

North-East Atlantic Commission

NEA(02)7

The Risk of Transmission of Gyrodactylus salaris in the Commission Area

NEA(02)7

The Risk of Transmission of Gyrodactylus salaris in the Commission Area

The parasite *Gyrodactylus salaris* represents a fatal threat to wild stocks of Atlantic salmon in the North-East Atlantic Commission area and perhaps beyond. A number of stocks have been practically wiped out by this parasite and infections with *G. salaris* pose a serious threat to salmon stocks in near-by rivers. Preventing its further spread within the Commission area must be a priority.

The North-East Atlantic Commission of NASCO has previously discussed, through an *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Introductions and Transfers, the devastating negative effects of *Gyrodactylus salaris*. This led to the development of the Resolution to Protect Wild Salmon Stocks from Introductions and Transfers, NEA(97)12. Despite measures taken by the Members of the North-East Atlantic Commission, infections of *G. salaris* have occurred in new regions. Incidents have also occurred where effective action to treat infections has been delayed, increasing the risk of further spread of the parasite. On this basis, Norway believes that the Commission should now carefully consider the problems related to *Gyrodactylus salaris*, and the need for further action. Future topics for consideration by the Commission should include the following:

1. the need to minimise the threat posed by *Gyrodactylus salaris* to Atlantic salmon, particularly in the Fennoscandic region (Norway, Sweden, Finland, and northern Russia), with particular attention on preventing the spread of the parasite in border regions between countries and transboundary watercourses;
2. the need to enhance cooperation on monitoring, research and dissemination of information regarding *G. salaris*, with special regard to the lack of knowledge on distribution and ecology of the parasite;
3. the need to strengthen national legislation to prevent further spreading of *Gyrodactylus salaris*;
4. the need to consider revisions to the Commission's Resolution on Introductions and Transfers (and possibly other NASCO agreements and resolutions) to take account of current knowledge and the Precautionary Approach.

If the Commission agrees, Norway would be willing to develop, in consultation with other Members of the Commission, proposals as to how these issues might be addressed, and report back next year. The objective would be to minimise the risk of further transmission of this most damaging parasite within the Commission area.