



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

Dalmahoy Hotel & Country Club, Edinburgh, UK

6 – 9 June 2022

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 In the absence of the Chair, Viktor Rozhnov (Russian Federation), and the Vice-Chair, Svein Magnason (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)), the Secretary opened the meeting. The Committee elected Helge Dyrendal (Norway) to serve the remainder of Viktor Rozhnov's term as Chair. He welcomed participants to the meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission.
- 1.2 The representatives of the European Union (EU), Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom (UK) referred to statements made at the Opening of the Council Meeting (Annex 1).
- 1.3 The representative of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) referred to the statement made at the Opening of the Council Meeting (Annex 2).
- 1.4 A list of participants at the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included as Annex 3.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, [NEA\(22\)12](#), (Annex 4).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Michael Millane (EU) was appointed Rapporteur.

4. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The Commission elected Alex Kinninmonth (UK) as its Chair (proposed by the representative of Norway, seconded by the representative of the EU) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2022 Annual Meeting.
- 4.2 The Commission elected Helge Dyrendal (Norway) as its Vice-Chair (proposed by the representative of the UK, seconded by the representative of the EU) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2022 Annual Meeting.

5. Review of the 2021 Fishery and ACOM Report from ICES on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

- 5.1 The representative of ICES, Dennis Ensing, presented the scientific advice relevant to the North-East Atlantic Commission, as contained in the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) report, [CNL\(22\)09](#). Dr Ensing's presentation is available as document NEA(22)15 (Annex 5). The Chair thanked Dr Ensing for his presentation.
- 5.2 The representative of the NGOs highlighted that Atlantic salmon are likely to be particularly impacted by climate change in their southern European range and asked

why EU-Spain and EU-Portugal are not currently included in the ICES stock assessments for the Southern NEAC area. The representative of ICES informed him that neither jurisdiction has enough appropriate data yet for inclusion in the current assessment models and he encouraged both to work towards this, particularly in the context of the ongoing development of the life-cycle model which may be adopted by ICES to assess the status of Atlantic salmon stocks in future years.

6. Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission

- 6.1 The Chair noted that under the Council's 'Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the 'Next Steps' for NASCO', [CNL\(13\)38](#), it was agreed that there should be an agenda item in each of the Commissions to allow for a focus on mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs).
- 6.2 The EU ([NEA\(22\)07](#)), Norway ([NEA\(22\)05](#)), the Russian Federation ([NEA\(22\)04rev](#)) and the UK ([NEA\(22\)06](#)) submitted papers providing information on MSFs, including a description of any MSFs still operating, the most recent catch data and any changes or developments in the management of MSFs to implement NASCO's agreements.
- 6.3 A 'Joint Statement on behalf of the EU and Norway regarding the Management of the Fisheries in the Teno Watercourse', [NEA\(22\)08](#), was provided in advance of the Annual Meeting. This concerned the status of work implementing the bilateral agreement between Norway and EU-Finland on the fisheries in the Tana / Teno river, which include MSFs.
- 6.4 A representative of Norway outlined the declining status of Atlantic salmon stocks in the cross-border Tana / Teno river system shared with EU-Finland. He pointed out that many of the stocks no longer have a harvestable surplus and noted that, in response, Norway has now implemented a ban on salmon fishing there in 2022 as a conservation measure in waters under their jurisdiction. However, he noted that EU-Finland has not yet implemented such a ban in waters under their jurisdiction as agreed bilaterally in spring of this year. He expressed concern about the potential harm to the salmon caused by fishing from the Finnish shore and asked the EU when the ban on fishing in the waters of the river under Finland's jurisdiction will come into effect. In response, a representative of the EU informed the Commission that parliamentary procedures in Finland had delayed the timely implementation of the ban there. However, the process has been expedited and the enactment of such a ban is imminent once final legislative procedures are complete and is expected to be in place by the end of this week. A representative of the EU acknowledged Norway's good co-operation on the shared research and management initiatives undertaken in the Tana / Teno river in this regard and this was reciprocated by the representative of Norway.

7. Regulatory Measures

- 7.1 The Chair reminded the Commission that in 2021 the Commission adopted a 'Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2021 / 2022, 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024', [NEA\(21\)16](#). Under this Decision, the Commission agreed:

'Not to set a quota for the salmon fishery in the Faroese Fisheries Zone for 2021 / 2022. This decision will also apply in 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024 unless the application of the Framework of Indicators shows that a re-assessment is warranted. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) retains the right to conduct a scientific research fishery in the Faroese Fishery Zone.'

- 7.2 The Chair noted that in 2021, although the North-East Atlantic Commission agreed a

multi-year decision, the West Greenland Commission had agreed a one year ‘Interim Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland in 2021’, [WGC\(21\)18](#). Therefore, the Request for Scientific Advice from ICES, [CNL\(21\)14](#), was for a ‘full assessment’ for a three-year period for each Commission in the advice provided in 2022. This meant that there was no need for the Framework of Indicators to be run prior to the ICES Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) meeting in 2022.

- 7.3 The Commission confirmed that the Decision, [NEA\(21\)16](#), would continue to apply in 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024, given the advice from ICES.

8. Risk of Transmission of *Gyrodactylus salaris* in the Commission Area

- 8.1 The Chair reminded the Commission that this Agenda item allows for information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of *G. salaris* and eradicate it if introduced. The Chair thanked the EU ([NEA\(22\)11](#)), Norway ([NEA\(22\)09](#)) and the UK ([NEA\(22\)10](#)) for their papers.
- 8.2 The Chair noted that in 2021, the Commission agreed that a two-day meeting of the Working Group on *G. salaris* should take place in 2022, at a time when a face-to-face meeting would be possible. The Working Group would have the same Terms of Reference as in 2021. He informed the Commission that, in consultation with the Chair of the Working Group, a face-to-face meeting was being planned for 26 – 27 October 2022, in Edinburgh.
- 8.3 A representative of Norway, Heidi Hansen, informed the Commission that a new method for combatting *G. salaris* was now ready for use after several years of testing. The use of monochloramine at very low concentrations could remove the parasite from salmon within a few days without having negative effects on the fish. In this regard, a large-scale experiment was carried out in the River Driva in 2021, the outcome of which was very promising. It is intended that this method would be used to combat *G. salaris* in two of the four infected rivers in the Driva region in 2022 and 2023. In addition, she informed the Commission that the parasite had been successfully eradicated after treatment in 39 of the 51 rivers infected with *G. salaris*. It is envisaged that if all the eradication measures implemented are successful, the number of infected rivers in Norway would be reduced to eight.

9. Presentation by Norway on the Issue of Pink Salmon in the Commission Area

- 9.1 The Chair informed the Commission that Norway requested that a supplementary item be added to the Draft Agenda, on the Issue of Pink Salmon in the Commission Area. Mr Eirik Frøiland (Norway) made a presentation on this issue, NEA(22)16 (Annex 6).
- 9.2 Mr Frøiland presented updated information on the recent rapid increase in the occurrence and abundance of non-native pink salmon stocks in Norwegian rivers, and the potentially serious negative consequences for Atlantic salmon stocks. He noted that this increase from 2017 was sudden after many decades of low abundances since the species was introduced to the Barents region of Russia in the period 1956 – 2001. He further informed the Commission that Norway had already implemented measures to prevent reproduction in 2017, 2019 and 2021. These measures were not fully effective and Norway has planned to implement further and more extensive measures from 2023. He proposed that appropriate control measures should also be considered to suppress further spread in the wider North Atlantic region. The representative of Norway

informed the Commission that a document (a Draft Statement of the Council) outlining measures to address this issue was being formulated for consideration by the Council. The representative of the EU indicated his support to work with Norway in this regard. The representative of the UK thanked Norway for raising this important issue and Mr Frøiland for his informative presentation. She expressed the intention of the UK to collaborate to better understand and mitigate for the serious threats posed to Atlantic salmon. The representative of Norway thanked all Parties for being supportive and working collaboratively to formulate a Draft Statement to address issues of concern for consideration by the Council.

- 9.3 In response to a question from the representative of the EU, Mr Frøiland suggested that climate change may be one factor influencing the recent expansion in pink salmon stocks observed in Norwegian rivers. Warmer weather, increasingly experienced in the months of May and June, in association with warming ocean temperatures, may both positively contribute to increased survival of out-migrating smolts. However, he noted that overall there is very limited evidence currently available to clearly establish this.
- 9.4 In response to a question from the NGOs, Mr Frøiland stated that he considered that pink salmon eggs and juveniles are unlikely to be a significant food source for Atlantic salmon, but a range of co-occurring native fish species have been documented to consume them.
- 9.5 The representative of the NGOs informed the Commission that an international workshop on the emerging threats of pink salmon and red skin disease to Atlantic salmon will be hosted by the Atlantic Salmon Trust in Edinburgh on 28 and 29 June 2022. The workshop aims to collate existing information, highlight knowledge gaps and identify associated measures to protect Atlantic salmon from these threats.

10. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 10.1 The Chair announced that the winner of the North-East Atlantic Commission £1,000 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Morten Trøbråten from Drøbak, Norway. The 73 cm (3.6 kg) female salmon was tagged from a bag-net at Agdenes at the mouth of the Trondheimsfjord on 5 June 2021 and captured by rod and line in the river Stjørdalselva on 20 June 2021.
- 10.2 The Chair offered congratulations to Mr Trøbråten on behalf of the Commission.

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

- 11.1 The Commission agreed to defer the decision on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice to the Council.

12. Other Business

- 12.1 The representative of the NGOs proposed that Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) should be acknowledged by the Commission for the conservation measures they have taken in the last few decades to better protect Atlantic salmon stocks, notably the Faroes Islands for suspending their mixed-stock fishery since 2000 and Greenland for significantly reducing their catch quota on historical levels. This was supported by all members of the Commission in attendance.

13. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 13.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next Annual Meeting at the same time and place as

the Fortieth Annual Meeting of the Council.

14. Report of the Meeting

14.1 The Commission agreed a report of the Meeting.

15. Close of the Meeting

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