

Greenland halibut in Subarea 1 (inshore – Upernavik)

Advice June 2026 for 2027 – 2028

Recommendation for 2027 – 2028

Following the application of the ICES guidance on data limited stocks (DLS) method 2.3, the Scientific Council recommends that catch should not exceed 1 330 t.

Management objectives

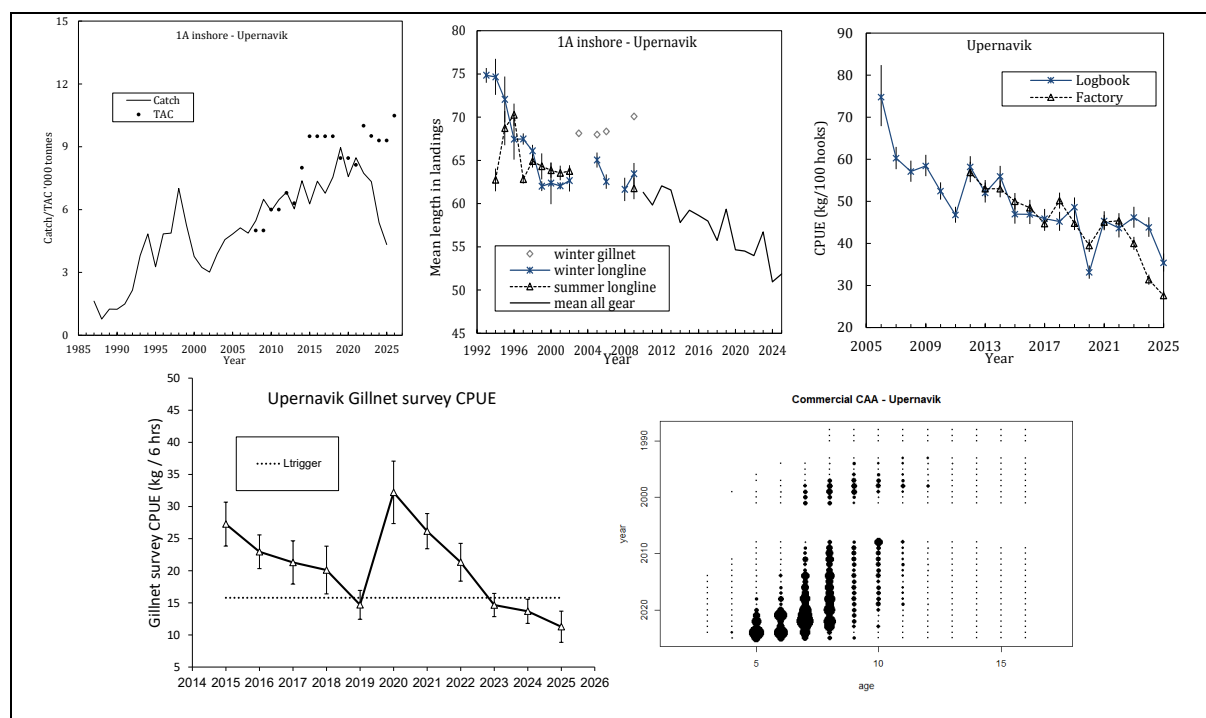
Denmark (on behalf of Greenland) requested an assessment of stock status and advice. No explicit management plan or management objectives have been defined by the Government of Greenland but a management plan is currently under development.

Management unit

Three inshore stocks in Division 1A (Disko Bay, Uummannaq, and Upernavik) are believed to recruit from the SA 0 + 1 offshore stock. Separate advice is given for each area in Division 1A inshore. The Greenland halibut stocks in Subarea 0 + 1 (offshore) and Division 1A inshore are part of a larger population complex distributed throughout the Northwest Atlantic.

Stock status

Although total stock size is not quantified, all indices suggest biomass is declining. Fishing mortality proxy has not been calculated, but mean size of the landed fish has decreased from 62 cm in 2013 to 52 cm in 2025, which is suggestive of high fishing pressure. Recruitment is unknown.



Reference points

Could not be established.

Assessment

No analytical assessment was performed. Survey indices, and mean length in the landings, commercial CPUE's and catch at age information were considered the best information to monitor the stock.

The next assessment is planned for 2028.

Basis for advice

ICES framework for category 3 stocks was applied (*rb* rule, Method 2.3; ICES 2025). The advice is based on the *rb* rule to provide precautionary advice. A survey biomass index (Upernavik gillnet CPUE) was used as an indicator of stock development. The advice is based on the mean catch (2021-2025) multiplied by the ratio of the mean of the last three index values (index A) to the mean of the four preceding values (index B), a biomass safeguard, and a precautionary multiplier. The stability clause was not considered.

Greenland halibut in Division 1A inshore – Upernavik. The basis for the catch scenarios. Catches are in tons. The figures in the table are rounded. Calculations were done with unrounded inputs, and computed values may not match exactly when calculated using the rounded figures in the table.

Mean Catch (2021-2025) used as A_y	6 652 t
Stock biomass trend	
Index A (2023-2025)	13.21 kg/6 hour
Index B (2019-2022)	23.60 kg/6 hour
r: Stock biomass trend (index ratio A/B)	0.56
Biomass safeguard	
Last index value (I_{2025})	11.28 kg/6 hour
Index trigger value (I_{trigger})	15.79 kg/6 hour
b: index relative to trigger value, $\min\{I_{2025}/I_{\text{trigger}}, 1\}$	0.715
Precautionary multiplier (ICES, 2025)	
m: multiplier (generic multiplier based on life history)	0.5
rb calculation: $A_y \times r \times b \times m$	1 330 t
Stability clause (+20%/-30% compared to A_y , only considered if $b=1$)	Not Applied
Catch advice for 2027 and 2028*	1 330 t
% advice change**	-77%

* Formula *rb* rule: $A_y \times r \times b \times m$, limited by the stability clause if applicable.

** Advice value for 2027 and 2028 relative to the advice value for 2025 and 2026 (5 801 t).

Human impacts

Mainly fishery-related mortality. Other mortality sources (e.g. pollution, shipping, oil-industry) are undocumented.

Biological and environmental interactions

No studies were reviewed in this assessment.

Ecosystem sustainability of catches

The impact of bottom fishing activities on VMEs in SA 0 was assessed in 2016. Three areas have been designated as marine refuges, that exclude bottom contact fisheries: Disko Fan, Davis Strait and Hatton Basin. Areas in SA 1 have also been closed to bottom fishing to protect benthic habitats.

Greenland halibut is included in the piscivore guild. There are no EPU or TCIs defined for this region. The ecosystem sustainability of catches cannot be evaluated.

Fishery

Catches increased from the mid-1980s and peaked in 1998 at a level of 7 000 t. Landings then decreased sharply, but gradually increased to a level between 7 500 and 9 000 t until 2019 and subsequently decreased to 4 329 t in 2025.

Recent catch estimates ('000 t) are as follows:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
TAC	9.7	9.5	8.5	8.5	9.9	10.0	9.5	9.3	11.0	10.5
Catch ¹	6.8	7.5	9.0	7.6	8.5	7.7	7.3	5.4	4.3	

¹ STACFIS estimates

Effects of the fishery on the ecosystem

Greenland halibut in the area is targeted with longlines and gillnets. Both gears select adult fish with large body size and do not retain recruits or small-sized fish. Ghost fishing by lost gillnets has been observed, but the extent of the impacts are unknown.

Greenland shark is a bycatch species of concern in the fishery given its low reproductive rate, slow growth rate and limited ecological information.

Special comments

Recruits are mainly received from the stock in SA 0 + 1 offshore.

The ICES Harvest Control Rule for data limited stocks used previously as the basis for giving TAC advice for this stock is no longer considered precautionary by ICES (ICES, 2025). Methods applied for this stock have been updated to align with current ICES recommendations for data limited stocks.

Sources of information

SCR Doc. 26/015, 018; SCS Doc. 26/011

ICES (2025). ICES Guidelines - Advice rules for stocks in category 2 and 3. Version 3. ICES Guidelines and Policies - Advice Technical Guidelines. 31 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.28506179>.