



West Greenland Commission

Report of the Forty-First Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

WGC(24)08

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1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Stephen Gephard (USA), opened the meeting and welcomed delegates.
- 1.2 Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union and the United States submitted written Opening Statements (Annex 1).
- 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, WGC(24)04 (Annex 3).

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur

- 3.1 Alan Walker (UK) was appointed as 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 only in Council, in future.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS), Alan Walker, 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. Review of the 2023 Fishery at West Greenland

- 5.1 The Chair noted that the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Atlantic Salmon at West Greenland, [WGC\(22\)10](#), required 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.’

- 5.2 He thanked DFG for the timely submission of its ‘2023 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland’, [WGC\(24\)03](#).
- 5.3 DFG summarised the report highlights, noting that the quota for the West Greenland salmon fishery in 2023 was 27 tonnes and the reported catch was 32.5 tonnes. The regulatory measure continues to be the guideline, stipulating that the fishery should be

closed when the catch reaches no more than 49 % of the quota. DFG has analysed the fishery performance and recommends that the 49 % is retained for 2024, both because it provides some flexibility for the managers and maintains a consistency of approach. However, DFG commits to continuing to take steps to improve the management of the fishery. There were some technical issues with reporting in 2023, but DFG has taken measures to avoid these in the future and, therefore, to avoid an over catch. The means to inform the licensed fishers is being improved through national newspaper advertisements, both in print and online versions and DFG believed this had led to large increases in reporting. DFG highlighted collaboration with the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the North Atlantic Salmon Fund in the lottery to incentivise citizen science sampling and was committed to continuing to improve on this. DFG noted the untimely reporting in 2023 and expressed the intention to increase the text message reminder scheme, continue with the online advertisements, and adopt a new feature in their reporting system related to catch report processing to better understand reporting. The percentage reporting had increased which was positive. There were some technical issues in 2023, but DFG was confident that it would be able to continue improvements in the 2024 season.

5.4 In advance of the Annual Meeting, Canada submitted the following comments:

‘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.’

5.5 DFG responded by email on 29 May 2024:

‘We do not have the time or the resources to participate in the data working group. We also do not see the need, as the working group already established

the basis for the analysis, which GFLK has replicated for the 2022 and 2023 fishery. The numbers are available in the attached excel file.

The numbers from the analysis will be used by GFLK in the upcoming salmon fishery, to determine when to close the fishery in the individual management areas.'

- 5.6 In advance of the Annual Meeting, the United States submitted a number of comments and questions for DFG and DFG provided the following responses by email:

'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)'

Q1 '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."

- o Can you please explain the apparent discrepancy between these two statements?*
- o Is there any current or potential future penalty for not following the legal requirement outlined within the Executive Order?'*

DFG Response: *'According to the executive order, it is a legal requirement to check your net daily, weather permitting, as stated in §5(2)(4) and §11(2)(4). Additionally, you must report immediately after catching salmon, as per §9 and §15. If you fish for salmon but do not catch any, you must report within 14 days of the fishing season's closure, as specified in §16. Here it is the hope to catch people who did not fish at all. Failure to report within this period will result in the license holder not being able to get a license for the following year. Violations of the aforementioned regulations may lead to enforcement actions under the criminal code, as outlined in §18 of the executive order.'*

Q2. '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,

- o 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.'*

DFG Response: *'License holders who do not report are not issues a license for the following year, but can reapply for the next year after that. This means that license holders who did not report in 2023 are not able to obtain a license in 2024, but can apply again in 2025.'*

Furthermore, we often see that people do not fish for a couple of years due to different circumstance and then reapply – as well as new fishers, who have never fished before applying each year.’

Q.3 ‘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.

Timing of >0 catch reports			
	Within the season	Between closure and last date of reporting	After last date of reporting
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?’

DFG Response: ‘We are unsure in exactly what way the online reporting system, Sullissivik, affected the increase in “out of season” reporting. The report mentioned that there was a problem with 230 reports not making it through the system.

In terms of technical issues, we hoped the problem has been fixed. GFLK are more aware of what sort of issues to look out for (e.g. no online reports coming in for a certain period of time).

To mitigate the “out of season” reporting, this season we are sending out more texts during the season to remind people to report. We are also adding a feature in our reporting system: By adding a feature ‘reporting date’ in sullissivik reporting system, we are able to see if there is a big difference between when a license holder has caught salmon, and when they report. Right now, we only register the catch date and the date when the report is entered into the reporting system, either manually or by Sullissivik (precisely speaking the registration date of a salmon report is the date when the report is approved, but it can be regarded as the date the report enters into GFLK system as processing the salmon reports is a daily job for GFLK during the salmon season). If they report to the municipality or by email this is entered by GFLK manually. Therefore, after this feature is updated in sullissivik and GFLK database, GFLK is able to track both the fishing dates, reporting dates and registration dates. This information could also help us show if the municipalities could be a bottle neck in receiving the reports in a timely manner. The report showed that the delay in reporting is lower for reports received through Sullissivik than by the municipality or email, which could indicate that the reports have a longer “travel” time through the municipalities.

Yes, “between time of closure and last date of reporting” equates to 14 days.’

Q4. ‘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?’

DFG Response: ‘We only conduct the interviews to gain more knowledge about the reasons behind licensholders not reporting and input to improve communication. We call all licenseholders we have a phone number for, but we only try to call each licenseholder once. We do see that we received reports from license holders during the interview period, which we correalate with them reporting, when they are reminded during the interview. They still reported too late and will not be able to receive a license next year.

No, we do not calculate estimated landings.

It is unclear how they are not aware of the reporting requirements, as this is written on the license they receive, they recieve texts if a mobile number is provide, there is a radio campaign three times a day during the season, advertisments in newspapers and news websites. However, Greenland is a large and vast country and information channels are limited many places. With more text messages sent both during the season, and when a management area close, we are hoping that more people will be aware of the importance of reporting. Promoting the online reporting system through the media, we are also hoping that this will make reporting easier and more timely.’

Q5 ‘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?'*

DFG Response: *'We were not able to provide the data necessary to conduct the analysis of the fishery in 2022, for the 2023 meeting. It was agreed at the 2023 annual meeting that we would provide the data at the 2024 annual meeting for both the 2022 and 2023 fishing season.'*

We have now included the data for the NW recreational category in the data (but not included in calculation). With regard to the calculation for 2021, we disagree that previously 100% was used as parameter % quota uptake (Registered 3 days prior to optimal closing date) for NW - rec. Under previous regime the result was 49% for 4 fishing areas. Since there is no overfishing for NW - rec, the same reason as we mentioned before as for 2022 and 2023, this quota should not be included for the calculation, at least not using the number of 100% (there can be debate whether we should use 75%, since the optimal date to close is the same as the real closing date). Therefore we excluded NW - rec for 2021 also and has got a updated weighted percent: 43%.

These numbers are available in the attached excel file (Annex 4).'

Q6. *'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?'

DFG Response: *'We are promoting an overall effort to combat untimely reporting in all management areas, including the NW professional category. Decisions on when to close the fishery is relatively hard to make as stated before. GFLK is continuously improving their estimates and knowlegde about the developments of the fishery. But as mentioned, a couple of days with nice weather or a license holder who reports 1 tonnes in a single report quickly changes the estimates. Even other inshore fisheries with much better reporting systems, e.g. through factories and logbooks is never closed exactly on 100%.'*

- 5.7 At the meeting, Canada noted timeliness of reporting had worsened and asked if DFG could please comment on (i) noting that the professional fishers are the most in violation of reporting requirements, given that they are professional fishers would they not be expected to be held to a higher standard, (ii) given that more timely reporting is desired, is there no incentive for the fishers not to report late?
- 5.8 In response, DFG recognised the need to identify those who are causing the delays, and that work on this should help in the future. DFG agreed that the professional fishers take a large proportion of the total catch, but reminded the Commission that there is no

individual reporting requirement for professional fishers for any other species (the factories report) so salmon is different. However, DFG will place extra focus on addressing the timeliness of reporting in future and will use the results of the analysis (Annex 4) to close the fishery, with a particular focus on ensuring timely closure of the professional category. With regards to increasing the timeliness of reporting, DFG believes that the text messaging will help so it is planning to send a number of text reminders throughout the season, and towards the end of the season.

- 5.9 The United States thanked DFG for its report and for its written answers to the questions submitted in advance of the meeting.
- 5.10 The Chair noted that the written responses from DFG were inserted in the report above, but asked DFG whether the data table they had provided could be annexed to the report. DFG confirmed that this could be done (see Annex 4).
- 5.11 The NGO representative expressed recognition to DFG for the excellent report providing a comprehensive summary of the 2023 fishery, an overview for licence types and fishing zones and tables and figures that would help the Commission in its deliberations. The NGO representative noted the data on the fishers that reported catching zero salmon and asked whether it was possible to distinguish between those that fished but caught zero, versus those that did not fish.
- 5.12 DFG explained that this information is not requested in the standard reporting form, but this was one of the questions asked during the phone interviews.

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.
- 6.2 The Chair referred the Commission to the papers submitted by Canada, [NAC\(24\)03](#), the European Union, [NEA\(24\)05](#), and the UK, [NEA\(24\)07](#). These include a brief description of any MSFs still operating, the most recent catch data and any changes or developments in the management of MSFs. The United States did not report as there are no directed wild Atlantic salmon fisheries in the United States. The Commission welcomed these reports.
- 6.3 The Chair invited questions or comments on these papers. No comments were received.

7. Regulatory Measures

- 7.1 The Chair noted that in 2022, the Commission had 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.'

7.2 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.'

7.3 The Chair referred the Commission to the '2023 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland', [WGC\(24\)03](#), and the discussion under Agenda item 5, and invited the Commission to provide comments or questions.

7.4 Canada noted that the regulatory measure as negotiated in 2022 was critically based on the closure trigger of 49 % that assumes timely reporting, but that it would be hard for DFG to meet the measure if reporting was not timely. Recognising that DFG has already stated its preference to retain the 49 % trigger point, Canada asked if DFG might explain in more detail why it was important to them to retain this percentage rate, and asked whether DFG could express some consideration towards reducing the trigger rate. In the absence of this information and a more detailed discussion, Canada would not be able to accept at this time in the discussion continuing with the 49 % trigger.

7.5 DFG explained it wished to continue with the 49 % of the overall TAC trigger based on their analyses of recent data and their developing understanding of the fishery, but will pay closer attention to the reporting of the professional fishers and its fisheries control and monitoring colleagues (GFLK) will use the analysis in Annex 4, to better manage the closure of the fishery for the upcoming season.

7.6 In following up, Canada asked DFG if the Government of Greenland would commit to a lower trigger percentage for the professional fisheries. DFG responded that, if there was a consensus within the Commission, it would be happy to discuss the numbers and proceed.

7.7 In the absence of comments or questions from other members of the Commission, the Chair asked whether any member of the Commission wished to request the reconsideration of the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure and whether to request that the percentage be adjusted.

7.8 Canada stated that as the discussion it had requested was not forthcoming at this time, it would not immediately call for a reconsideration of the regulatory measure but was not prepared to approve it in its present form. Canada suggested that the item remain open for further discussion.

7.9 The United States supported Canada in its proposal.

7.10 After the Commission adjourned to provide opportunity for informal discussion and then reconvened, Canada made the following statement:

'Canada remains concerned about overharvests in the West Greenland fishery, especially the not insignificant increase in these overharvests in 2023. A new development of concern this year is the decrease in timeliness of catch reporting. This violates the requirements of the regulatory measure as outlined in paragraph 1b, appears to be at least one driver of the increased overharvest, and risks fundamentally undermining management of the fishery using in-

season data.

The exchanges in recent days and weeks between DFG and other WGC members have shed light on some of the details of the ongoing challenges in managing the West Greenland salmon fishery. As part of these exchanges, we have heard from DFG their plans to address these issues of reporting timeliness and overharvesting, and their expectation that they will be able to achieve improvements in the 2024 fishery. We have appreciated these exchanges and welcome DFG's commitment to continue seeking improvements and look forward to seeing how these efforts succeed in containing overharvests.

However, given that consensus among members of the Commission on these issues is not forthcoming we will reluctantly agree to keeping status quo for the regulatory measure for the 2024 harvest season. If reporting timeliness and overharvests do not improve significantly in the 2024 fishery it will be difficult for Canada to continue on the current course. We would therefore ask that an Intersessional Meeting of the WGC be scheduled for the spring of 2025 and identified in the calendar that is being considered in item 3(b) of the Council agenda. Such a meeting will allow for: a detailed review of fisheries to date conducted under the regulatory measure; an assessment of whether the measure as agreed in 2022 is meeting its objectives; and, as appropriate, consideration of revisions to the closure percentage and/or other elements of the measure. Should the reporting and overharvest situation improve significantly in the 2024 fishery, there would be the possibility to cancel the Intersessional Meeting if all WGC members agree to do so.'

7.11 The United States made the following statement:

'In light of our discussion, the US is supportive of continuing the 2022 regulatory measure (WGC(22)10) for the 2024 fishery at West Greenland and we are supportive of keeping the closing percentage (aka "the 49% rule"). The collaborative work of the Data WG that informed the 2022 regulatory measure provided a novel approach for managing the fishery to minimize the likelihood of overharvest. We were cautiously optimistic of the performance of the measure in 2022 given the minimal reported overharvest, but remain very concerned given the significant reported overharvest in 2023. The large increase in delayed reporting is of primary concern given its impact on the effective implementation of the regulatory measure, which is predicated on timely reporting. Overharvest within this fishery is a long standing concern of the US – overharvest has occurred in 7 out of the past 9 years and has totaled ~20t since 2021. The fishery is in direct contrast to the ICES advice of zero harvest and the persistent overharvest compounds the issue. This occurs at a critical juncture for endangered US Atlantic salmon given the very large resource investments being made annually within our Atlantic salmon recovery program.

The US very much supports the proposal by Canada for an inter-sessional meeting prior to next year's Annual Meeting – we are hopeful that there will be no need for the IS but will review the performance of the 2024 fishery before deciding. The US also requests that the results from the 2024 fishery be analyzed in a similar manner as the 2021-2023 fisheries data to better inform and update the closing percentage noted within the 2022 regulatory measure. The US preference is for the Data WG to conduct the analysis and present the results to the Commission as undertaken in 2022 and discussed in 2023. The US remains

ready to work collaboratively with all members of the Commission to make progress on this important issue.'

- 7.12 DFG shared the concern regarding the increase in untimely reporting. DFG assured the Commission that it is committed to improving the management of the fishery and that all its initiatives are designed to achieve this. DFG indicated that it is open to the proposal of holding an inter-sessional meeting after the 2024 fishery, noting that this is a feature of the regulatory measure. However, DFG would like any inter-sessional meeting to be held in Greenland so that its experts could fully take part. DFG considered it was not necessary for the Data Working Group to be reformed to analyse the fishery data, because GFLK is already committed to conducting this analysis and reporting it in their report of the 2024 fishery and noted that resource limits would prevent DFG taking part in additional meetings.
- 7.13 The EU declared that it is important to ensure that the regulatory measure adopted in 2022 promotes the long-term conservation of the stocks, and declared that it was open to further inter-sessional meetings.
- 7.14 The Commission agreed that for 2024 it will not request the reconsideration of the multi-annual regulatory measure (referenced in paragraph 11 of the measure) and not request that the percentage (referenced in paragraph 5 of the measure) be adjusted.
- 7.15 The Commission agreed that the regulatory measure, as set out in WGC(22)10, would continue to apply in 2024.
- 7.16 The Commission agreed to endorse the principle of an inter-sessional meeting in 2025, after February but before May, with the dates to be agreed through further discussion.

8. Sampling in the West Greenland Fishery

- 8.1 The Chair noted that the Commission had worked co-operatively over the past five decades to collect biological data on Atlantic salmon harvested at West Greenland. These data provide critical inputs to the stock assessments conducted annually by the WGNAS.
- 8.2 In advance of the Annual Meeting, the United States submitted the following comments:

'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)'

Q1 '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?’*

DFG Response: *‘The lottery had a late start in 2023, which meant fewer license holders had the opportunity to send in samples. We hope to start the lottery at the beginning of the season and thereby include more management areas in the 2024 fishery. Again information channels are limited in Greenland. We believe that it takes time to implement something like this.*

We are happy that NASF and ASF are creative in their approach to information channels in Greenland (Q’s Greenland), and look forward to continue our collaboration with them.’

Q2 ‘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?’.*

DFG Response: *‘The sampling takes place in a period where the GINR has few resources available due to other commitments as it is survey season. This means that it is difficult to attend the local market every day.*

GINR are happy to sample carcasses from the local market as was agreed last year with the sampling coordinator.’

- 8.3 The EU confirmed that France and Ireland will continue to be involved in the sampling programme.
- 8.4 Canada noted that, at the 2023 Commission meeting, the Co-ordinator of the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme, Tim Sheehan (USA), had agreed to provide a link to documents describing the results of the sampling programme, and Canada asked for an update on this. He explained that the information was provided in the WGNAS reports and summarised in the ICES Advice document and that the most recent versions had been published in May 2024. He also noted that since 2011 he has facilitated the publishing of the results within his laboratory’s reference document series and that these reports had been provided to the Secretariat. The Secretary confirmed that provided reports are published on the NASCO website and can be accessed via the following link: [West Greenland Sampling Programme - NASCO](#).
- 8.5 DFG asked whether Mr Sheehan might be able to provide more information about the citizen sampling programme, so that DFG might use this information in incentivising future contributions in light of the lottery scheme. In response, Tim Sheehan noted that some issues prior to the start of the 2023 Citizen Science sampling caused a delayed start of the programme and therefore the number of samples (around 40) was lower than hoped. However, he stated that this was a good start and he looked forward to the programme expanding in 2024 and beyond. He would provide the biological information from all the samples after the meeting.
- 8.6 Mr Sheehan introduced a ‘Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland

Fishery Sampling Programme for 2024’, WGC(24)05.

- 8.7 The Commission agreed to adopt a ‘Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2024’, WGC(24)06 (Annex 5).

9. Announcement of the Tag Return Incentive Scheme Prize

- 9.1 NASCO operates a Tag Return Incentive Scheme. 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.
- 9.2 The Chair announced that the winner of the West Greenland Commission £1,000 prize in the NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was Herman Stach, Greenland.
- 9.3 The winning tag was applied to a wild origin, 2 sea-winter maiden female salmon with a fork length of 77.8 cm and weight of 5 kg at the index trapnet at Millerton on the Southwest Miramichi River, Canada on 2 October 2022. The fish had a river age of about three years and was recaptured near Nanortalik, Greenland on 26 August 2023.

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

- 10.1 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. The Chair noted that the Commission needed to appoint a scientist representative to the SSC. The Commission appointed Michael Millane (EU) to the SSC. The Commission’s representatives on the SSC are Michael Millane (EU) and Rebekka Nygård Bak (DFG).
- 10.2 The Commission agreed the request for scientific advice from ICES prepared by the Standing Scientific Committee in relation to the West Greenland Commission area. The request to ICES, as agreed by the Council, is contained in document CNL(24)09 (Annex 6).

11. Election of Officers

- 11.1 The Commission elected Katrine Kærgaard (DFG) as its Chair (proposed by the representative of the EU, seconded by the representative of the UK) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2024 Annual Meeting.
- 11.2 The Commission elected Cathal Gallagher (EU) as its Vice-Chair (proposed by the representative of DFG, seconded by the representative of the United States) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2024 Annual Meeting.

12. Other Business

- 12.1 Canada noted feedback from observers regarding the transparency of the Commission processes, reflecting that there seemed to be limited opportunity for discussion over some points and suggesting that, for example, short presentations on the reports of mixed-stock fisheries and the ICES Advice would be helpful in the future. The Secretary noted that the Council decided in 2022 that all ICES advice would be presented to the Council and therefore it would be for Council to decide if this process was to change.

12.2 The United States revisited the proposal it had made in Council to repurpose the Tag Return Incentive Scheme to support the citizen science sampling. Noting there is an ongoing lottery scheme to incentivise citizen science sampling, supported by the ASF and NASF, the United States withdrew its proposal, thanked DFG and these NGOs for their continuing efforts in this scheme.

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 Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Council.

14. Report of the Meeting

14.1 The Commission agreed a report of its Meeting.

15. Close of the Meeting

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