

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR



RESTRICTED
THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Serial No.2163
(B.g.14)

ICNAF Res.Doc.69/5

ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1969

Report of the Fifth Meeting of the
ICES/ICNAF Joint Working Party on North Atlantic Salmon

Copenhagen, 1 October 1968



Serial No. 2163
(B.g. 14)

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Dartmouth, N.S., Canada

18 March 1969

Report of the Fifth Meeting of the
ICES/ICNAF Joint Working Party on North Atlantic Salmon
Copenhagen, 1 October 1968

1. The following attended this meeting:

Canada	F. R. Hayes
	W. M. Sprules
Denmark	O. Christensen
	P. M. Hansen
	Sv. Aa. Horsted
England and Wales	I. R. H. Allan
Ireland	D. J. Piggins
	Miss E. Twomey
	A. E. J. Went
Scotland	B. B. Parrish (Chairman)
	K. A. Pyefinoh (Rapporteur)
Norway	L. Rosseland
Sweden	B. Carlin
U.S.A.	J. A. Posgay
ICNAF	L. R. Day

Dr. J. M. Anderson (Canada) and Mr. A. J. Aglen (Scotland) were present for part of the meeting.

(a) Consideration of Second Report

2. It was agreed that, though the text of this report which had been approved by the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries at their meeting in May, should be that submitted to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the additional information which had become available since May should be incorporated into the tables at the end of this report. These additions entail minor alterations to the text of the report and it was agreed that the Chairman and the Rapporteur should make these additions and amendments, together with such other minor alterations as seemed necessary and submit the Report for publication by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, probably in their Co-operative Research Report series.

(b) The West Greenland Fishery, 1968

(1) Data

3. It was reported that, up to 21st September 1968, the inshore salmon catch in West Greenland was about one-third to one-half of the catch at the corresponding date in 1967. This decrease in catch had been particularly apparent in the southern part of the area, where there had been much ice and it was suggested that the salmon may not have moved inshore this year because of the presence of cold surface water. It was emphasized, however, that, as the October catch is usually the biggest of the season, catch statistics up to the end of September might not be a reliable guide to the catch for the whole season.

4. It was also reported that, though catch statistics were not available, it was believed that the offshore catch to date had also been smaller than in 1967. So far as was known, at least four Danish, one Swedish, two Norwegian and two Faroese boats were taking part in the offshore fishery this year. As the number of boats participating is, at present, the only indication available of fishing effort for the offshore fishery, it was recommended that accurate information about the number of boats taking part should be provided for each of the years in which salmon fishing had taken place off the west Greenland coast.

5. It was also agreed that the recommendation for more detailed information on catch per unit effort for home water catches, which appears as the second recommendation in the second report, should be extended to include Greenland and other areas where salmon fishing was in progress.

(ii) Tag Recaptures

6. It was reported that, though it was known that some tagged fish had been caught in the Greenland fishery this season, full details of these recaptures were not yet available. A table was circulated giving details of the distribution of tagged fish recaptured on the Greenland coast and a map, which summarized these results pictorially, was exhibited and it was agreed that this should be included in the next report of the Working Party. This map showed that tagged fish from both sides of the Atlantic had been caught all along the west Greenland coast but that only fish tagged in Europe had been recaptured on the east coast of Greenland.

(iii) Research in 1968

7. A preliminary account was given of the first stages of this year's programme in West Greenland, where a longer programme covering a greater range of coast, had been arranged. Most attention had been given to the use of T-nets, though long lines had also been used. Work had started south of Godthab in mid-August and, between then and the end of September, nets had been set at a number of points between Julianehaab and Godthab. Salmon had not been plentiful on the coast and, up to September 20, 30 fish had been caught (19 in gill-nets and 11 in T-nets) but none had been fit for tagging. A number of sites very suitable for T-nets had been found between Julianehaab and Godthab but these were not places where salmon were likely to be plentiful. It was agreed that it was too early to draw any conclusions from this year's tests, especially as the T-nets might well do better later in the season.

8. It was also reported that work on the blood characteristics of Greenland salmon had been resumed at Godthab. The "Tornak", fishing out of Godthab, was maintaining the supply of material for these studies and, to the end of September, had caught 51 salmon (in gill-nets) mainly towards the end of the period.

9. The Canadian workers had arrived in Greenland and had gone north to Holsteinsborg, where they hoped to sample the salmon handled by a Danish freezer, which was buying fish from the offshore fishery.

(c) The Salmon Fishery off the Norwegian coast and other Areas

10. Until recently, the Norwegian salmon fishery has been traditionally coastal, carried out in the fjords or based on the islands off the coast of Norway. Early in the 1960's, however, a salmon fishery began seaward of these traditional areas. In 1962 some Danish fishermen began to fish off Norway and, the following year, five or six Danish vessels were operating.

11. At first this was a drift net fishery as, although long-lining was tried in 1963 or 1964, catches using this method were small. In 1966, however, long-lining became more important and the amount of long-lining has continued to increase since. Long-lining was at first chiefly carried out by Danish fishermen but, in 1967, a few Norwegian fishermen adopted this method but they entered the fishery late and their catches were small. This year a larger number of Norwegian vessels have taken part using long-lines and they began fishing earlier in the season. Their catches for 1968 are not known; information may be available next spring, but the Danish vessels caught 150 tons of salmon during April, May and June. Apart from these Norwegian fishermen, foreign participation in the fishing is mainly Danish (20 vessels in 1968) with some Swedish (5-10 vessels in 1968) and at least one Faroese vessel.

12. This offshore fishery is carried on during the spring and the first half of the summer. Long-lining goes on from April to early June (though the last Danish long-liner returned from the fishing grounds this year in mid-July) and the drift net fishery has much the same season as the inshore bag-net fishery, May to mid-July. Just over 80% of the catch was five-year old fish, 9% four-year old, 8.7% six-year old and only 1% were three-year old fish. Most of the fish caught are in good condition but some, mainly the smaller fish, are thin and lean but do not appear to be kelts. The proportion of these latter fish varies through the season (22% of the salmon caught in April were in poor condition, 35% in May and 12% in June).

13. The lines used carry 1500-2000 hooks/line. An analysis has been made of the catch-per-unit-effort for catches totalling about 5000 salmon; during April 90 salmon were caught per 1000 hooks fished, in May 100/1000 hooks. These values are about five times those found for the long-line fishery in the Baltic.
14. A number of fish tagged as smolts in Norway have been recaptured in this offshore fishery, together with some fish tagged as smolts in Sweden, 3 fish tagged as smolts in Denmark and one fish tagged as a smolt in England. This year, 240 salmon caught in this offshore fishery have been tagged by the Norwegians and four have been recaptured. No fish tagged in Scotland have so far been recaptured in this fishery and none of the fish tagged in North America.
15. A number of fish have been caught in Norwegian rivers this year with hooks attached, suggesting that they had been caught on long-lines and then broken free. Three such fish had been taken in Scotland (on the River Tay) this year.
16. Brief reference was made to the results of the cruise of the Faroese research ship Jens Chr. Svabo, which had caught 182 salmon on long-line just to the north of the Faroes during April and it was reported that Mr. Joensen had promised to try to obtain information about Faroese participation in sea fisheries for salmon.

(d) Other Matters.

17. An interesting observation, which may well prove important as a means of distinguishing between salmon from North America and from Europe, was reported from Canada. It had recently been discovered that specimens of the nematode Anisakis spp., from North American salmon had a fluorescent oral ring, whereas in specimens of this parasite from south-west England this ring was not fluorescent. This point will be investigated further.

(e) Summary

18. The following decisions were taken during the course of the meeting:
 - (a) That the Second Report of the Joint Working Party should be submitted to the Anadromous and Catadromous Fish Committee of ICES for approval and, if this was forthcoming and this approval was endorsed by the Council, the report should be published in the Co-operative Research Report series (ICES). The revision and updating of the tables and minor revisions of the script would be undertaken by the Chairman and the Rapporteur.
 - (b) That those members of the Joint Working Party available should meet in London, probably during the week beginning 20th January, 1969 to discuss the results obtained in 1968 and the programme for 1969.
 - (c) That the next full meeting of the Joint Working Party should be held, in Copenhagen or London, probably towards the end of the week beginning 19th May, 1969. The papers for discussion at that meeting would include accounts of the Norwegian offshore fishery by Mr. Rosseland and by Dr. Carlin and Mr. Christensen.
 - (d) That this account of the fifth meeting should be circulated to all present for comment.