

***Forty-First Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission******Knockranny House Hotel & Spa, Westport, Ireland******3 – 7 June 2024******Annotated Agenda***

The purpose of this paper is to provide the background, links to papers and decisions for each item on the Agenda for the Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission.

Papers for the meeting are on the [website](#).

This Annotated Agenda references papers that the Secretariat is aware of at the time of writing. If additional papers are issued, they will be posted on the website and delegates will be informed by email.

As agreed in 2022, Parties / NGOs were invited to submit questions on Agenda items, in advance to the relevant Party. The Secretariat requested that it be copied into any questions asked, to allow the questions to be included in the Annotated Agenda. No questions were received.

A summary of the decisions before the Commission is contained in Annex 1.

Timings of the Meeting

The Commission will meet on:

- Tuesday 4 June: 15:00 – 17:00 hrs
- Thursday 6 June : 15:00 – 16:15 hrs

Order of Business

Business will be taken in the following order:

1.	Opening of the Meeting
2.	Adoption of the Agenda
3.	Nomination of a Rapporteur
9.	Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice
4.	Report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area
5.	Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission
6.	Regulatory Measures
7.	Risk of Transmission of <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> in the Commission Area
8.	Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize
9.	Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice
10.	Election of Officers
11.	Other Business
12.	Date and Place of the Next Meeting
<i>Adjourn to Consider Report Text</i>	
13.	Report of the Meeting
14.	Close of the Meeting

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chair, Alex Kinninmonth (UK), will open the meeting.

Members of the Commission and NGOs may make verbal Opening Statements, as is usual in years when new regulatory measures are negotiated. It would be helpful if the written versions of any verbal opening statements could be sent to the Secretariat by 7 June 2024 so that they can be annexed to the final meeting reports.

- *no decision is required.*

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A Provisional Agenda, [NEA\(24\)01](#), was issued on 16 February 2024. No supplementary items were proposed by the Parties. The Draft Agenda, [NEA\(24\)02](#), was issued on 5 April.

- *the Commission may wish to adopt its Agenda.*

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- *the Commission may wish to nominate a Rapporteur.*

4. Report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area

In 2022 the Council agreed that full ICES Advice should be presented in Council only in future, [CNL\(22\)53](#). Therefore, there will be no presentation of ICES advice during the Commission meeting.

However, Article 9 of the Convention states that ‘*In exercising the functions set out in articles 7 and 8, a Commission shall take into account: the best available information, including advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea and other appropriate scientific organizations...*’

This agenda item allows for questions and comment on the ICES Advice, if required. The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker (UK), will be available to answer questions, if required.

- *no decision is required.*

The following papers are available:

- the Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), [CNL\(24\)06](#);
- the [Report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon](#) is on the ICES website.

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

This is essential business under Articles 7 and 15 of the Convention. Additionally, 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.

Each member of the Commission with mixed-stock fisheries (MSF) was requested to provide the Secretariat with a short paper which includes a brief description of any MSFs still operating, the most recent catch data and any changes or developments in the management of MSFs.

- *no decision is required.*

The following papers are available:

- Mixed-Stock Fisheries (Tabled by the European Union), [NEA\(24\)05](#);
- Mixed-Stock Fisheries (Tabled by Norway), [NEA\(24\)04](#);
- Mixed-Stock Fisheries (Tabled by the United Kingdom), [NEA\(24\)07](#); and
- Mixed-Stock Fisheries (Tabled by the Russian Federation), [NEA\(24\)09](#).

In addition to the MSF papers above, the following statement is available:

- Joint Statement on behalf of the European Union and Norway regarding the management of the Fisheries in the Tana Watercourse, [NEA\(24\)11](#).

6. Regulatory Measures

In 2021 the Commission adopted ‘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.’

The FWI has been used in the intermediate years of a multi-year catch agreement to provide an interim assessment of the robustness of the pre-fishery abundance (PFA) forecasts provided by ICES, and to determine whether a full re-assessment of stock status and new catch advice might be required. NASCO has previously agreed, [NEA\(13\)11](#), that when the Faroese fishery is closed, the FWI should only be used to signal the need for a re-assessment where there is an underestimate of forecast abundance (i.e. when a potential harvest might otherwise be available). The rationale for this is that if the FWI signalled that PFA had been overestimated, any new assessment would be even less likely to signal a fishery option.

No fishery for salmon has been prosecuted at the Faroes since 2000 and no quota for the Faroe Islands fishery has been set since 2000. Since 2013, decisions regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters have been agreed for three-year periods, unless the application of the FWI shows that a re-assessment is warranted. In recent years, the duration of the Decision has been aligned with that of the regulatory measure for the West Greenland fishery. However, the current ‘Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland’, WGC(22)10, will be renegotiated in 2026 at the latest. The alignment has enabled a full update of the ICES advice to be requested every three years and if the two regulatory measures remain out of synch then the full advice will have to be requested more frequently.

Details of previous Decisions / regulatory measures can be found [here](#).

The Commission will discuss a new Decision for the salmon fishery in Faroese waters.

In previous years alongside agreement of the regulatory measure, a FWI Working Group has been established, with a representative from each NEA member. The Group has worked by correspondence, in years where no new regulatory measure is negotiated, to co-ordinate the data collection and apply the FWI. In those years, the

Group has completed its work in January so that ICES could be advised by the end of January, if re-assessment of the catch advice is required.

However, the FWI has not been updated because its development was not requested of ICES in the 2023 Advice request, [CNL\(23\)11rev](#). Additionally, a new assessment model has been agreed for Atlantic salmon in 2024. The Chair of the WGNAS, and two members of the NASCO FWI WG, have both confirmed that it would be possible to reinstate the FWI process in future years. However, it would not be possible for the 2025 / 2026 season. It would be possible for the 2026 / 2027 season but full advice will be available in 2026 anyway as that is the next year in which the regulatory measure for the fishery at West Greenland will be negotiated. The FWI will not, therefore, be available for at least the next couple of years for inclusion in the NEA Decision. The Commission will need to discuss the new Decision in light of this information.

The ICES summary of advice for fishing seasons 2024 / 2025 to 2026 / 2027 for Atlantic salmon from the Northeast Atlantic states ([CNL\(24\)06](#), p 23) states:

‘...in the absence of specific management objectives and when the MSY approach is applied, the catch on both the Northern and Southern North-East Atlantic Commission (NEAC) area complexes at the Faroe Islands should be zero in each of the fishing seasons 2024/25, 2025/26, and 2026/27.’

The Commission may wish to:

- ***adopt a new Decision for the salmon fishery in Faroese waters, for either two, or three, years.***

The following papers are available:

- Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2021 / 2022, 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024, [NEA\(21\)16](#);
- the Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), [CNL\(24\)06](#);
- the [Report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon](#) is on the ICES website.

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

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. Parties were invited to submit papers to this Annual Meeting, to report on their work on the ‘Road Map’ to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of *G. salaris* and eradicate it if introduced, [NEA\(18\)08](#).

A face-to-face meeting on the Working Group on *Gyrodactylus salaris* was held in October 2022, which reported several recommendations to the Commission in 2023, that were agreed as best practice and the Commission encouraged members to disseminate them widely.

Recommendation 27 of the External Performance Review Panel, [CNL\(23\)17](#), is related to *G. salaris* and contains recommended actions to deal with the parasite. The Commission will be asked to consider this in 2025 when it considers Terms of Reference for the next meeting of the *G. salaris* Working Group.

- ***no decision is required.***

The following papers are available:

- *G. salaris* Road Map Update_European Union, [NEA\(24\)03rev](#);
- *G. salaris* Road Map Update_United Kingdom, [NEA\(24\)06](#);
- Report on *Gyrodactylus salaris* Road Map in 2023_Norway, [NEA\(24\)08](#); and
- Information on the monitoring of *Gyrodactylus salaris*_Russian Federation, [NEA\(24\)10](#).

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

NASCO operates a Tag Return Incentive Scheme. External tags that are returned to the appropriate authorities in the country of capture are eligible for inclusion in the draw. Each year a Grand Prize of £1,500 is awarded together with three prizes of £1,000, one in each of NASCO's three Commission areas.

The winner will be announced at the Meeting and will be recorded in the Meeting Report.

- *no decision is required.*

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

This item is required under Article 9 of the Convention which requires a Commission to take into account the best scientific evidence. Advice is provided annually under the ICES / NASCO Memorandum of Understanding.

In 1992, the Council established a Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) to assist the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES. During the Annual Meeting, the SSC will meet to develop a Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES for consideration by the Commissions and the Council.

A nomination has been sought to replace Niall O' Maoiléidigh (who is retiring in advance of the 2024 Annual Meeting) as one of NEA's representatives on the SSC.

- *the Commission may wish to appoint Dr O' Maoiléidigh's replacement to the SSC; and*
- *the Commission will be asked to consider the relevant section of the SSC's recommendation, although it may wish to defer the decision to the Council.*

The Standing Scientific Committee's recommendations will be available once its work is complete.

The following paper may be available:

- Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES

10. Election of Officers

The election of officers is required under Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure for the NEA.

The current Chair, Alex Kinninmonth (UK) is not available for re-election. The current Vice-Chair, Helge Dyrendal (Norway), is both eligible and available for re-election.

No background papers are produced for this item.

Work to seek candidates and Parties' support has been conducted by the Secretary.

The Secretary will introduce this item and ask for nominations and seconds for the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

- *the Commission may wish to elect a Chair and elect / re-elect Vice-Chair.*

11. Other Business

At the time of writing, the Secretariat had not been made aware of any other business.

12. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

The Commission will be asked to confirm the date and venue for its next Annual Meeting. It is usual practice for the Commission to meet during the Annual Meeting of the Council of NASCO, and in the same location.

The dates and location for the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council will be considered during the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Council.

- *the Commission may wish to agree to hold its next Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council.*

13. Report of the Meeting

Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure for the North-East Atlantic Commission requires that 'A draft report shall be considered by the Commission before the end of the meeting.'

A Draft Report of the Meeting will be circulated for review.

- *the Commission may wish to adopt the Report of the Meeting.*

14. Close of the Meeting

The Chair will close the Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Commission.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
24 May 2024

Annex 1

Summary of Commission Decisions

Agenda Item	Decision	Paper No.
2. Adoption of the Agenda	Adopt the Agenda	<u>NEA(24)02</u>
3. Nomination of a Rapporteur	Nominate a Rapporteur	
6. Regulatory Measures	Adopt a new Decision for the salmon fishery in Faroese waters, for either two, or three, years	<u>NEA(21)16</u> <u>CNL(24)06</u>
9. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint Dr O' Maoiléidigh's replacement to the SSC; and • consider the relevant section of the SSC's recommendation or defer the decision to the Council 	Paper issued at the meeting
10. Election of Officers	Elect a Chair and elect / re-elect Vice-Chair	
12. Date and Place of the Next Meeting	Agree to hold its next Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council	
13. Report of the Meeting	Adopt the Report of the Meeting	Issued at the meeting