



West Greenland Commission

*2020 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland*

WGC(21)04

Aalisarnermut, Piniarnermut Nunalerinermullu Naalakkersuisoqarfik  
Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture

NAALAKKERSUISUT  
GOVERNMENT OF GREENLAND



---

# 2020 REPORT ON THE SALMON FISHERY IN GREENLAND

---

West Greenland Commission

## Content

Introduction.....	1
Subsistence Fishery .....	1
The 2020 Fishing Season .....	2
Catch reports during the fishing season.....	2
Licenses and catch reports .....	3
Management of the 2020 Salmon Fishery .....	5
Initiatives implemented.....	6
Summary of 2018-2020 .....	7
Planned management, monitoring and control initiatives moving forward.....	7

JANUARY 2021

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, HUNTING AND AGRICULTURE

## Introduction

*According to the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for fishing for salmon at West Greenland in 2018, 2019 and 2020 (WGC(18)11) Greenland agrees to, in a timely manner, inform NASCO and, as appropriate, ICES, of improvements of the monitoring, management, control and surveillance or any modification to the management of the Atlantic salmon fishery and to provide an annual report on the outcome of the fishery.*

This report outlines the outcome of the 2020 salmon fishery in Greenland, including East Greenland and the modifications that the Government of Greenland has made to the management and monitoring, control and surveillance. In addition, as this is the last year of the *Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure (WGC(18)11)* the report will also outline data for the whole period, in order to showcase improvements achieved throughout the period 2018-2020. Moreover, it will outline initiatives for further improvement of the management, monitoring and control of the fishery planned for the 2021 fishing season and onwards.

## Subsistence Fishery

It is important to have in mind that the salmon fishery in Greenland is a subsistence/internal-use fishery and not by any means a commercial fishery.

It is vital to Naalakkersuisut, the Government of Greenland, that all people have the right to provide for themselves and their families. This is an essential part of the life and culture in Greenland. Therefore, it is normal that everybody can fish what he or she needs for their own consumption without having to report to the authorities. It is only the professional fishermen that normally have this obligation. Furthermore, in the commercial fisheries, the fishermen sell their catch to a land-based factory or facility, which provides the reporting to the Greenland Fisheries License Control Authority (GFLK). It is unique to the salmon fishery in Greenland that private persons fishing for their own consumption have to hold a license in order to fish for their own livelihood and that they also have to report their catches.

Thus, the management and control regime for salmon is very different from the normal management measures and demands of the fishermen. It introduces an extra workload on the GFLK and the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture that have limited resources. Since the economic foundation of Greenland is based on fisheries (more than 90 % of our export value), it is essential that the administration prioritize its resources, both human and economic.

The Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture and GFLK has for several years made an enormous effort to improve the management, control and reporting of the salmon fishery – and will continue to do so in the coming years. However, it is essential that there is an understanding of the constraint that we have – and that there is a need for proportionality in the measures implemented.

## The 2020 Fishing Season

In line with the *Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure*, the export ban continues to be in place and there are still no landings or sale of Atlantic salmon to fish processing factories allowed.

The 2020 fishing season started September 1<sup>st</sup> and the fishery was closed on September 20<sup>th</sup>. The quota was 20.7 tonnes. It was reduced from 30 tonnes to 20.7 tonnes in order to compensate for a harvest above the 2019 quota. The total catch in 2020 was 30.7 tonnes.

### Catch reports during the fishing season

In 2020, GFLK introduced an online reporting system through the public citizen website; Sullissivk.gl in order to improve the access for reporting for the fishermen. The system was ready just before the fishing system started on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

In 2019, it was discovered that catch report were received at GFLK with a delay of approximately 12 days from the catch of the fish until the reports was registered at GFLK. In 2020, this delay has been significantly reduced compared to 2019, with a delay of approximately 8 days from catch till registration. Multiple factors may be due to this improvement, such as the new online reporting system, but also high awareness of reporting of salmon fishery in the media (information campaigns) and that the fishermen are more familiar with the reporting process.

Figure 1 illustrates the quota uptake of salmon over time, after the opening of the fishery on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

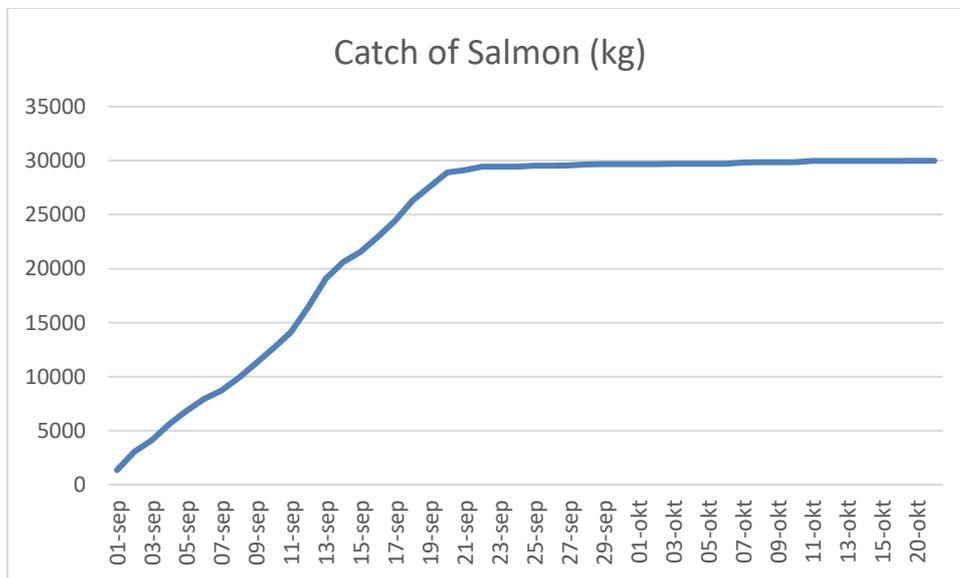


Figure 1. Catches of salmon (in kilograms) caught during the season.

## Licenses and catch reports

In the following paragraph, a detailed description of the reporting behavior of licenses holders and catch reports will be provided. In order to have an overview of the catch reports, the results in table 1 are divided into three groups; (1) catch reports received within season, (2) catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting, and (3) catch reports received after last date of reporting. The same grouping is used in table 2, which describes the results on the level of license holders rather than catch reports.

A total of 1318 catch reports has been received by the GFLK (table 1), with the majority of reports received during the fishing season (61 %). 433 catch reports were 0-catch reports, *i.e.* a report of no caught salmon, corresponding to 33 % of the total reports received (table 1). 97 % of the 0-catch reports were received timely, and a smaller part of the 0-catch reports was received late (3 %), *i.e.* after October 20.

Only 2 % catch reports were received late. In the report of the 2019 salmon fishery in Greenland, it was stated that the reporting in 2019 had improved compared to 2018, and in this report, we can conclude that the improvement has remained in 2020, and in some ways also improved.

In 2019, 7 % of the reports were received late (after December 1<sup>st</sup>), while in 2018 there was a severe delay and catch reports would be send to GFLK several months after the fishery was closed and continued to be send in until early spring in 2019. Considering the 2018 and 2019 fisheries, with only 3 % of the reports being reported late in 2020 is very satisfying.

<b>Table 1. Catch reports</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Overview</b>		
<i>Catch reports received within the season</i>	797	61 %
<i>Catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>	494	37 %
<i>Catch reports received after last date of reporting</i>	28	2 %
<i>Total number of catch reports received (incl. 0-catch reports)</i>	1 318	100 %
<b>Catch reports with &gt; 0 catches</b>		
<i>Catch reports received within the season</i>	605	68 %
<i>Catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>	266	30 %
<i>Catch reports received after last date of reporting</i>	14	2 %
<i>Total number of catch reports</i>	885	67 % <sup>a</sup>

<b>Table 1. Catch reports (continued)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Catch reports with 0-catches</b>		
<i>Catch reports received within the season</i>	192	44 %
<i>Catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>	228	53 %
<i>Catch reports received after last date of reporting</i>	14	3 %
<i>Total of number of 0-catch reports</i>	433	33 % <sup>a</sup>
<sup>a</sup> percent of the total number of catch reports of 1318.		

It was evaluated whether to divide the license holders into two sub-groups; professional and private. This was found unnecessary to include in these numbers, as the two sub-groups would have been very similar and the results of this would not be directly useful in further considerations in management of the fishery.

<b>Table 2. Overview of licenses in the salmon fishery in 2020</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Number of licenses issued in total</b>		
- Professional	340	45 %
- Private	419	55 %
- Total	759	100 %
<b>Overview:</b>		
<i>Number of license holders reporting in total</i>	617	81 %
<i>License holders not reporting</i>	141	19 %
<i>License holders only reporting 0-catches</i>	184	24 %
<i>License holders reporting catches &gt; 0 kg</i>	434	57 %
<i>License holders reporting within season</i>		
<i>Reports with catch &gt; 0 kg</i>	218	35 %*
<i>Reports with 0-catch</i>	82	13 %*
<i>License holders reporting between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>		
<i>Reports with catch &gt; 0 kg</i>	113	18 %*
<i>Reports with 0-catch</i>	178	29 %*
<i>License holders reporting after last date of reporting</i>		
<i>Reports with catch &gt; 0 kg</i>	12	2 %*
<i>Reports with 0-catch</i>	14	2 %*
* percentage of license holders that did report.		

Overall, the reporting has been satisfying in 2020 with a reporting percentage of 81 % and the majority of license holders reporting within the season (40 %). Only 12 persons reported late (corresponding to >2 %), *i.e.* after October 20.

In 2019, only 17 % of license holders reported within the season, suggesting room for improvements. This year reporting shows that improvements have been made with 40 % of license holders reporting timely during season.

## Management of the 2020 Salmon Fishery

The Executive Order on fishing after salmon from 2018 was revised during 2020, before the start of the fishing season. The requirements for all segments to hold a license, 0-catch reporting requirements and the requirement of reporting in order to get a license the following year, continues to be valid. The changes were besides updating, the following:

- The deadline for 0-catch reporting was changed from 1<sup>st</sup> December to 30 days after the fishery is closed,
- Online reporting option and,
- It is no longer legal to use drift nets

Thereby, the following criteria for the salmon fishery applied in 2020:

Criteria that you need to fulfil, in order to be eligible for a commercial license:

- Only fishermen with a permanent association to Greenland<sup>1</sup> can obtain a commercial license.
- Full accounting of fishing activities and harvest, including zero (0) catch for the previous year must have been reported.
- Own salmon nets and a vessel not longer than 42 feet.
- Information on number of salmon nets, type and brand must be reported in connection with the application for a license.
- Only hooks, fixed nets can be used.
- Nets must be marked with the owner's/vessel name with external identification code.
- Nets must be tended on a regular basis.
- Professional fishermen can sell their catches or use them for private consumption.
- Sold catch must be reported separately.

For private people/fishermen, the following criteria and regulations apply;

- Permanent association to Greenland<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Executive Order on Fisheries: *Landstingslov nr. 18 af 31. oktober 1996 om fiskeri, §3, stk. 4:* " 'Permanent association to Greenland' is understood in this law as persons that by purchase of a household, by renting or buying a home or by other arrangements indicates intension to have Greenland as a place of residence."

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order on Fisheries: *Landstingslov nr. 18 af 31. oktober 1996 om fiskeri, §3, stk. 4:* " 'Permanent association to Greenland' is understood in this law as persons that by purchase of a household, by renting or buying a home or by other arrangements indicates intension to have Greenland as a place of residence."

- If a license was issued in the previous season, a full accounting of fishing activities and harvest, including 0-catches, must have been provided.
- Private fishermen can only use hooks or 1 anchored gillnet (2000 knot ~60m).
- All nets must be marked with the owner's name.
- Nets must be tended on a regular basis.

## Initiatives implemented

2018 was the first year of the new regime under the revised Executive Order and *Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure* and thus, it was the first year that required all fishermen, professional and private, to hold a license and with new reporting requirements as outlined above.

Therefore, the Ministry, GFLK and KNAPK (the Fishermen and Hunter's Association) held an evaluation meeting in order to address a number of issues that had arisen during the 2018 fishing season. This practice has continued throughout the 2019 and 2020 fishing seasons.

The Ministry, GFLK and KNAPK furthermore held a start-up meeting before the 2020 season started, a meeting during the season as well as an evaluation meeting after the fishery was closed. Meetings have also been held with NGOs, before and after the season.

- Online reporting system introduced through the public citizen website [Sullissivik.gl](http://Sullissivik.gl), which improved the real time reporting. It is expected to improve further in the coming years as people start using it. An evaluation of the online reporting system is underway and further improvements will be made according to the results of the evaluation before the next fishing season.
- The Public citizen website [Sullissivik.gl](http://Sullissivik.gl) was further updated including the possibility to apply for a license and report online.
- Radio spots reminding people to apply for a license before fishing and to report timely ran daily in national radio throughout the season.
- Text messages sent to all fishermen, who had provided a mobile number, 3 times throughout the fishing season. This was introduced after positive results from a survey done during the 2019 fishery. The fishermen received a text at the beginning of the season, mid-way and just before the closure of the fishery.
- An article in KNAPK's magazine concerning the importance of reporting was published before the season. The magazine is distributed to members of KNAPK.
- An article in an outdoor magazine in a national newspaper about the importance of reporting in the salmon fishery and about the conditions of the fishery before the fishing season.
- A press release was sent mid-season, positively encouraging the fishermen to keep up their improved reporting.
- Facebook ads were used to reach fishermen and all press releases concerning the fishery was published both on the Government's and KNAPK's facebook pages.
- Following the closure of the fishery, press releases and a text messages was sent to fishermen to remind them to report at the latest 30 days after the closure of the fishery.

## Summary of 2018-2020

Table 3. Summary of the fishery in 2018-2020			
Year	2018	2019	2020
Reporting percentage	73.7 %	81.6 %	81.4 %
Quota uptake (tonnes)	40.6	28.8	30.7
Number of fishing days in the season	77	42	20

### Planned management, monitoring and control initiatives moving forward

As already informed, the Government of Greenland is working on a management plan for the salmon fishery. A working group consistent of the Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, GFLK, the Ministry of Environment and Research, KNAPK, Greenland Business, Arctic Prime Fisheries, the municipality of Sermersooq and Recreational Fishermen's associations are currently working on a draft for a management plan. The draft is based on the Greenlandic Guidelines for Management Plans, NASCO's Guidelines for Management of Salmon Fisheries, the current Multi-Annual Regulatory Measures and the fact that the salmon fishery in Greenland is a subsistence fishery. The management plan will be a long-term management tool, which aims at ensuring a more stable management of the salmon fishery.

The intention is that the Government of Greenland by the end of April or beginning of May 2021 adopt the Management Plan and an adjusted Executive Order, in due time before the fishing season begins, in order to ensure proper implementation and preparation for both the authorities and the fishermen.

In addition, the online reporting system will be further improved before the 2021 fishing season. All other initiatives such as the radio campaign, text messages, social media etc. will continue in 2021.