



***Report of the Forty-First Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic
Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Alex Kinninmonth (UK) opened the meeting and welcomed delegates.
- 1.2 An Opening Statement was made by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and is included as Annex 1 of this report.
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Forty-First Annual Meetings of the Council and Commissions of NASCO is included as Annex 2.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Commission adopted its Agenda, NEA(24)13, (Annex 3).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Sarah McLean (EU) was appointed Rapporteur.

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

- 4.1 The Chair reminded delegates that the ICES advice for North Atlantic Salmon Stocks was published on 10 May 2024, [CNL\(24\)06](#). He noted that in 2022 the Council had agreed that full ICES Advice should be presented in Council only in future.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker (UK), had presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to Council and this presentation is available as document CNL(24)56. Dr Walker attended the Commission meeting to answer questions.
- 4.3 The Commission had no comments or questions on this Agenda item.

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

- 5.1 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).
- 5.2 The EU, [NEA\(24\)05](#), Norway, [NEA\(24\)04](#), the Russian Federation, [NEA\(24\)09](#) and the UK, [NEA\(24\)07](#), submitted papers providing information on MSFs, including a description of the MSFs still operating in their jurisdictions, the most recent catch data and any changes or developments in the management of MSFs. Iceland did not submit a report as there are no directed mixed-stock salmon fisheries in Iceland.
- 5.3 A 'Joint Statement on behalf of the European Union and Norway regarding the Management of the Fisheries in the Tana Watercourse', [NEA\(24\)11](#), had also been 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.
- 5.4 The NGO representative asked if EU – Ireland planned to stop the fishing of mixed

stocks.

- 5.5 The EU stated that Ireland has had a salmon management system in place since 2007 which assesses attainment of Conservation Limits (CL) using 5-year datasets from commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries and scientific data to produce a predictive model. The predictive model determines if the CL has been met and whether a river should be closed, has catch and release or has a surplus. Where a surplus is available, exploitation is permitted. No distinction is made between recreational and commercial exploitation. Where a surplus is available, discussion at local level will determine the ratio of exploitation between recreational and commercial fisheries as appropriate. The EU stated that this regime is conservation focused and that options to improve conservation efforts are being assessed continuously.
- 5.6 The NGO representative asked if Norway would continue to limit fishing of mixed stocks in addition to the closures and limitations imposed in recent years.
- 5.7 Norway stated that there had been strong regulation of mixed-stock fisheries from 2021 onwards. Norway informed the Commission that nine of approximately 50 regions in Norway opened a mixed-stock fishery. These regions were those which were assessed to have reached CL. Norway stated that if new scientific data demonstrated a collapse in these stocks the decisions would be revisited.

6. Regulatory Measures

- 6.1 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.’

- 6.2 The Chair advised the Commission that the Framework of Indicators (FWI) had 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 forecasts provided by ICES, and to determine whether a full re-assessment of stock status and new catch advice might be required. NASCO had agreed in 2013 that when the Faroese fishery is closed, the FWI should only be used to signal the need for a re-assessment when a potential harvest might otherwise be available. 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 likely be renegotiated in 2026. 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 sync then the full advice will have to be requested more frequently. He noted that in previous years, alongside agreement of the Decision, 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.

- 6.3 The Chair noted that 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.
- 6.4 The Chair informed the Commission that it would be possible to reinstate the FWI process in future years if the Commission wishes. However, it would not be possible for the 2025 / 2026 season as it was not updated in 2024. It would be possible for the 2026 / 2027 season but full advice is likely to be available in 2026 for negotiation of the West Greenland regulatory measure.
- 6.5 The Chair reminded the Commission that 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.’

- 6.6 The Chair referred the Commission to the ‘Draft Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2024 / 2025 and 2025 / 2026’, NEA(24)12.
- 6.7 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed support for the Draft Decision.
- 6.8 The Commission adopted the ‘Decision Regarding the Salmon Fishery in Faroese Waters in 2024 / 2025 and 2025 / 2026’ NEA(24)14.

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

- 7.1 The Chair reminded the Commission that, in 2018, the Commission had adopted a ‘Road Map’, to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of *G. salaris* and to eradicate it, if introduced. Revisions to this document had been agreed in 2023, [NEA\(23\)14](#), along with best practice recommendations which the Commission encouraged members to disseminate widely.
- 7.2 The Chair noted that 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. He indicated that 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.
- 7.3 Under the ‘Road Map’, the Commission agreed to retain an item on *G. salaris* on the agenda for its Annual Meetings to facilitate reports by Parties / jurisdictions and the Working Group on *G. salaris* on measures to prevent the further spread of the parasite and to eradicate it in areas where it has been introduced, and on other aspects of the ‘Road Map’. The Chair thanked the EU, [NEA\(24\)03rev](#), Norway, [NEA\(24\)08](#), the Russian Federation, [NEA\(24\)10](#) and the UK, [NEA\(24\)06](#), for tabling reports on *G. salaris*.
- 7.4 The Commission had no comments or questions on this Agenda item.

8. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 8.1 NASCO operates a Tag Return Incentive Scheme. Eligible tags that are returned to the appropriate authorities in the country of capture may be included in the draws. 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.
- 8.2 The winner of the North-East Atlantic Commission £1,000 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Petter Pettersen, Norway.
- 8.3 A 75 cm adult female salmon was marked from a bag-net in the sea at Agdenes in Trondheimsfjorden on 6 June 2023. It was first captured in the river Orkla on 22 June 2023, re-released into the river and captured again on 13 August 2023, again in the river Orkla. The fish was released once again after its second capture.

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

- 9.1 The Convention requires NASCO to take into account the best scientific evidence and establish working arrangements with ICES. The Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) assists the Council and Commissions in formulating their questions to ICES. During the Annual Meeting, the SSC meets to develop a Draft Request for Scientific Advice from ICES for consideration by the Commissions and the Council.
- 9.2 One of the Commission's SSC representatives, Peder Fiske (Norway), presented the draft questions relevant to the Commission.
- 9.3 The Commission agreed the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee in relation to the North-East Atlantic Commission area. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(24)09 (Annex 4).

10. Election of Officers

- 4.1 The Commission elected Robert Floyd (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 2024 Annual Meeting.
- 4.2 The Commission re-elected Helge Dyrendal (Norway) as its Vice-Chair (proposed by the representative of UK, seconded by the representative of the EU) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2024 Annual Meeting.

11. Other Business

- 11.1 There was no other business.

12. Date and Place of the Next Meeting

- 12.1 The Commission agreed to hold its next Annual Meeting at the same time and place as the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council.

13. Report of the Meeting

- 13.1 The Commission agreed a report of the Meeting.

14. Close of the Meeting

- 14.1 The Chair thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the Meeting.