

WGC(04)8

Report of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization 7-11 June, 2004, Reykjavik, Iceland

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Ms Patricia Kurkul (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to Reykjavik.
- 1.2 There were no initial statements from the Parties. An opening statement was made on behalf of the NGOs by their Chairman. The NGOs noted the ICES advice to the Commission, that no fishery should take place at West Greenland. The NGOs urged continuing support and assistance from the Parties for the on-going conservation agreement negotiated between the North Atlantic Salmon Fund and the Atlantic Salmon Federation, on the one hand, and the KNAPK on the other.
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included on page XXX of this document.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its agenda, WGC(04)9 (Annex 1).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 The Commission appointed Dr Malcolm Beveridge (European Union) as its Rapporteur for the meeting.

4. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The Commission re-elected Ms Patricia Kurkul (USA) as Chair and Ms Julia Barrow (Canada) as Vice-Chair.

5. Review of the 2003 Fishery and ACFM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 5.1 The representative of ICES, Dr Walter Crozier, presented the scientific advice from ICES relevant to the West Greenland Commission, prepared in response to a request from the Commission at its Twentieth Annual Meeting. The ACFM report from ICES, which contains the advice relevant to all Commissions, is included on page XX of this document. Dr Crozier's powerpoint presentation to the Commission is contained in document CNL(04)40.

- 5.2 The representative of the United States complimented the ICES representative for the clear and comprehensive presentation of the ICES advice, noting, however, that the situation was grave.
- 5.3 The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also complimented the ICES representative on his presentation. However, he pointed out that nominal catches in West Greenland had dropped from 1,426 tonnes in 1977 to less than 9 tonnes in 2003, a reduction of 99.4%. He asked whether the reduction in West Greenland catches had made any measurable difference to the North American or southern European stocks. The ICES representative stated that exploitation rates had dropped significantly everywhere throughout this period, but despite this, the abundance of North American and southern European stocks were at such a low level that ICES had concluded that no catch at Greenland is presently warranted. The representative of the European Union pointed out that while observed catches in West Greenland were less than 9 tonnes, unreported catches were estimated at 10 tonnes, bringing the total exploitation at West Greenland in 2003 to close to 20 tonnes. The ICES representative urged that NASCO accept the ICES advice of a zero catch for 2004, or a figure close to this.
- 5.4 The European Union raised the issue of the poor state of knowledge of the genetic composition of salmon stocks in southern European rivers that had been mentioned in the ICES presentation. The Commission was informed that EC funds had recently been made available to carry out an analysis of salmon stocks in rivers in France, Spain and Southwest England. This was welcomed by the ICES representative.
- 5.5 The Chair thanked the ICES representative for his excellent report, but reiterated the sentiment that it was sobering advice.
- 5.6 A paper on the 2003 fishery at West Greenland was tabled by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), WGC(04)5 (Annex 2).

6. Regulatory Measures

- 6.1 There were no initial statements from the Parties.
- 6.2 Following discussions by Heads of Delegations, the Chair tabled a document for a 'Regulatory Measure for the Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2004'. There were no comments from the Parties on the proposal. The regulatory measure was adopted, WGC(04)6 (Annex 3).

7. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

- 7.1 The United States presented a report on the North American/European Union sampling programme at West Greenland in 2003, WGC(04)10 (Annex 4). The representative of Canada complimented the United States on the presentation, which provided a thorough analysis and assessment of the fishery and the sampling programme carried out in 2003. The views were endorsed by the representative of the European Union.

- 7.2 The West Greenland Sampling Agreement was tabled for discussion, WGC(04)7 (Annex 5). All Parties (the European Union, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the United States) agreed to contribute to the resourcing of the sampling programme. Canada will not be able to send a sampler to West Greenland but will support all other measures, including the maintenance of the database and the analysis of scale samples. The representative of the European Union expressed his hope that Canada would be able to support sampling work in future years. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) also complimented the United States on its presentation and looked forward to welcoming this year's samplers.

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 8.1 For the first time since 2001, tags had been entered into the annual award scheme of the West Greenland Commission. The winning tag in the draw, made by the Auditor on 24 May, was of Canadian origin and had been applied to a smolt in the estuary of the Southwest Miramichi River, Canada, on 27 May 2002, as part of a cooperative smolt-tagging project. The fish was caught at Maniitsoq, West Greenland, by Ms Charlotte Lyberth, and sold on the open market during September 2003.

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

- 9.1 The Commission reviewed the relevant sections (paragraph 4) of document SSC(04)2 and agreed to recommend it to the Council as a component of the annual request to ICES for scientific advice. The request, as agreed by Council, is contained in document CNL(04)13 (Annex 6).

10. Other Business

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11. Date and Place of Next Meeting

- 11.1 The next meeting of the West Greenland Commission will be held during the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council from 6-10 June 2005.

12. Report of the Meeting

- 12.1 The Commission agreed a report of its meeting, WGC(04)8.

Note: The annexes mentioned above begin on page XXX, following the French translation of the report of the meeting. A list of West Greenland Commission papers is included in Annex 7 on page XXX of this document.