

## Explanations on the ICES advice for 2024



### Cod around Greenland

A benchmark in 2023 used new genetic information to divide the cod stock complex off Greenland into three stocks.

The western inshore stock lives in the extensive fjord systems and is divided into a northern and southern stock component. The offshore stocks are divided into a West Greenlandic and an East Greenlandic-Icelandic high seas stock based on genetic stock allocations. Historically, the peak of the cod fishery off Greenland in the 1950s and 1960s was associated with a large West Greenland stock, while the recovery since 2000 has been increasingly due to a strengthening of the East Greenland stock and/or increased exchange with the Icelandic stock. Overall, the stocks in Greenlandic waters mix during different life stages. Therefore, it is generally difficult to assign catches from the fishery directly to a stock. Only a subsequent genetic study can provide more clarity.

After the collapse of the stock in the early 1990s, there was a 10-year period of very low population density. After a moratorium until 2005, fishing has been allowed again in 2006.

A solid stock assessment for the East Greenland stock is currently not possible, as seasonal migrations between East Greenland and Iceland prevent separate calculations. Mixing with the Icelandic stock probably means that the majority of catches in East Greenland currently come from Dohrnbank, which lies in Greenlandic territorial waters between East Greenland and Iceland. Due to the lack of information, the recommendation of 23,518 tonnes maximum catch for 2024 is only based on a 20% reduction (precautionary buffer) compared to the observed catch in 2022.

The West Greenland offshore stock is at a low level compared to historic values, but above critical biomass limits set in the 2023 benchmark. The scientific advice for 2024 is for 2398 tonnes total allowable catch based on the ICES MSY concept.

The two components of the West Greenland inshore stock are not targeted by German fisheries. Both components are overfished with respect to the MSY concept, but are within safe biological limits.

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