

Northwest Atlantic



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SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL MEETING - JUNE 1982

Proposed NAFO/ICES Study on Redfish

by

Assistant Executive Secretary

1. Initial Approach to ICES

- a) The following is an extract from the Report of the Scientific Council, June 1980 (*NAFO Sci. Coun. Rep.* 1979-80, p. 68-69):

"The Council noted that the spawning areas of redfish inhabiting Subarea 1 are actually outside the NAFO area in the adjacent ICES region, and agreed that studies of the stock and fisheries in the area should be considered in cooperation with ICES. The main objective of the proposed joint study is to investigate whether the redfish resource of West Greenland can be assessed and managed separately from redfish in the adjacent ICES region. The second objective should be to identify deficiencies in the data base and, if necessary, to develop research programs to collect the relevant information. The third objective should be to assess the status of the stock and to advise on the management of redfish in Greenland waters.

"The study could be initiated by evaluating all available information on (i) distribution and drift of larvae and 0-group redfish at East and West Greenland and in the Irminger Sea, (ii) distribution and emigration of juvenile and adult redfish along the Greenland coast and to the spawning areas in the Irminger Sea on the basis of tagging results and changes in model length, with a view to establishing immigration and emigration coefficients to be used in assessments, and (iii) the establishment of a catch-at-age series (including estimates of by-catches and discards in the fisheries for cod and shrimp) and a catch-per-unit-effort for assessments.

"Noting the need for immediate action on the above proposal, the Council

recommends

that the Executive Secretary should communicate with the General Secretary of ICES with a view to initiating the establishment of a Joint NAFO/ICES Working Group on Redfish Research in the Greenland Area."

- b) The above matter was addressed to the General Secretary of ICES (Mr. H. Tambs-Lyche) in a letter by the Executive Secretary (Capt. J. G. E. Cardoso) on 17 July 1980 as follows:

"At its June 1980 Meeting, the Scientific Council of NAFO proposed that a joint NAFO/ICES working group should be established to review all existing information on the redfish stocks(s) in the West and East Greenland areas, to coordinate future research needs and to undertake assessments of the stock with a view to determining if the West and East Greenland components can be managed separately. The relevant recommendation is given on page 8 of NAFO SCS Doc. 80/VI/25 (Provisional Report of the Scientific Council, Dartmouth, Canada, 3-13 June 1980) (copy enclosed).

"It would be much appreciated if we could have your comments on the above-noted proposal as soon as possible so that it may be further considered by the Scientific Council at its Annual Meeting during 3-8 September 1980."

- c) The following reply dated 17 December 1980 was received from the General Secretary of ICES:

"At the last Statutory Meeting, the Council of ICES adopted the following resolution (C.Res. 1980/2:6:2):

It was decided that:

"the Working Group on Redfish and Greenland Halibut in Region 1 (Chairman: Mr. B. Vaske) should meet at ICES headquarters from 11-19 March 1981 to:

- (i) assess TACs for 1982 for Redfish and Greenland halibut.

- (ii) estimate effective mesh sizes in use for Redfish,
- (iii) estimate the short-term losses and long-term gains resulting from an increase in mesh size in Sub-area XIV (to 140 mm) for all species of significant importance in that area.
- (iv) advise on the effectiveness of closed areas for the protection of spawning and nursery grounds of Redfish in Sub-area XIV.
- (v) evaluate biological relationships between Greenland Halibut and Redfish stocks in East and West Greenland.
- (vi) NAFO scientists should be invited to take part in the evaluation mentioned above."

"I refer to sub-paragraph (vi) above, and am pleased to invite interested NAFO scientists to take part in the meeting. I should be grateful for being informed about the name(s) and address(es) of those concerned (with a copy to Dr. B. Vaske, Institut für Hochseefischerai und Fischverarbeitung, 251 Rostock-Marienehe, Germany Dem. Rep.) as soon as convenient."

- d) In the absence of a NAFO Scientific Council Meeting in early 1981, telephone contact with Canadian representatives indicated that two Canadian scientists would be attending the ICES Working Group Meeting in March 1981. However, no information on discussions within this Working Group was available for the June 1981 Meeting of the Scientific Council. In fact, it was not until the Secretariat received the full published report of the 1981 ICES Meeting (*Procès-Verbal de la Réunion*, 1981) in early 1982 did it become evident that no action had as yet been taken by ICES.

2. Second Approach to ICES

- a) In the absence of any information from ICES regarding the establishment of a special NAFO/ICES Study Group on Redfish, other than the invitation for NAFO scientists to attend the March 1981 Meeting of the ICES Working Group, the Scientific Council at its June 1981 Meeting reiterated its earlier recommendation but in somewhat more detail (*NAFO Sci. Coun. Rep.* 1981, p. 27):

"The problem of biological relationships between the redfish stocks of West Greenland (NAFO Subarea 1) and the Irminger Sea stock complex (ICES Subareas V and XIV) requires further study and special research which should be separated from the usual assessment work on redfish. The Scientific Council of NAFO therefore

"recommends

that a special NAFO/ICES study group should be established to further examine the biological relationships of the West Greenland and Irminger Sea redfish stocks, and that ICES be requested to make the necessary arrangements at the earliest possible opportunity, the suggested terms of reference of the study group being: (i) to evaluate all available data on the subject, (ii) to plan and coordinate special research on the relationships of the West and East Greenland stocks, and (iii) to evaluate the data from such research projects."

- b) The Provisional Report of the June 1981 Meeting (SCS Doc. 81/VI/20) was forwarded to ICES in July 1981 in the hope that the matter would be brought up at the Annual Meeting of ICES in October 1981.
- c) In the absence of any mention of the NAFO proposal in the 1981 Report of ICES, the Executive Secretary again wrote the General Secretary of ICES regarding the proposal. The reply of the General Secretary dated 11 March 1982 is as follows:

"Thank you for your letter of 16 February concerning the possibility of a joint study of the redfish stocks at East- and West-Greenland.

"As far as we can see, the history of the case is as follows:

"In 1979, at the year's Statutory Meeting of ICES, it was agreed that our Working Group on Redfish and Greenland Halibut should, as part of its terms of reference, "consider the scientific feasibility of producing assessments for redfish and Greenland Halibut on a total stock basis in the Iceland-Greenland-Davis Strait area".

"The working group made it clear that there were not sufficient data to allow a combined assessment for the whole area, and that probably the Greenland Halibut stocks at West- and East-Greenland were not linked.

"In 1980 the NAFO Scientific Council recommended that a joint NAFO/ICES group should be established to look at the problem. This was communicated to us through your letter of 17 July 1980 (copy attached to your letter of 16 February). The matter was again considered at the ICES Statutory Meeting in 1980, and in the terms of reference for the Redfish and Greenland Halibut Working Group it was stated that the Group should "evaluate biological relationships between Greenland Halibut and Redfish stocks in East- and West-Greenland", and that "NAFO scientists should be invited to take part in the evaluation mentioned above".

"This was communicated to you on 17 December 1980, together with an invitation to interested NAFO scientists to take part in the meeting, which would be held in March 1981. I believe that letter (copy attached) should be considered as an answer to your letter of 17 July. In the report of the meeting of the Working Group on Redfish and Greenland Halibut in NEAFC Region 1 from the meeting held in March 1981, there is no mention of any of the participants specifically representing NAFO. There were, however, two Canadian scientists present.

The Group considered the terms of reference mentioned above, and concluded (page 27 of its report):

"The Working Group is of the opinion that there is a relationship between East- and West-Greenland at least for some of the stocks. But the knowledge on the matter is very limited, and there is a need for special research on this subject. The Working Group therefore suggests that a special ICES/NAFO Study Group should be set up to:

1. Evaluate all available data on the subject;
2. Plan and coordinate special research on the relationships of stocks at East and West Greenland.
3. Evaluate data from such research."

"These terms of reference were endorsed at the June 1981 Meeting of the Scientific Council of NAFO, which also asked ICES to make the necessary arrangements for setting up the group.

"It was then expected that the matter would be taken up in the Demersal Fish Committee of ICES at its meeting in Woods Hole, in order that the appropriate recommendation could be forwarded to the ICES Council.

"Regrettably, this question does not seem to have been raised in the Committee at that time, with the effect that there is, at present, no decision by the Council on the matter.

"Since both "NAFO scientists" and "ICES scientists" (which in some cases may be the same person) are in agreement as to how one should proceed, this oversight is certainly not due to any negative attitude from the side of ICES.

"I would therefore suggest that the NAFO Scientific Council at its forthcoming meeting makes preparations (if any are needed) for participation in a joint group, and that the Chairman of our Demersal Fish Committee, to whom I copy this letter, puts the matter on the agenda for the meeting of his committee during the forthcoming Statutory Meeting. This would allow the group to become operative after that meeting.

"On behalf of ICES I feel that I should apologise for the delay caused by the oversight mentioned above."

- d) In response to the above letter from the General Secretary of ICES, Capt. Cardoso's letter of 29 March 1982 contained the following:

"I can assure you we had no feeling of a negative attitude on the part of ICES. We only knew that the case of the working group had not been discussed at the Woods Hole meeting and therefore we were afraid that the matter was not progressing.

"Furthermore, I must admit I had not concluded that your letter of 17 December 1980 answered mine of 17 July 1980 as it could mean that your Working Group on Redfish and Greenland Halibut in Region 1 was not in agreement with the idea of a joint NAFO/ICES study group specially established to study Redfish stock(s) in the West and East Greenland areas and only thought it was sufficient to invite NAFO scientists to take part in the evaluation of biological relationships between Greenland Halibut and Redfish stocks in East and West Greenland.

"Even the conclusion of the ICES group on page 27 of its Report seemed to ignore that a joint NAFO/ICES study group had already been proposed. It appears as well that there is a slight difference between the terms of reference as suggested by ICES and as suggested by NAFO, both in the letter of 17 July 1980 and at the June 1981 Meeting. ICES considered "stocks" (which

I believe to mean stocks of Halibut and Redfish, whereas NAFO only refers to Redfish). However, I don't think this difference will constitute any difficulty.

"The question of the proposed NAFO/ICES study group on Redfish at Greenland is an item for the consideration of the Scientific Council at its next meeting in June 1982 and therefore it is prepared to study the matter with ICES. One point that is still not known and that protocol demands should be settled by you, is when and where do you think the joint study group should meet for the first time."

e) The General Secretary of ICES replied on 14 April 1982 as follows:

"Thank you for your letter of 29 March 1982. I have sent a copy of it to the Chairman of our Demersal Fish Committee, Mr. A. Burd, who is the one that will have to take the initiative to have the group established from the ICES side. Unfortunately, since the matter was overlooked last year, I cannot see a possibility for having the official ICES decision made before the Statutory Meeting in October; but the membership (from the ICES side) could then be established shortly afterwards and the group could then meet."