



2024 REPORT ON THE SALMON FISHERY IN GREENLAND

West Greenland Commission

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MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND HUNTING



1. Introduction

According to the *Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for fishing for salmon at West Greenland (WGC(22)10 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.*

This report outlines the outcome of the 2024 salmon fishery in Greenland, including East Greenland and, if any, the alterations that the Government of Greenland has made to the management and monitoring, control, and surveillance.

1.1 Subsistence 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 – and the Fisheries Act. Salmon fishing in Greenland is a subsistence/internal-use fishery and not a commercial fishery.

2. Implementation of the Regulatory Measure *WGC(22)10*

(1) For the 2024 salmon season, Greenland has maintained the management plan for Atlantic Salmon, as well as the already existing measures for monitoring, management, control and surveillance.

(a) According to the management plan, the fishing season is as follows:

- Southwest: 1/8 – 30/9
- Northwest: 1/9 – 31/10
- East: 15/8 – 15/10

According to the regulatory measure, the 2024 fishing season was kept within the period between August and November.

(b) Legal requirement in the Executive Order to report every time the net is tended. Legal requirement to report 0-catch. An online reporting option was introduced in 2020 and has been used since then. Contact with the municipalities before and during the fishing season in relation to the importance of effective disclosure of salmon reports. Data collected in GFJKs¹ database for monitoring of quota-uptake. Continued radio campaign about reporting and text messages have again been sent to license holders. The Government of Greenland collaborates with NASF and ASF to enhance catch reporting. As part of this initiative, fishers who submit their reports during the season have the chance to win prizes.

¹ GFJK: Greenland's Fisheries and Hunting Control Authority, previously known as GFLK (Greenland's Fisheries License Control Authority)



(c) Since 2018 it has been a legal requirement to have a license to participate in the salmon fishery.

(d) Since 2018 it has been illegal to fish without a license.

(e) According to the 1996 Fisheries Act², only professional fishermen are allowed to sell their catch. The executive order only allows them to sell their catch at local markets and to institutions.

(2) Since 2015, it has been a condition of the license to allow samplers to sample their catch. This is also stated on the license.

(3) (a) Since 1998, there has been an export ban on salmon in Greenland. (b) Since 2015, it has been prohibited to land salmon to the fish processing factories.

(4) The TAC for West Greenland was set at 27 tons in 2024. According to the management plan the 27 tonnes were divided into quota for the two management areas in West Greenland.

(5) Since 2022, Greenland has agreed to close the fishery at West Greenland, when the registered catch has reached no more than 49% of the overall TAC. Since 2022, closing the fishery when the registered catch reaches no more than 49% of the overall TAC has been the guiding principle. GFJK registers and collects data daily, and, based on numerous variables, decides when to close the fishery in the different management areas. These include previous years' uptake, the weather, days of delay in reporting, the oral reports from the local fisheries inspectors about the number of salmon they see coming in. Adding new features to the reporting system which has reduced the reporting lag significantly, have changed the decision-making on when to close the fishery in 2024. *(see section 4 for elaboration and evaluation of this measure).*

(6) GFJK collects and registers catch data daily. The quota uptake is published on GFJK's website every week. As mentioned above, there is continuous contact with the municipalities before and during the fishing season in relation to the importance of effective disclosure of salmon reports. There has also been a more extensive effort to send out text-messages both during the season, and when a fishery is closing. Improving the reporting system has also reduced the reporting lag and given more reliable information about the fishery.

(7) If fishers do not report to GFJK, they will not be issued a license for the following year's fishery. This is automatically ensured via the GFJK database. It is a legal requirement to report 0-catch within 14 days of closing the fishery.

(8) Greenland has continued to use initiatives to increase reporting of license holders.

(a) To have the newest contact information, license holders are permitted to state their phone number and/or email when applying for a salmon license.

² A new Fisheries Act has been passed, with effectiveness from 1. January 2025. The 2024 season was regulated by the act from 1996.



(b) During the salmon season, radio campaigns were transmitted daily, reminding people to report their catches. An ad was made for both national newspapers with a link to the online reporting website () and a continuous ad on their website with direct links to the reporting site was shown throughout the season. Text messages were sent to all license-holders both during the season with a reminder to report and when their area was closing with a reporting deadline. Around 4.420 text messages were sent during the 2024 season, compared to 3.800 text messages in 2023.

(c) License holders with the highest catches in the previous season, were sent a text message to remind them to report throughout the season. GFJK also made phone calls to them, to make sure that they reported their catches throughout the season.

(d) To provide information about reporting during the fishing season, a national radio speak was aired daily to remind license holders to report. A new initiative in 2023 was having an ad on the national newspaper *Sermitsiaq's* online website, with a link to the reporting website. This continued in 2024.

When an area is closed, a press release is issued on the government's official website and social media. The press releases also contain information about the reporting deadline.

(e) A post-season information campaign of the 2024 fishing season has not yet been carried out.

(f) Phone interviews with non-reporters were conducted in February 2025, to review the reasons for non-reporting. *Results from these interviews are mentioned in section 3.3.*

(9) Greenland has introduced a small change in the reporting system. It now includes a report date and not only a date for when reports are entered into the system (loading date). Reporting lag is therefore, in 2024, calculated between catch date and report date. Previously it was calculated between catch date and loading date. Section 4 reports on the effects of this change. Other changes include the possibility of reporting bycatch of pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorboscha*), and an update to the online reporting option sullissivik.gl. The update included the user interface with clearer instructions and several more obligatory fields.



3. The 2024 Fishing Season

An overview of opening and closure of the salmon fishery, the quota and quota uptake per management area and segment is summarized in table 1 and 2.

Table 1. Opening, closure, quota and quota uptake per management area and segment 2024. Source: GFJK								
Management Area	Opening	Closure pr. Segment		Quota per segment (tonnes)		Catch per segment (tonnes)		Total quota uptake (tonnes)
Northwest	1/9	Professional	31/10	Professional	7.56	Professional	5,94	6.96
		Recreational	16/11	Recreational	3.24	Recreational	1,02	
Southwest	10/8	Professional	31/10	Professional	11.34	Professional	9,42	12.88
		Recreational	20/9	Recreational	4.86	Recreational	3,46	
East	1/9	Professional	31/10	Professional	1.5	Professional	0,31	0.96
		Recreational	16/11	Recreational	1.5	Recreational	0,65	

Table 2. Total quota uptake West Greenland 2024.	
Management Area	Quota Uptake (tonnes)
Northwest	6.96
Southwest	12.88
Total quota uptake	19.84

3.1 Catch reports during the fishing season.

In 2020, GFJK introduced an online reporting system through the public citizen website; Sullissivik.gl, to improve reporting access for fishermen. Unfortunately, the site experienced some technical issues during the fishing season in 2023, which resulted in some reports not being loaded automatically into the database. Acknowledging the instability of the automation loading from Sullissivik.gl and after conversations with the IT suppliers and serious consideration, a decision was made in 2024, to manually load all the reports coming from different sources into the database (including Sullissivik).



Figure 1 illustrates the quota uptake of salmon over time, after the opening of the fishery on August 10th.

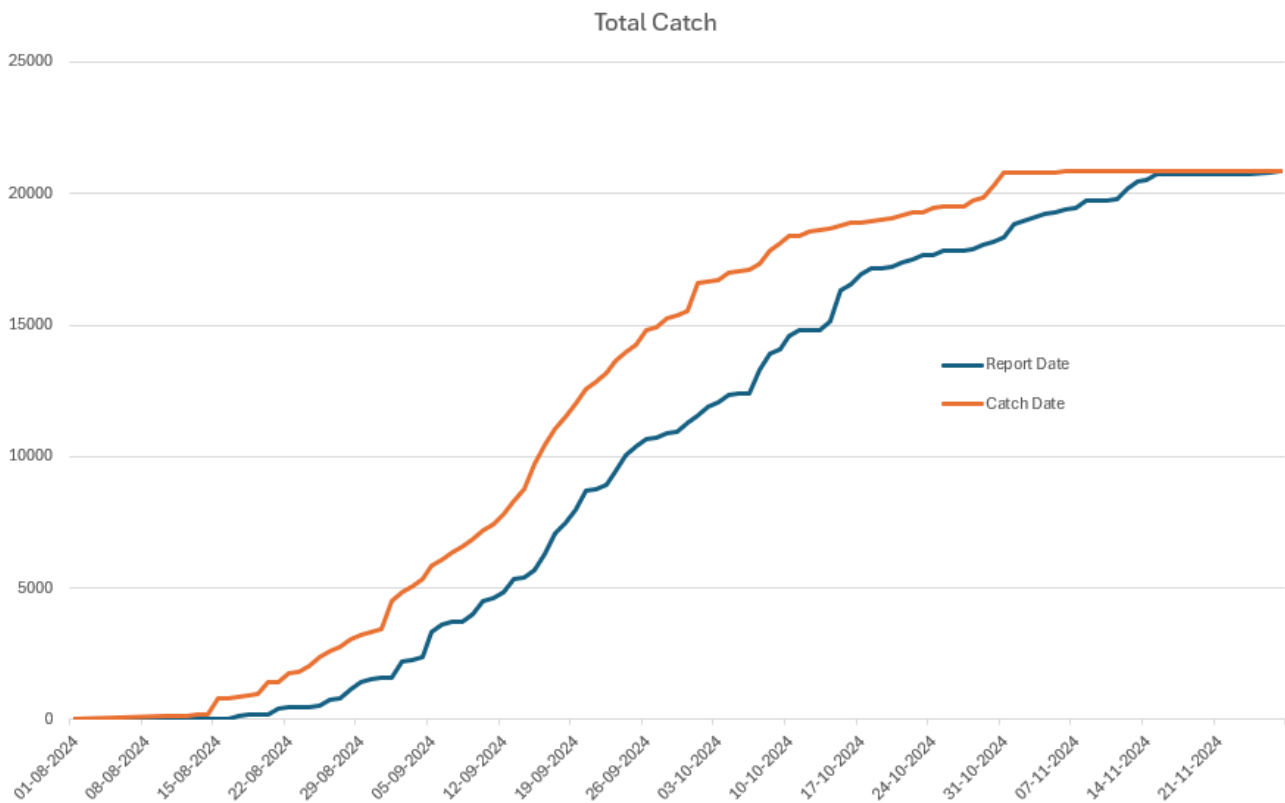


Figure 1. Catches of salmon (in kilograms) caught during the season. Dates from 2024. Source: GFJK

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Delay in reporting (days)	8	12	11,5 ³	14	5

Average delay in reporting 2020-2024. Data: GFJK

The table above shows the average number of days between the license holder catching the fish and GFJK receiving the catch report. As the table shows, the delay decreased significantly in 2024. This is partly due to the manual load of the reports and new field of ‘report date’ as mentioned earlier. GFJK have been trying to finish loading all the salmon reports daily within the salmon season (except weekends). It can also result from updating the Sullissivik.gl user interface with clearer instructions and several more obligatory fields. We are still of the opinion that Sullissivik.gl is a more efficient way of reporting than other more manual methods. Fishermen can access it on their mobile phones and other web devices.

³ Outliers were sorted out since they skewed the results. With outliers the number is 16 days. Reports received in 2023 were deemed to distort the overall picture, since the number is meant to help decide when to close the fishery during the season.



3.2 Licenses and catch reports.

In the following paragraph, a description of the reporting behavior of license holders and catch reports will be provided. To have an overview of the catch reports, the results in table 3 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 4, which describes the results on the level of license holders rather than catch reports.

The tables represent the 6 different sub-groups; professional and private in Northwest (NAFO sub-area 1ABC), Southwest (NAFO sub-area 1DEF) and East with the individual fishing seasons, all calculated respectively and summarized. The percentage (%) in sub-groups is compared to the total number of license holders reporting within each section, unless specified otherwise

Highlights from table 3

A total of 1,477 catch reports have been received by the GFJK, and the number of catch reports have decreased by 8.6% compared to 2023. The number of reports received within the season is 82.0% compared to 44.6% in 2023. For reports received within season with >0 catches this number is 87.8% compared to 49.5% in 2023. As we can see, after a low percent of reports delivered within the season in 2023, the percent has returned to a high level (2022's number are 84% and 93% respectively). In 2024, 76.2% of 0-catch reports were received within the season, while 87.8% of >0-catch reports were received within the season.



<i>Table 3. Catch reports</i>	Count	Percentage	1ABC Private	1ABC Professional	1DEF Private	1DEF Professional	East Private	East Professional
Overview								
<i>Catch reports received within the season</i>	1211	82.0%	32.9%	23.7%	24.1%	17.5%	1.7%	0.1%
<i>Catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>	213	14.4%	0.9%	31.5%	58.2%	8.9%	0.0%	0.5%
<i>Catch reports received after last date of reporting</i>	53	3.6%	0.0%	3.8%	77.4%	18.9%	0%	0.0%
<i>Total number of catch reports received (incl. 0-catch reports)</i>	1477	100%	27.1%	24.1%	30.9%	16.3%	1.4%	0.1%
Catch reports with > 0 catches								
<i>Catch reports received within the season</i>	649	87.8%	16.0%	33.3%	21.1%	26.7%	2.9%	0%
<i>Catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>	71	9.6%	0.0%	42.3%	42.3%	14.1%	0.0%	1.4%
<i>Catch reports received after last date of reporting</i>	19	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	57.9%	42.1%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Total number of catch reports</i>	739	50.0% ¹	7.0% ¹	16.7% ¹	12.1% ¹	12.9% ¹	1.3% ¹	0.1% ¹
Catch reports with 0-catches								
<i>Catch reports received within the season</i>	562	76.2%	52.3%	12.6%	27.6%	6.9%	0.4%	0.2%
<i>Catch reports received between time of closure and last date of reporting</i>	142	19.2%	1.4%	26.1%	66.2%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Catch reports received after last date of reporting</i>	34	4.6%	0.0%	5.9%	88.2%	5.9%	0%	0%
<i>Total of number of 0-catch reports</i>	738	50.0% ¹	20.0% ¹	7.4% ¹	18.9% ¹	3.4% ¹	0.1% ¹	0.1% ¹

¹percent of the total number of catch reports of 1477

Highlights from table 4

The number of license holders has increased by 2.7% compared to 2023, and the distribution between professional and recreational license holders is almost the same between years. The number of license holders reporting maintains its high level this year, with 79% of license holders reporting compared to 82% in 2023, and 68% in 2022.



If one license holder reports both within the fishing season and for example, between time of closure and last date of reporting, then the license holder falls in both groups (and possibly 3 groups if one reports in 3 time periods), this applies both for >0 catch and 0 catch. The number of license holders reporting >0 catch and 0 catch during the fishing season has increased to a high degree in 2024 (40.6%, 36.4%) compared to 2023 (28.1%, 10.5%), demonstrating license holders being better at reporting during the season and a more effective solution used in 2024, for example sending out more text-messages and the chance to win prizes when reporting.

Table 4. Overview of licenses in the salmon fishery in 2023		Count	Percentage	1ABC Private	1ABC Professional	1DEF Private	1DEF Professional	East Private	East Professional
Number of licenses issued in total									
-	Professional	314	38.9%		60.5%		38.2%		1.3%
-	Private	494	61.1%	37.2%		61.3%		1.4%	
-	Total	808	100%	22.8%	23.5%	37.5%	14.9%	0.09%	0.05%
Overview:									
	Number of license holders reporting in total	638	79.0%	21.5%	24.1%	38.9%	14.4%	0.8%	0.3%
	License holders not reporting	170	21.0%	27.6%	21.2%	32.4%	16.5%	1.2%	1.2%
	License holders only reporting 0-catches	328	51.4%	25.0%	19.2%	47.0%	8.2%	0.3%	0.3%
	License holders reporting catches > 0 kg	310	48.6%	17.7%	29.4%	30.3%	21.0%	1.3%	0.3%
License holders reporting within season ²									
	Reports with catch > 0 kg	259	40.6%	21.2%	29.7%	25.5%	22.0%	1.5%	0%
	Reports with 0-catch	232	36.4%	38.8%	17.7%	32.8%	9.5%	0.9%	0.4%
License holders reporting between time of closure and last date of reporting ²									
	Reports with catch > 0 kg	58	9.1%	0.0%	31.0%	55.2%	12.1%	0.0%	1.7%
	Reports with 0-catch	137	21.5%	1.5%	28.5%	62.0%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%
License holders reporting after last date of reporting ²									
	Reports with catch > 0 kg	14	2.2%	14.3%	0.0%	64.3%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	Reports with 0-catch	31	4.9%	0.0%	6.5%	87.1%	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%

² Percentage is compared to total number of reporting license holders (638). Please note, that a license holder can send multiple catch reports. The same license holder can therefore be included in multiple buckets.



3.3 Regulatory measure 8 (f) – interviews with non-reporters

According to current regulations, interviews are conducted with individuals who have not submitted their reports at the end of the season. In February 2025, 41 individuals were interviewed. The results showed that 36% of respondents were unaware that failing to report would prevent them from obtaining a new license the following year. Additionally, 37% stated that they had simply forgotten to submit their reports, while 4% cited a lack of time as the reason. The remaining 33% provided other explanations.

The survey also revealed that 52% of those interviewed had not received notifications via text-message from GFJK regarding reporting requirements. This highlights the importance of keeping contact information updated in our systems.

Furthermore, 88% of respondents reported that they had not caught any salmon, which is common among those who do not submit reports. Additionally, 55% had seen or heard media announcements regarding the closure of the fishing season.

Overall, most participants were satisfied with the current system of reminding them to report catches. Increasing awareness of the digital reporting process could be advantageous, as the online system offers the simplest available option.

4. Evaluation of regulatory measure (5)

As 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 in 2023.

At the NASCO annual meeting in 2024, it was decided to keep this measure at 49% for the 2024 season. We also used the knowledge gained from the statistics of the fishery in Greenland for 2022-2023 season to regulate the salmon fishery in 2024. Data for the 2021-2023 fishery can be found in the report for the 2023 fishery (WGC(24)03). The table is not updated for 2024, as the quota was not exhausted.

The 2021-2023 data affected how the NW-P, SW-P and SW-R was managed for the fishery in 2024. SW-R first achieved its optimal quota uptake, which is 38% and GFJK decided to announce the upcoming closure of the fishery with 40% quota uptake on 17th September 2024, with the consideration of 40% is the averaged optimal % quota uptake⁴ for 2024. The final quota uptake for SW-R is 71.1%, which suggests the fishery closed too early in 2024. At the same time as the closure, we received reports from our local fisheries inspectors of a slower fishery than previous years. This was also reported the NW later in the season. The explanation

⁴ % quota uptake refers to how many percentages the registered catch constitutes of the quota three days in advance of the optimal closure date.



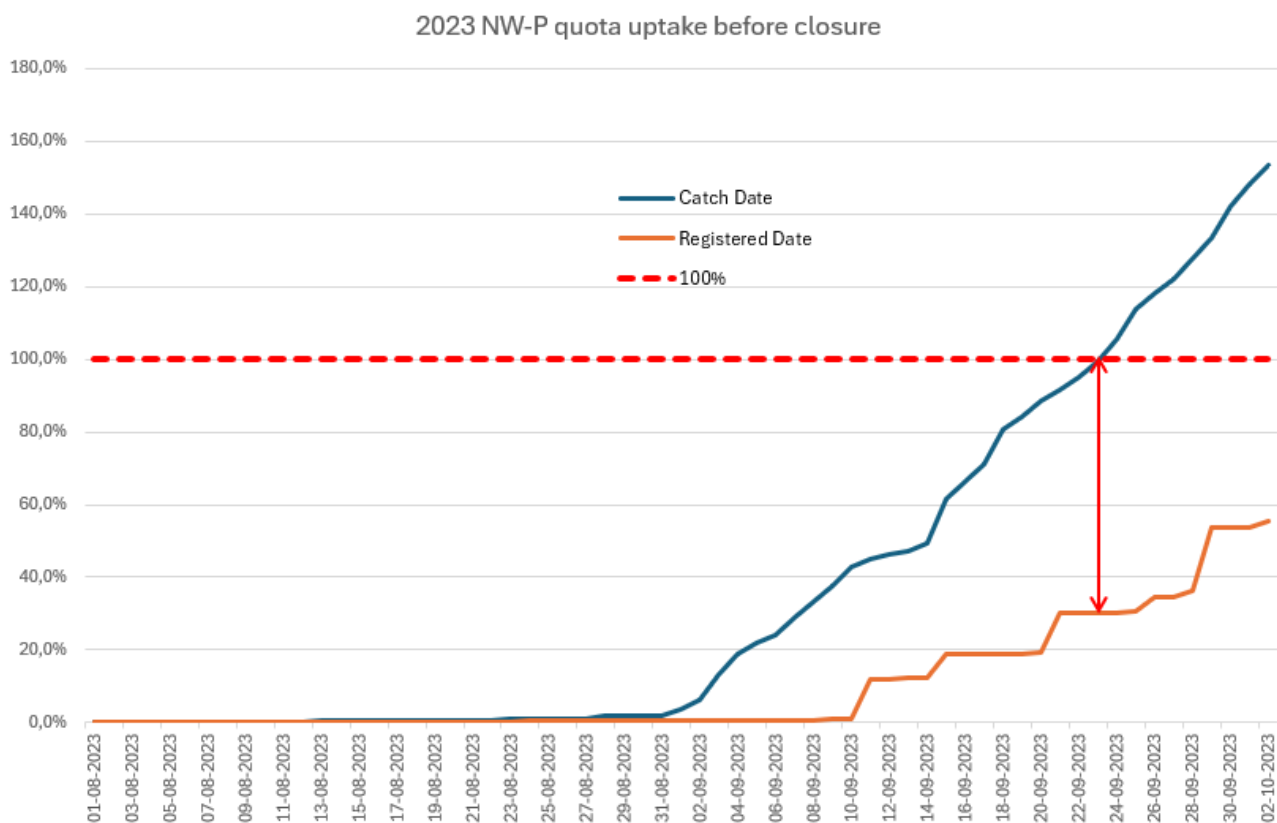
behind the slow season is not clear. Observations include, lower water purity, unusual high quantities of jellyfish, and observation of salmon not by the coast, but instead further offshore⁵.

Therefore, for 2024, it was not enough to decide the closure of the fishery for NW-P, SW-P fishery based only on % quota uptake. During the season we also monitored the reporting lag, compared to the 2023 season, as well as the reporting status in 2024, of the biggest salmon fishermen from 2023.

Both tasks are arduous as the first needs to be monitored continuously until the closure decision and the second includes many back and forward telephone calls to the fishermen. Furthermore, factors like the weather were also taken into account, where a week of sun and low winds can be enough time for the quota to be fished.

Figure 2 and 3 illustrates the difference of management of the NW-P fishery in 2023 and 2024. Both figures show reporting lag, which in 2023 had a normal lag of 40%, and reached a lag around 70% when the closure was decided (figure 2).

Figure 2 illustrates the quota uptake of NW-P salmon fishery over time based on catch date and registered date in 2023.



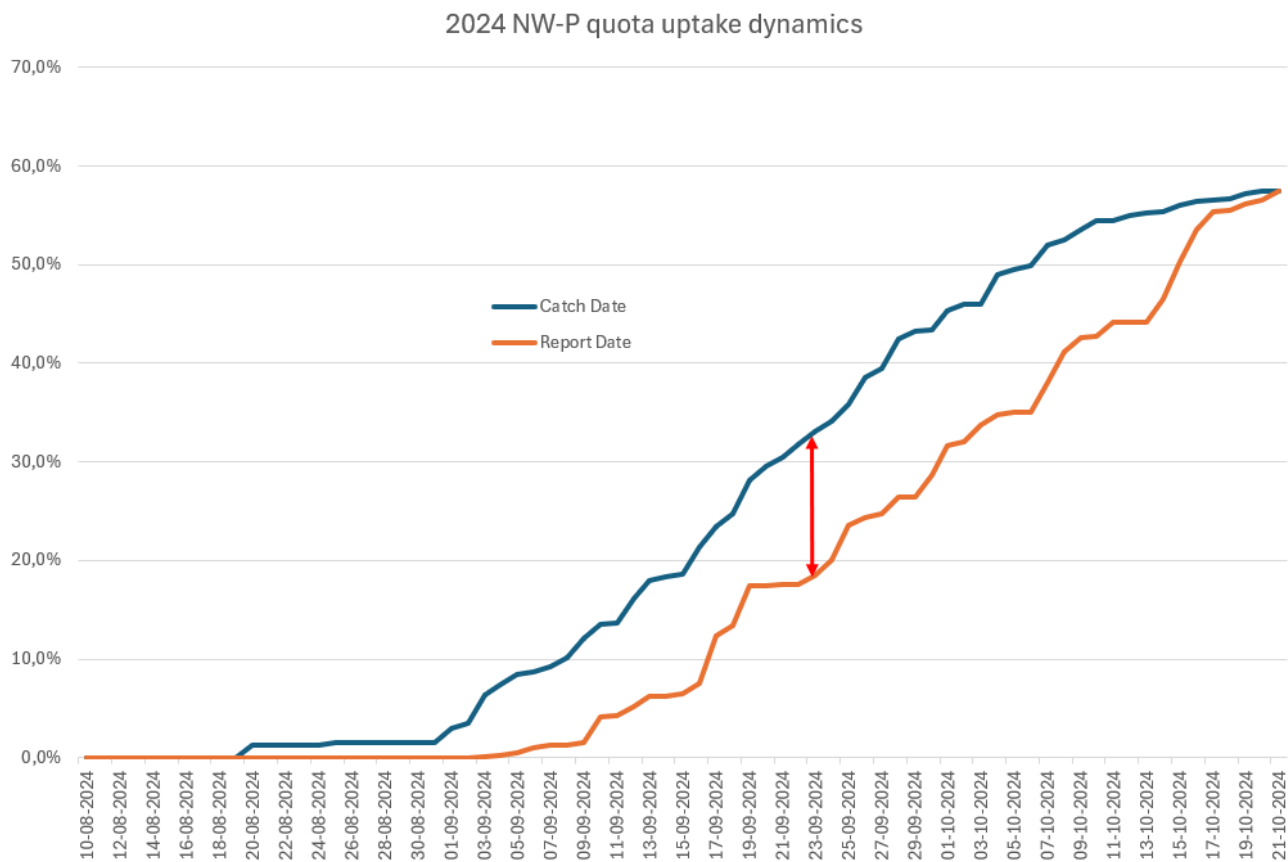
⁵ It is only allowed to catch salmon with nets tethered to the shore.



In 2024 the reporting lag was around 15% across the season (figure 3).

At the same time, we started to calculate the daily increment of the quota uptake which averaged around 1,5% daily throughout the season (NW-P). Therefore, we decided to announce the oncoming closure of the fishery not by 31% (% quota uptake), but around 80% quota uptake (15% lag and another 5% three days announcing period increment). The management plan of salmon specifies the latest date for fishery closure is 31st October, and until then the quota uptake had not reached 80%. As a result, we announced the closure on 28th October and the closure date is 31st October, with a final quota uptake of 78.6%.

Figure 3 illustrates the quota uptake of NW-P salmon fishery over time based on catch date and report date in 2024.



A similar scenario occurred also to SW-P (with a final quota uptake of 83%). The closure dates for NW-R and E-R were changed to 16th November due to a translation error in our closure announcement (the Greenlandic translation did not include the private fishery). We had to announce the closure to NW-R and E-R again after we discovered the error on 11th November.

In conclusion, in 2024 we prevented overfishing to all the salmon quotas, and the quotas have been consumed/exhausted as much as possible. To achieve this, we have updated both our technical and administrative measures before and during the fishery season. Apart from the general closure percentage of 49%, several big factors, including newest % quota uptake calculation, updating the reporting lag, affected our decision on fishery closure to a high degree.



5. Summary of 2024 season

The 2024 Report on the Salmon Fishery in Greenland, prepared by the Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting, presented the outcomes of the fishing season, management strategies, and compliance with regulatory measures. The report follows the requirements of the West Greenland Commission (WGC(22)10) and outlines developments in monitoring, management, and control of the salmon fishery.

The Greenlandic salmon fishery is non-commercial, serving as a subsistence/internal-use fishery for local communities. The 2024 fishery is characterized by a slow season, with low catches, and no clear explanations for this. The final uptake was lower than in previous years, with 20.79 tons caught.

808 fishing licenses were issued. Even though the reporting percentage decreased a little in 2024 (see table 5 for an overview), the in-season reporting increased significantly, with 82% of reports being submitted within the season, compared to 44,6% in 2023. We believe that this increase is due to enhanced reminders via text-message (4.420 in 2024 vs. 3.800 in 2023), as well as the raffle to win prizes when reporting, in collaboration with NASF and ASF. Interviews with non-reporters revealed that the majority did not catch anything.

The addition of “reporting date” in our reporting system, has had a positive impact on the reporting lag, which has reduced significantly in 2024 to 5 days compared to 14 days in 2023.

Table 5. Summary of the fishery in West Greenland 2019-2024						
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Reporting percentage	81.6%	81.4%	69.5%	68%	82,3%	79,0%
Quota uptake (tons)	28.8	30.7	39.97	28.88	32.58	20.79