	OFB (Office français de la Biodiversité), Direction Générale, Montpellier, France

NORWAY

*Mr Raoul Bierach – Representative	<i>raoul.bierach@miljodir.no</i>	Norwegian Environment Agency, Trondheim
Mr Helge Dyrendal	<i>helge.axel.dyrendal@miljodir.no</i>	Norwegian Environment Agency, Trondheim
Ms Heidi Ekstrøm	<i>heidi.ekstrom@kld.dep.no</i>	Ministry of Climate and Environment, Oslo
Dr Peder Fiske	<i>peder.fiske@nina.no</i>	Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Trondheim

Ms Heidi Hansen	<i>heidi.hansen@miljodir.no</i>	Norwegian Environment Agency, Trondheim
Marie Bjørland	<i>marie.bjorland@nfd.dep.no</i>	Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, Oslo
Mr Geir Jakobsen	<i>geir.jakobsen@mattilsynet.no</i>	Norwegian Food Safety Authority, Brumunddal
Ms Monika Haugland	<i>Monika.Haugland@fiskeridir.no</i>	Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, Bergen
Mr Vegard Haukeland	<i>vegard.haukeland@nfd.dep.no</i>	Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, Oslo
Olav Moberg	<i>olav.moberg@fiskeridir.no</i>	Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, Bergen
Ms Else Marie Stenevik Djupevåg	<i>Else.Marie.Stenevik.Djupevag@mattilsynet.no</i>	Norwegian Food Safety Authority, Oslo
Mr Yngve Torgersen	<i>yngve.torgersen@nfd.dep.no</i>	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, Oslo

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

*Dr Alexander Khatuntsov – Representative	<i>Khatuntsov.a@tsuren.ru</i>	Federal State Budgetary Establishment, Moscow
Ms Ekaterina Kazantseva	<i>kazanceva_EO@fishcom.ru</i>	Federal Agency for Fisheries, Moscow
Dr Sergey Prusov	<i>prusov@pinro.ru</i>	Polar Branch of VNIRO (PINRO named after N.M.Knipovich), Murmansk
Ms Maria Amelina	<i>a.mariya@tsuren.ru</i>	Federal State Budgetary Establishment, Moscow
Ms Elena Basova	<i>basova@sevtu.ru</i>	Severomorskoe Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fisheries, Murmansk
Mrs Kristina Belogurova	<i>krismel@pinro.ru</i>	Polar Branch of VNIRO (PINRO named after N.M.Knipovich), Murmansk
Mr Alexander Lizogub	<i>lizogub@sevtu.ru</i>	Severomorskoe Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fisheries, Murmansk
Mr Victor Rozhnov	<i>rozhnov@sevtu.ru</i>	Severomorskoe Territorial Department of the Federal Agency for Fisheries, Murmansk

UNITED KINGDOM

*Ms Ruth Allin – Representative	<i>Ruth.Allin@defra.gov.uk</i>	DEFRA, Bristol, England
---------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------

Mr Seamus Connor	<i>Seamus.Connor@daera-ni.gov.uk</i>	Inland Fisheries, Marine and Fisheries, Belfast, Northern Ireland
Ms Antje Branding	<i>Antje.Branding@gov.scot</i>	Marine Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland
Dr John Armstrong	<i>John.Armstrong@gov.scot</i>	Marine Scotland Science, Pitlochry, Scotland
Mr William Barnes	<i>william.barnes@defra.gov.uk</i>	DEFRA, London, England
Mr Donald Carmichael	<i>Donald.Carmichael@gov.scot</i>	Marine Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland
Dr Dennis Ensing	<i>Dennis.Ensing@afbini.gov.uk</i>	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland
Mr Robert Floyd	<i>Robert.Floyd@gov.wales</i>	Marine and Fisheries Division, Welsh Government, Cardiff
Dr Jonathan Gillson	<i>jonathan.gillson@cefas.co.uk</i>	Cefas, Lowestoft, England
Mr Peter J Gough	<i>peter.gough@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk</i>	Natural Resources, Cardiff, Wales
Ms Nora Hanson	<i>Nora.Hanson@gov.scot</i>	Marine Scotland Science, Pitlochry, Scotland
Mr Grant Horsburgh	<i>grant.horsburgh@defra.gov.uk</i>	DEFRA, London, England
Mr Keith Main	<i>Keith.Main@gov.scot</i>	Marine Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland
Dr Andrew Moore	<i>andy.moore@cefas.co.uk</i>	Cefas, Lowestoft, England
Mr Sam Pelan	<i>Samuel.Pelan@defra.gov.uk</i>	DEFRA, London, England
Ms Jane Rougvie	<i>Jane.Rougvie@gov.scot</i>	Marine Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland
Mr Lawrence Talks	<i>lawrence.talks@environment-agency.gov.uk</i>	Environment Agency, Hampshire, England
Mr Simon Toms	<i>simon.toms@environment-agency.gov.uk</i>	Environment Agency, Hampshire, England
Mr Alan Walker	<i>alan.walker@cefas.co.uk</i>	Cefas, Lowestoft, England

UNITED STATES

*Ms Kimberly Damon-Randall – Representative	<i>kimberly.damon-randall@noaa.gov</i>	National Marine Fisheries Service, Gloucester, Massachusetts
Mr Stephen Gephard – Representative	<i>sgephard@gmail.com</i>	Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Inland Fisheries Division, Old Lyme, Connecticut
Mr Patrick Keliher – Representative	<i>patrick.keliher@maine.gov</i>	Main Department of Marine Resources, Augusta, Maine
Ms Kimberly Blankenbeker	<i>kimberly.blankenbeker@noaa.gov</i>	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Silver Spring, Maryland

Mr Sebastian Belle	<i>sebastian@maineaqua.org</i>	Maine Aquaculture Association, Hallowell, Maine
Mr John Burrows	<i>jburrows@asfmaine.org /</i>	Atlantic Salmon Federation, US
Mr Mark Capone	<i>mark.capone@noaa.gov</i>	NOAA General Counsel – Northeast Section, Gloucester, Massachusetts
Ms Julia Crocker	<i>julie.crocker@noaa.gov</i>	National Marine Fisheries Service, Gloucester, Massachusetts
Mr Dan Kircheis	<i>dan.kircheis@noaa.gov</i>	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Orono, Maine
Mr Mahvish Madad	<i>MadadMZ@state.gov</i>	US Department of State, Washington DC
Mr Tim Sheehan	<i>tim.sheehan@noaa.gov</i>	National Marine Fisheries Service, Woods Hole, Massachusetts
Mr Dan Tierney	<i>Dan.Tierney@noaa.gov</i>	NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, Gloucester, Massachusetts
Ms Rebecca Wintering	<i>WinteringRJ@state.gov</i>	US Department of State, Washington DC

STATES NOT PARTY TO THE CONVENTION

France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon)

*Mr Guillaume Nardin	<i>guillaume.nardin@outre-mer.gouv.fr</i>	Ministère des Outre-Mer, Paris, France
Ms Camille Servetto	<i>camille.servetto@outre-mer.gouv.fr</i>	Ministère des Outre-Mer, Paris, France
Mr Herlé Goraguer	<i>Herle.Goraguer@ifremer.fr</i>	IFREMER, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, France
Mr Medhi Bouchelaghem	<i>mehdi.bouchelaghem@equipement-agriculture.gouv.fr</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Paris, France

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mr Darius Campbell	<i>darius@neafc.org</i>	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
Dr Lotte Worsøe Clausen	<i>lotte.worsoe.clausen@ices.dk</i>	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, Copenhagen, Denmark
Mr Ghislain Chouinard	<i>ghislain@ices.dk</i>	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, Copenhagen, Denmark
Dr Dennis Ensing	<i>Dennis.Ensing@afbini.gov.uk</i>	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland, Belfast

Dr Cathal Gallagher	<i>cathal.gallagher@fisheriesireland.ie</i>	European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission
Mr Mark Lane	<i>mark@naia.ca</i>	International Salmon Farmers Association
Ms Laura Poinso	<i>laura.poinso@iksr.de</i>	International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine
Mr Mark Saunders	<i>msaunders@yearofthesalmon.org</i>	North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission, Vancouver, Canada

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

****Denotes NGO Co-Chairs**

Angling Council of Ireland

Mr Martin McEnroe *martin.mcenroe@gmail.com*

Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada

Dr Stephen Sutton** *ssutton@asf.ca*

Mr Dave Meerburg *dmeerburg@asf.ca*

Mr Charles Cusson *ccusson@asf.ca*

Atlantic Salmon Federation, United States

Mr Don Ivany *divany@asf.ca*

Mr Kris Hunter *khunter@asf.ca*

Atlantic Salmon Trust, UK

Simon Dryden *simon@atlanticsalmontrust.org*

Professor Ken Whelan *Ken.whelan@hotmail.com*

Connecticut River Salmon Association

Mr Thomas Chrosniak *president@ctriversalmon.org*

Der Atlantische Lachs

Mr Heinz Ackmann *team@lachsverein.de*

Mr Julien Kocabiyik *JulienKocabiyik@web.de*

Downeast Salmon Federation

Mr Dwayne Shaw *dwayne@mainesalmonrivers.org*

Fisheries Management Scotland

Dr Alan Wells *Alan@fms.org*

Ms Charlotte Middleton *charlotte@fms.org*

Institute of Fisheries Management, UK

Dr Nigel Milner *n.milner@apemltd.co.uk*

Irish Seal Sanctuary

Mr Patrick Peril *perilpatsy@gmail.com*
Mr Johnny Woodlock *jwoodlock@eircom.net*

Marine & Environmental Law Institute

Dr David VanderZwaag *david.vanderzwaag@dal.ca*

Norske Lakseelver, Norway

Dr Torfinn Evensen *torfinn@lakseelver.no*
Mr Sigurd Hytterød *Sigurd.Hytterod@lakseelver.no*

North Atlantic Salmon Fund Iceland

Mr Elvar Örn Fridriksson *elvar@nasf.is*

North Atlantic Salmon Fund US

Mrs Kateryna Rakowsky *kateryna@northatlanticsalmonfund.org*

Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers, Norway

Mr Oyvind Fjeldseth *o.f@njff.no*

Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland, UK

Mr Andrew Graham-Stewart *director@salmon-troutscotland.org*

Salmon and Trout Conservation UK

Mr William Hicks *william.hix@btinternet.com*
Mr Paul Knight ** *paul@salmon-trout.org*

Salmon Watch Ireland

Mr Niall Greene *niall.b.greene@gmail.com*
Mr John Murphy *salmonwatchireland@gmail.com*

Scottish Anglers National Association, UK

Craig Campbell *rccampbell@btinternet.com*
Andy Walker *Andywalker231@aol.com*

INTERNATIONAL SALMON FARMERS ASSOCIATION (ISFA)

Mr Mark Lane *mark@naia.ca*

TBSS SPEAKERS

Geir Bolstad *Geir.Bolstad@nina.no*
John Campbell *John.Campbell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca*
Åsa Maria Espmark *Asa.Espmark@Nofima.no*
Ørjan Karlsen *Orjan.karlsen@hi.no*
Mark Lane *mark@naia.ca*
Arve Nilsen *Arve.nilsen@vetinst.no*

Michael Pietrak
Erik Sterud

Michael.pietrak@usda.gov
Erik.sterud@krugerkaldnes.no

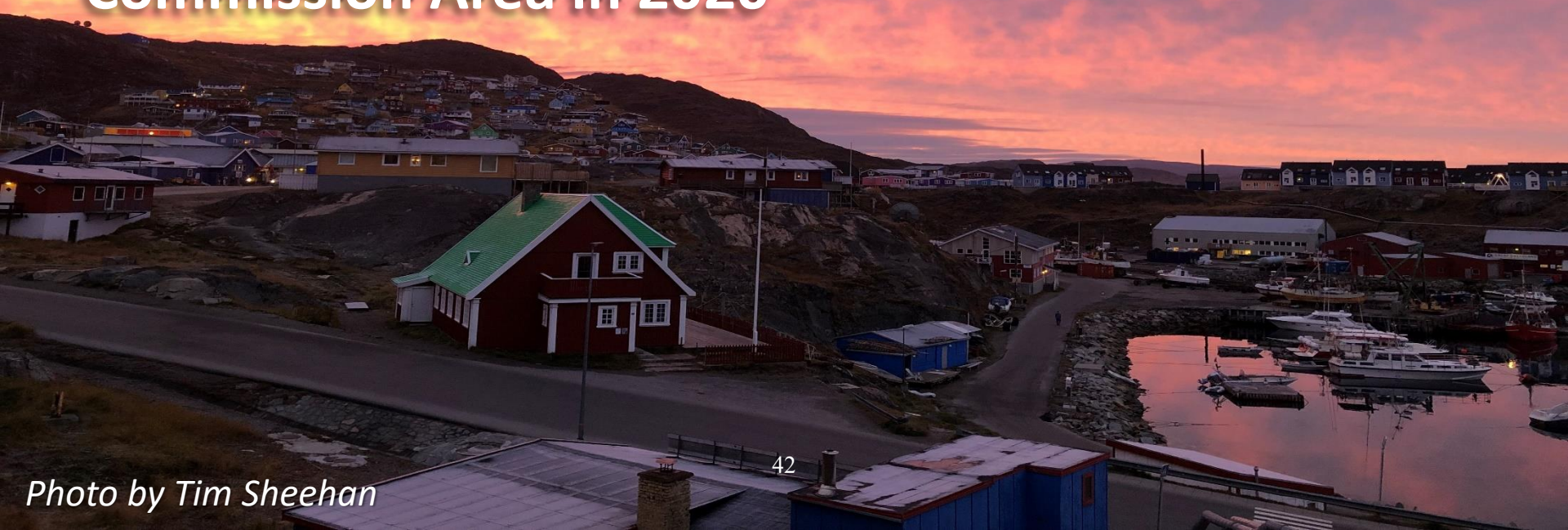
SECRETARIAT

Dr Emma Hatfield	Secretary	<i>hq@nasco.int</i>
Dr Wendy Kenyon	Assistant Secretary	<i>hq@nasco.int</i>
Ms Louise Forero Segovia	Information and Publications Officer	<i>hq@nasco.int</i>

WGC(21)10

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Atlantic Salmon in the West Greenland Commission Area in 2020



Terms of Reference



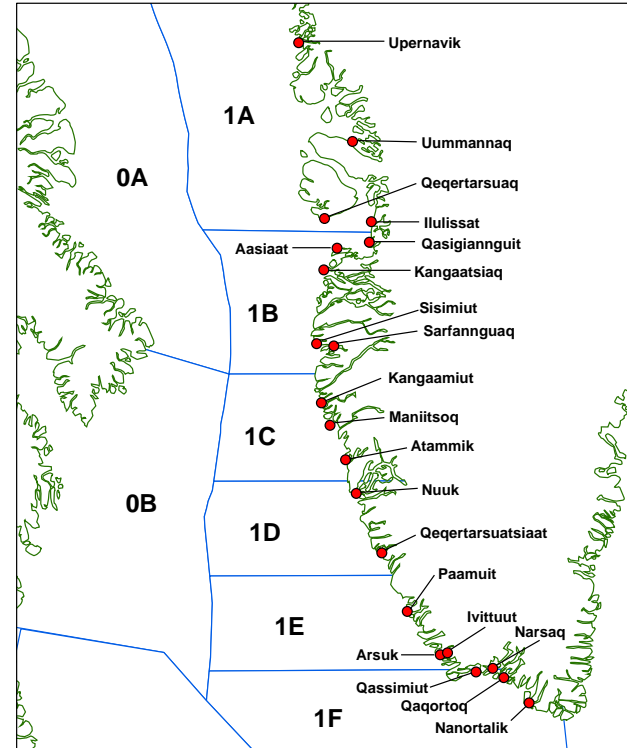
4. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland Commission area:

- 4.1 describe the key events of the 2020 fisheries;
- 4.2 describe the status of the stocks;
- 4.3 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2021 – 2023 with an assessment of risk relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding; and
- 4.4 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

4.1 Key Events 2020 Fishery

- 2020 quota was 20.7 t
- No sales to factories allowed
- All fishers required to have a license and mandatory reporting requirements
- Private fishers restricted to one gillnet fixed to shore
- Driftnets banned from 2020
- Fishing season: 15 August to 31 October
- Actual season: 1 September to 20 September

Figure 1: sal.wgc.all



4.1 Key Events 2020 Fishery: Catch

- Reported catch was 31.7 t
 - 1.9 t increase from 2019
 - 69.5% for Commercial use (73% in 2019)
 - 30.5% for Private use (26% in 2019)
- Unreported Catch
 - no quantitative approach
 - 10 t, previously reported by the Greenlandic authorities to account for private fishers in smaller communities

Table 3: sal.wgc.all

Licence status	Landings type	Reported 2019 catch (t)	Reported 2020 catch (t)
Licensed	Commercial (from commercial fishers)	21.8	22.0
	Private use (from commercial fishers)	0.1	0
	Commercial use (from private fishers)	0.2	0
	Private use (from private fishers)	7.6	9.7
Total commercial catch		22.0	22.0
Total private use catch		7.7	9.7
Total catch		29.8	31.7

4.1 Key Events 2020 Fishery: Catch

- 15 t of catch had been registered by 17 September
- Delay in reporting of catches, resulting in an overharvest of 11 t
- Catch peaked at approximately 2700 t in 1971

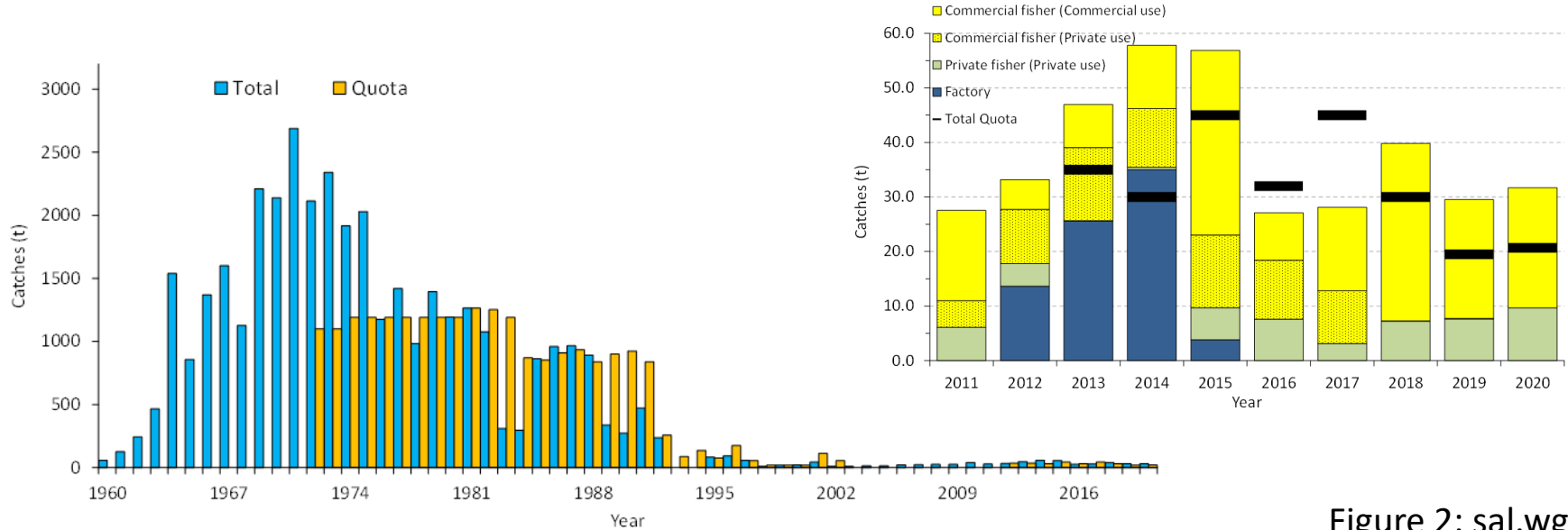


Figure 2: sal.wgc.all

4.1 Catch: Continent of Origin

- No sampling programme in 2020 due to pandemic
- 2019 samples:
 - 1119 samples from four communities representing four of the six NAFO divisions
 - Continent of Origin: North American: 72% European: 28%

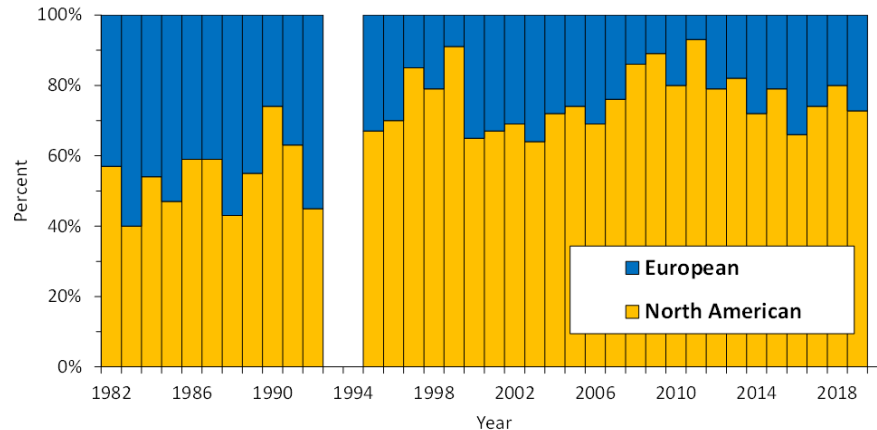


Figure 4: sal.wgc.all

4.1 Catch: Continent of Origin

- Estimated number of salmon harvested at West Greenland (5-year mean used in 2020) from PFA model

$$\text{Number of Salmon} = \text{Total Catch kg} \div \text{Average Weight of Individual Salmon Harvested kg}$$

- North American:
 - ~9600
- European:
 - ~3200

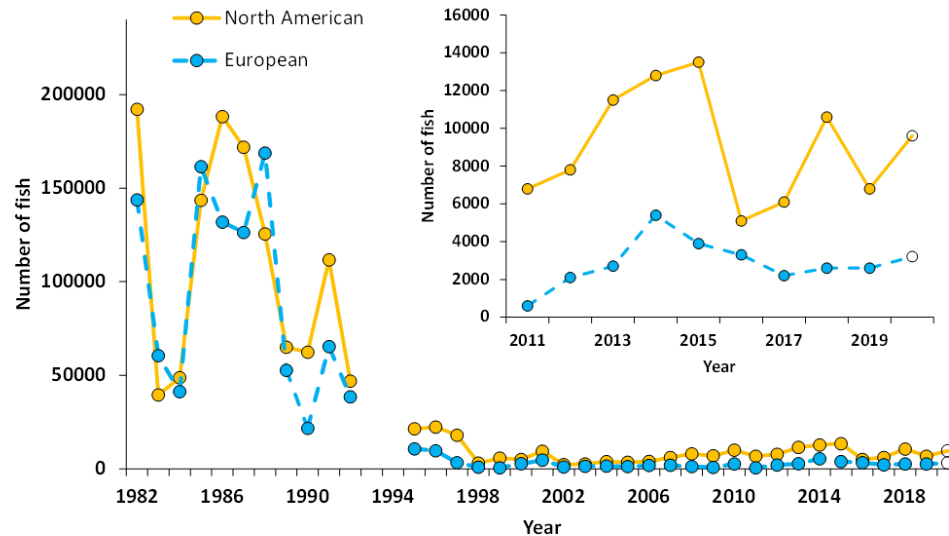


Figure 5: sal.wgc.all

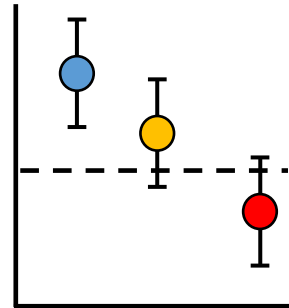
4.1 Catch: Region of Origin

- No 2020 samples available due to Covid-19 pandemic

4.2 Status of Stocks: Risk Assessment Framework

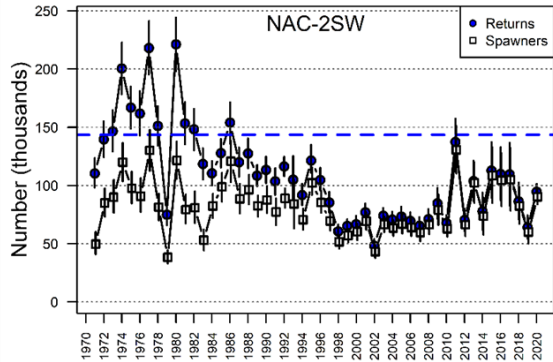
- Management advice for West Greenland fishery based on non-maturing 1SW salmon (return as 2SW/MSW) from North America (NAC) and Southern-Northeast Atlantic (S-NEAC)
 - Pre-Fishery Abundance (PFA) relative to Spawner Escapement Reserve (SER)
 - SERs - CLs adjusted for natural mortality (3% per month at sea)
 - Spawners (2 SW NAC and MSW S-NEAC) relative to Conservation Limits (CLs)

- Full Reproductive Capacity :
 - lower bound of the 90% confidence interval of the estimate above reference point
 - equivalent to a probability of at least 95% of meeting reference point
- At Risk of Suffering Reduced Reproductive Capacity:
 - lower bound of the confidence interval is below reference point, but the midpoint is above
- Suffering Reduced Reproductive Capacity:
 - midpoint is below reference point

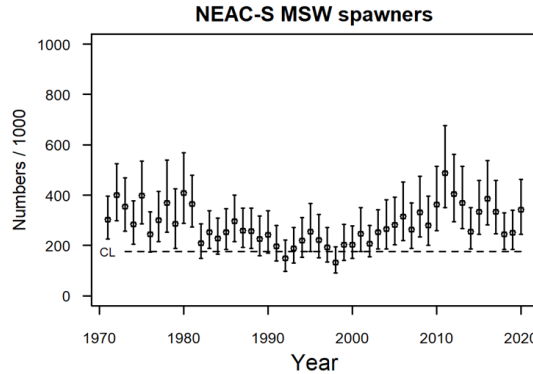


4.2 Status of Stocks: Pre-Fishery Abundance (PFA)

Figure 6: sal.wgc.all

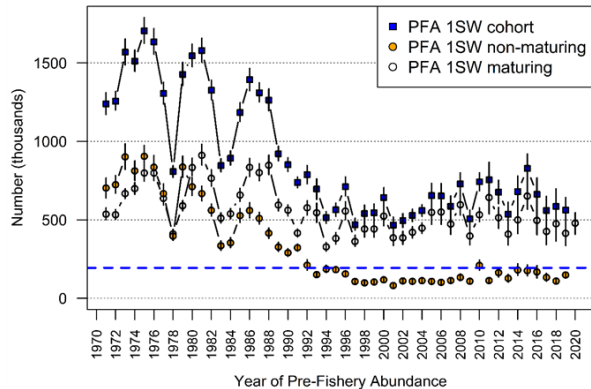


Adj. 2SW CL

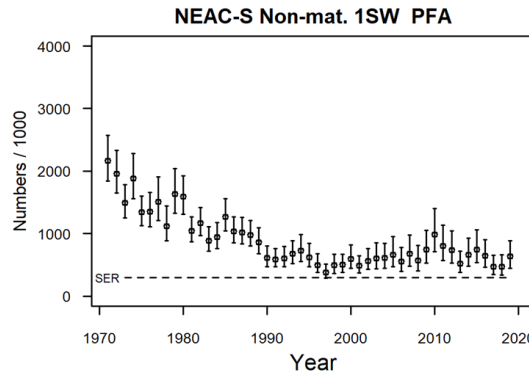


CL

- NAC PFA non-mat 1SW: suffering reduced reproductive capacity
- Southern-NEAC non-mat 1SW: full reproductive capacity
- Note adjusted CLs for UK (Scotland) in 2020



Adj. 2SW CL



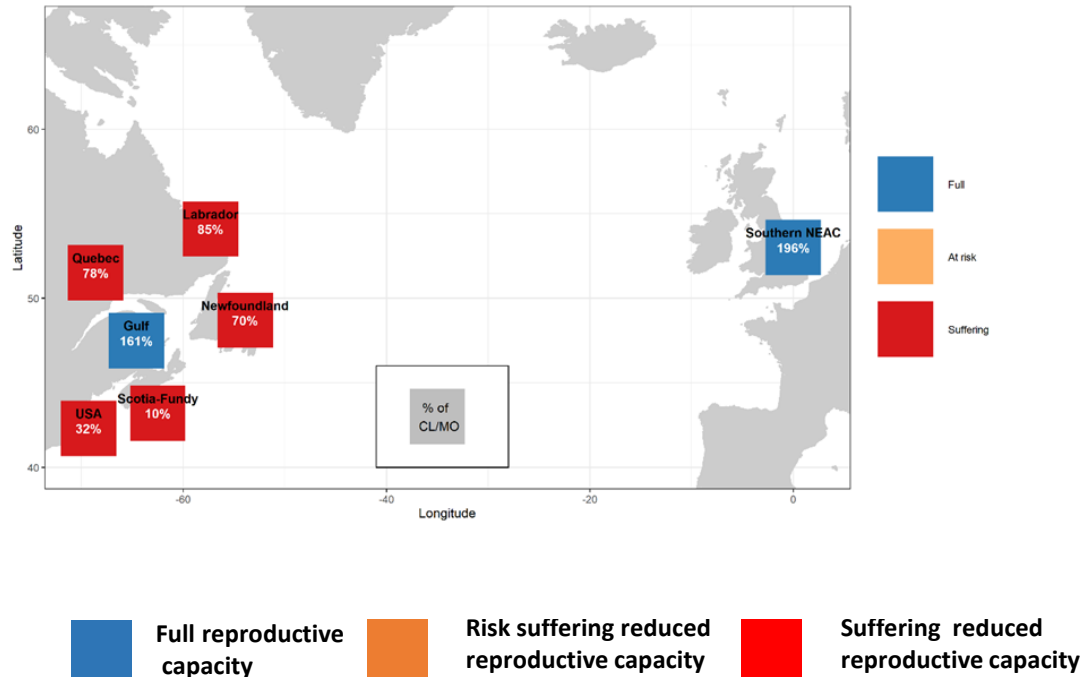
SER

Figure 7: sal.wgc.all

4.2 Status of Stocks: Spawners

Figure 8: sal.wgc.all

- 2020 spawners were improvement on 2019
- All regions/stock components suffering recued reproductive capacity,
- except for Gulf region in Canada and Southern NEAC



4.2 Status of Stocks: Exploitation Rate

- Exploitation rate = Greenland Catch \div Pre-Fishery Abundance (PFA)
 - North America: 6.0% Southern NEAC: 0.7%
 - among lowest in time series (1971-2019)
- Exploitation rate estimates are only available up to 2019, as 2020 exploitation rates are dependent on 2021 returns.

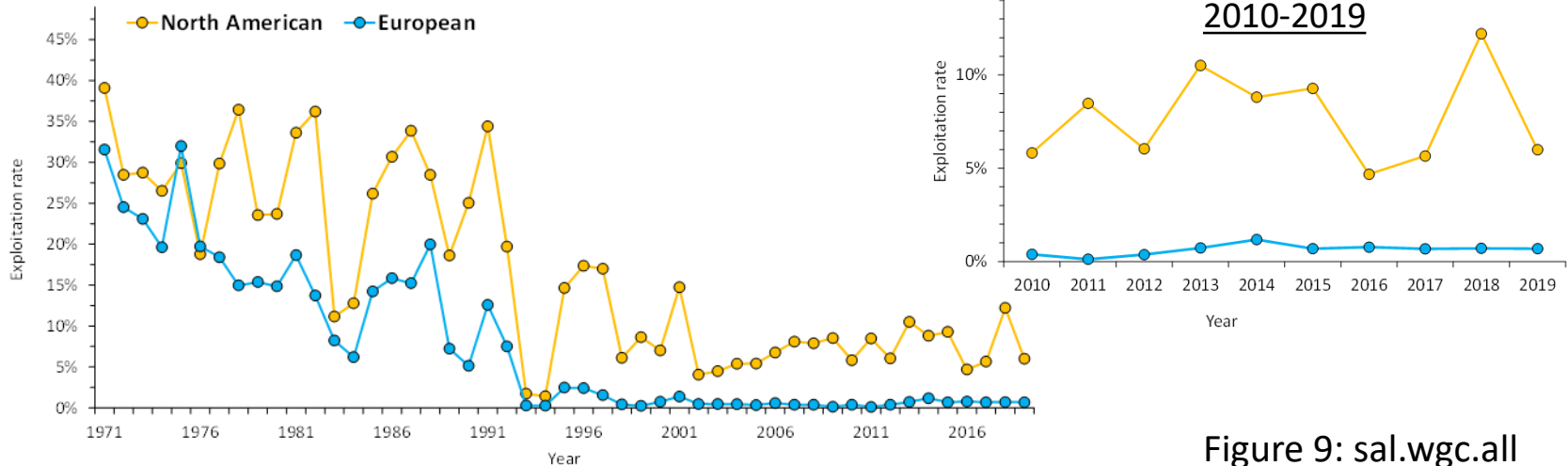


Figure 9: sal.wgc.all

4.3 Catch options or alternative management advice for 2021 – 2023



- No catch options
- No probabilities (close to 0) that the returns of 2SW salmon to the six regions of NAC or MSW to S NEAC will meet or exceed the objectives for these areas simultaneously

	Probability of meeting or exceeding region-specific management objectives							SIMULTANEOUS
	LABRADOR	NEWFOUNDLAND	QUÉBEC	GULF	SCOTIA-FUNDY	US	SOUTHERN NEAC	
2021 Catchoptions								
0	0.75	0.51	0.60	0.92	0.01	0.11	0.93	0.004
10	0.73	0.49	0.58	0.91	0.01	0.10	0.93	0.004
20	0.72	0.47	0.55	0.90	0.01	0.10	0.93	0.004
30	0.70	0.45	0.52	0.88	0.01	0.09	0.92	0.004
40	0.68	0.44	0.50	0.87	0.01	0.09	0.92	0.004
50	0.67	0.42	0.47	0.86	0.01	0.08	0.92	0.003
60	0.65	0.40	0.45	0.84	0.01	0.08	0.92	0.003
70	0.63	0.38	0.42	0.83	0.01	0.08	0.92	0.003
80	0.61	0.36	0.40	0.81	0.01	0.07	0.91	0.003
90	0.59	0.34	0.37	0.79	0.01	0.07	0.91	0.003
100	0.57	0.32	0.35	0.77	0.01	0.07	0.91	0.003
2022 Catchoptions								
0	0.73	0.44	0.47	0.90	0.03	0.15	0.83	0.006
10	0.72	0.42	0.44	0.88	0.03	0.15	0.82	0.006
20	0.70	0.40	0.42	0.87	0.03	0.15	0.82	0.005
30	0.68	0.39	0.40	0.86	0.03	0.14	0.81	0.004
40	0.67	0.37	0.38	0.85	0.03	0.14	0.81	0.004
50	0.65	0.35	0.37	0.83	0.03	0.13	0.81	0.004
60	0.63	0.34	0.35	0.82	0.03	0.13	0.80	0.004
70	0.62	0.32	0.33	0.80	0.02	0.12	0.80	0.004
80	0.60	0.31	0.31	0.78	0.02	0.12	0.79	0.004
90	0.58	0.29	0.30	0.76	0.02	0.12	0.79	0.004
100	0.57	0.28	0.28	0.74	0.02	0.11	0.78	0.004
2020 Catchoptions								
0	0.67	0.30	0.46	0.83	0.03	0.23	0.75	0.005
10	0.66	0.28	0.44	0.82	0.03	0.22	0.74	0.005
20	0.64	0.27	0.43	0.80	0.03	0.22	0.74	0.005
30	0.63	0.26	0.41	0.79	0.03	0.21	0.74	0.005
40	0.61	0.25	0.39	0.77	0.03	0.21	0.73	0.005
50	0.60	0.24	0.37	0.76	0.02	0.20	0.73	0.004
60	0.58	0.23	0.35	0.73	0.02	0.19	0.72	0.004
70	0.56	0.22	0.34	0.72	0.02	0.19	0.72	0.004
80	0.55	0.20	0.32	0.70	0.02	0.18	0.71	0.004
90	0.53	0.19	0.30	0.69	0.02	0.18	0.71	0.004
100	0.51	0.18	0.29	0.67	0.02	0.17	0.70	0.003

Table 7: sal.wgc.all

4.4 Framework of Indicators



Used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice

Used in NAC (only NAC indicators used) and WGC

- ✓ Updating indicator variables
- ✓ Running the objective function spreadsheet for each indicator variable and the variable of interest relative to the management objectives
- ✓ Quantifying the threshold values for the indicator variables
- ✓ Revising/adding the indicator variables
- ✓ Providing the spreadsheet for FWI assessment
- ✓ 19 variables, 13 rivers

Catch Advice Catch option > 0
(Yes = 1, No = 0)

Overall Recommendation
No Significant Change Identified by Indicators

Geographic Area	River/ Indicator	Ratio Value to				True High	Indicator State	Probability of Correct Assignment	Indicator Score	Management Objective Met?
		2020 Value*	Threshold	Threshold	True Low					
USA	Penobscot 25W Returns	998	46%	2 167	100%	100%	-1	1.00	-1.00	
	Penobscot 25W Survival (%)	0.002	18%	0.011	100%	60%	-1	1.00	-1.00	
	possible range					-1.00 0.80				
	Average		32%						-1.00	No
Scotia Fundy	Saint John Return Large	115	3%	3 329	97%	100%	-1	0.97	-0.97	
	Lahave Return Large	22	8%	285	82%	85%	-1	0.82	-0.82	
	North Return Large	226	36%	626	96%	75%	-1	0.96	-0.96	
	Saint John Return Small	241	11%	2 276	90%	80%	-1	0.90	-0.90	
	Lahave Return Small	278	17%	1 679	96%	67%	-1	0.96	-0.96	
	possible range				-0.92 0.81					
Average		15%						-0.92	No	
Gulf	Miramichi Return 25W	4 746	57%	8 366	100%	98%	-1	1.00	-1.00	
	Miramichi Return 15W	8 792	36%	24 287	58%	92%	-1	0.58	-0.58	
	possible range				-0.79 0.95					
	Average		46%						-0.79	No
Quebec	Bonaventure Return Large	1531	68%	2 243	73%	100%	-1	0.73	-0.73	
	Grande Rivière Return Large	426	96%	442	100%	83%	-1	1.00	-1.00	
	Saint-Jean Return Large	814	80%	1013	79%	100%	-1	0.79	-0.79	
	Dartmouth Return Large	889	118%	756	86%	75%	1	0.75	0.75	
	Madeleine Return Large	922	137%	672	94%	74%	1	0.74	0.74	
	Sainte-Anne Return Large	780	134%	584	82%	60%	1	0.60	0.60	
	Mitis Return Large	873	237%	369	89%	50%	1	0.50	0.50	
	De la Trinité Return Large	113	29%	385	88%	100%	-1	0.88	-0.88	
	De la Trinité Return Small	150	26%	578	90%	85%	-1	0.90	-0.90	
De la Trinité 25W Survival	0.28	57%	0.49	100%	68%	-1	1.00	-1.00		
possible range				-0.68 0.80						
Average		98%						-0.27	No	
Newfoundland	possible range									
Average									NA	Unknown
Labrador	possible range									
Average									NA	Unknown
Southern NEAC	possible range									
Average									NA	Unknown

* 2020 value: or if not available, the latest value of the time-series.

Figure 10: sal.wgc.all

CNL(21)60

*Question & Answer Session at the ICES Advice Presentation – Thursday 28
May 2021*

Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): I was just wondering whether ICES has looked into other factors affecting the salmon stock. Because in your previous advice, you always said that considering the reduced fisheries, and there haven't been any changes in the stock, that there should be other factors affecting the salmon stock, and whether you can assess those other factors' impacts versus fisheries. Thank you.

Dennis Ensing (WGNAS Chair): It's a very pertinent question, and you're absolutely right, other factors are impacting on Atlantic salmon abundance. You would probably be talking about predation, climate change barriers. The thing is, it's quite difficult to model on a large scale, but what is interesting in this respect, is that we are moving into a new full-lifecycle model for Atlantic salmon, and we will be doing the exercise with that.

So, in time, we will have a completely new assessment framework, and that will allow us a lot more flexibility of what data we use. That would mean that if we have good data on things like predation, you can then bring it into that model, and you can build that model up and feed that in and use it.

As it stands, as you have seen, for instance, we assume a natural mortality value of 3% per month at sea. But that is a constant. It's based on something. It's not that we just decided to pull that out of a hat. It's based on research. But models do not allow us that flexibility yet, but they will shortly. So, I have created a few models because of their flexibility, and we can then really start to bring all those factors in. Of course, it depends on good data.

And of course, there is a lot of research happening. I know that a lot of Parties here spend a lot of money on looking into marine survival issues. What is it? What are the factors? Where do they happen? And the new model will allow us to put that into our advice in the future, hopefully.

Maria Strandgård Rasmussen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): I just had a question regarding the PFA model. I'm looking at table seven for the Atlantic salmon at West Greenland. It's the output from the PFA model. I was just wondering about whether the input data is regionally summed. If it's based on regionally summed data, how can that account for variability within the region?

Dennis Ensing (WGNAS Chair): Yes, but this is from the PFA model. The input for that, it would be river returns, yes. Every jurisdiction will have its index rivers, and that's where that data comes from, and that is input in the model, and this is then what you get as an output.

Maria Strandgård Rasmussen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): I can try to clarify a bit further. If the output is summed by region, then you bypass the variability that's within one region. For example, if the predation picture is higher for one area within the region than the other, then you cannot get the sum value for the output saying that it's way below the...

Dennis Ensing (WGNAS Chair): No, I see what you mean. We know that there is variability. Unfortunately, the model is not allowing us to account for that, and this is probably the reason

for wanting to move into this full-lifecycle model, because it will give us a lot of flexibility to bring those things in. So, yes, we know the constraints of the model. There are different things in the model as well that we have as constant, or questions, and this is just the evolution of modelling. We've been using this model for a couple of years now, and it's not ideal, and I absolutely agree with that. This is why we want to improve it. This is why we're very keen to move to a new model which allows us a lot of flexibility to look at those. There're so many things we can do in the new model, that we can't with this one, so I hope that answers your question. Even the new model will be suboptimal. That's the caveat with the model, it never truly reflects what is happening, it just tries to be as close as possible. And the new model should get us closer to that and allow us a lot more flexibility.

Maria Strandgård Rasmussen (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)): Yes, thank you so much for your reply.

Tim Sheehan (United States): Thank you very much for the presentation. I just wanted to clarify, I was a little confused by the last question and the last answer. I was wondering if you could provide a little commentary on how the model works, where the model as I understand it, is a summation.

You have regional inputs that are the summation of river returns, spawning returns, that are lumped together for the U.S., and then that goes up and is added with the, say, rest of North America, and those are the primary inputs for the model. So, I didn't understand the question and the answer about individual rivers not really being averaged or summed across a region, where they're all contributing to the region totals.

I think that individual rivers, where we have information, it is informing the model, and it is providing a picture of what's going on for that region. So, I was wondering if you could talk about that, how individual rivers play into the model, and how the regional estimates of, say, spawning as an input are used within the modelling.

Dennis Ensing (WGNAS Chair): I think you've pretty much already given the answer here yourself. Different regions are represented. Every region will have multiple rivers, or hopefully at least one, of where the returners, where the spawners are. And we derive a lot of our information for the model from those rivers as well, so we know about smolt age, the migration, the average of that, the midpoint of that, spawners, marine survival we know for those rivers.

And they are then indicative of those regions that they represent. Now, that means that not every region is as well represented as we want. In an ideal world, you would have every river assessed, but that is just not feasible, that is impossible to do. The cost alone and the infrastructure alone would be prohibitive. But all that information is used in the data.

In terms of variability, there will be variability between years, but certainly if I look at our own river here, that is hard data. I know that's not the case on some rivers. Some rivers are estimates. There will be spawner estimates because it's done, for instance, using catch statistics, angling data. In Ireland, we have an index river which has a full trapping facility, so we literally get everything that ascends the river. So, we can be pretty happy with that input.

In some regions, it has to be a subset of the rivers in a region that are used in the model, and I think that when we move model, we're going to be dependent on rivers, but we can take other data as well, that has more of a regional signal.

Serge Doucet (NASCO President): I would like to thank Dennis for his presentations, and I thank you for the questions. And with that, I believe that I will bring this webinar to a close. Thank you, everyone.

WGC(21)18

***Interim Regulatory Measure for Fishing
for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland in 2021***

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 originating from the rivers of other Commission members, 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 catch (TAC) for all components of the Atlantic salmon fishery at West Greenland to 27 metric tonnes. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees not to carry forward any underharvest into a future year.
- (5) In support of the efforts to enhance timely reporting and registration to ensure that the TAC is respected, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to compile and register catch data on a daily basis and to further strengthen the timely reporting by municipalities and fishers. Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to report back on the efforts of these actions to the West Greenland Commission.
- (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) The Commission shall meet inter-sessionally, beginning in 2021 and concluding before the 2022 Annual Meeting, to explore additional measures to be implemented by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) with the objective of, *inter-alia*, improving the monitoring of the TAC uptake to prevent overfishing.
- (9) This interim regulatory measure shall apply to the fishery at West Greenland in 2021.

WGC(21)15

Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2021

The West Greenland Commission recognises the important contribution of sound biological data to science-based management decisions for fisheries prosecuted in the West Greenland Commission area. The members of the West Greenland Commission have worked co-operatively over the past five decades to collect biological data on Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland. These data provide critical inputs to the stock assessment completed by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon annually.

The objectives of the sampling program in 2021 are to:

- Continue the time series of data (1969-2020) on continent of origin and biological characteristics of the Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland fishery;
- Provide data on mean weight, length, age, and continent of origin for use in the North American and European Atlantic salmon run-reconstruction models;
- Collect information on the recovery of internal and external tags.

To this end, members participating in the sampling program in 2021 plan to collect:

- Biological characteristics data including lengths and weights of landed fish;
- Information on tags, fin clips, and other marks;
- Scale samples to be used for age and growth analyses;
- Tissue samples to be used for genetic analyses;
- Other biological data requested by the ICES scientists and NASCO co-operators.

Members of the West Greenland Commission plan to provide the following staff inputs to the co-operative sampling program at West Greenland during the 2021 fishing season:

- The European Union²: provide a minimum of 6 person weeks³ to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland;
- The United Kingdom: provide a minimum of 4 person weeks² to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland during the 2021 fishing season;
- Canada: provide a minimum of 2 person weeks² to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland;
- The United States: provide a minimum of 2 person weeks² to sample Atlantic salmon at West Greenland;

² Ireland (2 samplers) and France (1 sampler).

³ For the purposes of this statement of co-operation, a person week of sampling is defined as a trained individual who works on site in West Greenland to collect samples of Atlantic salmon for a period of 7 days.

- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources: sample Atlantic salmon from the city of Nuuk on a weekly basis;
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources: implement a Citizen Science sampling program for the sampling of Atlantic salmon;
- The United States: provide a Sampling Program Co-ordinator to co-ordinate the sampling program; and
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Program Co-ordinator: provide support for the sampling program by facilitating the sampling of Atlantic salmon by the samplers identified above.

Members of the West Greenland Commission plan to provide the following technical support for sample analysis and data collected at West Greenland during the 2021 fishing season:

- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Program Co-ordinator: work with any factories receiving harvested salmon (if factory landings are allowed) to collect biological characteristics data and samples from a proportion of the landed fish via factory staff;
- The United States: provide oversight for the processing of all collected biological samples;
- The United States: report the sampling program results to the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon in support of the stock assessment completed by this group;
- The United States: co-ordinate the publishing of a report that details the results of the sampling program in co-operation with institutes participating in the sampling program via a participating institution's official report series;
- Canada: provide single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) analysis of tissue samples collected from Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland;
- Canada: provide ageing of scale samples collected from Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland;
- Canada: maintain the historical West Greenland sampling database; and
- The United Kingdom (England & Wales): act as a clearing house for coded wire tags recovered from the fishery.

Members of the West Greenland Commission plan to provide the following co-ordination activities in support of the co-operative sampling program at West Greenland during the 2021 fishing season:

- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland): identify a mechanism to provide sampling access to landed Atlantic salmon before grading / culling and before fish are subject to health regulations that would restrict or prohibit activities associated with sampling as needed;
- Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland): inform persons designated by participating members of the West Greenland Commission of important developments in the management of the West Greenland fishery, including planned openings and closures of the Atlantic salmon fishery at West Greenland;

- The United States: the Sampling Program Co-ordinator is expected to determine the allocation of available scientific sampling personnel to ensure spatial and temporal coverage to characterize both the fishery and the Atlantic salmon populations along the West Greenland coast;
- The United States: the Sampling Program Co-ordinator will work with participating samplers to provide fishers and market supervisors with information explaining the rationale for the sampling program; and
- All members of the West Greenland Commission participating in the sampling program are expected to share access to resulting data and work co-operatively in the publication of information and to disseminate the findings of the sampling programme through appropriate venues.

Performance of activities set forth in this Statement of Co-operation are subject to the availability of appropriated funds under domestic law. Each member should make reasonable and good faith efforts to secure the necessary funds to implement fully its intended activities identified in this Statement of Co-operation. If compliance with domestic law and/or the lack of sufficient funds or other legitimate circumstances prevailing at the time impairs a participating member's ability to implement this Statement of Co-operation, the participating member should notify the other members as soon as possible.

CNL(21)14

Request for Scientific Advice from ICES

- 1. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic area:**
 - 1.1 provide an overview of salmon catches and landings by country, including unreported catches and catch and release, and production of farmed and ranched Atlantic salmon in 2021¹;
 - 1.2 report on significant new or emerging threats to, or opportunities for, salmon conservation and management²;
 - 1.3 provide an update on the distribution and abundance of pink salmon across the North Atlantic and advise on potential threats to wild Atlantic salmon;
 - 1.4 provide an overview of the East Greenland stock complex in terms of migration, stock composition, biological characteristics, historical landings, effort etc.;
 - 1.5 provide a compilation of tag releases by country in 2021; and
 - 1.6 identify relevant data deficiencies, monitoring needs and research requirements;
- 2. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North-East Atlantic Commission area:**
 - 2.1 describe the key events of the 2021 fisheries³;
 - 2.2 review and report on the development of age-specific stock conservation limits, including updating the time-series of the number of river stocks with established CLs by jurisdiction;
 - 2.3 describe the status of the stocks, including updating the time-series of trends in the number of river stocks meeting CLs by jurisdiction;
 - 2.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for the 2022/2023 - 2024/2025 fishing seasons, with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding⁴; and
 - 2.5 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.
- 3. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the North American Commission area:**
 - 3.1 describe the key events of the 2021 fisheries (including the fishery at St Pierre and Miquelon)³;
 - 3.2 update age-specific stock conservation limits based on new information as available, including updating the time-series of the number of river stocks with established CLs by jurisdiction;
 - 3.3 describe the status of the stocks, including updating the time-series of trends in the number of river stocks meeting CLs by jurisdiction;
 - 3.4 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2022-2025 with an assessment of risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or

pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding⁴; and

3.5 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

4. With respect to Atlantic salmon in the West Greenland Commission area:

4.1 describe the key events of the 2021 fisheries³;

4.2 describe the status of the stocks⁵;

4.3 provide catch options or alternative management advice for 2022-2024 with an assessment of risk relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits, or pre-defined NASCO Management Objectives, and advise on the implications of these options for stock rebuilding⁴; and

4.4 update the Framework of Indicators used to identify any significant change in the previously provided multi-annual management advice.

Notes:

1. *With regard to question 1.1, for the estimates of unreported catch the information provided should, where possible, indicate the location of the unreported catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Numbers of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries should be provided.*
2. *With regard to question 1.2, ICES is requested to include reports on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO.*
3. *In the responses to questions 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1, ICES is asked to provide details of catch, gear, effort, composition and origin of the catch and rates of exploitation. For homewater fisheries, the information provided should indicate the location of the catch in the following categories: in-river; estuarine; and coastal. Information on any other sources of fishing mortality for salmon is also requested. For 4.1, if any new surveys are conducted and reported to ICES, ICES should review the results and advise on the appropriateness of incorporating resulting estimates into the assessment process.*
4. *In response to questions 2.4, 3.4 and 4.3, provide a detailed explanation and critical examination of any changes to the models used to provide catch advice and report on any developments in relation to incorporating environmental variables in these models. Also provide a detailed explanation and critical examination of any concerns with salmon data collected in 2021 which may affect the catch advice considering the restrictions on data collection programmes and fisheries due to the COVID 19 pandemic.*
5. *In response to question 4.2, ICES is requested to provide a brief summary of the status of North American and North-East Atlantic salmon stocks. The detailed information on the status of these stocks should be provided in response to questions 2.3 and 3.3.*

Attendees:

Sergey Prusov (NEAC, manager representative)

Peder Fiske (NEAC, scientist representative)

Tony Blanchard (NAC, manager representative)

Tim Sheehan (NAC, scientist representative)

Maria Strandgård Rasmussen (WGC, manager representative)

Niall Ó Maoiléidigh (WGC, scientist representative)

Dennis Ensing (ICES representative, Observer)

Patrick Gargan (Co-ordinator)

New questions, originator:

- 1.3 (EU)
- 1.4 (US)

Closing Statements Submitted by Members of the Commission

Closing Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by Canada

Canada came to this year's discussions of a regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery with a strong and clear commitment to NASCO's objective, which in Article 3 of the Convention is to "contribute through consultation and co-operation to the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks subject to this Convention, taking into account the best scientific evidence available to it."

The best scientific evidence available to the West Greenland Commission (WGC) this year, as it has been for a number of years, is that there should be no fishing at West Greenland. The scientific advice further notes that the stocks fished at West Greenland, almost all of which originate in the rivers of other members, continue to suffer reduced reproductive capacity, which poses serious risks to their conservation. In response to scientific advice, Canada has taken significant steps over many years to strengthen management of our own fisheries, including the ongoing closure of all commercial fisheries since 2000, a move to no retention in many recreational fisheries, and limits on the amount of fish that may be taken in subsistence fisheries. These steps have been difficult for Canadians to accept given the importance of access to salmon, but they have been taken nevertheless in the face of long-standing and worsening concerns about salmon stocks.

In discussions of the West Greenland Commission this year, Canada worked with colleagues around the table to find a way forward that would recognize the importance of the fishery in Greenland and the progress made in managing that fishery in recent years, while also addressing the serious concerns of the members in whose rivers the subject stocks originate. Unfortunately, Denmark (in respect of the Faroes Islands and Greenland) has chosen to ignore these legitimate concerns of other members and refused any effective compromise on harvest amounts that would support stock conservation.

The outcome with which we find ourselves is a measure with a total allowable catch (TAC) in 2021 that neither responds to the scientific advice nor implements the previous regulatory measure's agreed approach to reduce future TACs to account for past overharvests. Furthermore, the measure does not propose any consequences for overharvests that might occur in 2021, as they have in each of the three previous years.

NASCO and its Parties continue to work together to better understand and respond to the wide range of factors contributing to declines in Atlantic salmon stocks. Management of harvests at sustainable levels must be a central element of any approach to conservation and management of harvested species, and is one area where management authorities can and should have firm control over impacts on stocks. Furthermore, a common approach in setting TACs in international fisheries is to allow for adjustment of future TACs to compensate for any overharvests. This ensures that members and Parties are accountable and responsible for their TAC commitments and for any failure to abide by those commitments.

Unfortunately, the measure coming out of this year's meeting has a TAC that is too high to support conservation, and the lack of consequences of past and future overharvests undermines the significance of the TAC itself. This outcome is deeply concerning for Canada, and seemingly for most other members of the Commission.

We appreciate that there are positive elements in the measure adopted, including continuation of monitoring, sampling and reporting activities, and we look forward to continuing to work with Denmark (in respect of the Faroes Islands and Greenland) to support improvements in that work. We also acknowledge and understand the challenges in managing a fishery in small, remote, northern communities, challenges that we likewise face in some of our own fisheries in Canada. However, this does not change the simple fact that harvests must be sustainable, and meaningful consequences for overharvests are an essential element in ensuring that sustainability.

As we look to beginning negotiations anew in the coming year, we urge all Commission members to work in a spirit of compromise and co-operation to ensure that the needs and concerns of all members can be addressed, in order to provide urgent protection to Atlantic salmon stocks and ensure the longer-term conservation and restoration of this iconic species.

Closing Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by the European Union

The European Union is disappointed by the lack of ambition of the interim regulatory measure adopted by NASCO, but we are also relieved that there will be a framework in place to manage the fishery at West Greenland in 2021.

We previously highlighted that the issue of the overharvest by DFG in the last three years remains to be addressed, as it occurred in the context of an international agreement to which DFG was a Party.

The European Union is looking forward to working with the other members of the WGC to improve the interim regulatory measure adopted this year. While we hope that DFG can comply with the agreed TAC, we also hope that in the event of overfishing, DFG can reconsider its position on the payback of such overfishing.

Closing Statement to the West Greenland Commission Submitted by the United States

Over the course of developing the last two regulatory measures for the West Greenland fishery, the members of the West Greenland Commission (WGC) worked hard and in a spirit of cooperation to develop a multilaterally agreed management regime for the West Greenland fishery that enhanced fisheries management and accountability and improved reporting, resulting in more complete catch data and other information on the fishery. The United States came to the 38th Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) optimistic that an agreement could be reached on a new multi-annual regulatory measure that would build on the progress made in the last few years.

Despite the efforts expended in two WGC intersessional meetings this year as well as during this annual meeting, we find that the Commission has lost ground.

We are extremely disappointed that the Commission was only able to agree a measure

applicable to 2021 and that the 27 ton (t) Total Allowable Catch (TAC) did not account for the 10 t overharvest from 2020, as required by the 2018-2020 regulatory measure. The United States showed substantial flexibility to find a compromise approach that would work for Denmark (on behalf of the Faroes Islands and Greenland) (DFG) as did other Commission members. Unfortunately, DFG rejected every reasonable compromise suggestion made. Our governments have joined this Convention and agreed to cooperate to conserve, restore, enhance, and rationally manage Atlantic salmon. We are here, operating under this Convention, to negotiate agreements that take the concerns of all WGC members into account. Unfortunately, that is not what happened this week. Instead, the concerns and interests of four of the five members of this Commission were largely, if not entirely, ignored. There was no flexibility shown by DFG and no real effort to find common ground. This was both surprising and concerning, and we hope this is not how our relationship in NASCO will be defined in the future.

With regard to a TAC level for the West Greenland fishery, we consider that 27 t is much too high. For decades, the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advice has been that the aggregate stocks cannot support a fishery, and yet, for most of that time, the WGC has allowed a fishery to continue for internal use – local markets, institutions, and personal consumption. During this same period, U.S.-origin salmon populations have been at risk of extinction. As we have noted previously, we have never cited the fishery at West Greenland as the sole cause for the stock's decline, nor solely responsible for its recovery. In fact, as reported to NASCO, the United States and other States of origin have invested significant resources--in dam removals, habitat restoration, stock support, and other activities--to ensure that wild salmon stocks are effectively conserved and managed. To give endangered U.S. salmon and other depleted stocks across the North Atlantic the best chance of continued survival and eventual recovery, we need to address all threats wherever they occur, including those from mixed stock fisheries. As expressed repeatedly throughout the meeting, we firmly believe that the 2021 TAC for West Greenland should be no more than 20 t. Given the 10 t overharvest in 2020, this TAC level would be in line with the application of the overharvest provision from the previous regulatory measure to which DFG agreed. We see no other option but to apply this binding obligation to reduce the following year's quota to the 2021 TAC because of the overharvest in 2020. DFG, however, has refused to honor its obligation to pay back its 2020 quota overharvest, which is very disappointing.

In addition to the overall level of the TAC for the West Greenland fishery, a key issue for the United States coming into this meeting centered on the quota overharvest payback provisions of the previous regulatory measure. We find it incomprehensible that DFG could not accept the continuation of that provision in a new regulatory measure. We appreciate the effort and resources that have been invested into the management of the Atlantic salmon fishery at Greenland. Even with those improvements, however, significant overharvest occurred in every year of the previous three-year regulatory measure. Given that DFG continues to struggle to manage the fishery within the allocated TAC, this provision is crucial to ensure overfishing does not take place on these endangered and depleted stocks. Since DFG has stated that it can and will respect the TAC, we note that means this provision would never be triggered. We fail to understand, therefore, why DFG cannot agree to retain the overharvest payback provision.

We are aware that DFG feels that it has given as much as it can with regard to the management of the West Greenland fishery, and it has asserted many times that the people of Greenland are dependent on salmon fisheries. DFG has not, however, made a compelling case for a fishery in terms responsive to NASCO's Convention and other basic texts with respect to the dependency of communities on salmon for subsistence needs. DFG insists on the support of NASCO and sanction for the West Greenland fishery, but has not fully embraced the Organization's

expressed and shared processes or principles to conserve, restore, enhance, and rationally manage Atlantic salmon. Despite the poor status of many of the stocks, DFG presses to take more fish.

Stocks in many areas of the North Atlantic are at or close to all time low levels of abundance, and U.S. stocks are particularly imperiled. It is indisputable that salmon from these stocks are caught in the commercial fishery off West Greenland. The United States remains steadfast in our commitment to ensure that Atlantic salmon are not extirpated from our waters and that, ultimately, we are able to recover this species. As in many other locations, salmon are of cultural and social importance to residents of the United States and to Native American Tribes. Not only are we working hard to connect salmon habitats in rivers, estuaries, and marine waters, but we are also trying to reconnect the people with this treasured resource. That said, Native American Tribes have not accessed wild Atlantic salmon for many years given its poor status. All NASCO Parties must fully consider the scientific advice and the Organization's Convention and guiding principles, particularly the precautionary approach, when considering whether or not to authorize a mixed stock fishery. Enabling the continued overharvest of salmon populations to serve one country's commercial fishery rather than supporting conservation measures in line with science to ensure the future of this iconic species, flies in the face of the NASCO treaty and other fundamental agreements. As we have noted before, this will ultimately undermine the ability of all fishermen to benefit from the resource over the long-term.

In closing, it is deeply disappointing and troubling that we have not been able to make the kind of progress the United States expected would be possible coming into this annual meeting. We cannot endorse the proposed one-year regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery, but we will not block consensus and undermine its adoption either. We hope this Commission can find more common ground as it works over the next year to develop a new measure for the West Greenland fishery that takes into account all Members' concerns and more clearly recognizes the very poor status of many of the contributing stocks.