



***Forty-First Annual Meeting of the West Greenland 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 West Greenland 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. There were questions in relation to Agenda items 5. and 8. These can be found under those Agenda items.

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

**Timings of the Meeting**

The Commission will meet on:

- Monday 3 June 16:15 – 18:00 hrs
- Tuesday 4 June: 17:00 – 18:00 hrs
- Thursday 6 June: 16:15 – 17:45 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
5.	Review of the 2023 Fishery at West Greenland
7.	Regulatory Measures
4.	Report of the ICES Advisory Committee on Salmon Stocks in the Commission Area
6.	Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission
8.	Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery
9.	Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize
11.	Election of Officers
12.	Other Business
10.	Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice
	<i>Adjourn to Consider Report Text</i>
14.	Report of the Meeting
15.	Close of the Meeting

## 1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chair, Stephen Gephard (USA), 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, [WGC\(24\)01](#), was issued on 16 February 2023. No supplementary items were proposed by the Parties. The Draft Agenda, [WGC\(24\)02](#), was issued on 5 April.

- *the Commission will be asked 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. Review of the 2023 Fishery at West Greenland

The Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland, [WGC\(22\)10](#), requires a number of elements to be reported to the Commission. Paragraph 9 states ‘*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.*’

This Agenda item allows Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to present its review of the 2023 fishery at West Greenland to the Commission, and for questions to be asked.

Decisions on the regulatory measure for future years will take place under Agenda item 7.

In advance of the Annual Meeting, Canada submitted the following comments. A response will be sought during the meeting and included in the Meeting Report.

*‘We thank DFG for the report on the 2023 West Greenland fishery and for their continued efforts to manage this mixed-stock fishery and to implement the regulatory measure agreed in 2022.*

*Canada had reasonable hopes that the outcomes of the 2023 fishing season would show further improvements to those observed in 2022. We note however that total harvest in 2023 was five tonnes more than in 2022. Furthermore, we are concerned that so many of the catch reports are being received after the fishery is closed, undermining the use of in-season data to decide when to close the fishery as per the regulatory measure. To explore these issues and whether/how the regulatory measure can continue to be used, we feel it is important to revisit the analysis undertaken by the data working group in 2022 in light of data from the 2022 and 2023 fisheries. Such work undertaken during the upcoming annual meeting could examine whether a revision of the 49% threshold is warranted to ensure that 2024 and 2025 harvests are kept within agreed levels, and/or whether other revisions to the regulatory measure should be contemplated.*

*If WGC members are amenable to this proposal, it would be helpful if DFG could provide the quota uptake data to WGC heads of delegation in advance of the annual meeting. If this is not possible, it would be helpful to at least confirm that the data will be available for consideration and analysis by the working group at the 2024 annual meeting, in a similar way as was done in 2022.*

*We would like to thank DFG for their continued collaboration at WGC, as members try to reach the most positive outcome in the management of the West Greenland fishery.*

*We would be grateful if you could advise on your preferred approach to providing the requested data and re-convening the data working group.’*

In advance of the Annual Meeting, the United States submitted the following comments. A response will be sought during the meeting and included in the Meeting Report.

*‘Agenda Item 5 (questions are based off of the information presented in 2023 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland (WGC(24)03 and prior fishery reports )*

- *The reports contains the following two statements: 1) “Legal requirement in the Executive Order to report every time the net is tended” and 2) “It is a legal requirement to report 0-catch within 14 days of closing the fishery.”*
  - *Can you please explain the apparent discrepancy between these two statements?*
  - *Is there any current or potential future penalty for not following the legal requirement outlined within the Executive Order?*
- *The report states, “If fishers do not report to GFLK, they will not be issued a license for the following year’s fishery. This is automatically ensured via*

the GFLK database.” *Following along from this, in 2022 there were 757 licenses issued with 68% reporting, which should have resulted in 511 existing license holders being eligible for a license in 2023 and 246 not being eligible. In 2023 there were 793 licenses issued, which means that at least 282 new applicants obtained a license. Given this, there have been on average ~200 new applicants for a license every year since 2018. We recognize that this does not mean there are on average 200 new/unique new applicants each year, but it does seem like a large number of new applicants each year.*

- *Can you please verify that our understanding is correct and that these numbers are approximately correct? Any information that you can provide to help us better understand this dynamic and process would be appreciated.*
- *The report states “The number of license holders reporting in a timely manner, according to current regulation, has increased to the highest level since before 2019.”. This doesn’t seem to be accurate as the management of the fishery, according to the current regulation, is wholly reliant on accurate and timely reporting of catches during the fishery and greater than 50% of the catches were not reported in-season.*

<b>Timing of &gt;0 catch reports</b>			
	<b>Within the season</b>	<b>Between closure and last date of reporting</b>	<b>After last date of reporting</b>
2021	66%	29%	5%
2022	93%	4%	2%
2023	49.5%	42.3%	8.3%

- *Was the large increase in out of season reporting in 2023 due to issues associated with the online reporting system (Sullissivik) or are there other contributing factors?*
- *Can you please explain what steps will be taken to minimize the out of season reporting during the 2024 fishery?*
- *Can you please verify that “between time of closure and last date of reporting” equates to 14 days?*
- *The report states that 41 people were interviewed between October and November 2023, but a total of 141 license holders did not report. Of the 41 interviewed, 40% of them did harvest salmon. Further, 55% were not aware of the information campaign.*
  - *Were the landings from the interviewed non-reporters included within the reported landings?*
  - *Were estimated landings from the non-interviewed non-reporters included within the reported landings?*
  - *Given the extensive campaign undertaken each year, can you explain how 55% of the non-reporters were unaware of the reporting requirements and what new approaches will be implemented to reach this segment in 2024?*

- *Given statements within the report such as “The decision on when to close the fisheries is not only based about how many reports and catches are registered by the fishermen. The local GFLK fisheries inspectors contribute, daily, with their observations on the fishery and at the local markets. Factors as the day of the week and the weather, also play a large role on the catches, where a week of sun and low winds can be enough time for the quota to be fished.” It is unclear how closely the 49% clause is being adhered to when determining the closing dates for the various fishery segments. We very much appreciate the analysis presented within Section 4 (Evaluation of regulatory measure) as the information presented provides a better understanding of the fishing and reporting dynamics. However, we do have a few question:*
  - *Can you explain why the Data Working Group wasn’t employed to conduct the analysis of the 2022 and 2023 data as requested during the 2023 WGC meeting?*
  - *Can you explain the reasoning for not including the NW recreational category in analysis as we feel including all of the available information would strengthen the results of the analysis?*
  - *Can you please provide the % of TAC uptake (catch) associated with the closing dates for all 4 segments of the 2022 and 2023 fisheries?*
  - *Can you please provide the % of TAC uptake (registered) associated with 3 days prior to the closing dates for all 4 segments of the 2022 and 2023 fisheries?*
- *Since 2021, the NW Professional segment has overharvested ~14t in total, the SW Professional segment has overharvested ~5t in total and the SW Recreational segment ~4t in total with all other segments having remained below their respective TACs.*
  - *Given the majority of the overharvest has come from the NW Professional segment, what targeted strategies do you intend to implement to minimize the overharvest issue within this segment in 2024?’*

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

The following papers are available:

- the Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), [CNL\(24\)06](#);
- 2023 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland, [WGC\(24\)03](#).

## **6. 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 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. There are no directed wild Atlantic salmon fisheries in the United States, so no report will be provided under this Agenda item by the United States.

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

The following papers are available:

- Labrador Mixed Food Fisheries – Mixed-Stock Fisheries Context (Tabled by Canada), [NAC\(24\)03](#);
- Mixed-Stock Fisheries (Tabled by the European Union) [NEA\(24\)05](#); and
- Mixed-Stock Fisheries (Tabled by the United Kingdom), [NEA\(24\)07](#).

## **7. Regulatory Measures**

In 2022, the Commission adopted the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland, [WGC\(22\)10](#).

Paragraph 5 of the regulatory measure states:

*‘In the first year of this regulatory measure, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agrees to close the fishery at West Greenland when the registered catch has reached no more than 49% of the overall TAC. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) may close the West Greenland fishery before reaching this limit based on data collected during the current and previous fishing seasons, taking into account multiple variables that differ from year to year, such as catch data and weather conditions. In any subsequent year covered by this regulatory measure, the percentage referenced above may, in consultation with the Commission, be adjusted based on previous experience and the expected effect of new management measures.’*

Paragraph 11 of the regulatory measure states:

*‘The Commission agrees to apply this regulatory measure to the fishery at West Greenland in 2022. The Commission also agrees to apply this measure in 2023, 2024 and 2025 unless any member of the Commission requests its reconsideration based on a review of the scientific advice provided by ICES and / or the review of the annual report pursuant to Paragraph 9 including in the event of an overharvest.’*

***The Commission may wish to:***

- ***determine whether any member of the Commission wishes to request the reconsideration of the regulatory measure;***
- ***agree whether the percentage referenced in paragraph 5 will be adjusted, and if so, how.***

***And, therefore,***

- ***agree whether the regulatory measure, as set out in [WGC\(22\)10](#), will continue to apply in 2024.***

The following papers are available:

- the Report of the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), [CNL\(24\)06](#);
- 2023 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland, [WGC\(24\)03](#).

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

## 8. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

This Agenda item allows consideration of a draft statement of co-operation for the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme, which facilitates the effective functioning of the Programme. The data collected under this programme provide critical inputs to the ICES WGNAS stock assessment.

In advance of the Annual Meeting, the United States submitted the following comments. A response will be sought during the meeting and included in the Meeting Report.

*'Agenda item 8 (questions based off of the Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme (WGC(23)07) and results of the sampling program as reported by ICES)*

- *The Statement of Cooperation states that “Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), in co-operation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Sampling Programme Co-ordinator: provide support for the sampling programme by facilitating the sampling of Atlantic salmon by the samplers identified above.”. The Citizen Science Program was initiated in 2020. In 2020 ~15 samples were collected, in 2021 ~220 samples were collected, in 2022 zero samples were collected and in 2023 ~40 were collected. We do however think that the additional efforts initiated in 2023 (i.e. Q's Greenland and the NASF/ASF sponsored lottery) will result in positive benefits for the program.*
  - *Can you explain why the program has not been more successful (e.g. lack of interest, logistic or infrastructure limitations) and how these limitations will be addressed in 2024?*
  - *Is there anything that other members of the WGC can provide or contribute to bolster the effort?*
- *The Statement of Cooperation states “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 over the course of the fishing season”. This item has been part of the Statement of Cooperation for a number of years with sporadic results. In a few years, a decent number of samples were collected from a range of fishing dates whereas in other years, only a small number of samples from a few clustered fishing dates were collected and in some years, no samples were collected.*
  - *Can you explain why the program has not been more successful and how these limitations will be addressed in the 2024?’*
- *the Commission may wish to agree a statement of co-operation for the 2024 Sampling Programme.*

The following paper will be available:

- Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme.

## 9. 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.*

## **10. 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. The SSC comprises two representatives from each Commission, ideally one scientist and one manager. Its work is co-ordinated by Livia Goodbrand (Canada). 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.

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

- *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 following paper may be available:

- Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES

## **11. Election of Officers**

The election of officers is required under Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure for the WGC.

2024 is the final year in office for the Chair, Stephen Gephard (USA) and the Vice-Chair, Katrine Kærgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)) who have both already served two full terms in office.

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 will ask for nominations and seconds for the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

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

## **12. Other Business**

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

## **13. 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.*

#### **14. Report of the Meeting**

Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure for the WGC 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 its Meeting.*

#### **15. Close of the Meeting**

The Chair will close the Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission.

Secretariat  
Edinburgh  
24 May 2024

*Summary of Commission Decisions*

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Paper No.</b>
2. Adoption of the Agenda	Adopt the Agenda	<a href="#">WGC(24)02</a>
3. Nomination of a Rapporteur	Nominate a Rapporteur	
7. Regulatory Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine whether to request the reconsideration of the regulatory measure;</li> <li>• agree whether the percentage referenced in paragraph 5 will be adjusted, and if so, how; and</li> <li>• agree whether the regulatory measure, as set out in <a href="#">WGC(22)10</a>, will continue to apply in 2024.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">WGC(22)10</a> <a href="#">CNL(24)06</a> <a href="#">WGC(24)03</a>
8. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery	Agree a statement of co-operation for the 2024 Sampling Programme	Paper issued at the meeting
10. Recommendations to the Council on the Request to ICES for Scientific Advice	Consider the relevant section of the SSC's recommendation or defer the decision to the Council.	Paper issued at the meeting
11. Election of Officers	Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair	
13. 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.	
14. Report of the Meeting	Adopt the Report of the Meeting	Issued at the meeting