



WGCIS(26)12

The report on 2021-2025 salmon fishing seasons

West Greenland Commission Inter sessional





Background

- The management plan expired December 31st, 2025.
- The management plan has been in force since 1 July 2021.
- The seasons 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.
- The Ministry has produced a report that will form the basis of discussions of drafting a new management plan.





Legislation



Greenland Parliamentary Act no. 29 of 23 May 2024 on Fishery.



Government of Greenland Executive Order no. 59 of 1 August 2025 on Salmon Fishery.



Government of Greenland Executive Order no. 72 of 4 November 2025 on the Technical Regulation of Fishing.



and Government of Greenland Executive Order no. 10 of 4 February 2025 on Licenses and Quotas for Fishing.



The management plan for Atlantic salmon.



Stakeholders

- The management plan was drawn up in collaboration with the stakeholders in the fishery, and a working group was established to discuss the management of the salmon fishery in Greenland.
- The stakeholders involved were:
 - members of the Fisheries Council: fisheries organizations, Greenland Business Association
 - Other ministries in GG.
 - Greenland Institute of Natural Resources
 - Municipalities
 - Recreational fisheries association
 - Other NGO's





Discussions

- Among the topics discussed was the division of West Greenland into two to three management areas, with staggered seasons, to ensure that fishers throughout the region would be given the opportunity to participate in the fishery.
- Distribution keys based on historical catch data
- Maximum number of nets for commercial fishers.
- In addition, stricter reporting requirements, improved data collection.
- Proposals for regulating the Kapisillit salmon were also included in the work





Management areas

- The fishery for Atlantic salmon is divided into two management areas in West Greenland and one management area in East Greenland.
- Fishing for Atlantic salmon may only take place inshore, which is defined as within 3 nautical miles of the baseline.
- The Atlantic salmon migrate to Greenland in the summer, where they initially arrive in South Greenland and then move north, primarily along the west coast.
 - Staggered opening times for the fishing are set for the two management areas, north and south.



TAC

- The total allowable catch (TAC) for the salmon fishery is determined annually by the Government of Greenland on the basis of the agreement under the West Greenland Commission in NASCO (Multi-annual Regulatory Measures, (WGC(22)10)).
- To ensure balanced access to fishing throughout the country, the Government of Greenland distributes the TAC in management areas based on historical catch data.
- This approach supports the goal of equal access to the resources. A fixed quota is set for the East Greenland management area based on catches from the past 10 years, which at the same time ensures that the progression in East Greenland from hunters to fishers can be supported.

Management area	Distribution key
Northwest	40%
Southwest	60%
East Greenland	Fixed annual quota of 3 tons



Recreational and commercial quota

- The quota is then distributed in each area between commercial and recreational fishers.
- In the Northwest area, 28% of the total quota goes to commercial fishers and 12% to recreational fishers.
- In the Southwest, 42% of the total quota goes to commercial fishers and 18% to recreational fishers.
- In East Greenland the quota is divided equally, with 50% allocated to each group.

Management area	Distribution key 1		Distribution key 2
Northwest	40%	Commercial fishers	28% ¹
		Recreational fishers	12% ¹
Southwest	60%	Commercial fishers	42% ¹
		Recreational fishers	18% ¹
East Greenland	Fixed annual quota of 3 tons	Commercial fishers	50% ²
		Recreational fishers	50% ²
¹ Percentage distribution of the quota for West Greenland			
² Percentage distribution of the quota for East Greenland			



Licence

- All fishing for salmon requires a licence, regardless of the form of fishing used.
- The purpose of the licence requirement is to ensure control and sustainable management of the resource, as well as to maintain an overview of the number of fishers.
- Licences can only be issued to vessels up to and including 12.8 metres (42 feet) in length, which reflects the nature of the fishery as a small coastal fishery.
- To obtain a licence for salmon fishing, the requirements must be:
 - The applicant must have permanent residence in Greenland.
 - Licensees must have complied with the reporting obligation by submitting reports on their fishing in a timely manner during the preceding year.
 - These criteria ensure that licences are awarded only to individuals with permanent ties to the country, and that the fishery management can be based on valid data.



Technical conservation measures

- Commercial fishers may only use:
 - hooks
 - 20 nets with a mesh size of at least 140 mm in stretched dimensions.
 - The nets may be used in linked units up to a maximum of five nets.
- For non-commercial fishing, the use of hooks, fishing rods or a single net with up to 2,000 knots and a minimum mesh size of 140 mm in stretched dimensions is permitted.
- In addition, all fishers are required to clearly mark the salmon net with the owner's full name, on a label made of water-resistant material.





Bycatch

- Bycatch in the fishery must be handled and registered in accordance with the Government of Greenland Executive Order on Bycatch in Fishery. The executive order defines bycatch as catches of any living organisms not covered by the fishing licence.
- If, in reports or inspections, a high bycatch of a given species is found during a particular period of time or in a specific geographical area, the Ministry will in consultation with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and the Fisheries Council, must assess whether special measures will need to be taken to ensure that the bycatch can be maintained at an acceptable level, taking into account the biological status of the species. Such precautions may include closure of the fishery in some areas or during certain periods, or other measures to ensure that no species is burdened beyond its biological potential.
- In the period 2021-2025, there have been no examples of the Ministry being required to react in relation to the level of bycatch.



Pink salmon

- In 2021, five pink salmon that had spawned were recorded and removed from the Kapisillit River. No individuals were however observed in 2023, and analyses of eDNA samples showed no evidence of the presence of the species in the river.
- No quota has been set for fishing for pink salmon, and fishing for this species is therefore free. Catches of pink salmon may be reported in the same way as for Atlantic salmon (see section 4 on reporting). Photos and information about the time and place of the catch, etc., may be sent to the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources.





Quota uptake

Management area	Catch 2021	Catch 2022	Catch 2023	Catch 2024	Catch 2025
Northwest (NAFO 1A + 1B + 1C)	17.2	8.94	14.51	6.95	10.33
Commercial fishers	13.94	7.47	12.12	5.93	9.21
Recreational fishers	3.26	1.47	2.39	1.02	1.12
Southwest (NAFO 1D + 1E + 1F)	20.48	17.18	18.42	12.87	18.29
Commercial fishers	14.82	10.89	12.49	9.41	13.2
Recreational fishers	5.66	6.29	5.93	3.46	5.08
East Greenland	0.98	0.63	1.37	0.96	0.99
Commercial fishers	0.42	0.27	0.58	0.31	0.13
Recreational fishers	0.56	0.36	0.79	0.65	0.86
Total quota uptake	38.66	26.75	34.3	20.78	29.61



Catches

- Catches concentrated in the Southwest management area, which had the largest quota uptake throughout the period. Here, the catch ranged from 12.87 tonnes in 2024 to 20.48 tonnes in 2021.
- In the management area Northwest, catches fluctuated between 6.95 tonnes in 2024 and 17.2 tonnes in 2021
- Throughout the period, East Greenland has had a very limited quota uptake compared to West Greenland. Catches have been between 0.63 tonnes (2022) and 1.37 tonnes (2023), which reflects the smaller quota share and the generally lower fishing pressure in the area.
- Commercial fishers accounted for most catches in both Northwest and Southwest.
 - In Southwest, commercial fishers landed between 9.41 and 14.82 tonnes annually during the period
 - Recreational fishers caught between 3.46 and 6.29 tonnes.



- Overall, the total national catch across the period was 150.1 tonnes, an average of 30.02 tonnes per year.
- The average annual catch was 1.12 tonnes less than the period 2016-2020, which was 31.14 tonnes.

Management area	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	Overall average
Northwest						
(NAFO 1A + 1B + 1C)	44	33	42	33	35	37
Commercial fishers	81	84	84	85	89	84
Recreational fishers	19	16	16	15	11	16
Southwest						
(NAFO 1D + 1E + 1F)	53	64	54	62	62	59
Commercial fishers	72	63	68	73	72	69
Recreational fishers	28	37	32	27	28	31
East Greenland	3	2	4	5	3	4
Commercial fishers	43	43	42	32	14	35
Recreational fishers	57	57	58	68	86	65



Number of licences

- The number of salmon licences issued in the period 2021 to 2025 remained relatively stable, although with a higher level in 2021, when 916 licences were issued.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of licences	916	757	787	808	753



<i>Salmon licences in the period 2021-2025</i>	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share
<i>Number of reports</i>										
Number of licensees who reported	644	70%	513	68%	648	82.3%	638	79.0%	534	70.9%
Number of licensees who did not report	272	30%	244	32%	140	17.7%	170	21.0%	219	29.1%
Number of licensees who reported zero catch	227	25%	190	25%	293	45.2%	328	51.4%	206	38.6%
Number of licensees who reported only catches > 0 kg	417	46%	322	43%	354	54.8%	310	48.6%	328	61.4%



<i>Salmon licences in the period 2021-2025</i>	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share	Num ber	% share
<i>Number of licensees who reported during the season</i>										
Reports of catch > 0 kg	992	54%	275	58%	182	28.1%	259	40.6%	230	43.1%
Reports of zero catch	127	7%	86	18%	68	10.5%	232	36.4%	169	31.6%
<i>Number of licensees who reported between the close of the season and the final reporting deadline</i>										
Reports of catch > 0 kg	433	23%	22	5%	118	18.2%	58	9.1%	74	13.9%
Reports of zero catch	143	8%	54	12%	156	24.1%	137	21.5%	152	28.5%
<i>Number of licensees who reported after the final reporting deadline</i>										
Reports of catch > 0 kg	77	4%	8	2%	54	8.3%	14	2.2%	23	4.3%
Reports of zero catch	77	4%	61	13%	111	17.1%	31	4.9%	78	14.6%



Communication

- SMS messages have been sent since 2022,
- In the years 2022-2024, SMS messages were sent directly to licensees in the salmon fishery, both during and after the season.
- No SMS messages were sent in 2025, which may have had an impact on the reporting rate. In future, it is expected that SMS messages will be a regular part of the information campaigns in the salmon fishery.
- Press releases: Communications are produced for the public regarding TACs, the start and close of the fishery, and reporting. The press releases are also shared on the Facebook page of the Government of Greenland.
- Radio spots: Every year, a campaign on licensing and reporting requirements is launched on national radio and broadcast daily during the fishing season.
- Facebook ads: Facebook ads for online reporting at [Sullissivik.gl](https://sullissivik.gl). In 2026, GFJK will create its own Facebook page, which will amongst other things be used for information campaigns and announcements regarding the fishery.



Qujanaq

