

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>West Greenland Commission</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Report of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WGC(25)08</b></p>
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***Report of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the West Greenland Commission of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chair, Katrine Kærsgaard (Denmark in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, (DFG)), opened the Meeting and welcomed delegates.
- 1.2 A Written Opening Statement was submitted by DFG (Annex 1).
- 1.3 A list of participants at the Forty-Second 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\(25\)04](#).

**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 9 May 2025, [CNL\(25\)06](#). She 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), presented the report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM) to Council and this presentation is available as document [CNL\(25\)61](#). Dr Walker attended the Commission meeting to answer questions relevant to the Commission.
- 4.3 The Commission had no comments or questions on this Agenda item.

**5. Review of the 2024 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 of that document 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 The Chair referred the Commission to the ‘2024 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland’, [WGC\(25\)03](#) and asked DFG to present this report.
- 5.3 DFG summarised the report highlights, noting that the TAC for West Greenland was set at 27 tonnes in 2024 as according to the multi-annual regulatory measure. The total uptake was around 19.9 tonnes. None of the individual quotas were exhausted, and only one segment, recreational in Southwest, was closed based on quota uptake. All other

segments were closed when the season ended. DFG recognised that 2024 was a year characterised by low levels of fishing, with unclear reasons as to why. The Commission was advised that the summer of 2024 was characterised by lots of pack ice in south Greenland, and this could have impacted the abundance of salmon along the shore. Other observations included seeing salmon further offshore, where fishing is not permitted. DFG noted that this looked like a tendency across the North Atlantic, underscoring that factors other than fishing could be affecting the state of salmon. DFG indicated that the level of reporting in 2024 was similar to 2023, with around 79% of all license holders having reported. A noticeable difference from 2023 was the in-season reporting, which increased from around 45% in 2023 to 82% in 2024. This was raised as an issue at last year's meeting, [WGC\(24\)08](#), and DFG was, therefore, glad to have seen a positive development. DFG attributed this development to several factors: the collaboration of a lottery with the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (Iceland), that incentivised license holders to report in-season and within the last day of reporting. DFG looked forward to continuing its collaboration with these organizations for the upcoming season. DFG had sent out more text messages and the Control Authority (Greenland's Fisheries and Hunting Control Authority, GFJK), spent a lot of resources contacting municipalities and calling fishermen to remind them to report. Another positive development was the decrease in delay in reporting. The average delay in 2024 was five days, which is significantly lower than in 2023, when it was 14 days. DFG noted that this development could be attributed to multiple factors, the biggest one possibly being a change in the reporting system. DFG had added a new field (report date), when previously there was only a date for when the report was entered into the system. DFG believed this change gives a more accurate picture of reporting delay and that the great amount of work by the Control Authority and the recurring information campaigns in newspapers and radio broadcasts had also contributed to a lower delay in reporting. Finally, DFG noted that the regulatory measure allows for a yearly adjustment of the closure mechanism, which has been kept at 49% since the regulatory measure was implemented. DFG had been unable to conduct an analysis for 2024, as none of the quotas were exhausted. However, the current analysis had been used for closing the recreational fishery in Southwest. DFG advised the Commission that a new analysis would be conducted for the 2025 fishery. DFG stated that many improvements to the fishery are made each year, and many hours are spent on these changes. This year DFG was glad to see that the work had paid off.

- 5.4 The Chair noted that the NGOs had submitted a number of questions to DFG in advance of the Annual Meeting. These questions, and the answers to them provided during the meeting, are contained in Annex 3.
- 5.5 The UK recognised DFG's extensive efforts to manage the fishery in 2024. The report from DFG demonstrates that the efforts taken, including on extensive communications, seem to be paying off and the UK hopes for a similar successive outcome in 2025.
- 5.6 Canada thanked DFG for its report, acknowledged that the catch had been less than the quota and asked if DFG could say more about why the catch was below the quota, e.g. was this due to environmental conditions or a reduction in salmon abundance. Canada indicated that it hoped to use this to inform negotiations for 2025. DFG acknowledged the lower catches in 2024 and stated that it did not have a clear reason for the lower catches. The report on the 2024 fishery suggested possible explanations such as the presence of pack ice in the fishing area causing the salmon to be further offshore during the fishing season.

- 5.7 The United States acknowledged the strong commitment from DFG in continuing to manage its fishery, noting the significant improvements made over the years to improve the understanding of the fishery. The United States noted the new Greenland Fisheries Act (2024) in 2025 and asked whether this will result in any changes to the future management of the salmon fishery. DFG responded that the new Fisheries Act will not change salmon management directly. However, the management plan for salmon in West Greenland will need to be revised before the salmon season in 2026, so that could lead to changes to the management. The management plan is aligned with the regulatory measure in the Commission, but the management plan is made only by Greenland and involves Greenlandic stakeholders.
- 5.8 The United States then noted that the DFG report states that it is a ‘*Legal requirement {for salmon fishers} in the Executive Order to report every time the net is tended*’ and asked what is meant by the ‘last date of reporting’, given it is mandatory to report every date. DFG responded that it gives a three-day notice of the closure of the fishery and then fishers have 14 days in which to submit their final catch reports, whether they catch salmon or not. There are some delays in reporting though this delay has decreased significantly, as DFG has tried to use positive reinforcement to encourage timely reporting through information campaigns using a range of media. Interviews with some of the fishers who had not reported established that most had forgotten about the requirement to submit their report.
- 5.9 The United States then noted that the 2025 Report states that the previous year’s quota uptake is considered in how to close the fishery in the new year, and asked DFG to explain how this is achieved and, for example, would the quota undercut be taken into account next year. DFG responded that it did use the analysis of the catches in 2023 in the Southwest region when considering the management of the fishery there in 2024. DFG will continue this approach but noted that GFJK considers a range of factors including regular communications with the fishers.
- 5.10 The United States noted that DFG had developed a new tool for 2024 to consider quota uptake on a day-to-day basis. The United States appreciated this approach and asked DFG what was its assessment of the utility of this new approach and, if it was positive, would it be possible to calculate this metric for previous years across the different user groups / areas to evaluate the metrics, dynamics and utility for future management.
- 5.11 DFG submitted the following written response:

*‘We understand that the term ‘% quota uptake / day’ refers to daily increment of the quota uptake, which averaged around 1.5% daily throughout the season (NW-P), as mentioned in our report. This metric serves as a supporting tool to help determine the appropriate closure percentage when the quota uptake approaches the optimal level, which we calculated based on 2023 data. This metric can vary greatly throughout the season, which is why it is mainly used when the fishery is near closure.*

*We are confident in the use of the ‘% quota uptake / day’ metric and the method we applied in closing the 2024 fishery. This method takes into account the optimal quota uptake percentage, monitoring of reporting lag, ‘% quota uptake / day’, and checking the reporting status of the largest fishers. We intend to apply the same approach to the 2025 fishery.*

*As for the possibility of calculating this metric for previous years, we are currently unable to provide a definitive answer. This depends on the quality of*

*data from previous years, which will require some time to assess. Limited resources in our Control Authority (GFJK) could also affect the ability to conduct the analysis. However, we expect to be able to provide an answer before submitting the report for the 2025 salmon fishery.'*

- 5.12 The United States asked DFG for its thoughts on an inter-sessional meeting to consider the use of new methods for analysing the fishery in future years. DFG noted that the possibility of an inter-sessional meeting was to be covered under a later item on the Agenda (see item 11), but confirmed it was open to an inter-sessional meeting to discuss this.
- 5.13 The EU congratulated DFG on the management of the salmon fishery in 2024, including that the catch was within the quota and that delays in reporting had been reduced.
- 5.14 The NGOs thanked DFG for its comprehensive answer to the questions it had submitted ahead of the meeting, and for an excellent report on the 2024 fishery. The NGOs recognise the fishery is very small relative to others and thanked the Government of Greenland for continuing the improvement of its reporting scheme. The NGOs suggested that there were lessons for all in NASCO of a demonstration of identifying issues, taking action, doing assessments, identifying improvements, implementing them and then evaluating their success or not. The NGOs congratulated DFG for this.
- 5.15 A representative of the IPRIIs thanked DFG for the comprehensive report, its efforts on better reporting and for not exceeding the quota. They also thanked DFG for good dialogue with stakeholders, which was an example to others, and for implementing adaptive management for fisheries.

## **6. Mixed-Stock Fisheries Conducted by Members of the Commission**

- 6.1 The Chair noted that in 2024, Council had agreed to include an agenda item in each of the Commissions to allow for an annual update on coastal, estuarine and in-river mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs) and the justification for their continued prosecution ([CNL\(24\)88rev](#)). She noted that the addition of the request to provide justification for the continued prosecution of MSFs was new and that members of the Commission had been asked to include justification for this in their papers on MSFs.
- 6.2 Canada, [NAC\(25\)05](#), the European Union, [NEA\(25\)07](#), and the UK, [NEA\(25\)05](#) had submitted papers providing information on MSFs. The Chair noted that these papers had already been considered in the other Commissions but asked whether any members of the West Greenland Commission had any further questions, particularly in relation to the justification for the continued prosecution of MSFs.
- 6.3 The Commission had no comments or questions on this Agenda item.

## **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 asked the Commission if there were any further comments prior to considering the agreement points.

7.4 DFG suggested that it would prefer to retain the 49% trigger point for managing the 2025 fishery, because the 2024 fishery did not provide any new data for the analysis. However, it noted that if the reporting lag and in-season development of the 2025 fishery followed the same path as in 2024, it might propose to raise the % trigger point for the new regulatory measure, but did not have a rate in mind.

7.5 The Commission agreed that for 2025 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.

7.6 The Commission agreed that the regulatory measure, as set out in [WGC\(22\)10](#), would continue to apply in 2025.

## **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 The Co-ordinator of the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme, Tim Sheehan (USA), introduced a 'Draft Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2025', WGC(25)05.

8.3 The Commission agreed to adopt a 'Statement of Co-operation on the West Greenland Fishery Sampling Programme for 2025', [WGC\(25\)07](#).

8.4 Tim Sheehan (USA) noted that, after many years of dedicated service, he would need to step down from the role of Co-ordinator at some time in the coming years and noted that a successor would need to be appointed to this prestigious and exciting position.

## **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 The Chair noted that the Commission needed to appoint a manager representative to the SSC. The Commission appointed Augusta Jerimiassen (DFG) to the SSC. The Commission's representatives on the SSC are Augusta Jerimiassen (DFG) and Michael Millane (EU).
- 9.3 The Commission agreed to defer consideration of the request to ICES for scientific advice in relation to the West Greenland Commission to the Council. The request to ICES, as agreed by Council, is contained in document [CNL\(25\)09rev](#).

## **10. Other Business**

- 10.1 The Chair advised the Commission that under Council Agenda item 6.b), 'Decisions on the 'Draft of an Action Plan for NASCO', [CNL\(24\)14](#)', Council had considered a recommendation from the Working Group on the Future of NASCO relating to the work of the Commissions. The recommendation text (IP11) read as follows:
- 'Jurisdictions provide information on co-operative approaches to the management of salmon catchments that are shared with other jurisdictions. This would include information on how fisheries are managed for the full catchment (e.g. quotas, Conservation Limits, catch returns, habitat plans, regulations). Discussion focused on the following rivers: the Teno / Tena in EU – Finland and in Norway, for the Minho / Miño in EU – Portugal and in EU – Spain (Galicia), and for the Bidasoa in EU – France and in EU – Spain (Navarra).'*
- 10.2 During its deliberations on this matter, Council had agreed to ask the Commissions to consider whether there is a benefit in the provision of information to the Commissions on co-operative approaches to the management of salmon catchments that are shared with other jurisdictions.
- 10.3 The Chair invited the Secretary to explain how this item had been considered in the other Commissions. The Secretary noted that the item had been raised in the North American Commission (NAC) and North-East Atlantic Commission (NEA) meetings this week. No decisions had been made in the NAC at this time, whereas the NEA had agreed a new agenda item for 2026 to consider papers from Commission members that describe cross-border catchments and existing collaborative measures as a first step towards developing for future co-operative measures.
- 10.4 The Chair noted that Cathal Gallagher (EU) was stepping down as Vice Chair due to being hired as the next NASCO Secretary. The Secretary asked the Commission for any nominations for a new Vice Chair.
- 10.5 The WGC elected Catherine McGinty (EU) as its Vice Chair (proposed by DFG, seconded by United States) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2025 Annual Meeting.



## **11. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**

- 11.1 The United States welcomed thoughts from other members of the Commission on the appropriateness of an inter-sessional meeting to review the results from the 2025 fishery, to discuss different tools and options for management of the fishery and to engage in preliminary discussions on a possible new regulatory measure for 2026.
- 11.2 DFG stated it was open to having an inter-sessional meeting, as had been done in previous years. DFG would be happy to host the meeting in Nuuk.
- 11.3 The EU supported the proposal for an inter-sessional meeting but asked that it be a hybrid or virtual meeting. The EU suggested the meeting might be held in March 2026 to allow time for DFG to report on the 2025 fishery and for review of this report.
- 11.4 Canada and the UK supported the proposal for a meeting, in hybrid format and around March 2026.
- 11.5 The Commission agreed to an inter-sessional meeting in 2026 and requested that the Secretariat add possible dates for a hybrid meeting in the 'NASCO Calendar of Inter-sessional Meetings 2025 / 2026', [CNL\(25\)49](#).
- 11.6 The Commission agreed to hold its next Annual Meeting at the same time and place as the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the Council.

## **12. Report of the Meeting**

- 12.1 The Commission agreed a report of its Meeting.

## **13. Close of the Meeting**

- 13.1 The Chair thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the Meeting.
- 13.2 The Chair thanked the Secretary for her contributions to the Commission over the years and hoped they would meet in Nuuk soon. 'Takuss in Nuuk'.