

Iceland Responsible Fisheries Foundation (IRFF)

Iceland Responsible Fisheries Certification Programme



Icelandic Tusk Commercial Fishery

2nd Surveillance Assessment Report

Certification Body (CB):	Global Trust Certification
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Fishery client:	Samtök fyrirtækja í sjávarútvegi (SFS) (Fisheries Iceland), The National Association of Small Boat Owners, Iceland (NASBO)
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Foreword

The Iceland Responsible Fisheries (IRF) Certification Programme is based on articles and substantive criteria from the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) reference documents, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF(1995)) as well as the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries (2005/2009).

A full description of the standard-setting arrangements, normative references and processes can be obtained from the Iceland Responsible Fisheries Foundation owns and operates the brand of Iceland Responsible Fisheries including the certification programme.

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2 Glossary

AIS	Automatic Identification System
B ₄₊	Biomass of 4 years and older fish
B _{lim}	The biomass limit reference point below which there is a high risk that recruitment will be impaired and that the stock could collapse
B _{loss}	The biomass below which there is no historical record of recruitment
B _{MSY}	SSB that is associated with Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)
B _{pa}	Precautionary reference point designed to have a low probability of being below B _{lim}
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected species*
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
F _{lim}	Fishing mortality which in the long term will result in an average stock size at B _{lim}
F _{max}	Fishing mortality rate that maximizes equilibrium yield per recruit
F _{MGT}	Management elected fishing mortality target/limit; usually specified in FMP
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
F _{MSY}	Fishing mortality which in the long term will result in an average stock size at B _{MSY}
F _{pa}	Precautionary reference point for fishing mortality to avoid true fishing mortality being above F _{lim}
HCR	Harvest Control rule
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
ICG	Icelandic Coast Guard
ITQ	Individual Transferable Quota
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
IWC	International Whaling Commission
kt	kilo tonnes
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MII	Ministry of Industries and Innovation
MFRI	Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (formerly MRI)
MRI	Marine Research Institute (now MFRI)
MSY B _{trigger}	ICES MSY framework parameter that triggers advice on a reduced fishing mortality relative to F _{MSY}
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield; the largest average catch or yield that can continuously be taken from a stock under existing environmental conditions
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation
NAMMCO	North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission
NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NPA	National Program Action
NWWG	North-Western Working Group (within ICES)
SSB	Spawning stock biomass; total weight of all sexually mature fish in the stock
SSB _{MGT}	Management elected SSB target/limit; usually specified in FMP
SSB _{trigger}	SSB level that acts as a trigger when the stock fall below a certain level
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
UN	United Nations
VMEs	Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

*Species recognised by Icelandic legislation and/or binding international agreements to which the Icelandic authorities are party. Binding international agreements as applicable in Icelandic jurisdiction.

3 Executive Summary

This 2nd IRF surveillance audit was conducted in late 2021 by a team of two auditors, Vito Romito and Dankert Skagen, MD, whose experience, qualification and responsibilities has been detailed below in Section 3.1. These auditors also took part in the previous surveillance audit for this fishery. The site visits for the current surveillance were held remotely, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Video calls with the Client, industry, management, science and enforcement representatives were held on the 1st week of November 2021, to gather information on the fisheries under assessment, in addition to the desktop review part of the audit, and to discuss progress relative to any open non-conformances. This fishery audit was combined with the other 6 fisheries certified under the IRF program.

The fishery under assessment continues to remain in compliance with the IRF Standard Revision 2.0. Corrective actions and progress to close the active non-conformances are deemed to be on track. No new non-conformance has been identified during the 2nd surveillance activities. The Assessment Team recommends for the existing certification to be maintained.

3.1 Assessment Team Details

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The Assessment Team for this assessment was as follows; further details are provided in [Appendix 1](#):

- Vito Romito – Lead Assessor, responsible for Section 2 (Compliance and Monitoring) and Section 3 (Ecosystem Considerations).
- Dankert Skagen – Assessor, responsible for Section 1 Fisheries Management (which includes requirements on harvest control rule and policy, stock assessment and status, advice and decisions on TAC).

3.2 Details of applicable IRF Documents

This assessment was conducted according to the relevant program documents outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Relevant GULF RFM program documents including applicable versions.		
Document title	Version number, Issue Date	Usage
IRF Responsible Fisheries Management Standard Revision 2.0	Revision 2.0, June 2016	Standard
IRF Certification Requirements Revision 1.2	Version 1.2, October 2018	Process

4 Fishery Applicant Details

Table 2. Applicant details.

Applicant Contact Information	
Organisation/Company Name:	Samtök fyrirtækja í sjávarútvegi (SFS) (Fisheries Iceland)
Date:	November 2020
Address:	Building:
	Street: Borgartún 35
	City: Reykjavík
	Country: Iceland
	Postal Code:
Phone:	(354) 591 0300
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Applicant Contact Information	
Organisation/Company Name:	The National Association of Small Boat Owners, Iceland (NASBO)
Date:	November 2020
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	City: 101 Reykjavik
	Country: Iceland
	Postal Code: IS-101
Phone:	(354) 552 7922
Web:	www.smabatar.is
Contact person:	Örn Pálsson
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5 Units of Certification

The Unit of Certification (i.e., what is covered by the fishery certificate) is described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Unit of Certification (UoC).		
Species:	Common name (ENG and ISL):	Tusk/Cusk (Keila)
	Latin name:	<i>Brosme brosme</i>
Geographical Area(s)	Iceland 200-mile EEZ within FAO Fishing Area 27	
Stock(s)	Tusk (<i>Brosme brosme</i>) in Subarea 14 and Division 5.a (East Greenland and Iceland grounds)	
Management System	Ministry of Industries and Innovation (Iceland)	
Fishing gear(s)/method(s)	Longline; Demersal trawl; Hook-and-line by small vessels; Gears from other Icelandic fisheries legally landing tusk*	
Client Group	Samtök fyrirtækja í sjávarútvegi (SFS) (Fisheries Iceland), The National Association of Small Boat Owners, Iceland (NASBO)	

6 Assessment Process

This Assessment constitutes a summary evaluation of the applicant fisheries’ continuing conformance (or not) to the relevant IRF Fisheries Standard and Scheme Requirements.

Surveillance audits are required to consider all sections of the IRF Standard, although this may take the form of a summary of relevant and new information that demonstrates the level of conformity to the criteria.

IRF surveillance audits are required to include:

- Compliance and progress of the fishery, specific to agreed corrective action plans against non-conformances raised in the initial certification or subsequent surveillance reports.
 - Sufficient detail on progress and evidence of close out shall be presented in surveillance reports.
- Changes in the management regime and processes that may affect the outcome of certification.
- New information on the status of stocks from recent survey, assessment and other information of a scientific basis that may affect the outcome of certification.
- Continued compliance with the IRF Standard.

Where areas of new non-conformity arise, these shall be managed in accordance with the Certification Requirements for assigning non-conformances.

6.1 Surveillance Meetings

The table below provides information about the remote site visit meetings held on the 1st week of November 2021 for the combined audit of the Icelandic cod, haddock, saithe, Golden redfish, common ling, tusk and summer spawning herring commercial fisheries.

Table 4. Summary of assessment meetings, 1st week of November 2021.

Meeting Date and Location	Personnel	Areas of discussion/agenda points
Date: 01 st of November 2021 Location: Remote, Video Call	The Client (opening meeting): Kristján Pórarinsson, Fisheries Iceland; Finnur Gardarsson, IRF Foundation. GT Assessment Team: Vito Romito Dankert Skagen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief review or key highlights of the 2020/2021 fishing season for cod, haddock, saithe, golden redfish, ling, tusk and ISS herring. Any key issues or updates from an industry perspective? ▪ Issues with/changes resulting from Covid pandemic? ▪ Any significant changes in the management system, key laws or regulations in the past 12 months? ▪ Cod 2021 benchmark / SSB downward and F upward revision. ▪ Any updates from the day to day operations of the large and small fleet sectors? ▪ Plans for revisiting/updating Fishery Management Plans? ▪ Non-Conforming Areas and Corrective Actions ▪ Corrective Action relating to Non-Conformance 1: <i>Although required by legislation, there is evidence of extensive non-reporting/under-reporting of seabirds and marine mammals bycatch such that the Assessment Team cannot be confident that catch amounts by species and fishing area (of marine mammals and seabirds) are estimated and continually recorded in fishing logbooks.</i> Regarding NC 1, what are the updates, new information or developments addressing the issue? ▪ Corrective Action relating to Non-Conformance 2: <i>There is insufficient evidence that adverse impacts of the cod, haddock and saithe fisheries on the following ecosystem components: Spotted wolffish, and; Common loon are being considered and appropriately assessed and effectively addressed, consistent with the precautionary approach.</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regarding NC 2, what are the key developments regarding a) spotted wolffish (e.g. relating to research activities and/or live releases in the fishery)? In the last audit a potential recovery plan was discussed, as well as age reading and survival experiments in Icelandic waters. What are the updates? Has spotted wolffish been released in the past season? Catches in 2020/2021 were 1,300 t against a TAC of 314 t. Can we confirm if the excess catch (over the TAC) has been released alive and where is that recorded (the Fiskistofa website only reports total catch https://www.fiskistofa.is/veidar/aflaupplysingar/afliallartegundir/) ▪ As for b) the common loon element, what are the updates for the species? Is there any new data on this species abundance or bycatch in gillnet and longline gear? ▪ Any recent updates relating to the smartphone app deployed to facilitate recording of marine mammal and seabirds' bycatch in smaller vessels? Any thoughts on this system? Feedback from the small vessel sector about implementation? Is it helping collect bycatch information? ▪ Updates on the use of use bycatch mitigation measures on longline fisheries (e.g. tori lines, night settings, acoustic devices) for gillnetters (e.g. pingers trials, actual deployment, other) and for trawlers (escape panels, excluder devices, bobbins, rock hoppers) or equivalent practices? To what extent are such bycatch reduction devices / practices used in these fisheries? Updates? ▪ Any other changes or updates of mention for the 7 fisheries in question that may relate to day to day operations and industry activities, management, research, assessment and advice, or mitigation of ecosystem effects of fisheries we should discuss?
<p>Date: 2nd November 2021</p> <p>Location: Remote, Video call</p>	<p>Icelandic Coast Guard: Björgólfur H. Ingason, Chief controller, Icelandic Coast Guard; Asgrimur L. Asgrimsson, Chief of Operations, Icelandic Coast Guard.</p> <p>GT Assessment Team: Vito Romito Dankert Skagen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enforcement Laws and Regulations. In the past 12 months, have there been any significant amendments or changes to Icelandic fisheries laws / regulations with a bearing on enforcement activities? ▪ Has the level of resources and monitoring effort remained similar/changed in past 1-2 years? ▪ Have there been changes over the 2020/2021 season in the systems or patrolling vessels/assets used for enforcement (i.e. new vessels or other)? ▪ How many airborne fisheries patrol hours have been conducted over the last fishing season? ▪ Any other updates regarding enforcement assets (e.g. drones)? Use other electronic reporting systems? ▪ Boardings rate and type/ number of violations recorded (most recent year/season)? What are the most commonly occurring violations? Is enforcement data available by gear type or fishery (i.e. for cod, haddock, saithe, golden redfish, ling, tusk, herring under assessment)? Foreign vessels boarded? <i>Could you please provide us with tables/figures for this information as done in past years?</i> ▪ How many prosecutions and reprimands made against skippers did these activities (overall enforcement activities) result in? <i>Could you please provide us with tables/figures for this information as done in past years?</i> ▪ Are there many violations of fishermen fishing over their TAC? ▪ Enforcement of, and levels of compliance with, logbook reporting of interactions/bycatch between seabirds and marine mammal (especially in gillnets, longlines and trawl gear)? Is the new app in use in small vessels effective for catch recording? Updates and changes in the past 1-2 years? Any prosecutions for failing to report bycatch? ▪ Spotted wolffish can now be released after capture as per new 2020 regulation. Are fishermen reporting released vs retained spotted wolffish separately in the logbooks? ▪ Have there been any major changes in overall violation/compliance rate in the past 2-3 years? ▪ What is checked when vessels are boarded (gear specs, catch composition, logbook vs actual catches, other)? ▪ Reporting requirements and or issues with lost fishing gear (e.g. longline, gillnets)?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any changes to the range of monetary and operational penalties for infractions to fisheries regulations? ▪ Are there any repeating offenders in Icelandic waters? ▪ Any instances of serious IUU fishing by Icelandic or foreign vessels in the past 2-3 years? ▪
<p>Date: 2nd November 2021</p> <p>Location: Remote, Video call</p>	<p>Directorate of Fisheries/Fiskistofa: Erna Jónsdóttir, Head of Administration Division, Fiskistofa; Sævar Guðmundsson, Head of Department, Fiskistofa.</p> <p>GT Assessment Team: Vito Romito Dankert Skagen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief review or key highlights of the 2020/2021 fishing season for cod, haddock, saithe, golden redfish, ling, tusk and ISS herring. Any key issues or updates from a Fiskistofa perspective? Covid related changes? ▪ Any significant changes in the management system, key laws or regulations in the past 12 months? ▪ Any changes or updates of mention within Fiskistofa (e.g. staff) in the past 12 months? ▪ Any new or updated closed areas of mention (e.g. trawl or coral closures) within the Icelandic EEZ in the past 12-18 months? ▪ Has there been revisions in legislation and regulations? There was a mention previously that a revision process was ongoing. Is there any changes beyond editorial? Is there a good overview of changes? ▪ What rules are still in place for fishing outside the ordinary ITQ system (Hook and line, Byggðakvóti etc.) Status and essence of rules. ▪ Short term closures after re-organisation. How is it organised in practice, and how does it work now (number of closures by cause). How are they published? ▪ Redfish: Any plans for revision or renewal of the agreement between coastal states? ▪ Tusk: In recent years, about 30% of the catches in 5a are by foreigners. The TAC according to the HCR is allocated to Icelandic vessels. At present, total catch is close to recommended because Icelanders do not take their whole quota. Plans for a more permanent solution to this issue? ▪ Tusk: News about relation to Greenland? There was a warning in the last MFRI advice that catches from Greenland may have to be reconsidered in the assessment. ▪ Tusk: Tusk quotas spent on other species – is it possible to tell which? ▪ Haddock: There was added 8000t to the quota in 2020/21, from 45 389t to 53 389t and the plan was to subtract it next year. Apparently, 47,979 t were caught in the 2020/21 fishing year. What happens? ▪ Sampling of catches. Previously logistics has been mentioned as a problem – getting samples from landings far from the nearest observer. Is it still so? How about sampling from catches that are processed on board. ▪ How many days have directorate inspectors spent on board of fishing vessels in the last 2 fishing seasons for which information is available? What is the average inspector coverage % on bottom trawlers, longliners, gillnetters (cod if possible) and pelagic trawlers? Can the assessment team be provided with a table for 2020-2021, as done in previous audits? ▪ The short-term closure monitoring system was transferred to Fiskistofa in the fall of 2020. Regulation regarding the short-term closures was changed in 2020, and the size limit was increased for cod, which led to significant decrease in the number of closures.” How many closures have there been in 2020/2021 for each species in question? ▪ Monitoring of less valued species including elasmobranchs – is this something which has been started already? ▪ We discussed previously a report from the Icelandic National Audit Office (NAO) from 2018, noting that more quantitative data are needed to substantiate the conclusions that rate if discards are low and that there are few irregularities in connection with re-weighing of catches after de-icing in Iceland. In continuing to review actions implemented to improve some of the shortcomings identified in the report, what progress / updates have there been in the past 12 months?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act No. 57/1996 empowers the Fisheries Directorate to monitor all weighing by a weighing license holder for a period of up to six weeks in cases where monitoring of the weighing license holder by the Directorate detects a significant deviation of the percentage of ice in the vessel's catch in a particular fish species, compared to the average ice percentage for that vessel, has this measured been applied in 2020/21? Are there examples of this? ▪ Non-Conforming areas and Corrective Actions ▪ <u>Corrective Action relating to Non-Conformance 1</u> (applicable to all certified fisheries): <i>Although required by legislation, there is evidence of extensive non-reporting/under-reporting of seabirds and marine mammals bycatch such that the Assessment Team cannot be confident that catch amounts by species and fishing area (of marine mammals and seabirds) are estimated and continually recorded in fishing logbooks. Regarding NC 1, are there updates, new information or developments addressing the issue?</i> ▪ Any recent updates relating to the smartphone app deployed to facilitate recording of marine mammal and seabirds' bycatch in smaller vessels? Any thoughts on this system? Feedback from fishermen? Is it helping collect bycatch information? Has the compliance of fishermen recording of such interactions improved? Do you see more reports of such non-fish species? ▪ <u>Corrective Action relating to Non-Conformance 2</u>: <i>There is insufficient evidence that adverse impacts of the cod, haddock and saithe fisheries on the following ecosystem components:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spotted wolffish, and; - Common loon <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>are being considered and appropriately assessed and effectively addressed, consistent with the precautionary approach.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Regarding Spotted wolffish: Has spotted wolffish been released in the past season? Catches in 2020/2021 were 1,300 t against a TAC of 314 t. Can we confirm if the excess catch (over the TAC) has been released alive and where is that recorded (the Fiskistofa website only reports total catch but we don't see releases https://www.fiskistofa.is/veidar/aflaupplysingar/afliallartegundir/)</p> ▪ According to section 2 of Act no. 57/1996, concerning the treatment of commercial marine stocks, discard of catches is prohibited. However, minor exceptions include: a) Non-value catches and b) Heads and other refuse from working or processing. What species or species groups are considered non value catches? ▪ Collaboration between the Coast Guard and Fiskistofa relating to fisheries monitoring and enforcement activities. Updates for the past 12-18 months? ▪ Updates on the use of use bycatch mitigation measures on longline fisheries (e.g. tori lines, night settings, acoustic devices) for gillnetters (e.g. pingers trials, actual deployment, other) and for trawlers (escape panels, excluder devices, bobbins, rock hoppers) or equivalent practices? To what extent are such bycatch reduction devices / practices used in these fisheries? Updates? ▪ Any other changes or updates of mention for the 7 fisheries in question that may relate to day to day operations and monitoring activities, from a Fiskistofa perspective that we should discuss? ▪ AOB
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<p>Date: 04th November 2021</p> <p>Location: Remote, Video call</p>	<p>Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI):</p> <p>Gudmundur Thordarson, Head of Demersal Division, MFRI;</p> <p>Bjarki Elvarsson, Senior Scientist, MFRI.</p> <p>GT Assessment Team: Vito Romito Dankert Skagen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cod 2021 benchmark / SSB downward and F upward revision. ▪ Cod: News about stock diversity and metapopulation ideas? ▪ Cod: Revision of assessment method etc. Points you want to highlight? More revisions to come? ▪ Cod: Is the catch stabilizer still used if SSB < SSBtrigger? According to the evaluation report (WKICECOD) it is not, but in all official statements it always applies. ▪ Benchmarks and revisions of management plans. What are the plans now 'after' the pandemic? Herring and redfish in particular. ▪ Tusk: Retro problem – further understanding? ▪ Ling. The historical retro in both the ICES and MFRI advise shows a quite large downward adjustment of biomass and upwards revision of mortality. The analytic retro looks much nicer. How come? ▪ Saithe: Why has the fishing area shifted (SW - NW)? - Fleet behavior or stock change? ▪ Herring: How confident are you that there is a strong year class coming in? ▪ Herring: Have you sufficient understanding of the retro-problems in the past to be able to take action if that becomes a problem again. ▪ Redfish: Recruitment failure – thoughts about why? ▪ Discards – new studies? Plans for alternative approaches?? ▪ Transfer of quotas between years and between species: Are there thoughts about how to balance practicality with precautionary approach? Better ways to protect vulnerable species? Plans to amend the rules? ▪ Non Conformances (NCs): 2 NCs were identified in previous IRF Full Assessments or carried over from the 4th Surveillance cycle in 2018. ▪ Non Conformance 1: <i>Although required by legislation, there is evidence of extensive non-reporting/under-reporting of seabirds and marine mammals bycatch such that the Assessment Team cannot be confident that catch amounts by species and fishing area (of marine mammals and seabirds) are estimated and continually recorded in fishing logbooks.</i> ▪ Regarding NC 1, what are the updates and developments addressing the issue for 2021? ▪ Any recent updates relating to the smartphone app deployed to facilitate recording of marine mammal and seabirds' bycatch in smaller vessels? Any thoughts on this system? Feedback from fishermen? Is it helping collect bycatch information? ▪ Non Conformance 2: <i>There is insufficient evidence that adverse impacts of the cod, haddock and saithe fisheries on the following ecosystem components: Spotted wolffish, and; Common loon are being considered and appropriately assessed and effectively addressed, consistent with the precautionary approach.</i> ▪ Regarding NC 2, what are the key developments regarding spotted wolffish (e.g. relating to research activities and/or live releases in the fishery)? In the last audit a potential recovery plan was discussed, as well as age reading and survival experiments in Icelandic waters. What are the updates? Has spotted wolffish been released in the past season? Catches in 2020/2021 were 1,300 t against a TAC of 314 t. Can we confirm if the excess catch (over the TAC) has been released alive and where is there a record of it (the Fiskistofa website only reports total catch https://www.fiskistofa.is/veidar/aflaupplysingar/afliallartegundir/)? ▪ Furthermore, are there any updates relating to common loon in terms of population research or bycatch information? ▪ Recent known interactions between the fisheries under assessment and the following: basking sharks and leafscale gulper sharks? ▪ Can the assessment team be provided with total catch in numbers of Grey skate (<i>Dipturus flossada / batis</i>) for the latest available MFRI survey? Any additional updates on the state of this endangered species / complex? ▪ What survey abundance or status updates can be provided regarding vulnerable/ETP species: 1) dogfish, 2) Greenland shark and 3) porbeagle shark? ▪ Have there been any recent interactions with Blue whales and Northern right whales for the fisheries under assessment?
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updates on the use of use bycatch mitigation measures on longline fisheries (e.g. tori lines, night settings, acoustic devices) for gillnetters (e.g. pingers trials, actual deployment, other) and for trawlers (escape panels, excluder devices, bobbins, rock hoppers) or equivalent practices? To what extent are such bycatch reduction devices / practices used in these fisheries? ▪ Harbour porpoise updates in Iceland (e.g. surveys), status and management? ▪ Do you have updated bycatch information in Icelandic fisheries (e.g. cod gillnets, lumpfish nets, other gear) of harbour porpoise, harbour seals, grey seals, harp, ringed, hooded and bearded seals for 2020-2021? (we already have data you provided at the previous audit for 2016-2019) ▪ Do you have updated bycatch information in Icelandic fisheries (e.g. cod gillnets, lumpfish nets, longliners, purse seiners) relating to seabird bycatch for 2020-2021? (we already have data you provided at the previous audit for 2016-2019) ▪ Any updated MFRI or other reports on the by-catch of seabirds and marine mammals in Icelandic fisheries (not specifically relating to lumpfish)? ▪ Coral areas. Any research updates or new closures (proposed or implemented) in the past 12-18 months? ▪ Bycatch of deep water sponges are recorded during bi-annual groundfish surveys allowing managers to estimate the distribution of mass sponge occurrences. Any research updates? Any updates on management measures specific to conservation of sponge communities? ▪ Hydrothermal vents. Any research updates or new closures in the past 12-18 months? ▪ Mapping the distribution of benthic assemblages and habitats which are considered to be sensitive to trawling disturbances. Such information was deemed important in order to predict which species and habitats are at risk of being damaged by fishing activities and for the protection of important marine habitats in the future. Since the publication of the Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem NovasArc report in 2019 have there been additional research activities or plans to reflect and address the findings of the report? ▪ Any new studies, papers or reports on the Icelandic marine ecosystem's structure or foodweb dynamics?
<p>Date: 05th of November 2021</p> <p>Location: Remote, Video Call</p>	<p>The Client (closing meeting): Kristján Þórarinnsson, Fisheries Iceland; Finnur Gardarsson, IRF Foundation.</p> <p>GT Assessment Team: Vito Romito Dankert Skagen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summary of findings from the week's meetings. ▪ Corrective actions for active non-conformances, updates, clarifications and discussions. ▪ Reporting timelines and next steps in the audit process. ▪ Questions and answers.

7 Summary Findings

7.1 Relevant changes to Legislation/Regulations and the Management Regime

Fisheries legislation

Iceland has an established Marine Policy and a structured management system¹ covering all commercial species, including tusk². There is a principal Act (*last amendment No 116/2006*)³ and a number of supporting Acts and Regulations for the management of the fishery.⁴ Article 1 in the principal act states the overall objective for Icelandic fisheries management: *The exploitable marine stocks of the Icelandic fishing banks are the common property of the Icelandic nation. The objective of this Act is to promote their conservation and efficient utilisation, thereby ensuring stable employment and settlement throughout Iceland.*

Institutions

There are a number of inter-related government agencies within the system under the direction of the Ministry of Industries and Innovation which has ultimate responsibility. The Ministry of Industries and Innovation⁵ in Iceland is the principal management organization responsible for Icelandic fisheries and has the ultimate responsibility for fisheries management. They act according to law issued by the parliament (Alþingi), and according to advice from the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI). The executive body is the Fisheries Directorate (Fiskistofa)⁶, which is responsible for the implementation of Fishery Regulations on behalf of the Ministry. Key functions of the Directorate of Fisheries include: Implementation of regulations, collection and collation of fishery catch data, managing and policing the Icelandic ITQ system and supporting research, survey work and Coastguard surveillance activities. The Icelandic Coast Guard⁷ is responsible for control at sea, both of the catches and the quality of the vessels. It performs sea and air patrols and monitoring of fishing within the Icelandic zone. It also operates the Icelandic Maritime Traffic Service within its operations centre which has a key role in ensuring safety at sea, but can also take action if the behaviour of a fishing vessels is unusual. The Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI)⁸ conducts a wide range of marine research and provides the Ministry with scientific advice. MFRI has wide international cooperation in all major fields of marine science, as indicated by its publication record⁹.

TAC and ITQ system

Limiting the total annual catch of tusk is achieved primarily by an annual TAC. The TAC is set by the Ministry taking advice from MFRI, which is responsible for collecting and analysing scientific data on the stock. Management also includes fora for consultation with stakeholders.

The MFRI advice is based on calculations done within the framework of ICES (The International Council for Exploration of the Sea) by the ICES Deep Sea Working Group (WGDEEP), according to standards approved by ICES

1 <http://www.fiskistofa.is/english/fisheries-management/>

2 <https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/>
[and https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/fisheries-management/](https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/fisheries-management/)

3 <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2006116.html>

4 <https://simplebooklet.com/stjrnfiskveia20212022lgogreglugerir>

5 <http://eng.atvinnuvegaraduneyti.is/>

6 <http://www.fiskistofa.is/english>

7 <http://www.lhg.is/english>

8 <https://www.hafogvatn.is>

9 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/is/midlun/utgafa/ritaskra>

in regular benchmark assessments¹⁰. ICES provides advice, which normally, but not necessarily is followed by MFRI and subsequently by the Ministry. The ministry also seeks advice from ICES on management plans.

In 2020, because of the ongoing Covid 19 epidemic, the advice was made by MFRI according to the management plan, based on an assessment performed by MFRI following ICES standards, without involving ICES. In 2021, the normal procedure was resumed.

The overall TAC is distributed on vessels as individual transferable quotas (ITQ), managed by the Directorate. The ITQ system has evolved gradually in Icelandic fisheries management and was fully implemented in 1990. The legal basis for the ITQ system is the principal fisheries management act (116/2006)¹¹. The main elements are:

- 1 Each vessel is assigned a quota share (%) in each stock, initially based primarily on catch history over a reference period.
- 2 The annual allowable catch for each vessel from each stock is obtained by multiplying the TAC of the year and the vessel's quota share (as a proportion).

Quotas can be transferred between vessels; this applies both to quota shares and annual catch allotments. For most stocks, including tusk, quotas can be transferred between years and also between species. Quota transfer is mainly intended to promote rationalisation and thus increase profitability in the industry, but there has been concern that it can be used to legalize over-exploitation of vulnerable but valuable species. An overview of the system is provided in Agnarson & al, 2016¹². A recent study of the transfer system in Iceland¹³ describes the performance of this system in detail and conclude that *'The trend toward individual quota and discard bans presents a challenge for mixed fisheries: how to avoid widespread under-utilization of quota due to choking effects of individual species for which quota is exhausted. Iceland's demersal fishery has met this challenge using the most elaborate set of balancing mechanisms in the world.....The absence of persistent overfishing of individual stocks is attributed to limits that have been tightened over time and are very strict for the primary target species. These results highlight the potential for balancing mechanisms to facilitate sustainable exploitation of distinct interconnected resources and the importance of adapting implementation to local circumstances.'*

Control of landings

All fish (with some exceptions) has to be landed and the landings have to be weighed by authorized weighers. These landings are reported to the Directorate and are the primary source of catch data. All landings have to be accounted against a quota. If the vessel does not have a quota for a landing, it has to buy one, and there is an efficient market for buying and selling quotas. To reduce the incentive for high-grading, undersized fish that is caught has to be sold. Only part of the catch is subtracted from the quota. The fisher gets a strongly reduced price and the surplus goes to a fund to promote scientific work of the MFRI.

General fishing permits are of two types, a general fishing permit with a catch quota and a general fishing permit with a hook-and-line catch quota. In addition, parts of the total TAC is set aside for special purposes (for example Strandveidar¹⁴, Bygdakvoti¹⁵), mostly to support local communities and small scale fisheries.

10 https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2017/WKICEMSE/wkicemse_2017.

11 <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2006116.html>

12 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X16302238>

13 Oostdijk & al: www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.2008001117

14 <https://www.fiskistofa.is/fiskveidistjorn/umfiskveidistjornunarkerfid/strandveidar/>

15 <https://www.fiskistofa.is/veidar/afhaheimildir/bygdakvoti/>

Log books are compulsory, and recently, only electronic logbooks (or mobile phone apps) are accepted¹⁶. The fishing year in Iceland runs from 1st September - 31st August.

Protective measures

These include area closures (temporary and permanent) and gear restrictions. There is an extensive system of area closures that are to a large extent, but not exclusively, designed to avoid exploitation of cod at the spawning grounds in the spawning season and to avoid catching juvenile fish. Closures can be permanent or temporary. Permanent closures are according to regulations by the Ministry and can be valid for parts of the year or the whole year. They are intended to protect spawning grounds, nursery areas, vulnerable habitats etc. and most of them have been in place for many years (Figure 1) The latest revision was in 2019¹⁷. The Directorate has recently launched a map solution (Hafsjá) to inform about all closures (permanent and short term) as well as other information (Figure 1)¹⁸.

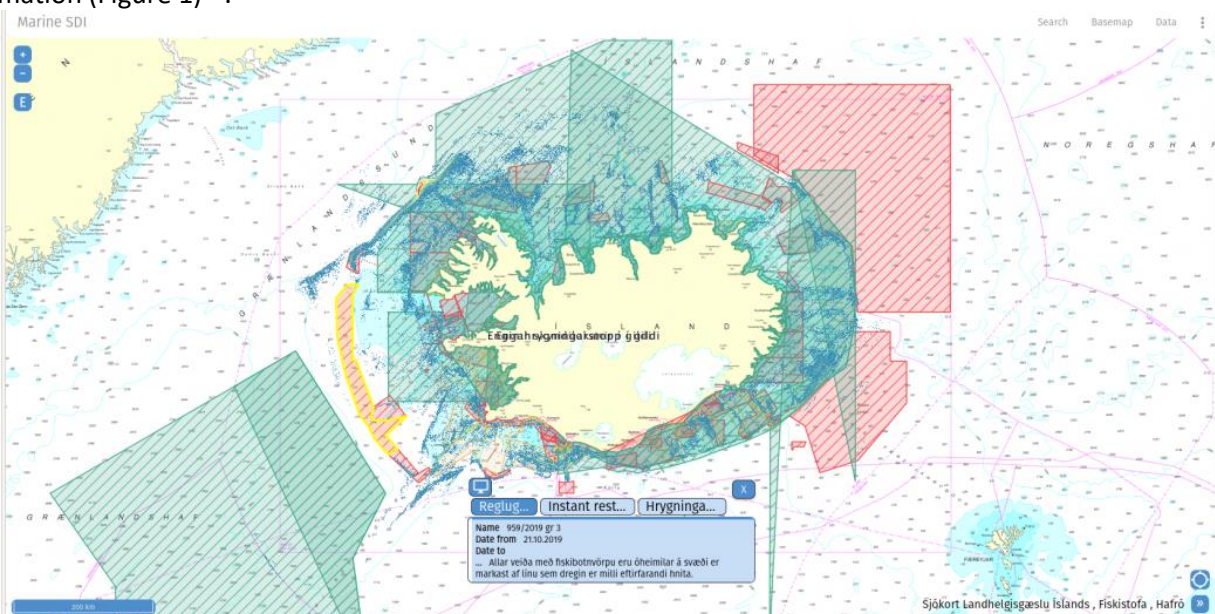


Figure 1. Screenshot of an example of the map in Hafsjá. The coloured fields are various closures. One (with yellow outline in the West) has been marked, and the label at the bottom gives details of that regulation. The small dots are location of catches (all gears in this example).

Temporary closures are as a rule triggered by reports from the Coast Guard, Directorate or others of too much undersized fish. Recently in 2020, the Directorate has taken over the administration of these closures from the MFRI. Such closures are introduced on short notice (hours) and are valid for 2 weeks. They are published on the website of the Directorate, and shown in the Hafsjá map.

There are mesh size regulations in place to protect juveniles; the standard mesh size in trawl is 135 mm¹⁹. If undersized fish are caught, they have to be landed. Special rules apply for payment to encourage landing, but

16 <https://www.fiskistofa.is/fiskveidistjorn/afladagbaekur/>

17 <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/21660>

and

<https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/21661>

18 <http://atlas.lmi.is/mapview/?application=haf>

19 Mesh size regulations: <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/4032>

discourage catching of undersized fish.

Discards are prohibited in Iceland.²⁰ Discards are not included in the assessment, and are considered to be small. To some extent they are monitored, mostly for cod and haddock. Studies by MRI indicate that discards of ling (and of tusk) are very small (<1% by number, <0.5% by weight)²¹.

International relations

Policies incorporate a number of International Agreements and declarations²², including; UN Convention of the Law of the Sea, Agenda 21 of the Rio Declaration, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the International Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing. Iceland has broad international scientific cooperation through organisations such as [the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission](#) (NEAFC)²³, [the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization](#) (NAFO)²⁴, and [the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission](#) (NAMMCO)²⁵. Icelandic scientists have been involved in many international projects arranged by these organizations and in co-operative projects with research institutes and universities.

7.2 Stock status update

Stock identity. The tusk assessment unit as defined by ICES covers ICES Division 5a and 14: Iceland and East Greenland. The stock structure of tusk in the North Atlantic is poorly known. It clearly is not homogeneous. It is pelagic at the egg and early larval stages, but confined to the bottom after that. Therefore, substantial migrations between the main areas of occurrence, that would be sufficient to replenish depleted components, is regarded as quite unlikely²⁶. The main evidence for including East Greenland tusk was lack of contrast between these areas in genetics in a study in 2007 using micro-satellite primers. The issue was discussed again by WGDEEP in 2018, that concluded that the tusk population in Greenland is likely to be a "sink" from the Icelandic population and as such should not affect the productivity of tusk in Iceland. It further concluded that the division of tusk into different advice units should be reviewed, not only in Iceland and East Greenland, but for all the tusk stocks.²⁷ So far, no further studies have been presented.

The stock assessment and advice is made with data from Iceland only. Therefore, it is effectively treated as a domestic stock. There is no cooperation on management of the stock and no scientific cooperation beyond the general participation in fora like ICES. Greenland sets its own TAC for tusk in its own waters, independently of Iceland.

Since 2015, the catches in Greenland waters have increased to about 500 tonnes, which is some 12-19% of the

20 <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/1996057.html>

21 Thordarson, G. (2011) Estimates of tusk and ling discards in the Icelandic longline fishery. WGDEEP-2011:WD02: http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2011/WGDEEP/wgdeep_Annex02_WorkingDocuments_2011.pdf; pages 10-18

22 <https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/international-policy/>

23 <http://www.neafc.org/>

24 <http://www.nafo.int/>

25 <http://www.nammco.no/>

26 <http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2007/WGDEEP/Sec-04-%20Stock%20Identity.pdf>

27 [http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2018/WGDEEP/07%20WGDEEP%20Report%20-%20Sec%2006%20Tusk%20\(Brosme%20brosme\).pdf](http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2018/WGDEEP/07%20WGDEEP%20Report%20-%20Sec%2006%20Tusk%20(Brosme%20brosme).pdf)

total (Figure below). The catches of tusk in East Greenland are by-catches in trawl and long line fisheries. They are not sampled, there is no data available beyond landings in tonnes and they are not included in the assessment.²⁸ MFRI has noted that if the recent higher levels of catch in the Greenlandic area of Subarea 14 continue, the treatment of catch data may need to be reconsidered in future assessments and management.²⁹

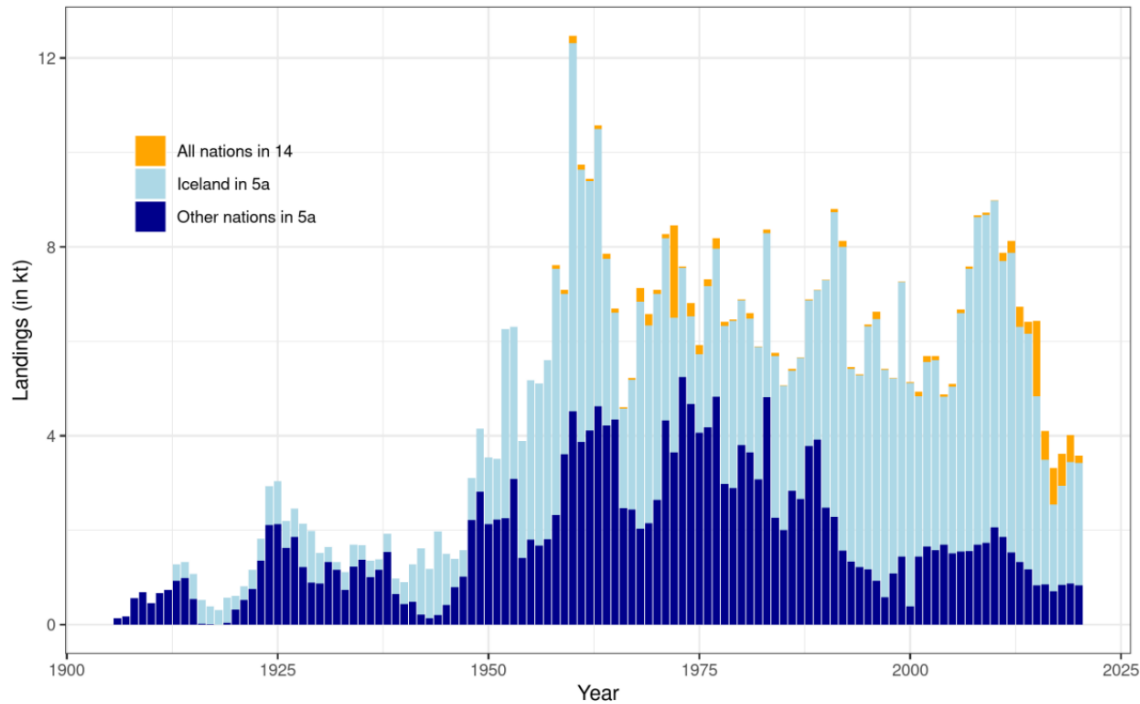


Figure 2. Catches of tusk in Iceland and Greenland zones (area 14).

Assessment data. The main data, provided by MFRI, are catch statistics, including catch in numbers by length, age-length keys, life history data from the fisheries, and stock abundance measurement by length class by a bottom trawl survey in the spring. The data collection, sampling and surveys have remained unaltered for many years, and there are no changes this year. As data from Greenland are not included in the assessment, the description below refers to the fishery in Iceland.

All Icelandic catches of tusk (as well as all other commercial fish) have to be landed in authorized ports and weighed by authorized weighers.³⁰ These landings are reported to the Directorate and are the primary source of catch data. Discards are prohibited in Iceland.³¹ Discards are not included in the assessment and are considered to be negligible³².

28 http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Stock%20Annexes/2017/usk.27.5a14_SA.pdf

29 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk1259450.pdf>

30 <https://www.reglugerdir.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/sjavarutvegsraduneyti/nr/20213>

31 <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/1996057.html>

32 Thordarson, G. (2011) Estimates of tusk and ling discards in the Icelandic longline fishery. WGDEEP-2011:WD02: http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2011/WGDEEP/wgdeep_Annex02_WorkingDocuments_2011.pdf; pages 10-18

Biological samples from the catch are taken at sea by the fishermen or in the harbours by people from MFRI and/or inspectors from the Directorate of Fisheries. The samples are analysed by MFRI.

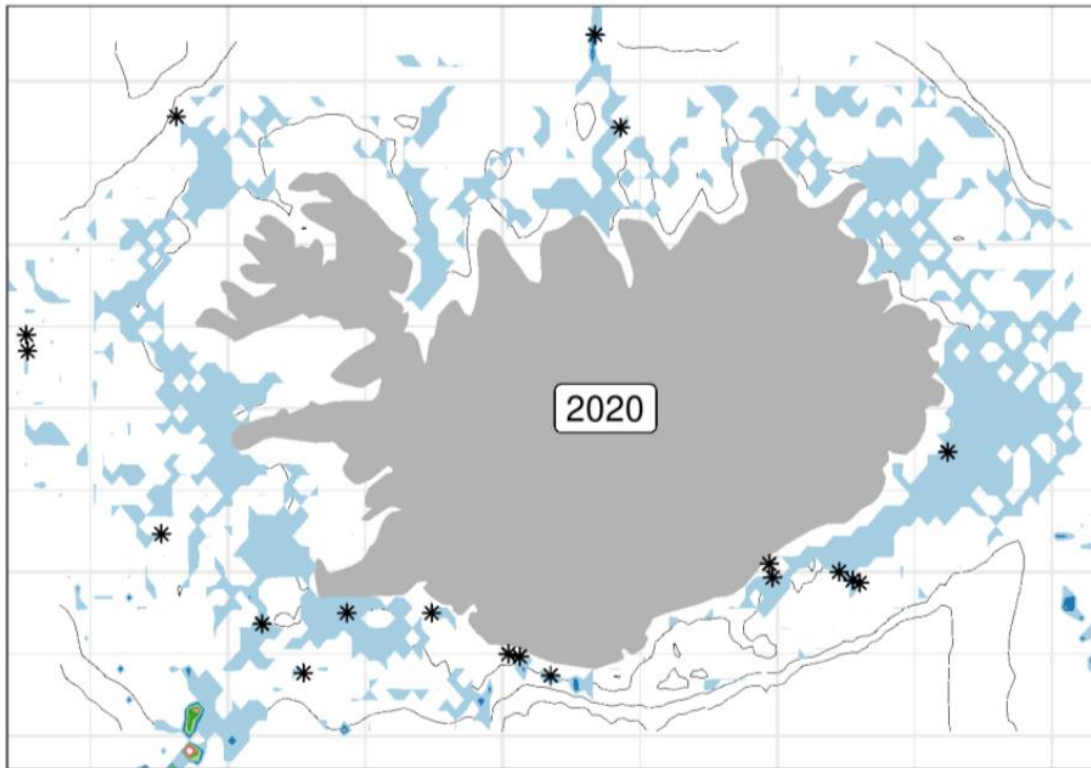


Figure 3. Tusk. Fishing grounds in 2020 as reported in logbooks and positions of samples taken from landings in the long line fishery (asterisks).³³

The general process of the sampling strategy is to take one sample for every 180 tonnes of tusk landed. This means that between 30–40 samples from hauls containing tusk are taken from the commercial longline catch each year, as long line is the dominating gear for tusk. Each sample consists of 150 tusk from a single haul. Otoliths are extracted from 20 randomly chosen fish, which are also length measured and weighed gutted. In most cases tusk are landed gutted so it not possible to determine sex and maturity, but if a sample is ungutted, sex and maturity is recorded. The information from the samples is then used along with the total landings data to estimate catch-in-weight, catch-at-age-in numbers, weight-at-age-in-the-catch, and length composition in the catch.

Survey data. There is a spring groundfish survey and an autumn groundfish survey, both covering the whole Icelandic EEZ (Figure 4). These surveys are more extensive than most surveys that are used around the world for routine assessments (530 stations in the spring survey, 380 stations in the autumn survey). There are only minor changes from year to year in the coverage. An extensive survey protocol is available³⁴. One or both of the surveys are used for most stock assessment. For tusk, only the spring survey is used.

³³ https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk_tr_isl1259449.pdf

³⁴ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/fjolrit-156.pdf>

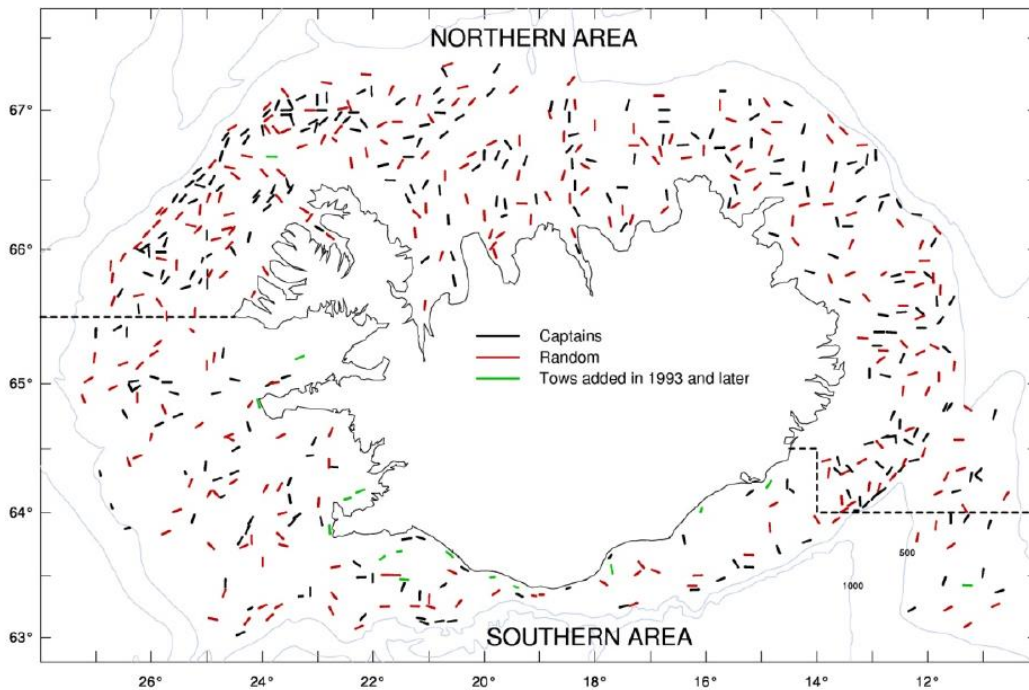


Figure 4. Stations in the spring groundfish survey. Colors indicate how the stations were decided.

Assessment method. The assessment is done with the Gadget software³⁵, which has a combined age-length disaggregated forward projecting population model that is fitted to observations by the maximum likelihood approach. As such, it is versatile with respect to which data to use, but the data must be sufficient both in content and in quality to reliably estimate the key model parameters that characterize the time course of stock abundance and mortality. A detailed technical description of the assessment method and the data that go into the assessment is presented in the ICES Stock Annex for Tusk (*Brosme brosme*) in Icelandic waters³⁶.

The method was approved for tusk by ICES at a combined benchmark and management plan evaluation in 2017³⁷. The approval implies that the data were regarded as sufficient for the method. No changes were made to the method for this year's assessment.

In brief, the assessment uses data for 2 fleets (Icelandic and Foreign - 1982-present) and the spring groundfish survey (1985-present). The age span is 1-18 years and the length span 4-110 cm. Catches in Greenland waters are not included. A fixed natural mortality of 0.15 is assumed.

The data outlined above are relevant and sufficient for assessing the stock using the Gadget method, which is versatile enough to make proper use of the kinds of data that are available. The quality of the data is generally good, although parts of the data may be noisy, making fitting the model to some of the length distributions problematic. An error in the input data where some survey data were double counted was corrected in the 2020

³⁵ <https://gadget-framework.github.io/gadget2/>

³⁶ http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Stock%20Annexes/2017/usk.27.5a14_SA.pdf

³⁷ http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2017/WKICEMSE/wkicemse_2017.pdf

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assessment. That uncovered a retrospective problem with SSB in particular. The reason for this problem may have to do with fitting to sparse and noisy observed length distributions, in particular for the older ages and the earlier part of the time series. The retrospective discrepancy is less severe for the reference biomass, from which the TAC is derived, as well as for the fishing mortality. This may be because the estimate of SSB, which covers old fish, is more vulnerable to poor model fit for the larger length groups. Since most of the fishery is on younger fish and the management strategy evaluation that informed the management plan for this stock included high assessment uncertainty and autocorrelation ($CV=0.2$, $\rho=0.8$)³⁸ the retrospective error is hardly detrimental to the advice.

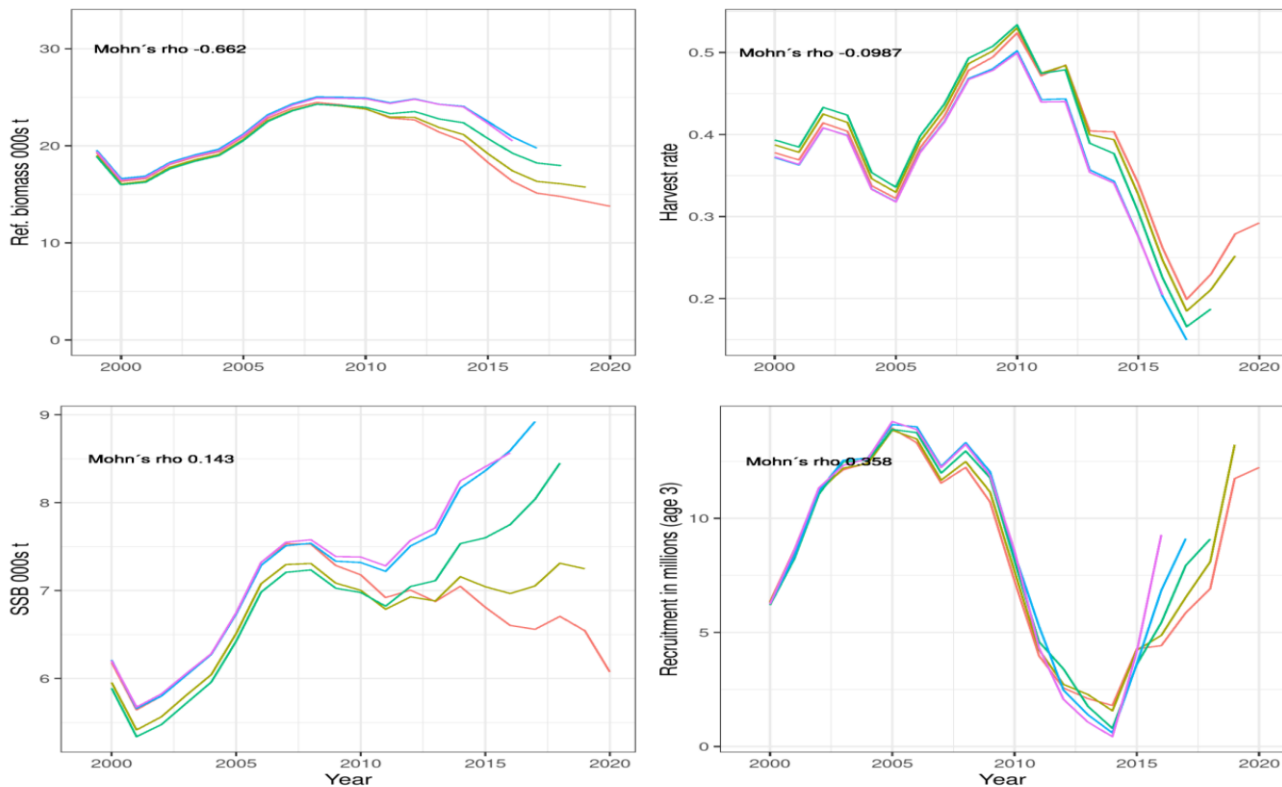


Figure 5. Retrospective plots illustrating stability in model estimates over a 5-year ‘peel’ in data. Results of reference biomass (> 40 cm length), spawning stock biomass, fishing mortality F, and recruitment (age 3) are shown.

Assessment results.

The main results from the 2021 MFRI assessment³⁹ are shown below. The harvest rate is slightly above the target, while the SSB is above the trigger value.

³⁸ https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2017/Special_requests/Iceland.2017.10.pdf

³⁹ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk1259450.pdf>

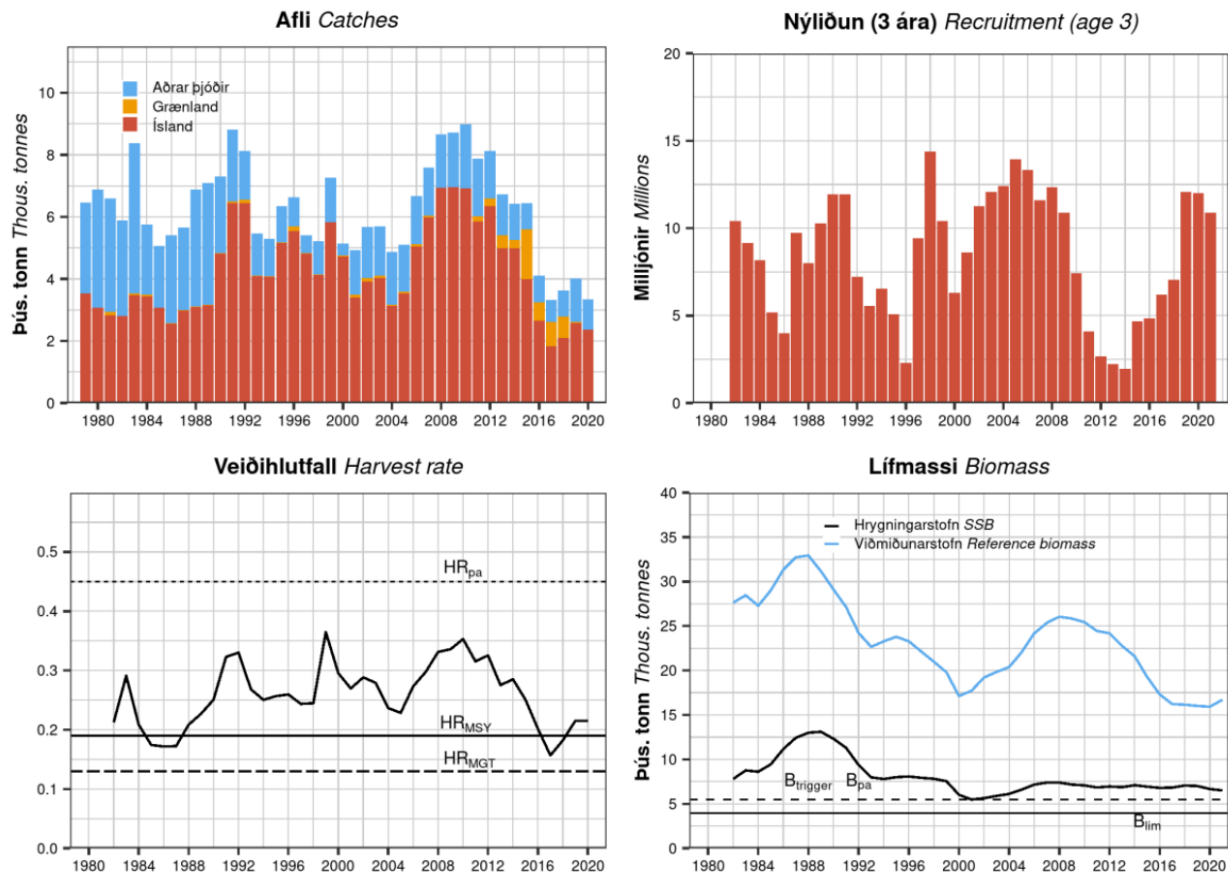


Figure 6. Tusk catches in Icelandic waters (by Iceland and other nations) and Greenlandic waters, recruitment, harvest rate and SSB and Reference biomass.

Reference points and Harvest rule

Reference points for tusk were defined by ICES at the benchmark/management plan evaluation in 2017⁴⁰. They have remained unchanged since then. The reference points and the management plan were approved by ICES and adopted by Icelandic authorities. The values are tabulated in the table below, taken from the MFRI advice⁴¹.

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http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2017/WKICEMSE/wkicemse_2017.pdf

f

41 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk1259450.pdf>

Table 5. Reference points for tusk.

Nálgun <i>Framework</i>	Gátmörk <i>Reference point</i>	Gildi <i>Value</i>	Grundvöllur <i>Basis</i>
Aflaregla <i>Management plan</i>	SSB _{MGT}	6240 t	B _{pa}
	HR _{MGT}	0.13	Veiðihlutfall af viðmiðunarstofni (B ₄₀₊) leiðir til langtíma hámarksafraksturs. Vænt gildi veiðihlutfalls, þegar veitt er samkvæmt aflareglu, er 0.09–0.18. <i>Percentage of biomass 40+ cm leads to long-term MSY. Realized HR can range from 0.09–0.18.</i>
MSY	MSY-B _{trigger}	6240 t	B _{pa}
	HR _{MSY}	0.17	Slembireikningar innan Gadget líkans <i>Stochastic projections</i>
	F _{MSY}	0.226	Slembireikningar innan Gadget líkans <i>Stochastic projections</i>
Varúðarnálgun <i>Precautionary approach</i>	B _{lim}	4460 t	B _{pa} /1.4
	B _{pa}	6240 t	B _{loss}
	F _{lim}	0.41	Veiðidánartala sem leiðir til þess að hrygningarstofn er yfir B _{lim} með 50% líkum <i>Equilibrium F which will maintain the stock above B_{lim} with a 50% probability</i>
	F _{pa}	0.27	95% líkur á að veiðidánartala sé undir F _{lim} <i>95% probability that true F is below F_{lim}</i>
	HR _{lim}	0.27	Veiðihlutfall sem leiðir til þess að hrygningarstofn er yfir B _{lim} með 50% líkum <i>Equilibrium HR which will maintain the stock above B_{lim} with a 50% probability</i>
	HR _{pa}	0.20	95% líkur á að veiðihlutfall sé undir HR _{lim} <i>95% probability that true is below HR_{lim}</i>

The precautionary limit for the SSB is based on stock-recruit dynamics in the assessed period 1982-2015 (Figure below). The fishing mortality has been moderate in this period and there is no convincing stock-recruit relation. Following ICES guidelines for this situation, the lowest observed SSB (B_{loss} = 6240 t, representing the mean of that biomass in a bootstrap estimate of its distribution) was used for B_{pa}. Then, B_{lim} was derived based on the inverse of the standard factor used for calculating B_{pa} from B_{lim}, i.e. B_{lim} = 6,240/1.4 = 4460 t. For comparison, the lowest SSB in the time series in the present assessment was 5473 t in 2001.

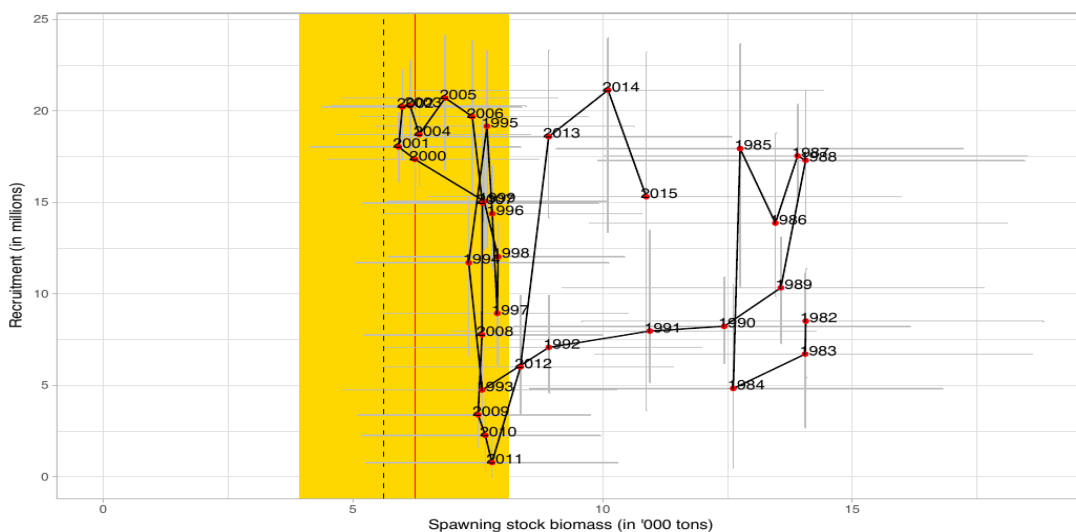


Figure 7. Spawning stock biomass recruitment relationship for tusk in 5a. Uncertainty in recruitment and SSB is indicated with 90% quantile intervals as grey bars. Red point indicate the median estimate and black solid line the chronological order. The yellow vertical bar represents the distribution of B_{loss}.

Precautionary mortality reference points were derived according to standard practise: Flim as the F where the median SSB is at Blim, and Fpa as Flim*1.4. The HR reference points were derived as the median HR when fishing at reference Fs.

The management plan prescribes an exploitation with a harvest rate of 0.13 (TAC/Reference biomass), where the reference biomass is the biomass of fish larger than 40 cm at the assessment step. It was tested and approved by ICES in 2017⁴², together with reference points and assessment method, and has remained unchanged after that.

The official formulation⁴³ is the following:

According to the Harvest Control Rule (HCR) the TAC for the fishing year $y/y+1$ (1 September of year Y to 31 August of year $y+1$) as 13% (HR_{MGT}) of the biomass of tusk 40cm and larger ($B_{Ref,y}$) in the assessment year (y) calculated as:

$$TAC_{y/y+1} = HR_{MGT} * B_{Ref,y}$$

If the spawning stock biomass (SSB) falls below 6 240 tonnes (MGT $B_{trigger}$), the HCR dictates that harvest rate shall be reduced linearly to zero based on the ratio of the SSB estimated and MGT $B_{trigger}$, the TAC for the fishing year $y/y+1$ is then calculated as:

$$TAC_{y/y+1} = HR_{MGT} * (SSB_y / MGT B_{trigger}) * B_{Ref,y}$$

The harvest rule was tested by simulations to ensure a low (<5%) probability that it would lead SSB below B_{lim} . The testing tool was a forward projecting bootstrap procedure, without assessment feedback but taking into account uncertainty in process, in particular in recruitment, and assessment uncertainty, both including autocorrelations. No implementation error was assumed. This tool has been used for several Icelandic stocks, first for cod in 2009. According to these simulations, the harvest rate leading to maximum long-term yield (H_{MSY}) is 0.17 and the harvest rate with 50% probability of $SSB < B_{lim}$ is 0.27, corresponding to an $F_{lim} = 0.41$. For the harvest rule, a harvest rate = 0.13 was decided, which is on the safe side of the H_{MSY} but leading to almost the same long-term yield. In line with ICES technical guidelines the $MSY B_{trigger}$ is set as B_{pa} , as the stock has not been managed according to F_{MSY} , or equivalents thereof, for more than 5 years. If SSB drops below $B_{trigger}$, the rule is to reduce the HR linearly towards the origin.

A long-term target for the stock biomass is not defined explicitly, as the harvest strategy is defined in terms of mortality. However, the expected long-term yield by following the rule was tested by the simulations and found to be near the maximum obtainable. The target harvest rate (13% of biomass of fish > 40cm) in the management plan is associated with a near maximum long-term yield and a low probability of bringing the spawning biomass below the trigger level, which is still well above the limit biomass. The existing rules, together with strong mechanisms for implementation and enforcement, are regarded as sufficient to protect against overfishing. In addition there are supportive measures (area closures, gear restrictions, discard ban, strict landings control and control at sea) that contribute to keeping exploitation under control.

7.3 Landings update

Catch data. In Iceland, the fishery for tusk is almost exclusively conducted with long line, mostly at depths less

42 https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2017/Special_requests/Iceland.2017.10.pdf

43 <https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/>

than 300 m, and predominantly on the Western part of the shelf (Figure 8).

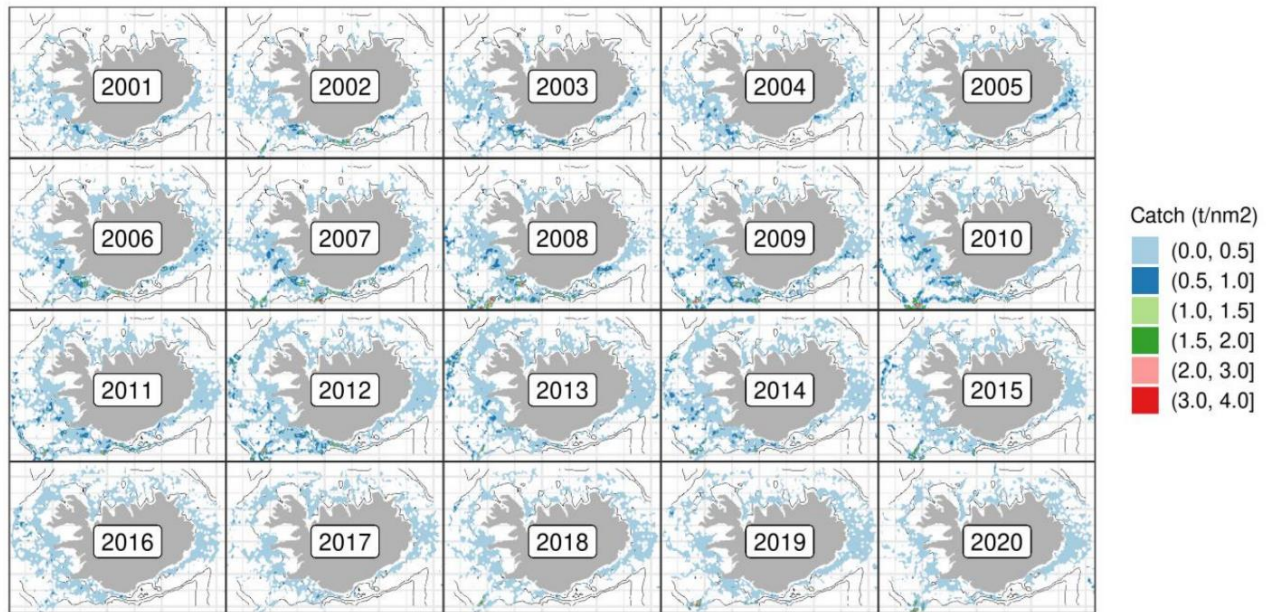


Figure 8. Positions where tusk was caught in Iceland in the last 20 years⁴⁴. The distribution of landings is relatively stable.

In Iceland, some catches are taken by Faroese and Norwegian vessels operating in the Icelandic zone, typically about 20%, slightly more in the most recent years (Figure below). They report their catches to Icelandic authorities, but do not provide samples.

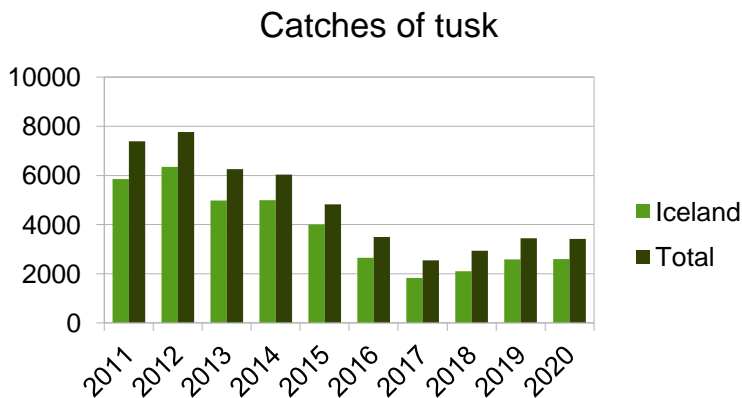


Figure 9. Catches of tusk in Icelandic zone – by Icelandic vessels and the total. The difference comes from foreign vessels (Faeroese and Norwegian). Data from https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk_tr1259448.pdf

⁴⁴ https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk_tr1259448.pdf

The catches have gone down in recent years, and some of the quota is spent on other species. Most likely, that reflects the market conditions. The actual catch can deviate substantially from the TAC, and in the last 4 years the Icelandic catch was far below the national TAC (Figure 11). A likely cause is the year-to-year and between species flexibility (Figure 12) that is permitted, A tusk quota can be used to cover catches of other species (negative transfers) or quotas of other species can be used to cover catches of tusk (positive transfers). In recent years, the tusk quota has not been fully utilized, apparently because of market conditions.

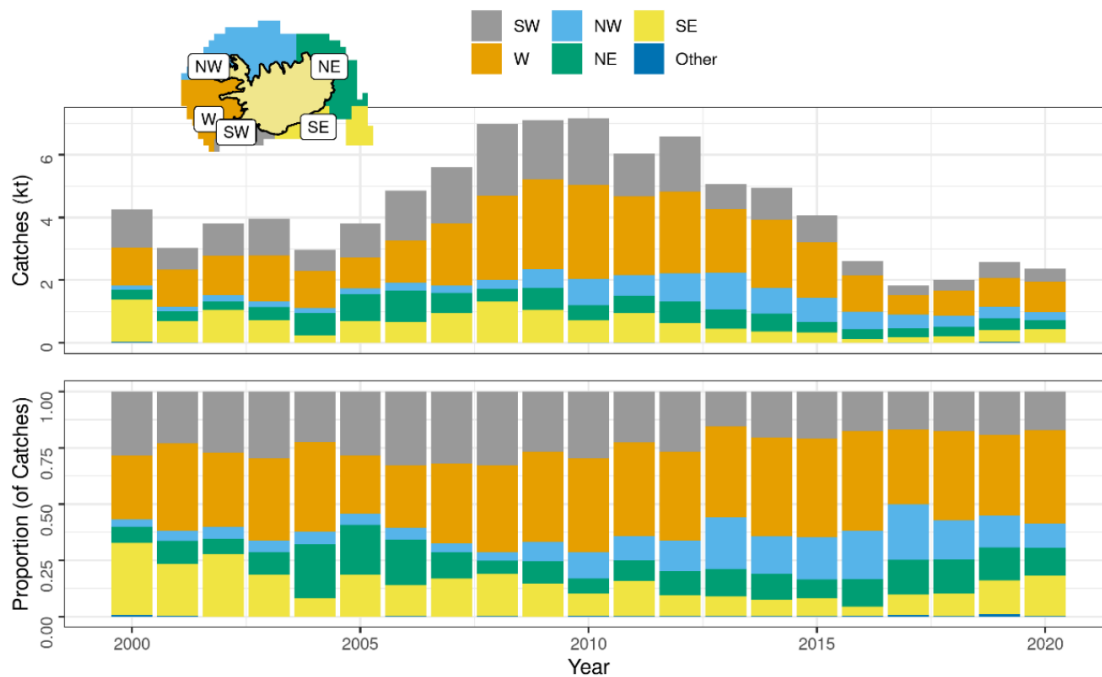


Figure 10. Area distribution of tusk catches according to logbooks.

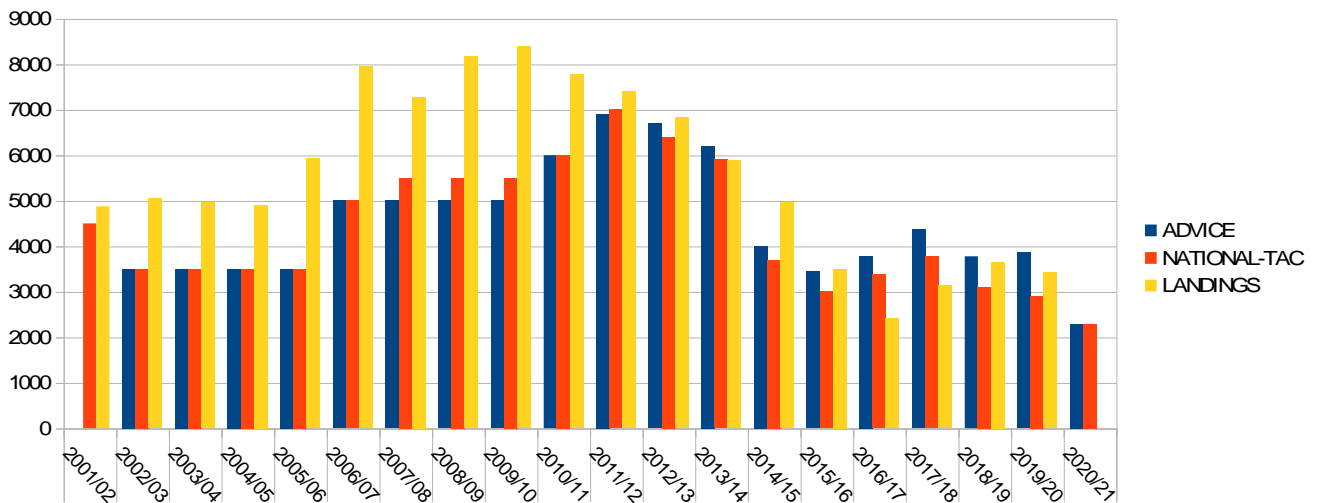


Figure 11. Advice and landings of tusk in Iceland.

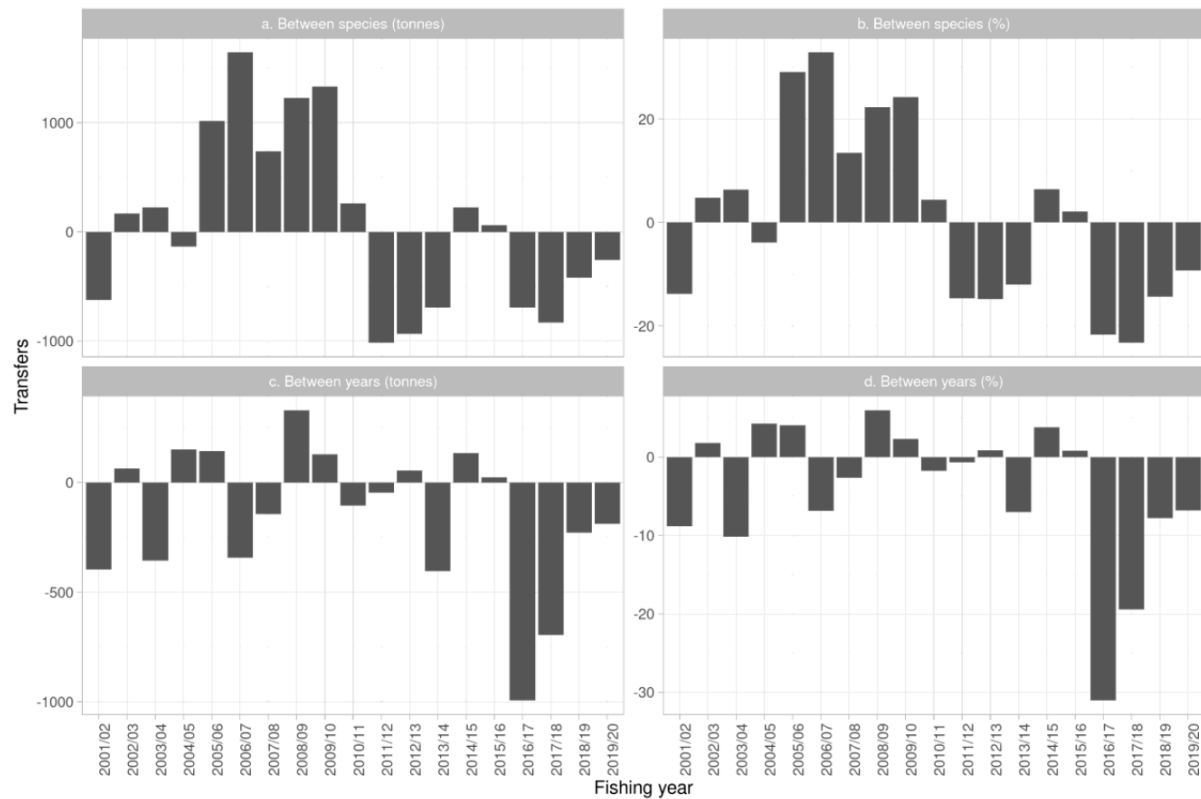


Figure 12. Tusk in 5.a and 14. Net transfer of quota in the Icelandic ITQ system by fishing year. Between species (upper): Positive values indicate a transfer of other species to tusk, but negative values indicate a transfer of tusk quota to other species. Between years (lower): Net transfer of quota for a given fishing year (may include unused quota).

The national Icelandic quota, which has been identical to the recommended quota for a number of years, is distributed on Icelandic participants only. Catches in Icelandic waters by other nations are not accounted for. In recent years, when the Icelandic quota has not been fully utilized, the difference is about the same as the catch by foreign vessels, so the total is close to the outcome of the harvest rule.

7.4 Enforcement and Compliance update

The Icelandic Directorate of Fisheries is an independent administrative body responsible to the Fisheries Minister, responsible for the day to day implementation of the Act on Fisheries Management and related legislation, for day-to-day management of fisheries and for supervising the enforcement of fisheries management rules. More specifically, the Directorate of Fisheries works in accordance with the following Acts, the Directorate of Fisheries Act (no. 36/1992)⁴⁵, the Fisheries Management Act (no. 116/2006)⁴⁶, the Act on Fishing in Iceland’s Exclusive Economic Zone (no. 79/1997), the Act concerning the Treatment of Commercial Marine Fish Stocks (no. 57/1996) and the Act on a Special Fee for Illegal Marine Catch (no. 37/1992). Accordingly, it issues fishing permits to vessels and allocates catch quotas, imposes penalties for illegal catches, supervises the transfer of quotas and quota

⁴⁵ <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/149a/1992036.html>

⁴⁶ <https://www.ecolex.org/details/legislation/fisheries-management-act-1990-lex-faoc003455/>

shares between fishing vessels, monitors vessels using the VMS system e-logbooks, controls the reporting of data on the landings of individual vessels and monitors the weighing of catches⁴⁷. It also provides supervision on board fishing vessels and in ports of landing (i.e. shore based monitoring), which involves inspecting the composition of catches, fishing equipment and handling methods. It works closely with the Icelandic Coast Guard, which carries out fisheries inspection at sea, monitors the EEZ and receives required notifications from vessels, Port Authorities and the MFRI.

A full list of regulations which was harmonised and streamlined starting in 2019 is available on the Ministry's website⁴⁸ (see also the digital booklet for the 2021-2022 regulations at https://vefbirting.prentmetoddi.is/raduneyti/stjorn_fiskveida_2020-21/94/).

The Fisheries Management Act sets out penalties for the violation of its provisions, or rules adopted by virtue of it, which are provided in detail in the Act Concerning the Treatment of Commercial Marine Fish Stocks (Act No. 57 1996⁴⁹). Provisions of the Act on a Special Fee for Illegal Marine Catch⁵⁰ are also applied as appropriate. Penalties range from the issue of reprimands by the Directorate of Fisheries and the suspension of commercial fishing permits to fines and, in cases of serious or repeated deliberate violation, imprisonment for up to six years (Article 24 and 25 of Act No. 116/2006).

Control of discarding of fish is provided for by the Treatment of Commercial Marine Stocks Act No. 57 1996, which prohibits discarding and fishing without sufficient quota. The Act requires the Directorate of Fisheries to monitor and publish information on catches of the fleet (Articles 2-3). Furthermore, the Act stipulates that all fish caught within the Icelandic EEZ, or during trips where a proportion of fishing activities take place in the EEZ, must be landed in an officially recognised port. Fiskistofa also performs check at sea to check for differences in catches of certain vessels when the Fiskistofa inspector is on board and when not, to detect discards. Some findings have been published in 2019⁵¹ and 2020⁵².

Within two hours of landing catches are officially separated, weighed and recorded by accredited weighing stations and reported against the appropriate quota allocation following provisions outlined in the Act No 57, 1996 concerning the Treatment of Commercial Stocks, and Regulation No. 745/2016 on Weighing and Recording of Marine Resources⁵³.

The weight registration document for each vessel is transmitted to the Fisheries Directorate who record it on their Catch Registration System (the Fisheries Directorate and Landing Ports database GAFL). The Directorate also receives the e-logbook information. During the 2021 remote audit, Fiskistofa confirmed that starting in September 2020 smaller Icelandic vessels are now required to log their catches in an App (essentially an e-logbook) which contains information on catch and bycatch, including that of marine mammals and seabirds. This follows

⁴⁷ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/english/about-the-directorate/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.stjornarradid.is/efst-a-baugi/frettir/stok-frett/2021/09/23/Stjorn-fiskveida-2021-2022-Log-og-reglugerdir/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/149a/1996057.html>

⁵⁰ <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/149a/1992037.html>

⁵¹ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/aflasamsetning-a-botnvorpu-og-dragnotarveidum>

⁵² <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/aflasamsetning-i-thorskanetum-og-botnvorpu>

⁵³ <https://www.stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?RecordID=884be309-64a5-4367-9e4d-f5e7216b6f40>

regulation 298/2020⁵⁴. The App also called Afladagbókina or catch diary^{55 56} automatically records the location of the boat during fishing and the captains then records the catch, its condition and by-catch, in a very simple way. The app replaces paper logbooks in the small boat sector, with an electronic catch recording system.

Weighing is undertaken on official port scales certified by the Fisheries Directorate and operated by individuals authorised by the Directorate. In circumstances where there are significant difficulties in using a port scale, private weighing scales can be used provided the company involved has been approved by the port authority, the scales and operators using them are certified and Fisheries Directorate inspectors have unimpeded access to the facilities. This is known as a 'Home-weighing license'. Fish markets can also be authorised to weigh catches by the Directorate.

Processed at sea catch are registered as processed weights using an officially approved yield. This is monitored and verified by the Directorate staff. Weights at landing are checked at the processing base by Directorate staff. Processed weights are converted to live weight equivalents for deduction from each vessel's quota and management purposes by staff at the Directorate. Adjustments can be made by the Directorate to correct for errors – the system is transparent in so far that anyone can enter a vessel registration number on the Directorates website and obtain the catch, species, quota, remaining quota, quota rents for any vessel. The Directorate notes on the website that the information may be corrected by staff at later time post original posting of the information.

A December 2018 report from the Icelandic National Audit Office (NAO)⁵⁷ on certain aspects of the Icelandic enforcement system highlighted that more quantitative data are needed to substantiate the conclusions that discards are low and that there are few irregularities in connection with re-weighing of catches after de-icing. Although available evidence (e.g. data from scientific cruises held up against information reported by the vessels) still indicates that discards are low and re-weighing irregularities not significant, the Directorate of Fisheries has recently placed new staff to control re-weighing at processing plants at risk and has started to publish information on its website showing catch composition reported by fishing vessels on trips with and without an inspector on board, with a view to roll this out more widely to several fishing fleets in Iceland. During the 2021 remote audit, Fiskistofa confirmed that they worked on this issue by increasing surveillance. The results of this surveillance are published online to show the violations and deter other potential violators⁵⁸.

As a result of this process new Regulation has been put in place which essentially places additional Fiskistofa surveillance at the operators cost, for those that do not comply. This is Regulation 990/2020⁵⁹ on (7th) amendment to Regulation no. 745/2016, on weighing and registration of marine catch. Paragraph 3 Article 8 of the Regulation now reads as follows:

The weigher may deduct 12% when cooling with ice cream or 7% when cooling with an ice concentrate of unprocessed catch which is weighed on a weighbridge finished for export, directly into a transport vessel. The master shall ensure that refrigerant information is received at the port of landing before the catch is weighed and recorded. If the Directorate of Fisheries' inspection reveals a significant deviation from the ice ratio in the vessel's catch, the vessel's catch shall be weighed in accordance with Article 11 for the next 8 weeks. If there are repeated

⁵⁴ <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/21887>

⁵⁵ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/afladagbokin-smaforrit-fyrir-rafraena-skraningu-afla>

⁵⁶ <https://www.mbl.is/200milur/frettir/2020/08/31/oll-aflaskraning-rafraen-fra-og-med-morgundeginum/>

⁵⁷ <https://rikisendurskodun.is/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Eftirlit-Fiskistofu-Stjornsysluuttek.pdf>

⁵⁸ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/hlutfall-kaelimidils-mai-til-agust>

⁵⁹ <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/22140>

significant deviations from the reported ice ratio in the vessel's catch, the vessel's catch shall be weighed in accordance with Article 11 the next 16 weeks.

Furthermore, Fiskistofa supervised re-weighing 81 times during the 2019/2020 fishing season. Also, in 2019, the Directorate of Fisheries began implementing ISO-31000 the standard intended for effective guidance on risk management for institutions and companies. This is being implemented in an effort to strengthening confidence in the Agency's oversight, and increase efficiency and transparency in the operations of the Directorate of Fisheries.⁶⁰

Acts/Laws and Regulations may be accessed by searching by Act/Law/Regulation No./Year (e.g. 116/2006) at <http://www.althingi.is/lagasafn/> (for Acts/Laws) or <https://www.reglugerd.is/> (for Regulations). In addition to their being easily accessible and searchable online laws and regulations are also effectively disseminated through an online law gazette which provides the most up to date versions of the legislation (i.e. incorporates latest amendments)⁶¹.

The Fisheries Directorate website also prominently displays announcements relating to the management of the fishery including, for example, in relation to allocation of quota, opening and closure of fisheries, license revocations, reminders about legal requirements etc.⁶²

All scientific advice is available online⁶³. Harvest control rules are scrutinised on request by an independent scientific body (ICES) with reports being published online.

Up-to-date maps of fisheries closures are available on-line on the Fisheries Directorate website⁶⁴.

Temporary/sudden closures (generally 2 weeks triggered by high juvenile abundance on fishing grounds) are announced by the Coastguard on VHF radio on a specified wavelength and on the radio before the news and weather (Fisheries Directorate pers. com. site visit November 2021). They are also published on the MFRI website. The short-term closure monitoring (and issuing of) was transferred to Fiskistofa in the fall of 2020. Some regulation regarding the short-term closures was also changed in 2020, whereby the trigger size limit was increased for cod, which led to significant decrease in the number of closures. An updated table as provided by the management authorities (MFRI and Fiskistofa) is shown below.

Table 6. Short term closures in Iceland for the years 2018-2021.

Year	Species	Number of closures
2018	Cod	90
2018	Saithe	4
2018	Shrimp	2
2018	Haddock	1
2019	Cod	50
2019	Haddock	1

⁶⁰ http://www.fiskistofa.is/media/arsskyrslur/Arsskyrsla_Fiskistofu_2020.pdf

⁶¹ <https://www.stjornarradid.is/efst-a-baugi/frettir/stok-frett/2021/09/23/Stjorn-fiskveida-2021-2022-Log-og-reglugerdir/>

⁶² <http://www.fiskistofa.is/>

⁶³ <https://www.ices.dk/advice/Pages/Latest-Advice.aspx>

⁶⁴ <http://atlas.lmi.is/mapview/?application=haf>

2020	Cod	9
2020	Haddock	1
2020	Greenland halibut	1
2021	Sea cucumber	2
2021	Cod	3
2021	Haddock	1

Directorate Inspections at Sea

Days spent by Fisheries Directorate inspectors at sea inspecting vessels is shown in the table below.

Table 7. Directorate inspector days on fishing vessels (Source: Directorate of Fisheries, November 2021 remote audit).

Season	Fishery type: Bottom Trawl	Fishery type: Longline	Fishery type: Gillnet	Other Gears (e.g. pelagic gears used to catch herring)?
2015/16 season days	553	Not Available	81 (60 days cod, 21 days lumpsucker)	Not Available
2016/17 season days	780	230	117 (60 days cod, 57 lumpsucker)	195
2017/2018 season days	570	202	154 (41-113)	156
2018/2019 season days	674	190	155 (59- 36- (Greenland halibut 60)	102
2019/2020 season days	468	92	85 (44-37-4)	127
2021/2021 season days*	315 (1.3% of trips)	2 (0.0% of trips)	0 specifically for cod	59 trips on pelagic trawls (3.4% of trips)

* This season was been heavily affected by Covid-19 restrictions and the Fiskistofa observers were limited by social distancing regulations in their capacity to board and inspect vessels.

7.4.1 Enforcement by Fiskistofa

The Directorate of Fisheries monitors compliance with laws and regulations which apply to fishing, handling of commercial stocks and treatment catch. In many cases, the Directorate of Fisheries is intended to respond to violations of laws and regulations through the application of administrative sanctions. Sanctions are intended to have a protective effect to reduce or prevent further violations. The main resources available to the Directorate of Fisheries for violations are reprimands and revocation of a fishing license. Alleged violations can also be prosecuted by the police and in some cases it is the only available remedy to respond to violations. Then the Directorate of Fisheries can in individual cases, deprive individuals of a fishing license to enforce law enforcement and rules.

Based on the latest available Fiskistofa report, published in 2020, 164 cases were suspected of violations. The table below contains information on the number of cases by category.

Table 8. Fiskistofa suspected violations in 2020. Source: Fiskistofa 2020 Annual Report⁶⁵.

Suspected violation	No.
Veiðar án leyfis / Fishing without a permit	14
Brottkast / offences	11
Vigtun afla / weighing of catch	24
þar af vigtun vigtarleyfishafa of which the weighing by the weighing licensee	9
Framhjálöndun / landing	6
Afladagbók / logbook	40
Vanskil afladagbókar / submitting logbook late	470
Veiðar án aflaheimilda / Fishing with insufficient catch quotas	6
Mál vegna umframaflla / Cases due to excess power	1321
Lax og silungsveiði / salmon and trout fishing	24
Undirmálsfiskur / bottom fish fishing	4
Röng tilgreining tegunda / Incorrect identification of species	3
Grásleppuveiðar / Greenland halibut fishing	13
Strandveiðar / coastal fishing	42
Annað s.s. tilkynningarskylda, löggilding vigtarmanns, vigtun án löggilts vigtarmanns, ónákvæmni við áætlun afla og hindrun eftirlits. / Other s.s. notification obligation, certification of the weigher, weighing without a certified weigher, inaccuracy in the catch plan and obstruction of control.	14

The table below also contains information regarding the penalties for suspected violations. The information does not show whether the decision of the Directorate of Fisheries has been repealed or amended by a ruling of the industry and the Consumer Innovation Council. The information in the tables cannot be compared with each other. One case could deal with several types of offenses. This can result in penalties and correction of catch registration. In addition, several violations by the same party may have been merged into one case.

The Directorate of Fisheries sent 470 letters due to catch logbooks not being returned on time and 1,321 cases arose due to fishing in excess of catch quotas, which then must be rectified by purchasing additional quota to balance the books or no further fishing is permitted.

Table 9. Fiskistofa penalties and follow up for suspected violations in 2020. Source: Fiskistofa 2020 Annual Report⁶⁶.

Penalties for suspected violations	No.
Mál kærð til lögreglu / Cases reported to the police	13
Áminningar / reminders	28
vegna brota gegn reglum um veiðar/ for violations of fishing rules	8
vegna brota gegn reglum um vigtun og skráningu afla / for violations of the rules on weighing and registration of catches	4

⁶⁵ http://www.fiskistofa.is/media/arsskyrslur/Arsskyrsla_Fiskistofu_2020.pdf

⁶⁶ http://www.fiskistofa.is/media/arsskyrslur/Arsskyrsla_Fiskistofu_2020.pdf

vegna brota gegn reglum um afladagbók / for violations of the rules on catch logbooks	5
framhjálföldun / for landing	4
brottkast / discards	4
ófullnægjandi flokkun undirmáls (aflaskráning einnig leiðrétt) / inadequate sub-classification of catches (catch registration also corrected)	3
Svipting veiðileyfis/ Revocation of fishing license	11
vegna brota gegn reglum um veiðar / for violations of fishing rules	4
vegna brota gegn reglum um afladagbók /for violations of the rules on catch logbooks	5
vegna brottkasts / due to discard	2
Ófullnægjandi flokkun undirmáls (aflaskráning einnig leiðrétt) /Insufficient sub-category classification (catch registration also corrected)	1
Hindrún eftirlits / Obstruction of control	1
Afturköllun vigtarleyfis / Revocation of weighing license	1
Afturköllun framkvæmdaleyfis í eða við veiðivatn / Revocation of a construction permit in or near a fishing lake	1
Mál sent öðru stjórnvaldi / Case sent to another authority	4
Ekki tilefni til beitingar viðurlaga eða leiðbeina / No need for sanctions or guidance	40
Leiðrétting aflaskráningar (auk leiðréttingar ófullnægjandi flokkunar undirmáls) / Correction of catch registration (in addition to correction of inadequate sub-classification of subheadings)	12
Leiðbeiningarbréf / Letter of instruction	119
Innheimtumál / Collection issues	
Ítrekunarbréf vegna ógreiddra veiðigjalda á árinu 2020: / Recurring letter regarding unpaid fishing fees in the year 2020:	181
Veiðileyfissviptingar: / Fishing license revocations:	26
Álagning gjalds vegna ólögðs sjávaraflla: / Imposition of a fee for illegal fishing	1323

7.4.2 Enforcement by the Icelandic Coast Guard

At sea surveillance is primarily the remit of the Icelandic Coast Guard (ICG). The Icelandic Coast Guard monitors commercial fishing vessels in Iceland's EEZ on a continuous basis. There are requirements surrounding the reporting of vessel position (manually or using VMS systems) and the reporting of catch on entering or leaving Icelandic waters, among others.

During the remote audit in November 2021 the ICG reported that surveillance in 2020 and 2021 was challenging due to the COVID 19 pandemic. By beginning of March 2020, severe restrictions on direct interactions between people were imposed. This restricted surveillance possibilities on board vessels for Maritime Surveillance and Control agency such as the Icelandic Coast Guard (ICG).

To meet the situation the ICG patrol vessels increased their visibility, using their boats to monitor the fisheries close to the fishing vessels. There was also increased support and cooperation with Directorate of Fisheries by operating DF drones for surveillance from ICG patrol vessels.

In spite of the Coast Guard efforts the pandemic has had its impact. Fewer inspections and boardings of vessels resulted in less measuring of fish, which was reflected in fewer Short Time Closures in 2020 and 2021 (see Table 6) and none based on Fisheries inspections by ICG. The overall number of inspections since 1988 is shown below.

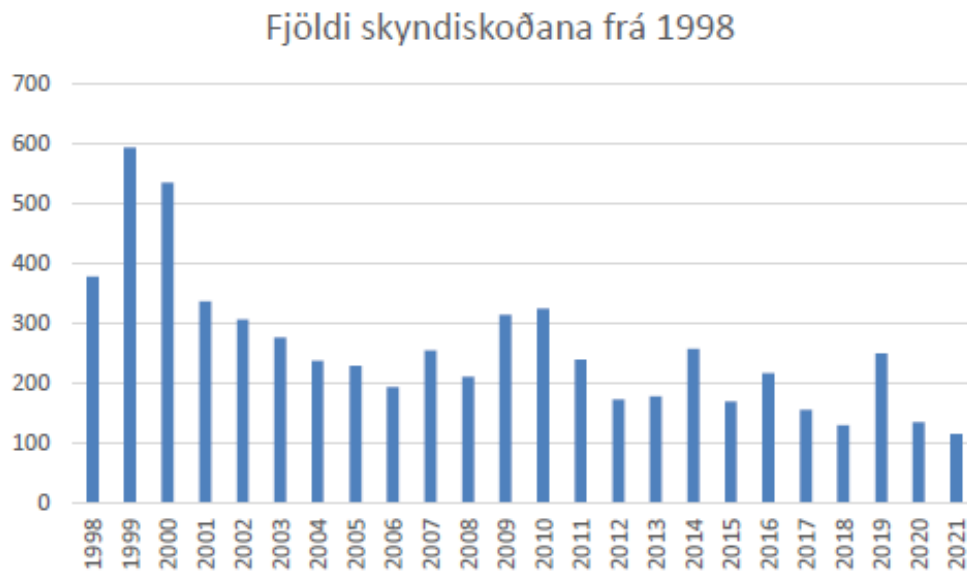


Figure 13. Overall number of ICG inspection from 1988 to 2021. Source: provided by the ICG during the remote audit, November 2021.

Also, we show here below a figure for the amount of air surveillance performed in 2021.

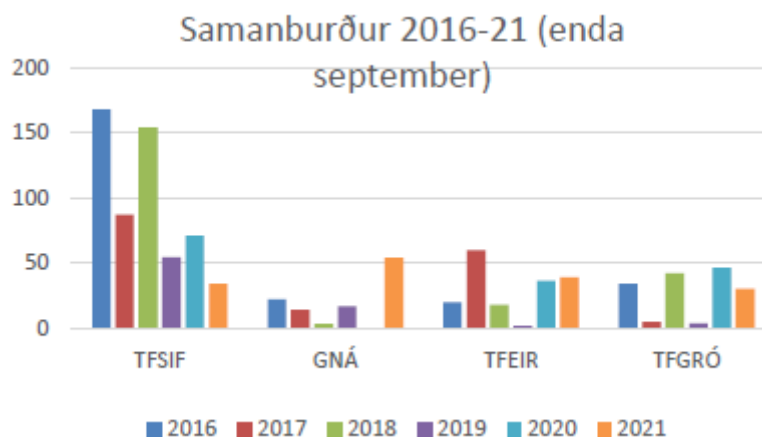


Figure 14. Air surveillance by four different Icelandic assets from 2016 to 2021. Samtals is the total. Source: provided by the ICG during the remote audit, November 2021.

Seven foreign flag vessels were also inspected the ICG in 2021, three Faroese vessels of which one was a longliner and two capelin fishing vessels, and four Norwegian capelin fishing vessels, all within Icelandic EEZ.

In terms of overall infringements, 8 reports of apparent infringements were reported in 2021, noting however that not all reports are due to fishing infringements and one report can include more than one type of Apparent Infringement. The types of apparent infringement in 2021, included: Lögskráningar/Crew registry, Veiðar /Fisheries, Veiðileyfi /Fishing permit, Ferilvöktun /Vessel monitoring, Farþegafjöldi /Passengers, Haffæri /Sea worthiness and a new addition Fyrirmælum ekki fylgt /Instructions not obeyed. These are shown below (until the end of September 2021) compared to historical data up to 2016.

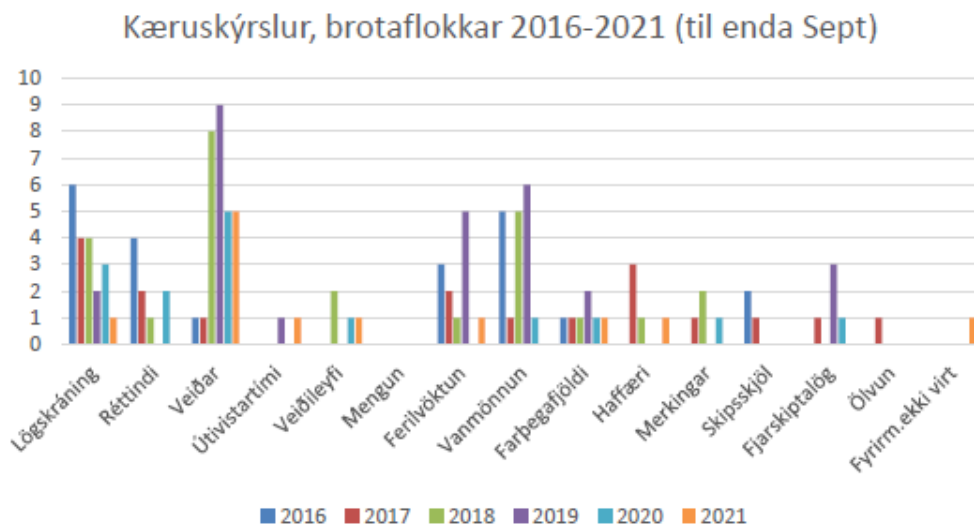


Figure 15. Overview of ICG infringement reports in 2016-2021. Source: provided by the ICG during the remote audit, November 2021.

From these eight reports, 12 apparent infringements were reported in 2021. For 2021, infringements on Veiðar /Fishing are the 5 most common, and adding Veiðileyfi /Fishing permit brings the total number of infringements specifically regarding fisheries to 6. No apparent infringement were reported in 2021 in the following categories; Réttindi /License, Mengun /Pollution, Vanmönnum /Manning, Merkingar /Markings, Skipsskjöl /Ships documents, Fjarskiptalög /Communications or Ölvun /intoxication. Of the 8 vessels that were reported for apparent infringements in 2021, up to end of September, 6 vessels are less than 24 meters in length; 2 are more than 24 meters in length, one of which is a passenger vessel.

7.5 Bycatch, habitat and ecosystem update

Associated species catch and bycatch to the fishery

The Icelandic groundfish fishery is multispecies in nature with vessels simultaneously targeting numerous species. With regards to catches, most commercially fished species in Iceland are now part of the ITQ system. Discarding is prohibited and comparison between observer measured catch compositions and self-reporting by fishers ensures that a high level of compliance with the ban on discarding is maintained. The species listed below are those that were identified during the full assessment in 2019⁶⁷. A status update has been provided.

Table 10. Status of bycatch and associated species in the tusk target and non-target fisheries.

Status of bycatch and associated species in the tusk target and non-target fisheries as identified during the full assessment from historic average catches for each relevant gear type. All data and information is derived from the MFRI Advice page⁶⁸ for each individual species.

PORSKUR – COD (*Gadus morhua*)⁶⁹

MFRI assesses that fishing pressure on the stock is above HRMSY. Spawning stock size is above MSY Btrigger, Bpa, and Blim. The stock was benchmarked in 2021 (ICES, 2021b), resulting in a downward revision of recruitment and stock size, and an upward revision in the fishing pressure. This is largely because relationship between stock-in-numbers and survey for age groups 6-9 was linear but is now assumed nonlinear, weight of survey indices of younger fish (ages 1-5) is now less than for older fish (ages 6-9) and survey indices of 1- and 2-year old fish from IS-SMH is no longer used in the assessment. These changes lead to better consistency between the assessment and the survey dynamics. The reference biomass in 2020 is thus estimated 20% lower in this year's assessment compared with last year's assessment.

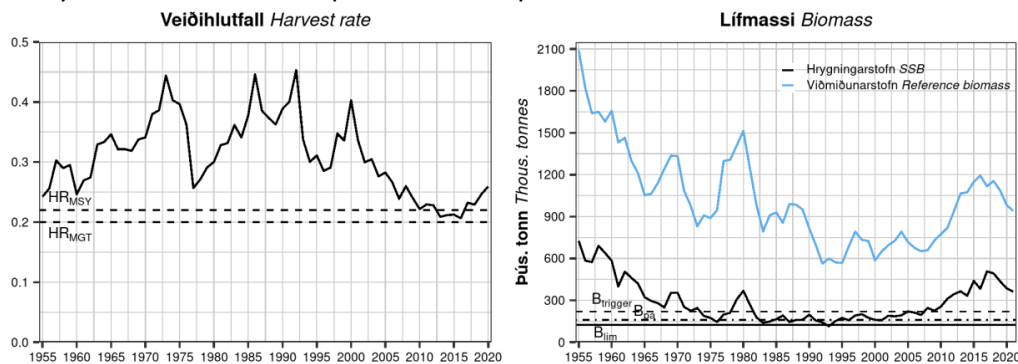


Figure 16. Icelandic cod harvest rate and biomass.

ÝSA – HADDOCK (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*)⁷⁰

The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) has decreased since 2008, but stabilized above MSY Btrigger in recent years. MFRI and ICES assesses that fishing pressure on the stock is above both HRMSY and HRpa and below HRLim. Spawning stock size is above MSY Btrigger, Bpa and Blim.

⁶⁷ <https://www.responsiblefisheries.is/media/1/form-11.2-icetusk-initial-assessment-final-report-and-determination-1.pdf>

⁶⁸ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/en/harvesting-advice>

⁶⁹ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/01-cod1259506.pdf>

⁷⁰ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/02-haddock1259378.pdf>

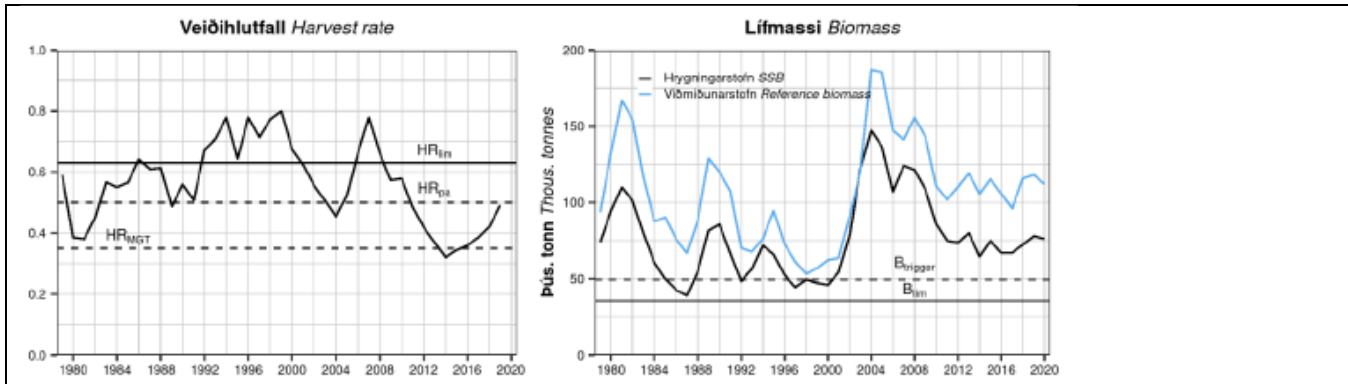


Figure 17. Icelandic haddock harvest rate and biomass.

UFSI – SAITHE (*Pollachius virens*)⁷¹

The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) is currently at the time-series maximum. MFRI assesses that fishing pressure on this stock is below HRMSY, HR_{pa}, and HR_{lim}; spawning stock size is above MSY B_{trigger}, B_{pa}, and B_{lim}.

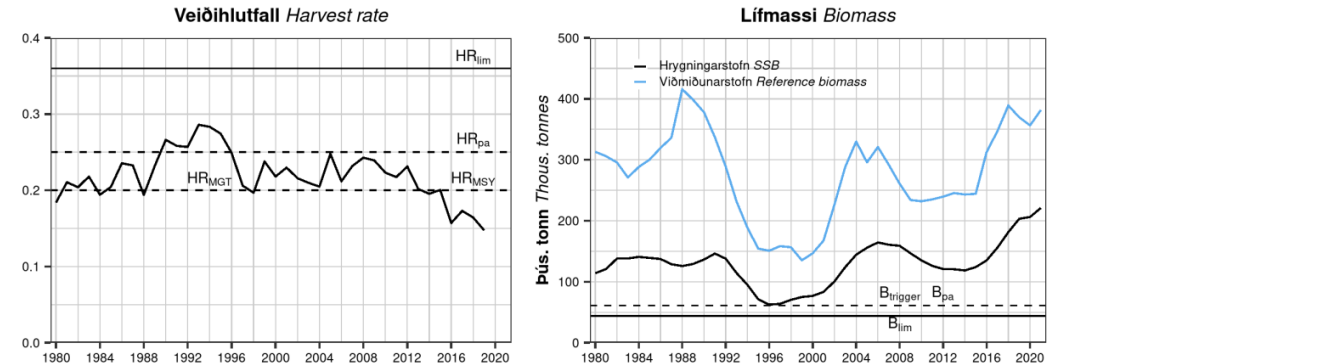


Figure 18. Icelandic saithe harvest rate and biomass.

GULLKARFI – GOLDEN REDFISH (*Sebastes norvegicus*)⁷²

MFRI and ICES assesses that fishing pressure on the stock is above FMSY and below F_{pa} and F_{lim}, and that spawning-stock size is above MSY B_{trigger}, B_{pa}, and B_{lim}.

⁷¹ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/03-saithe1259383.pdf>

⁷² <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/04-goldenredfish1259391.pdf>

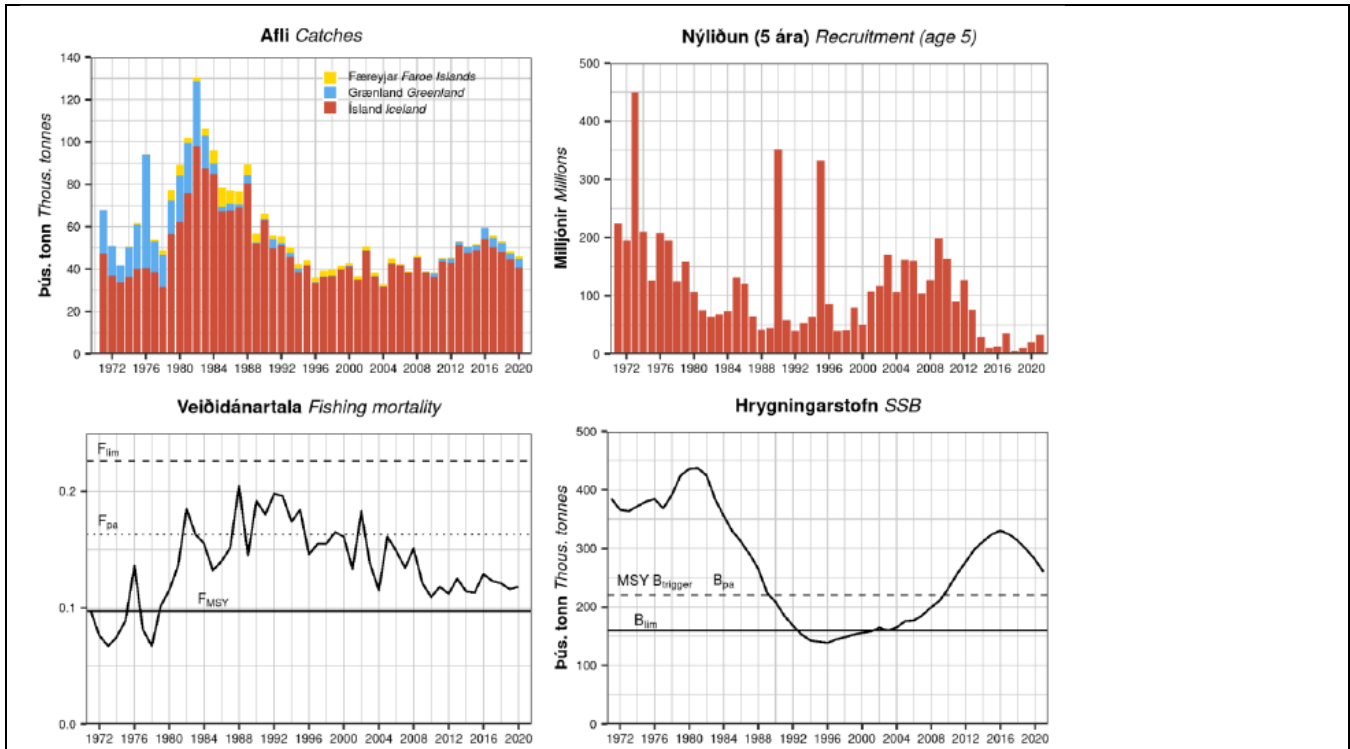


Figure 19. Icelandic golden redfish harvest rate and biomass.

DJÚPKARFI – DEMERSAL BEAKED REDFISH (*Sebastes mentella*)⁷³

The IS-SMH biomass index has been variable since 2012. Since 2007, survey estimates have consistently shown very low estimates for juveniles (≤ 30 cm). The biomass index shows some stability in recent years although recruitment is very limited and cause for caution. Catches in the previous 5 years have generally been in agreement with advice and TAC.

⁷³ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/05-demersalsmentella1259395.pdf>

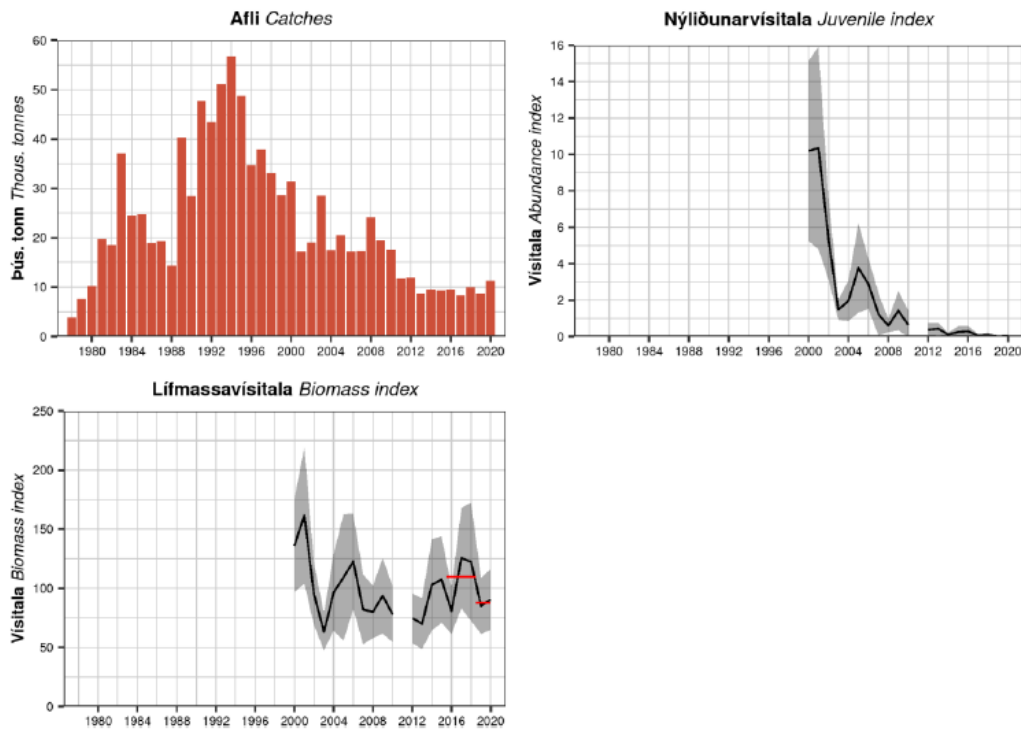


Figure 20. Catches, and IS-SMH juvenile (≤ 30 cm) and biomass indices. Grey areas represent 95% CI. Red horizontal lines indicate average biomass indices for 2016–2018 and for 2019–2020 used in the advice calculations.

GRÁLÚÐA – GREENLAND HALIBUT (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*)⁷⁴

The stock biomass is stable and is above MSY Btrigger. Fishing mortality is estimated to be just below FMSY.

⁷⁴ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/08-greenlandhalibut1259406.pdf>

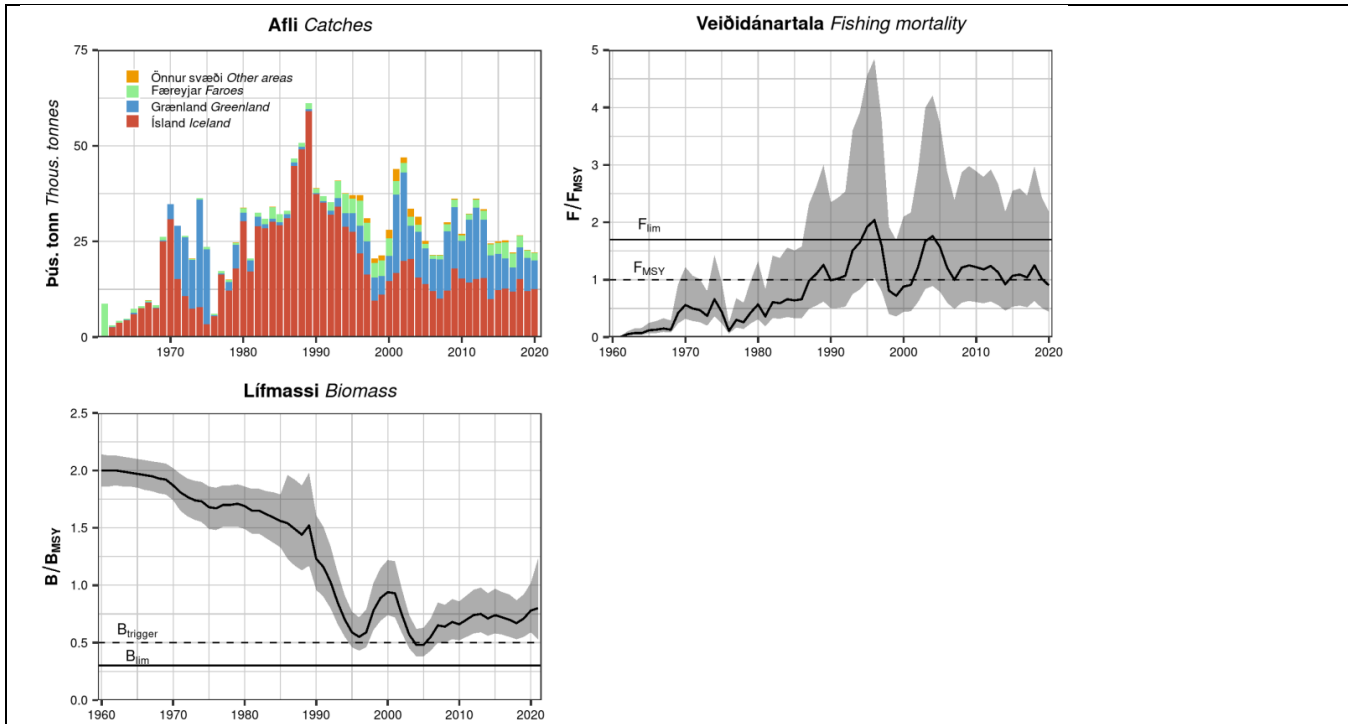


Figure 21. Greenland halibut harvest rate and biomass.

STEINBÍTUR–ATLANTIC WOLFFISH (*Anarhichas lupus*)⁷⁵

Fishing pressure on the stock is below FMSY. MFRI cannot assess the stock status relative to maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and precautionary approach (PA) reference points, because the reference points are undefined. However, exploitable biomass is assessed to be above candidate reference points.

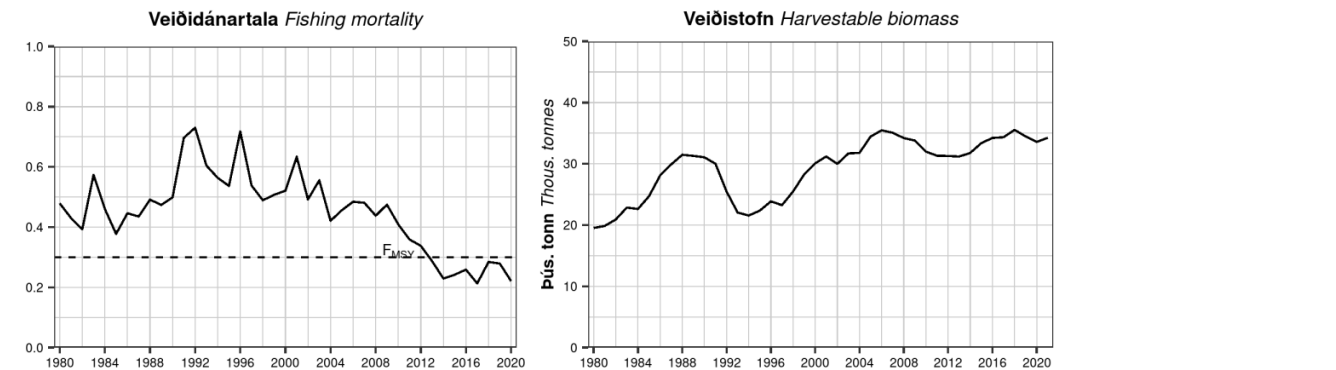


Figure 22. Atlantic wolffish harvest rate and biomass.

LANGA – LING (*Molva molva*)⁷⁶

The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) and the reference biomass (ling >75 cm) in 2013–2018 were among the highest in the time series, but are now declining. Harvest rate (HR) has decreased since 2008 and is now the

⁷⁵ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/15-atlanticwolffish1259434.pdf>

⁷⁶ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/17-ling1259442.pdf>

lowest in the time series, but above HR_{MGT} and HR_{MSY} . Recruitment was high from 2004 to 2011 but has declined to the levels of the 1980s and 1990s.

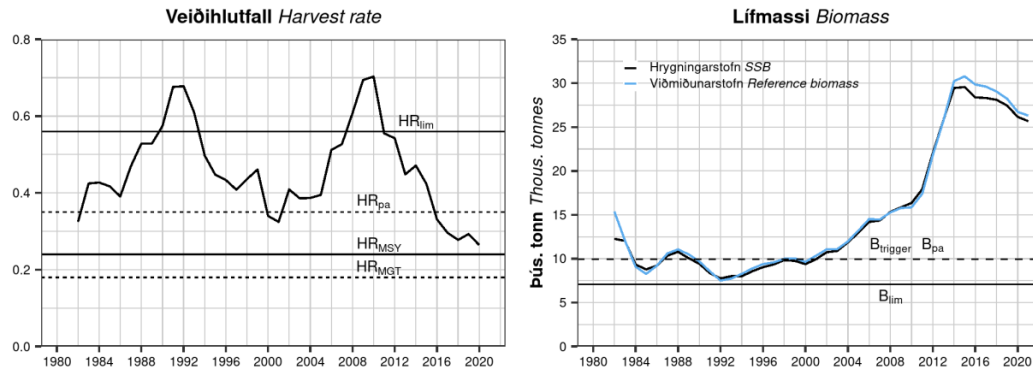


Figure 23. Ling harvest rate and biomass.

GULLLAX – GREATER SILVER SMELT (*Argentina silus*)⁷⁷

Fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY} , F_{pa} and F_{lim} and spawning-stock size is above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and B_{lim} .

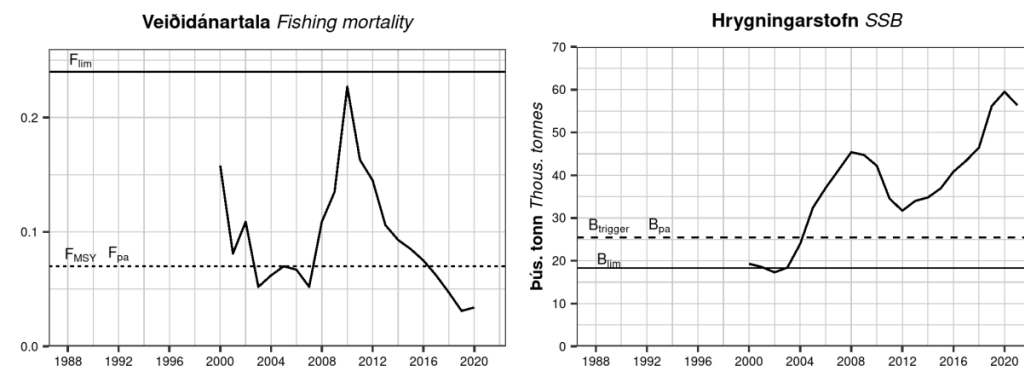


Figure 24. Greater silver smelt harvest rate and biomass.

Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) and vulnerable species interactions

Context to the tusk fishery. Some of the updates below are only partially relevant to the tusk fishery because although (cod) gillnets are responsible for the majority of issues relating to seabird and marine mammal bycatch, tusk catches from gillnet gear in the past 5 years have been negligible, at around 0.2% of total gillnet catches. However, bycatch updates from longline (main gear used to catch >95% of tusk) and trawl gear (very small catches used to catch <4% of tusk) are certainly more relevant to the tusk fishery.

The MFRI has not provided any further bycatch data for marine mammals and seabirds. The latest data from 2016 to 2019 was provided at the previous surveillance.

Relevant updates for species for which data is available is provided below. All the species below were identified and analyzed as vulnerable or ETP species in the full assessment that resulted in the current certificate for this fishery (see relevant audit report at <https://www.responsiblefisheries.is/certification/certified-fisheries>).

⁷⁷ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/23-greatersilversmelt1259465.pdf>

Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*)

Harbour porpoises are classified as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List⁷⁸ (population trend unknown, last assessed in 2020). They are also classified as Least Concern in the Icelandic National Redlist (based on a 2016 assessment)⁷⁹. Annual estimates of harbour porpoise by-catch have decreased in recent years as gillnet effort has decreased (see table below), from a high of 7,300 animals in 2003 to about 1600 animals in 2009–2013⁸⁰ and down to about 750 animals in 2014-2015.

The latest Report of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee Working Group on Harbour Porpoise (19-22 March 2019)⁸¹ reported the following about the Icelandic harbour porpoise population.

After reviewing the assessment and noting the recent decline in by-catch, the WG agreed that there was no specific cause for concern for harbour porpoises in Iceland. However, they also concluded that the lack of time and expertise meant they were not in a position to provide management advice on sustainable removals.

An aerial survey in Iceland is planned for harbour porpoise in 2023.

Harbour seals

The MFRI 2021 advice for harbour seals⁸² indicates that the 2020 harbour seal census resulted in a population estimated of 10,319 animals (95% confidence intervals: 6,733-13,906). The current population estimate is 69% lower than the first abundance estimate from 1980 and the estimate is 14% under the management objective of 12 thous. Animals (Hafrannsóknastofnun 2021). In 2019, new regulation regarding seal hunting in Iceland was enacted (Atvinnuvega- og nýsköpunarráðuneytið 2019). All seal hunting is banned, but it is possible to obtain an exemption for traditional hunt. It is also forbidden to sell Icelandic seal products. Bycatch in gillnets is probably the highest mortality risk for harbour seals in Iceland currently. Limited data are available on seal bycatch, but data collected by on-board observers of the Directorate of Fisheries, and in the MFRI gillnet survey, indicate that on average, 1389 (coefficient of variation, CV=35) harbour seals have been bycaught annually in the lumpfish fishery between 2014 and 2018. Bycatch in cod gillnet fishery and bottom trawls is less common and more uncertainty associated with the bycatch estimates in those fisheries. Between 2014 and 2018, it has been estimated that annually, 15 harbour seals were bycaught in cod gillnet fisheries (CV=102) and 17 harbour seals in bottom trawls (CV=100) (Hafrannsóknastofnun, 2019). Negative effects from the cod gillnet fisheries (and associated fisheries that land fish in those nets) are considered to be very limited.

Other marine mammals

The MFRI confirmed that no interaction with Blue whales and Northern right whales recorded in recent years.

There are no further updates from NAMMCO or the MFRI in relation to other marine mammal species (i.e. seals), aside from what we reported in the previous surveillance report.

⁷⁸ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/17027/50369903>

⁷⁹ <https://www.ni.is/node/27406>

⁸⁰ Pálsson ÓK, Gunnlaugsson Th, and Ólafsdóttir D. 2015. By-catch of seabirds and marine mammals in Icelandic Fisheries. Marine Research no 178. <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/fjolrit-178pdf>

⁸¹ https://nammco.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/final-report_hpwg-2019.pdf

⁸² <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/radgjof-landselur20201286028.pdf>

Pingers testing

The MFRI has been conducting pinger/acoustic device testing in gillnet fisheries for several years now, with mixed results. The last device tested in 2019-2020 showed promise, and publication on the results and possible larger scale trials were planned for 2021 (MFRI, personal communication, November 4th 2021).

Gulper sharks

Some catch of leaf scale gulper sharks has been recorded, last in 2016. Survey trends are presented below.

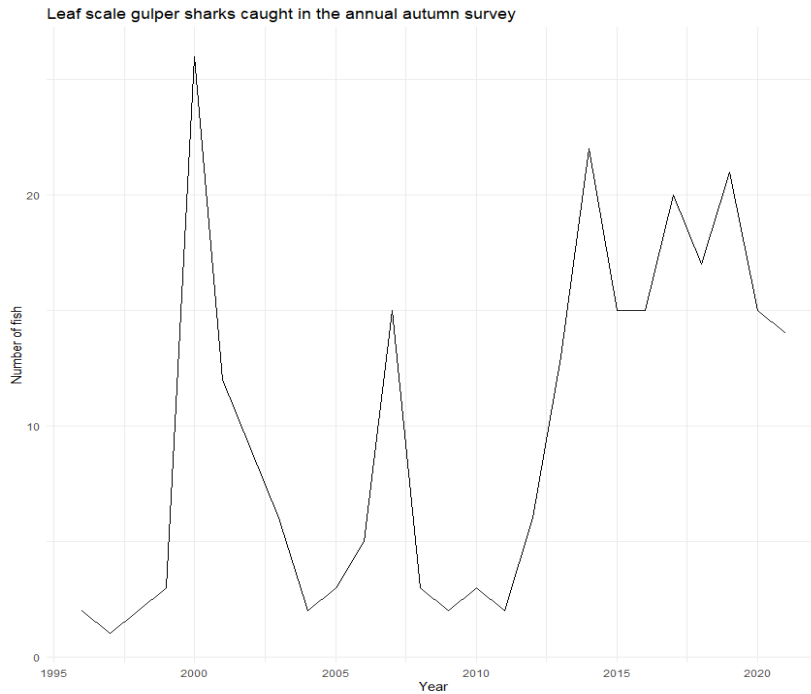


Figure 25. Leaf scale gulper shark caught in the annual autumn survey, from 1995 to 2021.

Grey skate (*Dipturus flossada / batis*) landed catch in 2019 was 194 t, and 160 t in 2020. Survey abundance is variable but has been on average relatively stable in recent years.

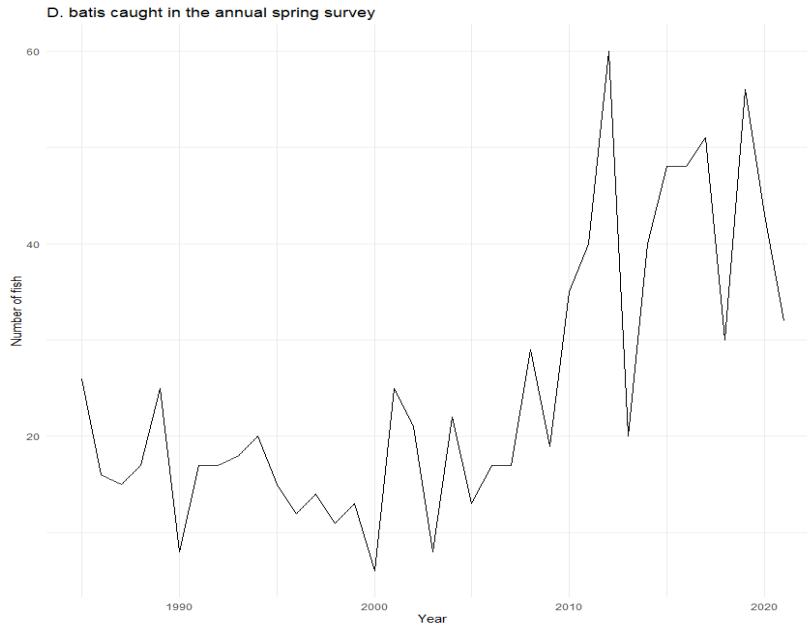


Figure 26. D. batis caught in the annual spring survey, from 1985 to 2021.

Landed catch of dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) was 1 t in 2019 and 3 t in 2020. Survey trends are very sporadic.

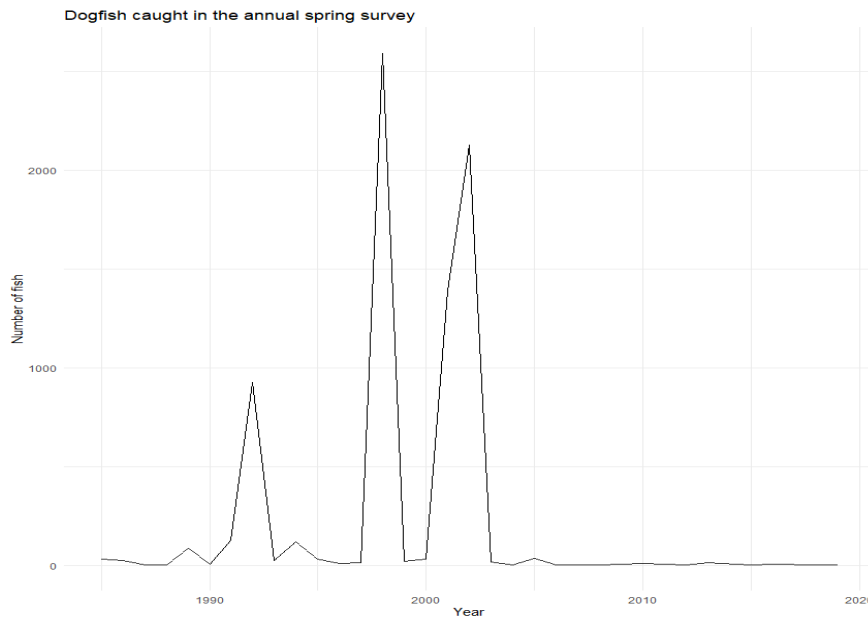


Figure 27. Dogfish caught in the annual spring survey, 1985 to 2021.

Landed catch of Greenland shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*) was 6 t in 2019 and 2 t in 2020. Survey trends are also very sporadic.

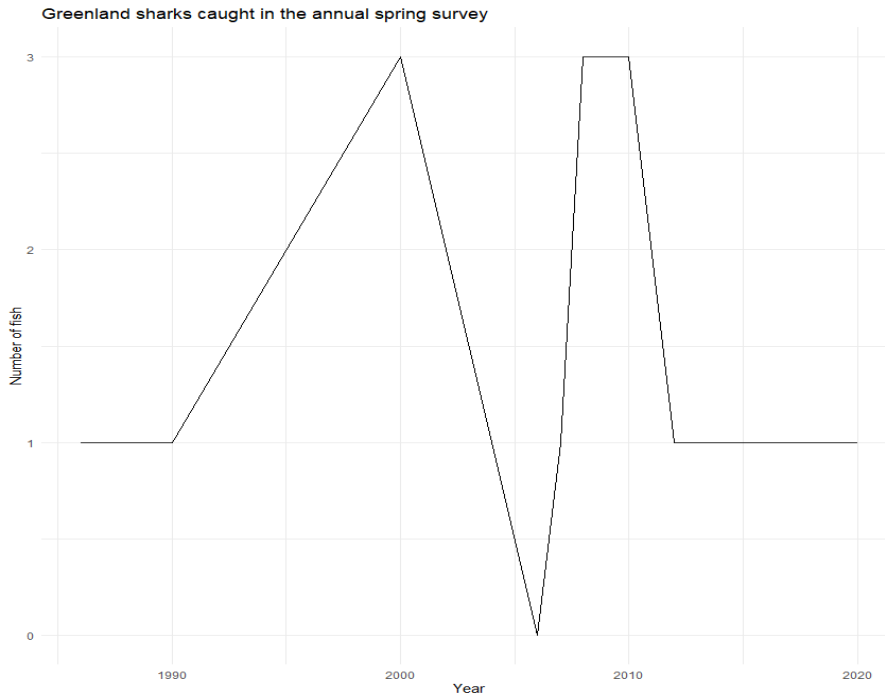


Figure 28. Greenland shark caught in the annual spring survey.

Landed catch of porbeagle in 2019 was 2.6 t and 3.6 t in 2020.

Porbeagles (*Lamna nasus*) are rarely caught in surveys, but two were caught in the autumn survey in 2021 and one in the gillnet survey in 2019.

7.5.1.1 Habitat

Trawl effort spatial extent

The ICES 2020 Icelandic ecosystem overview report⁸³ indicates that within the ecoregion, abrasion caused by bottom trawls has been shown to impact fragile three-dimensional biogenic habitats in particular (e.g. sponge aggregations, coral gardens, and coral reefs), with impacts happening mainly in deeper waters (> 200 m). Effects of bottom trawling on soft substrates in shallow waters have been shown to be minor. Other impacts involve overturning boulders, scouring the seabed, and direct removal of and/or damage to epifaunal organisms.

Using vessel monitoring system (VMS) and logbook data ICES estimates that mobile bottom trawls used by commercial fisheries in the 12 m+ vessel category have been deployed over approximately 132,485 km² of the ecoregion in 2018, corresponding to ca. 17.5 % of the ecoregion’s spatial extent. A map of spatial distribution of bottom trawl effort is shown below. The Icelandic bottom trawl fleet consists of about 50 vessels (30–80 m length) fishing mainly for cod, haddock, saithe, redfish, and Greenland halibut.

⁸³ https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2020/2020/EcosystemOverview_IcelandicWaters_2020.pdf

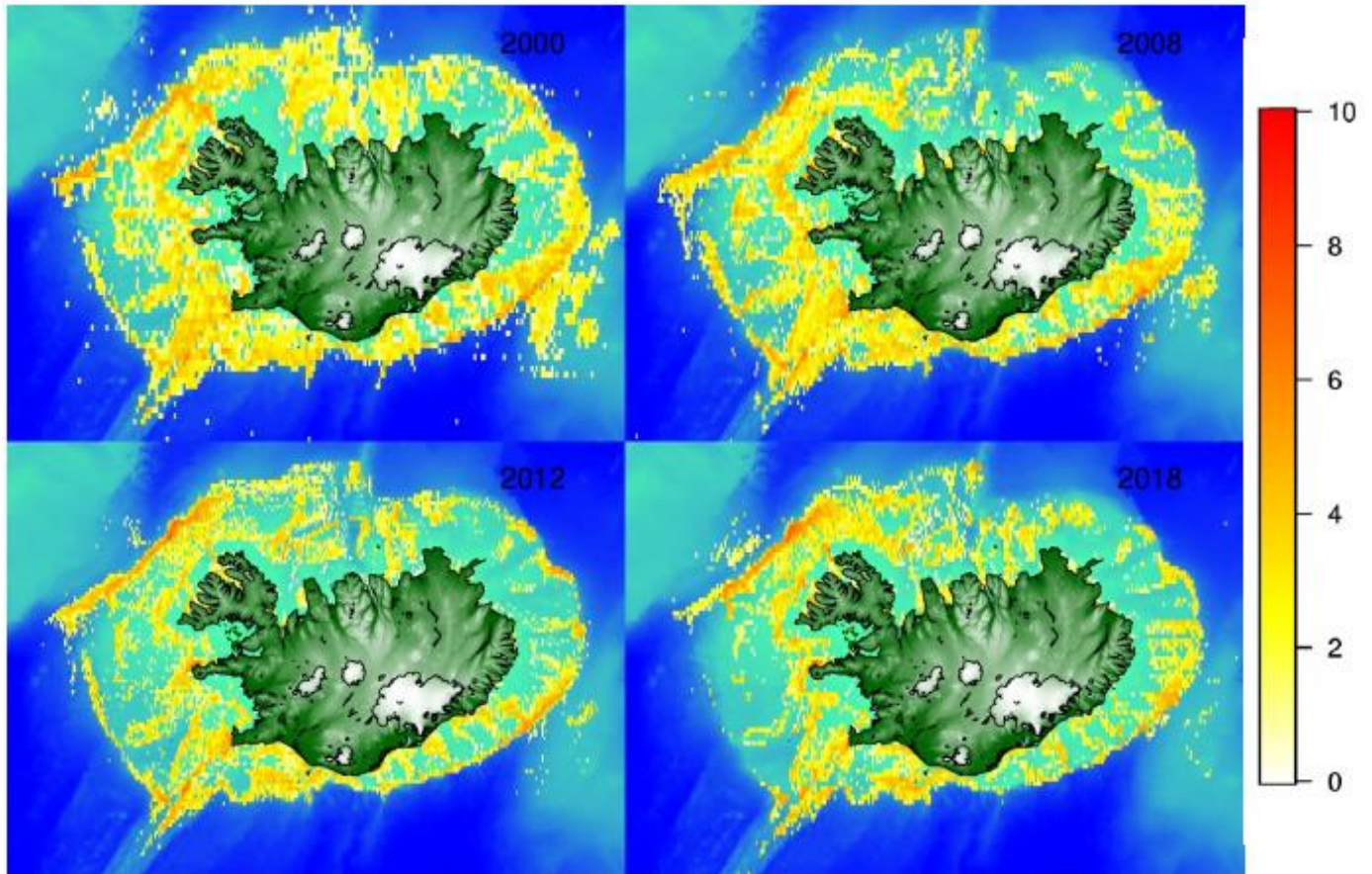


Figure 29. Spatial distribution of bottom-trawl effort (1000 kW hr) based on logbooks from trawl fishery targeting demersal fish, shrimp, and Norway lobster in 2000, 2008, 2012, and 2018.

Habitat mapping

Seabed mapping is one of the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute’s projects which started with the launching of the research vessel, Arni Fridriksson RE 200, in the year 2000. The vessel is equipped with a multibeam echo sounder which enables a detailed mapping of the seabed. Until spring 2017 the multibeam echo sounder was of the type Kongsberg EM 300 (30 kHz, 135 beams, 2°x2°) but was then updated to Kongsberg EM 302 (30 kHz, 432 beams, 1°x2°, water column data) and a subbottom profiler, Kongsberg TOPAS PS18.

From the year 2017 the seabed mapping project is one of MFRI’s major initiatives for the next 12 years. The main emphasis is to gain information within the economic zone which is useful for multifaceted purpose and is a prerequisite for scientific approach for sustainable utilization, protection and research of resources in the ocean, on, in and under the seabed. The detailed mapping has been valuable for the research of the marine environment, the physical properties of the ocean and the marine geology. Mapping fishing grounds and vulnerable areas, i.e. benthic communities and habitats, has played a significant role. An update of their work has been provided below.

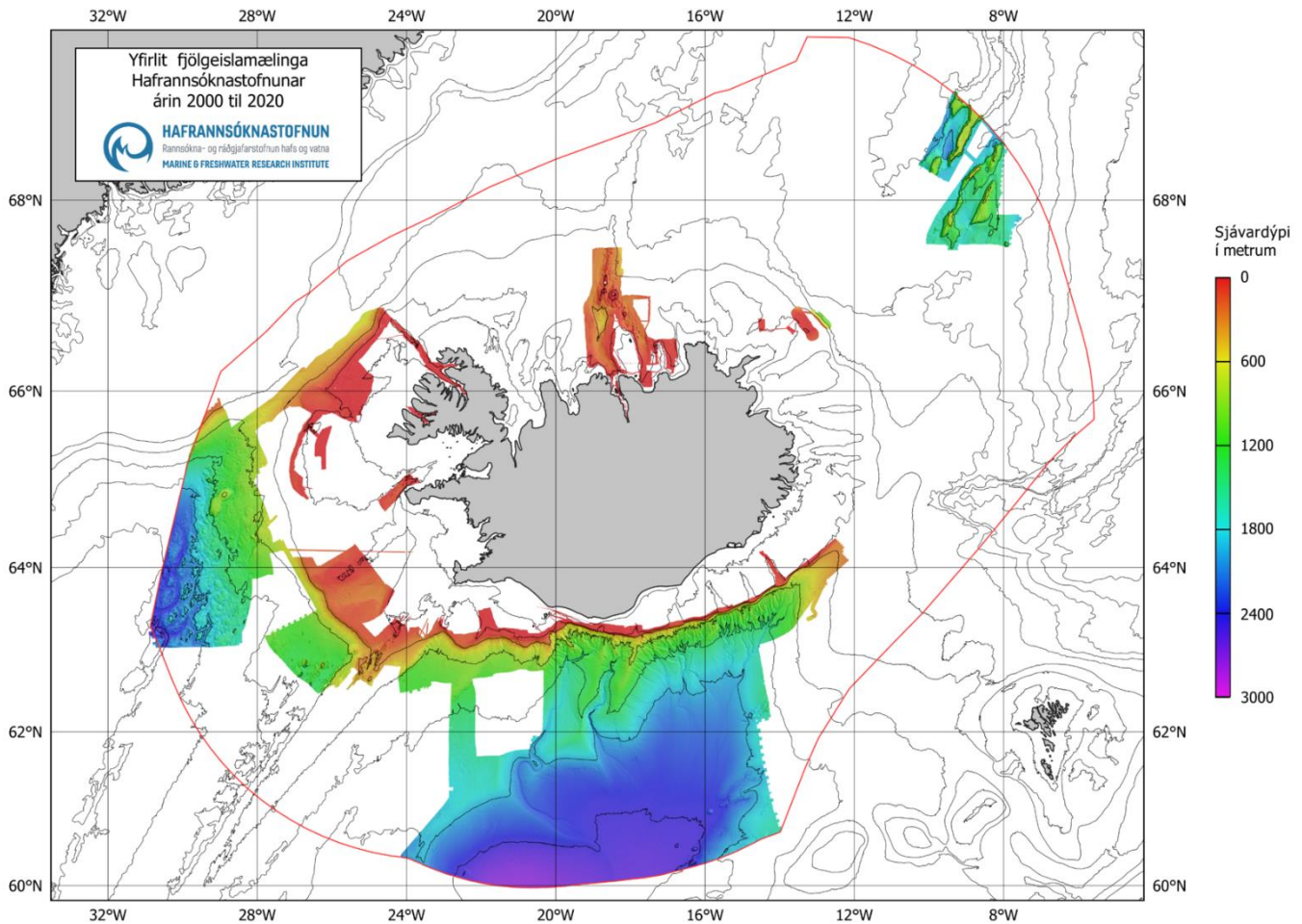


Figure 30. MFRI overview of seabed mapping in Icelandic waters between 2000 and 2020. Source: <https://www.hafogvatn.is/en/research/seabed-mapping>.

NovasArc project

Records of sensitive benthic species were used in the project NovasArc – a Nordic project on vulnerable marine ecosystems and anthropogenic activities in arctic and sub - arctic waters (<https://novasarc.hafogvatn.is>). In the NovasArc project, distribution forecast maps were prepared for sensitive species off the Faroe Islands, eastern Greenland, Iceland and Norway. The forecast maps indicate areas that could be suitable for these species based on available information on known distribution and environmental factors related to them (Buhl - Mortensen et al. 2019)⁸⁴. These maps were also compared to the footprint of bottom fishing and the collision between them discussed. The project was a collaborative project of the Marine Research Institute with Havstovan in the Faroe Islands and the Institute of Marine Research in Bergen, supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers NORDEN.

The 2019 NovasArc report highlighted through a risk assessment method that within the Icelandic EEZ, overlap between the fishing effort and the optimal predicted habitat was high for several VMEs, including sublittoral sea pen communities (54.8% of their optimal habitat), hard bottom sponge aggregations (51.2%), stylasterid corals (50.5%), cold-water coral reefs (50.4%), soft bottom sponge aggregations (41.6%), and hard bottom gorgonians

⁸⁴ <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1304079/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

(42.3%). However, the authors also note that historical trawl disturbance may have decreased the amount of suitable habitat for these benthic groups.

Also, a paper was published by Burgos et. al (2020)⁸⁵ based on the findings of the Novasarc work. The group that produced this publication has received an additional funding to develop this work further including managerial aspects in 2021. The MFRI highlighted during the November 2021 site visits that Novasarc II is now ongoing and will concentrate on updating predictive models and discuss the output for managerial purposes.

Benthos recorded in the MFRI survey

Recording of benthic animals as a bycatch in the autumn MFRI trawl took place for the fifth time in 2020 (Jakobsdóttir et al. 2020⁸⁶) (Figure 31). Benthic animals were collected at 105 stations. Benthic animals are classified into species as far as possible, counted and weighed. Amount of benthic animals in tows ranged from 0.028 kg to 97.5 kg and the number of individuals counted in tow ranged from 1 to 1,213 (Fig. 21). The largest number of individuals were fungi. Maximum number of identified species or groups in tow there were 71 species at a station west of Kolbeinseyjarhrygg and the fewest species, a total of 3, occurred two stations in the continental shelf south of the country. At one point west of Reykjanes was the total weight of benthic animals in a tow was 97.5 kg and a total of 50 species, most of which contained 80 kg of coral. Sponges weighed the most at other stations. Six benthic species were identified at the Faroe Islands ridge that have not occurred in previous surveys. A total of over 700 species have been identified from the five autumn surveys since benthos bycatch has been recorded.

⁸⁵ <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2020.00131/full>

⁸⁶ Klara Björg Jakobsdóttir, Höskuldur Björnsson, Jón Sólmundsson, Kristján Kristinsson, Steinunn Hilma Ólafsdóttir og Valur Bogason. 2020. Protected areas within Iceland's territorial waters and fragile ecosystems. Summary for the Ministry of Industry and Innovation of the available data from areas in the sea around Iceland that have been closed for over 10 years and fishing with demersal gear has been restricted or banned. HV 2021-49 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/hv2020-54.pdf>

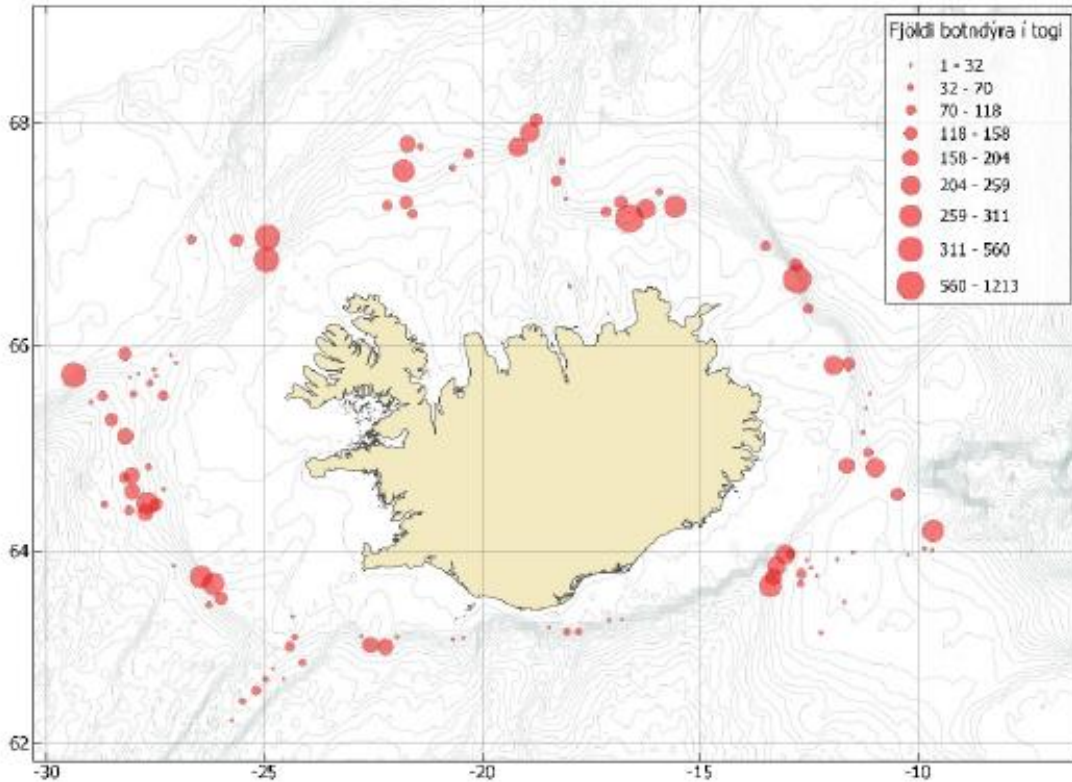


Figure 31. Benthos recorded in the autumn Icelandic autumn groundfish survey in 2020. Number (kg) per tow.

The Ministry of Industry and Innovation has begun work on formulating a protection policy for vulnerable bottom ecosystems (or vulnerable marine ecosystems) within the Icelandic economic zone to shape procedures for the protection of fragile benthic ecosystems based on international standards criteria that Iceland is signatory to. This includes defined demersal fishing areas and protected areas. Therefore, the Ministry requested that the Marine Research Institute compile information in addition to evaluating five aspects of fragile benthic ecosystems, reported on by Ólafsdóttir et al. 2021⁸⁷. These five aspects are:

1. An assessment of which species in Icelandic waters are considered fragile ecosystems in Iceland. At the same time, an overview of the state of knowledge is compiled the distribution and density of the species. The summary will take into account FAO guidelines as well as the work of ICES, NAFO and NEAFC.
2. Define for each species or groups that can be considered as characteristic species ecosystems, when their density is considered so high that an area is considered to be a fragile ecosystem.
3. Perform an analysis of any of the areas that have been closed for a long time to evaluate if it meets the criteria for being considered a vulnerable bottom ecosystem.
4. Propose a definition of what can be considered a significant negative effect from bottom fishing gear on fragile bottom ecosystems.

⁸⁷ Steinunn Hilma Ólafsdóttir, Stefán Á. Ragnarsson, Julian M. Burgos, Einar Hjörleifsson, Klara Jakobsdóttir og Guðmundur Þórðarson. 2021. Protection of fragile benthic ecosystems. Summary of information and evaluation of five factors is concern sensitive bottom ecosystems for the Ministry of Industry and Innovation. HV 2021-50 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/hv2021-50.pdf>

5. Define demersal fishing areas where fishing has taken place for the past 20 years (or other years if this describes fishing in recent decades better), with bottom fishing gear (bottom trawls, seines, nets, lines, dredges).

One of the outputs of the report is shown below. The map below shows details of closed areas (in grey), and in yellow or red the distribution of areas where bottom trawling has taken place for 4 years or less and 5 years or more between 2009-2019. Light yellow surfaces show shrimp and lobster trawl fishing grounds.

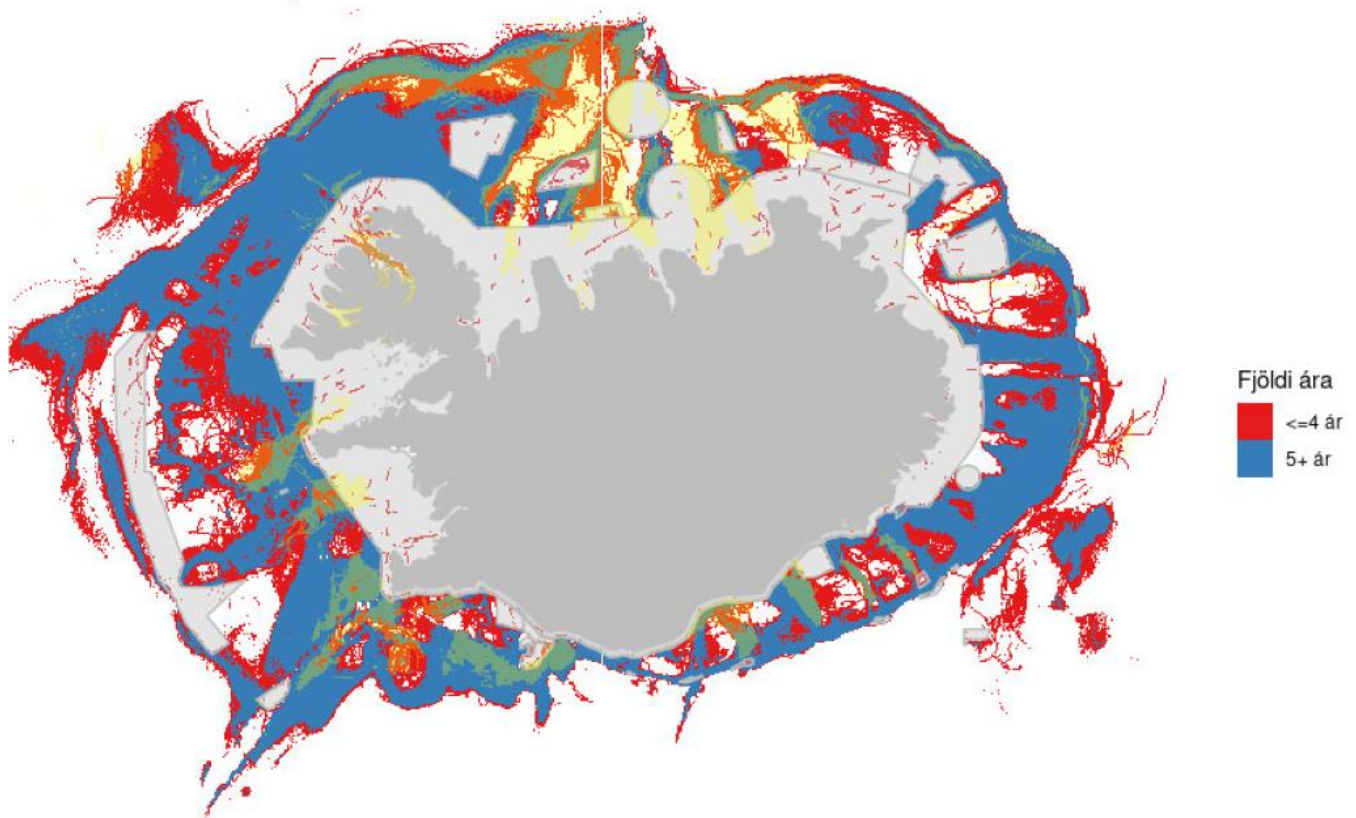


Figure 32. Long term closures and selected fishing distribution around Iceland between 2009-2019.

Long term area closures

Fiskistofa has created a new GIS platform where all spatial data relevant to Icelandic fisheries management has been integrated. The figure below for example contains information on long term spatial closures in Iceland.

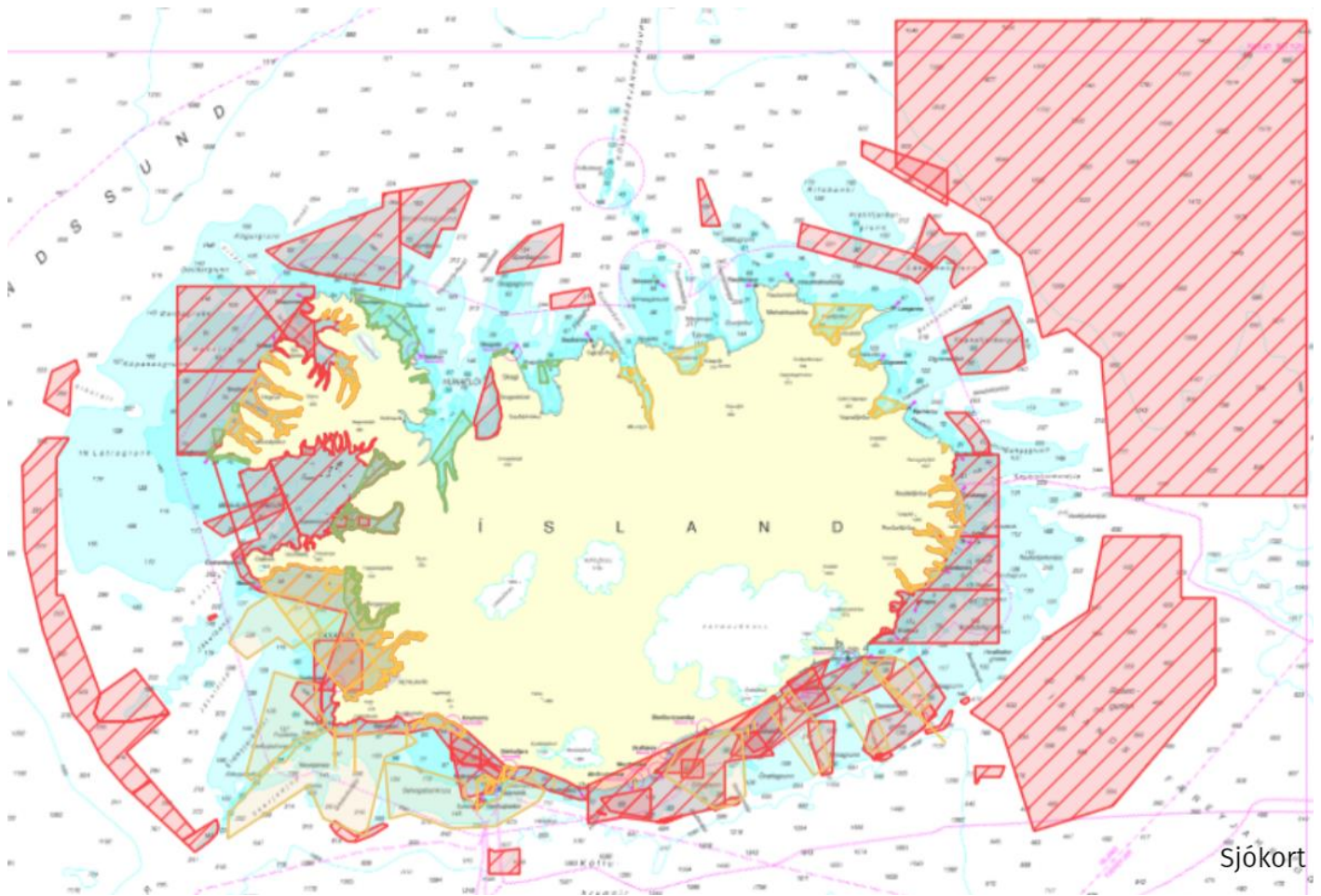


Figure 33. Regulatory long-term closures in Iceland, all gear types. Red closures tend to be bottom trawl and sometime all gear closures. Yellow/orange boxes with internal lines near the coast (East, West and North West) are longline closures. Open yellow/orange boxes south and southeast of Iceland are lobster trawl restricted areas. For details on each closure including dates and gear restrictions please click on each red box in the Atlas/GIS website managed by Fiskistofa at <http://atlas.lmi.is/mapview/?application=haf> .

Bottom trawl effort from the same map can be seen in the figure below.



Figure 34. Bottom trawl effort in Iceland. Red areas indicate highest effort, yellow areas indicate medium effort, while blue dots indicate lower effort. Source: Atlas/GIS website managed by Fiskistofa at <http://atlas.lmi.is/mapview/?application=haf>.

The MRFI has proposed new closures to protect vulnerable ecosystems to the Ministry of Fisheries.

7.5.1.2 Foodweb considerations

Tusk feed on a variety of crustaceans and fishes, such as Nephrops, crabs, Norway pout and redfish. For the current fishery there are no further updates in terms of foodweb considerations aside from the data from Sturludottir *et al.* 2018⁸⁸ which described the results of an ecological end-to-end model built using the Atlantic framework for the Icelandic marine ecosystem, and in which Icelandic tusk (likely grouped within the classes FOC=Other codfish, FDC=Demersal commercial or FDF=other demersal fish) was found to be reasonably well connected to other key fish species as both prey and predator, and as such did not appear to be a key prey species in the Icelandic marine ecosystem, like capelin for example.

⁸⁸ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165783618301620>

7.6 Update on consistency to the fundamental clauses of the RFM Fishery Standard

This section includes a brief update on changes in the fishery relevant to the fundamental clauses of the IRF Fishery Standard and a statement of continuing consistency (or not) to those fundamental clauses.

Section 1. Fisheries Management

7.6.1 Clause 1.1 Fisheries Management System and Plan for Stock Assessment, Research, Advice and Harvest Controls

1.1	Fisheries Management System and Plan for Stock Assessment, Research, Advice and Harvest Controls including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The fisheries management system – The fisheries management plan
Summary of relevant changes:	<p>The fisheries management consists of a network of organisations and agencies with a legal basis in terms of a suite of laws and regulations. The Ministry of Industries and Innovation has the ultimate responsibility, the Directorate of Fisheries is the executive body, the Coast Guard does control and surveillance and the MFRI is the scientific institution that provides advice to the Ministry. Internationally, ICES organize and approves assessment and management plan evaluation. The legal basis for the management is a suite of laws and regulations. Laws are given by the Parliament (Althingi), regulations are given by the Ministry.</p> <p>The main regulations are quota regulations of the catches in an ITQ system, technical regulations (gear standards, mesh sizes etc), area closures (permanent and temporary, including short term closures), landing obligations in authorized ports where the catches have to be weighed by authorized staff), discard ban. There are rules for minimum landing size – smaller fish has to be landed but the fisher gets only a fraction of the payment). There are a range of special regulations for small coastal boats and regulation of tourist fishery (which also has quotas). Log books are compulsory, and recently, only electronic logbooks (or mobile phone apps) are accepted. The fishing year in Iceland runs from 1st September - 31st August.</p> <p>All catches have to be accounted against quotas, and there is an active market for buying and selling quotas as needed. For most stocks, including tusk, quotas can be transferred between years and between species, within certain bounds.</p> <p>The management plan includes the measure noted above. It has a harvest rule for deriving the total quota from a stock assessment. The plan includes reference points for biomass and exploitation rate. Such plans are generally developed by Iceland, mostly by the MFRI, and evaluated and endorsed by ICES.</p>
References:	Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.
Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard	The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

7.6.2 Clause 1.2 Research and Assessment

1.2 Research and Assessment	
Summary of relevant changes:	<p>The tusk assessment unit as defined by ICES covers ICES Division 5a and 14 Iceland and East Greenland. Catches in Icelandic waters dominate, and there is little evidence of effective exchange between the areas. The assessment is made with only Icelandic data and effectively the assessment is of the tusk in Icelandic waters.</p> <p>Assessment is based on catches in numbers at length and age-length distributions. The total amounts landed is provided by the Directorate according to the landings reported by landing sites. There is a well-organized system for sampling of catches. In addition, data from the spring bottom trawl survey (amounts caught and biological sample) are used.</p> <p>The assessment is done with a forward projecting length and age disaggregated stock model fitted to catch and survey data. The software (Gadget) is publicly available and is used for several Icelandic stocks.</p> <p>The assessment method was established and approved by ICES in a benchmark process in 2017, and has remained unchanged since then. It works reasonably well with tusk, but there has been a retrospective error, in particular in the SSB estimates, which may be due to short and noisy time series of data. Other estimates, in particular of fishable biomass and harvest rate, that are used in the harvest rule, are more consistent.</p> <p>There has not been any changes to the methods and procedures for assessment for tusk in recent years, except for a mistake in some survey data that were corrected last year.</p> <p>The main results of the assessment are shown below from the MFRI 2021 assessment⁸⁹.</p>

⁸⁹ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk1259450.pdf>

1.2 Research and Assessment

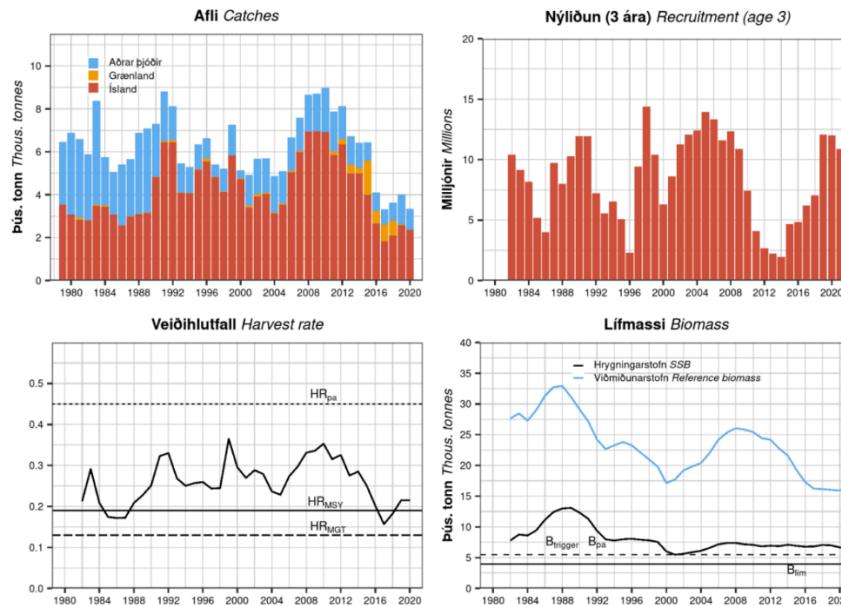


Figure 35. Tusk catches in Icelandic waters (by Iceland and other nations) and Greenlandic waters, recruitment, harvest rate and SSB and Reference biomass.

References:

Please refer to the footnotes and references in the [summary/background section](#) and the [Reference section](#) at the end of this document.

Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard

The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

7.6.3 Clause 1.3 Stock under Consideration, Harvesting Policy and the Precautionary Approach

1.3 Stock under Consideration, Harvesting Policy and the Precautionary Approach including:

- 1.3.1 The precautionary approach
- 1.3.2 Management targets and limits
 - 1.3.2.1 Harvesting rate and fishing mortality
 - 1.3.2.2 Stock biomass
 - 1.3.2.3 Stock biology and life-cycle (structure and resilience)

Summary of relevant changes:

The harvest rule and Precautionary approach. The precautionary approach is implemented by applying a harvest rate well inside the range defined by precautionary reference points.

These reference points, that are tabulated below, were established by ICES at the benchmark process in 2017 and adopted by Icelandic authorities. The reference points were derived by simulations approved by ICES. According to these simulations, the harvest rate leading to maximum long-term yield (H_{MSY}) is 0.17 and the harvest rate with 50% probability of $SSB < B_{lim}$ is 0.27, corresponding to an $F_{lim} = 0.41$.

Table 11. Precautionary and management reference points.

Nálgun <i>Framework</i>	Gátmörk <i>Reference point</i>	Gildi <i>Value</i>	Grundvöllur <i>Basis</i>
Aflaregla <i>Management plan</i>	SSB _{MGT}	6240 t	B _{pa}
	HR _{MGT}	0.13	Veði hlutfall af viðmiðunarstofni (B ₄₀₊) leiðir til langtíma hámarksafkrakts. Vænt gildi veiðihlutfalls, þegar veitt er samkvæmt aflareglu, er 0.09–0.18. <i>Percentage of biomass 40+ cm leads to long-term MSY. Realized HR can range from 0.09–0.18.</i>
MSY	MSY-B _{trigger}	6240 t	B _{pa}
	HR _{MSY}	0.17	Slembireikningar innan Gadget líkans <i>Stochastic projections</i>
	F _{MSY}	0.226	Slembireikningar innan Gadget líkans <i>Stochastic projections</i>
Varúðarnálgun <i>Precautionary approach</i>	B _{lim}	4460 t	B _{pa} /1.4
	B _{pa}	6240 t	B _{loss}
	F _{lim}	0.41	Veididánartala sem leiðir til þess að hrygningarstofn er yfir B _{lim} með 50% líkum <i>Equilibrium F which will maintain the stock above B_{lim} with a 50% probability</i>
	F _{pa}	0.27	95% líkur á að veiðidánartala sé undir F _{lim} <i>95% probability that true F is below F_{lim}</i>
	HR _{lim}	0.27	Veði hlutfall sem leiðir til þess að hrygningarstofn er yfir B _{lim} með 50% líkum <i>Equilibrium HR which will maintain the stock above B_{lim} with a 50% probability</i>
	HR _{pa}	0.20	95% líkur á að veiðihlutfall sé undir HR _{lim} <i>95% probability that true is below HR_{lim}</i>

Management targets. The management plan has a target harvest rate (HR: TAC as fraction of biomass of fish > 40 cm) of 0.13, which is well below the MSY HR and even further below the precautionary HR. This HR leads to almost the maximum long-term yield. In line with ICES technical guidelines the MSY B_{trigger} is set as B_{pa}, as the stock has not been managed according to F_{MSY}, or equivalents thereof, for more than 5 years. The rule prescribes a reduction in HR linearly towards the origin for SSB below MSYB_{trigger} = 6240 t. The relatively low HR reduces the risk caused by uncertain assessment with only minor loss of long-term average catch. As the harvest strategy is defined in terms of exploitation rate (HR), and the HR is associated with a low risk of recruitment overfishing, a separate biomass target is considered redundant and has not been defined.

Harvest rule.

The official formulation⁹⁰ is the following:

According to the Harvest Control Rule (HCR) the TAC for the fishing year y/y+1 (1 September of year Y to 31 August of year y+1) as 13% (HR_{MGT}) of the biomass of tusk 40cm and larger (B_{Ref,y}) in the assessment year (y) calculated as:

$$TAC_{y/y+1} = HR_{MGT} * B_{Ref,y}$$

If the spawning stock biomass (SSB) falls below 6 240 tonnes (MGT B_{trigger}), the HCR dictates that harvest rate shall be reduced linearly to zero based on the ratio of the SSB estimated and MGT B_{trigger}, the TAC for the fishing year y/y+1 is then calculated as:

$$TAC_{y/y+1} = HR_{MGT} * (SSB_y / MGT B_{trigger}) * B_{Ref,y}$$

Both the reference points and the harvest rule have been unchanged since 2017, and the

1.3	Stock under Consideration, Harvesting Policy and the Precautionary Approach including:	
1.3.1	The precautionary approach	
1.3.2	Management targets and limits	
1.3.2.1	Harvesting rate and fishing mortality	
1.3.2.2	Stock biomass	
1.3.2.3	Stock biology and life-cycle (structure and resilience)	
	<p>stock remains within the expected bounds. Iceland has sent a request for a new benchmark and revision of management plans for inter alia tusk in 2022.</p> <p>Further protective measures include area closures and rules for landing of undersized fish. Closed areas can be permanent, which are defined in regulations and remain unchanged from year to year, as well as temporary closures (normally for 2 weeks) of areas where undersized fish are caught. Undersized tusk as not led to closures in recent years.</p> <p>The management of temporary closures was moved from MFRI to the Directorate last year, but the rules and standards remain unchanged.</p>	
References:	Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.	
Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard	The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.	

7.6.4 Clause 1.4 External Scientific Review

1.4	External Scientific Review	
Summary of relevant changes:	<p>ICES is regarded as the relevant institution that provides external scientific review. Both the assessment method and the harvest rule (including reference points) were approved by ICES in a benchmark process in 2014. A new benchmark process was postponed due to the Covid 19 epidemic and is now planned for 2023..</p> <p>Normally, the assessment is conducted by the ICES North-Western Working Group (NWWG), where stakeholder nations participate. In 2020, because of the ongoing Covid 19 epidemic, MFRI made its own assessment and the advice was made by MFRI . In 2021, the normal procedure was resumed.</p> <p>Iceland has broad international scientific cooperation through organisations such as the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)⁹¹, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)⁹², and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)⁹³. Icelandic scientists have been involved in many international projects arranged by these organizations and in co-operative projects with research institutes and universities.</p>	

90 <https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/>

91 <http://www.neafc.org/>

92 <http://www.nafo.int/>

93 <http://www.nammco.no/>

1.4 External Scientific Review	
References:	Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.
Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard	The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

7.6.5 Clause 1.5 Advice and Decisions on TAC

1.5 Advice and Decisions on TAC	
Summary of relevant changes:	<p>ICES is regarded as the relevant institution that provides external scientific review. Both the assessment method and the harvest rule (including reference points) were approved by ICES in a benchmark process in 2014. A new benchmark process was postponed due to the Covid 19 epidemic and is now planned for 2023.</p> <p>Normally, the assessment is conducted by the ICES North-Western Working Group (NWWG), where stakeholder nations participate. In 2020, because of the ongoing Covid 19 epidemic, MFRI made its own assessment and the advice was made by MFRI . In 2021, the normal procedure was resumed.</p> <p>Iceland has broad international scientific cooperation through organisations such as the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)⁹⁴, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)⁹⁵, and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)⁹⁶. Icelandic scientists have been involved in many international projects arranged by these organizations and in co-operative projects with research institutes and universities.</p>
References:	Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.
Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard	The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

94 <http://www.neafc.org/>

95 <http://www.nafo.int/>

96 <http://www.nammco.no/>

Section 2. Compliance and Monitoring

7.6.6 Clause 2.1 Implementation, Compliance, Monitoring, Surveillance and Control

2.1 Implementation, Compliance, Monitoring, Surveillance and Control	
<p>Summary of relevant changes:</p>	<p>The Icelandic Directorate of Fisheries, or Fiskistofa⁹⁷, is an independent administrative body responsible to the Fisheries Minister, in charge of the day to day implementation of the Act on Fisheries Management and related legislation, for day-to-day management of fisheries and for supervising the enforcement of fisheries management rules. More specifically, the Directorate of Fisheries works in accordance with the following Acts, the Directorate of Fisheries Act (no. 36/1992)⁹⁸, the Fisheries Management Act (no. 116/2006)⁹⁹, the Act on Fishing in Iceland’s Exclusive Economic Zone (no. 79/1997), the Act concerning the Treatment of Commercial Marine Fish Stocks (no. 57/1996) and the Act on a Special Fee for Illegal Marine Catch (no. 37/1992). Accordingly, it issues fishing permits to vessels and allocates catch quotas, imposes penalties for illegal catches, supervises the transfer of quotas and quota shares between fishing vessels, monitors vessels using the VMS system e-logbooks, controls the reporting of data on the landings of individual vessels and monitors the weighing of catches¹⁰⁰. It also provides supervision on board fishing vessels and in ports of landing (i.e. shore based monitoring), which involves inspecting the composition of catches, fishing equipment and handling methods. It works closely with the Icelandic Coast Guard, which carries out fisheries inspection at sea, monitors the EEZ and receives required notifications from vessels, Port Authorities and the MFRI.</p> <p>The Icelandic Coast Guard¹⁰¹ is responsible for control at sea, both of the catches and the quality of the vessels. It performs sea and air patrols of Iceland's 200-mile exclusive economic zone and 12-mile territorial waters, and monitoring of fishing within the zone in consultation with the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute and Ministry of Industries and Innovation. The Coast Guard operates the Icelandic Maritime Traffic Service within its operations centre which has a key role in ensuring safety at sea, but can also take action if the behaviour of a fishing vessels is unusual.</p> <p>The Fisheries Management Act sets out penalties for the violation of its provisions, or rules adopted by virtue of it, which are provided in detail in the Act Concerning the Treatment of Commercial Marine Fish Stocks (Act No. 57 1996¹⁰²). Provisions of the Act on a Special Fee for Illegal Marine Catch¹⁰³ are also applied as appropriate. Penalties range from the issue of reprimands by the Directorate of Fisheries and the suspension of commercial fishing permits to fines and, in cases of serious or repeated deliberate violation, imprisonment for up to six years (Article 24 and 25 of Act No. 116/2006).</p> <p>Summary of relevant updates in 2021</p>

⁹⁷ <https://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/>

⁹⁸ <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/149a/1992036.html>

⁹⁹ <https://www.ecolex.org/details/legislation/fisheries-management-act-1990-lex-faoc003455/>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/english/about-the-directorate/>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.lhg.is/english>

¹⁰² <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/149a/1996057.html>

¹⁰³ <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/149a/1992037.html>

2.1 Implementation, Compliance, Monitoring, Surveillance and Control

Temporary/sudden closures (generally 2 weeks triggered by high juvenile abundance on fishing grounds) are announced by the Coastguard on VHF radio on a specified wavelength and on the radio before the news and weather (Fisheries Directorate pers. com. site visit November 2021). They are also published on the MFRI website. The short-term closure monitoring (and issuing of) was transferred to Fiskistofa in the fall of 2020. Some regulation regarding the short-term closures was also changed in 2020, whereby the trigger size limit was increased for cod, which led to significant decrease in the number of closures. An updated table as provided by the management authorities (MFRI and Fiskistofa) is shown below.

Table 12. Short term closures in Iceland for the years 2018-2021.

Year	Species	Number of closures
2018	Cod	90
2018	Saithe	4
2018	Shrimp	2
2018	Haddock	1
2019	Cod	50
2019	Haddock	1
2020	Cod	9
2020	Haddock	1
2020	Greenland halibut	1
2021	Sea cucumber	2
2021	Cod	3
2021	Haddock	1

Directorate Inspections at Sea

Days spent by Fisheries Directorate inspectors at sea inspecting vessels is shown in Table 7. The number has remained consistent with previous years.

Enforcement by Fiskistofa

The Directorate of Fisheries monitors compliance with laws and regulations which apply to fishing, handling of commercial stocks and treatment catch. In many cases, the Directorate of Fisheries is intended to respond to violations of laws and regulations through the application of administrative sanctions. Sanctions are intended to have a protective effect to reduce or prevent further violations. The main resources available to the Directorate of Fisheries for violations are reprimands and revocation of a fishing license. Alleged violations can also be prosecuted by the police and in some cases it is the only available remedy to respond to violations. Then the Directorate of Fisheries can in individual cases, deprive individuals of a fishing license to enforce law enforcement and rules.

Based on the latest available 2020 Fiskistofa report, in 2020, 164 cases were suspected of violations. Table 9 contains information on the number of cases by category.

2.1 Implementation, Compliance, Monitoring, Surveillance and Control

Table 9 also contains information regarding the penalties for suspected violations. The information does not show whether the decision of the Directorate of Fisheries has been repealed or amended by a ruling of the industry and the Consumer Innovation Council. The information in the tables cannot be compared with each other. One case could deal with several types of offenses. This can result in penalties and correction of catch registration. In addition, several violations by the same party may have been merged into one case.

The Directorate of Fisheries sent 470 letters due to catch logbooks not being returned on time and 1,321 cases arose due to fishing in excess of catch quotas, which then must be rectified by purchasing additional quota to balance the books or no further fishing is permitted.

Enforcement by the Icelandic Coast Guard

At sea surveillance is primarily the remit of the Icelandic Coast Guard (I0043G). The Icelandic Coast Guard monitors commercial fishing vessels in Iceland's EEZ on a continuous basis. There are requirements surrounding the reporting of vessel position (manually or using VMS systems) and the reporting of catch on entering or leaving Icelandic waters, among others.

During the remote audit in November 2021 the ICG reported that surveillance in 2020 and 2021 was challenging due to the COVID 19 pandemic. By beginning of March 2020, severe restrictions on direct interactions between people were imposed. This restricted surveillance possibilities on board vessels for Maritime Surveillance and Control agency such as the Icelandic Coast Guard (ICG).

To meet the situation the ICG patrol vessels increased their visibility, using their boats to monitor the fisheries close to the fishing vessels. There was also increased support and cooperation with Directorate of Fisheries by operating DF drones for surveillance from ICG patrol vessels.

In spite of the Coast Guard efforts the pandemic has had its impact. Fewer inspections and boardings of vessels resulted in less measuring of fish, which was reflected in fewer Short Time Closures in 2020 and 2021 (see Table 6) and none based on Fisheries inspections by ICG. The overall number of inspections since 1988 is shown below.

2.1 Implementation, Compliance, Monitoring, Surveillance and Control

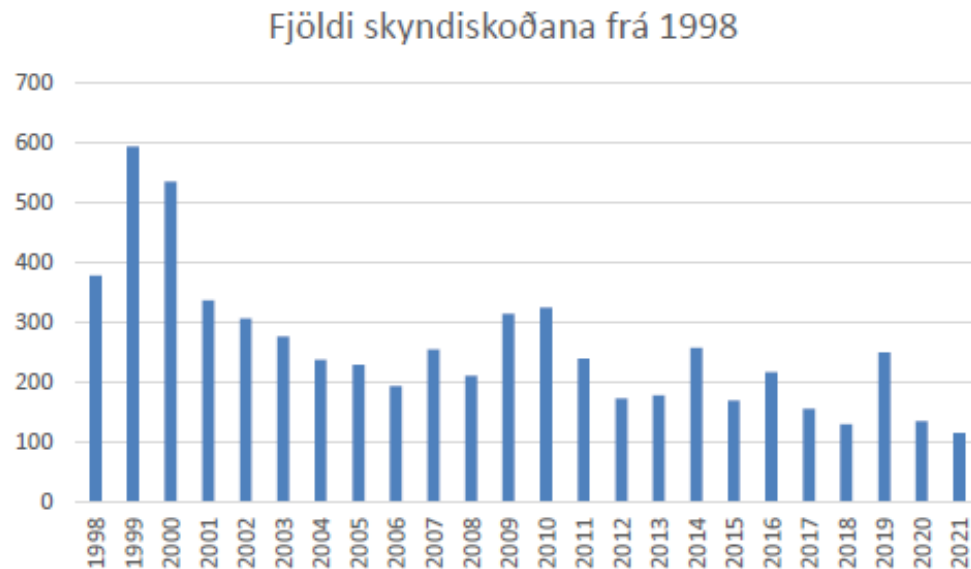


Figure 36. Overall number of ICG inspection from 1988 to 2021. Source: provided by the ICG during the remote audit, November 2021.

Also, we show here below a figure for the amount of air surveillance performed in 2021.

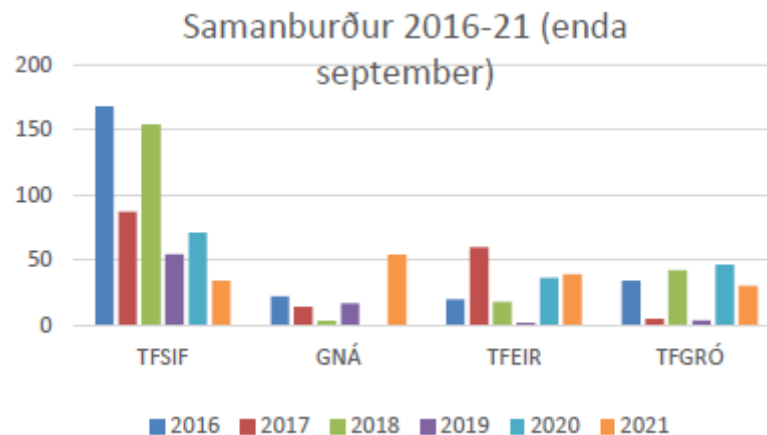


Figure 37. Air surveillance by four different Icelandic assets from 2016 to 2021. Samtals is the total. Source: provided by the ICG during the remote audit, November 2021.

Also, seven foreign flag vessels were inspected the ICG in 2021, three Faroese vessels of which one was a longliner and two capelin fishing vessels, and four Norwegian capelin fishing vessels, all within Icelandic EEZ.

In terms of overall infringements, 8 reports of apparent infringements were reported in 2021, noting however that not all reports are due to fishing infringements and one report can include more than one type of Apparent Infringement. The types of apparent

2.1 Implementation, Compliance, Monitoring, Surveillance and Control

infringement in 2021, included: Lögskráningar/Crew registry, Veiðar /Fisheries, Veiðileyfi /Fishing permit, Ferilvöktun /Vessel monitoring, Farþegafjöldi /Passengers, Haffæri /Sea worthiness and a new addition Fyrimælum ekki fylgt /Instructions not obeyed. These are shown below (until the end of September 2021) compared to historical data up to 2016.

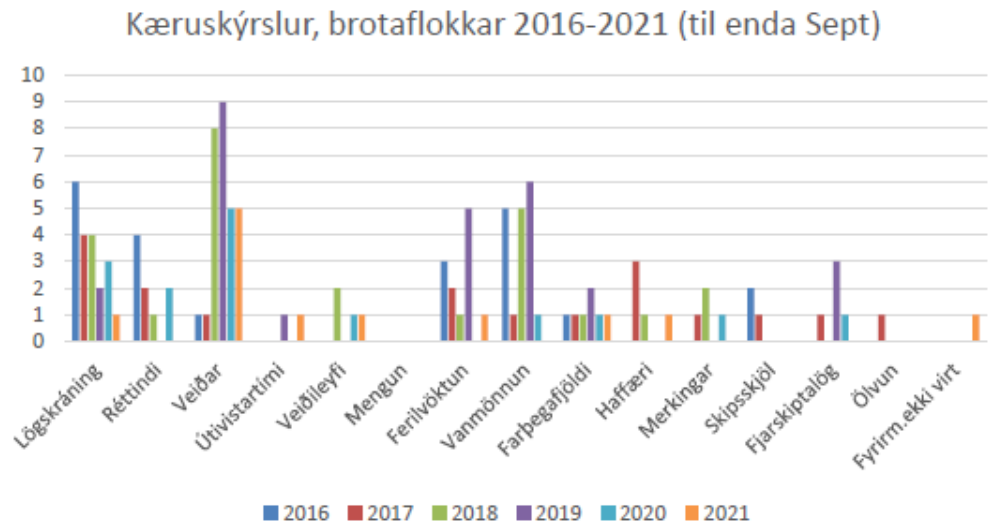


Figure 38. Overview of ICG infringement reports in 2016-2021. Source: provided by the ICG during the remote audit, November 2021.

From these eight reports, 12 apparent infringements were reported in 2021. For 2021, infringements on Veiðar /Fishing are the 5 most common, and adding Veiðileyfi /Fishing permit brings the total number of infringements specifically regarding fisheries to 6. No apparent infringement were reported in 2021 in the following categories; Réttindi /License, Mengun /Pollution, Vanmönnum /Manning , Merkingar /Markings, Skipsskjöl /Ships documents, Fjarskiptalög /Communications or Ölvun /intoxication. Of the 8 vessels that were reported for apparent infringements in 2021, up to end of September, 6 vessels are less than 24 meters in length; 2 are more than 24 meters in length, one of which is a passenger vessel.

References: Please refer to the footnotes and references in the [summary/background section](#) and the [Reference section](#) at the end of this document.

Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

7.6.7 Clause 2.2 Concordance between actual Catch and allowable Catch

2.2 Concordance between actual Catch and allowable Catch

Summary of relevant changes: **Context**
 Catches and landings in Iceland are monitored and recorded in a number of complementary ways. Logbooks, either electronic (e-logs) or standard paper based, depending on the vessel, record landings at sea and these are verified and standardised through physical weighing at accredited weigh stations in landings ports throughout Iceland. Logbooks are

2.2 Concordance between actual Catch and allowable Catch

compulsory as required by Regulation No.746/2016¹⁰⁴. These must be electronic (e-logs). Small vessels used to use paper logbooks until late 2020 when regulation 298/2020¹⁰⁵ implemented the use of an electronic app. The App also called Afladagbókina or catch diary^{106 107} automatically records the location of the boat during fishing and the captains then records the catch, its condition and bycatch. Catch data must be entered on the e-log using a Fisheries Directorate-approved programme and all changes to entries must be visible and traceable. It is prohibited to start a fishing trip without a logbook on board. Vessel masters are required to record the following information in their logbooks:

- Ship name, ship registration number and call sign.
- Fishing gear, type and size.
- Location determination (latitude and longitude) and time when fishing gear is placed in the sea.
- Catch by quantity and species.
- Harvesting.
- Landing.
- Seabirds bycatch by species and species.
- Marine mammals' bycatch by number and species.

Landings must be weighed within 2 hours of landing by an official weigher using calibrated scales. Following allowances for ice the official weight is forwarded to the Directorate where it is compared with the relevant e-logbook entry before an appropriate deduction is made to that vessels remaining quota. The officially weighed catches are the official catch of record with e-log information being used as a secondary source to ensure accuracy. If a vessel does not have sufficient quota to cover it has a number of options available to it such as renting in additional quota or transferring quota between species; however, the landings must be fully covered within 3 working days as required by law (Act No. 57/1996). In Iceland, the time restrictions attached to landing, recording and rationalising catch and quota mean that while the system is not real time it is very close (circa. 24 hours)⁵³.

2021 updates

The Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture decides on the TAC of the cod stock for each fishing year (Sept –Aug) in accordance to law (Fisheries Management Act 116), based on HCR and the advice mentioned below. Before catch is allocated, proportions of the TAC of some species is removed for various reasons such as for the coastal fisheries which any small boat in possession of a licence may access, for research purposes or for chartered angling vessels. Catches are generally within advice and TAC save a few seasons, as shown in the table below. Apparent overages in previous years were due to landings of juveniles through the

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?RecordID=42a16a67-60a7-4ae7-ad7c-0f53fc254654>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/21887>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/afladagbokin-smaforrit-fyrir-rafraena-skraningu-afla>

¹⁰⁷ https://www.mbl.is/200milur/frettir/2020/08/31/oll_aflaskraning_rafraen_fra_og_med_morgundeginum/

2.2 Concordance between actual Catch and allowable Catch

VS catch system (up to 5% of TAC), catches by other nations that exceed what was set aside for that, various arrangements to allow flexibility and reduce the incentive for discards across the entire spectrum of species managed in Iceland created to allow the functioning of the global discard ban.

Table 13. TACs and actual catches, according to MFRI (source: MFRI, 2021 advice¹⁰⁸).

Fiskveiðíár <i>Fishing year</i>	Tillaga <i>Recommended TAC</i>	Aflamark <i>National TAC</i>	Afli Íslendinga <i>Catches Iceland</i>	Afli annarra þjóða <i>Catches other</i>	Afli alls <i>Total catch</i>
2010/2011	6000	6000	6223	1545	7768
2011/2012	6900	7000	5981	1420	7401
2012/2013	6700	6700	5549	1284	6833
2013/2014	6300	6300	4847	1034	5881
2014/2015	4000	4000	4135	823	4958
2015/2016	3440	3440	3221	900	4121
2016/2017	3780	3780	1689	729	2418
2017/2018	4370 ^{h)}	4370	2200	939	3139
2018/2019	3776 ^{h)}	3776	2454	1197	3651
2019/2020	3856 ^{h)}	3856	2590	830	3420
2020/2021	2289 ^{h)}	2289			
2021/2022	2172 ^{h)}				

References: Please refer to the footnotes and references in the [summary/background section](#) and the [Reference section](#) at the end of this document.

Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard

The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

7.6.8 Clause 2.3 Monitoring and Control

2.3 Monitoring and Control including:

- 2.3.1 Vessel registration and catch quotas
- 2.3.2 Fishing vessel monitoring and control systems
- 2.3.3 Catches are subtracted from relevant quotas
- 2.3.4 Rules are enforced
- 2.3.5 Analysis is carried out

Summary of **Context** relevant changes:

Commercial vessels participating in the fishery require a permit issued by the Fisheries Directorate. This is a requirement of the Fisheries Management Act No.116/2006. These permits represent the initial legal requirement without which a vessel may not obtain the quota necessary to fish for Icelandic quota stocks. Quotas conform to the overall decision on TAC, through the individual vessel quota share and other allocations. The headline TAC for a species is determined first and all subsequent allocations are in effect subdivisions of that figure. As a result, the allocated catch quotas for a species (when quotas are initially allocated) are assigned in such a way that the combined quotas for that species conform to the currently effective decision on TAC.

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/19-tusk1259450.pdf>

<p>2.3 Monitoring and Control including:</p> <p>2.3.1 Vessel registration and catch quotas</p> <p>2.3.2 Fishing vessel monitoring and control systems</p> <p>2.3.3 Catches are subtracted from relevant quotas</p> <p>2.3.4 Rules are enforced</p> <p>2.3.5 Analysis is carried out</p>	<p>Catches by vessel are monitored and recorded in near real-time in a central database maintained by the Fisheries Directorate¹⁰⁹. The official weight of the catch is subtracted from that vessels individual quota share for a particular species. The catch quota of each vessel or vessel group for each fish species and fishing year is available on the Fisheries Directorate website. For each vessel the information available for each species is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allocated quota (initial allocation of quota from the overall TAC based on no. of shares) 2. Compensations (quota gained/lost through compensations) 3. Quota transferred from the previous year (this may be a negative balance) 4. Quota transferred between vessels (a negative balance indicates an outward transfer of quota (i.e. quota transferred to other vessels) while a positive balance indicates an inward transfer of quota (i.e. quota gained from other vessels) 5. Allowed catch (the sum of 1 to 4 above) 6. Catch (vessels landings in the season to date of that species) 7. Balance (Allowed catch - Catch) 8. Overfished <p>Specific data on each Icelandic quota species, its allocation to ITQ holders, transfer information, balances and catches to date is available at http://www.fiskistofa.is/english/quotas-and-catches/quota-status-and-catches-of-species-by-vessel/aflastodulisti.jsp?lang=en. Registered catches are based on information from ports of landing and information on catches exported unprocessed. The catch statistics are published, subject to change, once they have been compared to submitted logbooks and reports from buyers, and are available on the Fisheries Directorate website. Accordingly, information on the size and composition of the fleet of fishing vessels is available and documented, and the catch quota of each vessel or vessel group, along with the fishing year is recorded in the official central database (GAFL) in a transparent manner and is publicly accessible.</p> <p>The Icelandic Coast Guard, working closely with the Fisheries Directorate, administers an integrated monitoring, control and surveillance system which covers the activities of Icelandic and foreign fishing vessels, using VMS for all Icelandic vessels and for all foreign vessels. Fishing gear is subject to inspection, as well as the composition of the catch and its handling onboard the fishing vessels. At-sea inspections are undertaken during boardings by the Coast Guard and on fishing trips accompanied by the inspectors of the Fisheries Directorate. The Coast Guard undertakes unannounced inspections at sea and check logbooks during these boardings. Fisheries Directorate inspectors also make unannounced</p>
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¹⁰⁹ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/veidar/aflaheimildir/aflahlutdeildalisti/>

- 2.3 Monitoring and Control including:
 - 2.3.1 Vessel registration and catch quotas
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checks of logbooks during port inspections. The Coast Guard uses several different but complementary electronic vessel monitoring systems including satellite-based systems comprising VMS and use of satellite imagery, the monitoring of coastal activity through a dedicated land-based very high frequency (VHF) system and the use of the Automatic Identification System (AIS), and more recently drones.

Deviations and flexibility measures

Data related to landings are processed in the Directorate’s database and catches are subtracted from vessels’ quotas. The system is designed such that reports are received in near real-time so that the Directorate can act quickly if vessels are approaching the end of their quotas. In addition, vessels are aware or can easily check online their current quota status for a particular species. Deviations where they occur can sometimes be rectified using the flexibility within the system (e.g. by using inter-annual, inter-vessel or inter-species transfers to cover catches of a species for which the vessel did not already have quota, or by purchase of additional quota if possible). Excess catches which are not corrected using these flexibility measures can result in a revocation of fishing licenses and fines¹¹⁰.

In addition to the landing, weighing and registration system for catches, export documentation provides an independent comparative check on catch quantities. Analysis of catches includes the comparison of reported catches with the amount of sold or exported products to verify independently that reported landings aligned accurately with those reported. If comparison reveals discrepancies in reported and actual landings received from quayside weighing by registered weighers corrective action is taken as appropriate and Fiskistofa can send inspectors to verify for issues.

Updates for 2021

During the November remote site visit Fiskistofa reported that a new data department has been created to allow for further data analysis relating to catch recording and day to day implementation of management measures, ultimately to improve the ability to detect discrepancies and enforce regulations.

Aside from the above, the monitoring and control systems remain largely unchanged since the previous surveillance. The only other update for 2021 relates to the progress to address the minor non-conformance raised against Clause 2.3.2.4 .

¹¹⁰ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/fiskveidistjorn/stjornfiskveida/#Vidurlog>

- 2.3 Monitoring and Control including:
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Non-conformance #1 (Clause 2.3.2.4: Minor Non-conformance). Although required by legislation, there is some evidence of non-reporting/under-reporting of seabirds and marine mammals bycatch such that the Assessment Team cannot be fully confident that catch amounts by species and fishing area (of marine mammals and seabirds) are estimated and continually recorded in fishing logbooks.

One important development in terms of corrective action is the development and use of an app to facilitate catch and bycatch recording in smaller vessels. Fiskistofa, the MFRI and the Client group representative confirmed that starting in September 2020, smaller Icelandic vessels are required to log their catches in a phone/tablet app (essentially an e-logbook) which contains information on catch and bycatch, including that of marine mammals and seabirds. This follows regulation 298/2020¹¹¹. The App also called Afladagbókina or catch diary^{112 113} automatically records the location of the boat during fishing and the captains then records the catch, its condition and by-catch, in a very simple way. The app replaces paper logbooks in the small boat sector, with an electronic catch recording system.

As of November 2021, the system continues to be used in the small vessel sector and catch and bycatch data is being collected by Fiskistofa and the MFRI for management purposes. MFRI staff reported that data from the App is in the process of being made available to the MFRI through MFRI/Fiskistofa IT staff collaboration. Fiskistofa has also reported as part of this 2nd surveillance audit that since the beginning of the App's implementation it has been mandatory to register all catch and bycatch according to regulation 298/2020 and the data is being received by the authorities. Their inspectors have been busy training fishermen and captains at the quaysides during landing, and their helpline was quite busy in the beginning of the coastal fleet season. Also, one physical meeting was held in Akranes with coastal fishermen. A tutorial video on the use of the App was also published on the Fiskistofa website <https://www.fiskistofa.is/ymsaruppl/tilkynningar/afladagbokaapp-myndband> and on the Fiskistofa facebook site¹¹⁴.

Furthermore, a traceability component to the App has been implemented in April 2021 which is being used to further help with the detection of discrepancies in catch records and to allow better traceability across the supply chain. This traceability component is currently subject to further development.

¹¹¹ <https://www.regluger.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/21887>

¹¹² <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/afladagbokin-smaforrit-fyrir-rafraena-skraningu-afla>

¹¹³ https://www.mbl.is/200milur/frettir/2020/08/31/oll_aflaskraning_rafraen_fra_og_med_morgundeginum/

¹¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Fiskistofa-1151844504903713/videos/304666984614930/>

<p>2.3 Monitoring and Control including:</p> <p>2.3.1 Vessel registration and catch quotas</p> <p>2.3.2 Fishing vessel monitoring and control systems</p> <p>2.3.3 Catches are subtracted from relevant quotas</p> <p>2.3.4 Rules are enforced</p> <p>2.3.5 Analysis is carried out</p>	
	<p>Status: Open, Corrective Actions in place to be reviewed annually in subsequent audits. Corrective actions are deemed to be on track.</p> <p>A corrective action plan against this non-conformance has been provided under the Non Conformances and Corrective Action Section of this report. Please refer to it for further detail on the non-conformance, the corrective action plan and the corrective evidence supplied during this audit.</p>
<p>References:</p>	<p>Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.</p>
<p>Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard</p>	<p>The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.</p>

Section 3. Ecosystem considerations

7.6.9 Clause 3.1 Guiding Principle

3.1 Guiding Principle

<p>Summary of relevant changes:</p>	<p>Associated species catch and bycatch to the fishery</p> <p>The Icelandic groundfish fishery is multispecies in nature with vessels simultaneously targeting numerous species. With regards to catches, most commercially fished species in Iceland are now part of the ITQ system. Discarding is prohibited and comparison between observer measured catch compositions and self-reporting by fishers ensures that a high level of compliance with the ban on discarding is maintained. A status update on the species identified during the full assessment in 2019¹¹⁵ is listed in Table 10.</p> <p>Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) and vulnerable species interactions</p> <p>Context to the tusk fishery. Some of the updates below are only partially relevant to the tusk fishery because although (cod) gillnets are responsible for the majority of issues relating to seabird and marine mammal bycatch, tusk catches from gillnet gear in the past 5 years have been negligible, at around 0.2% of total gillnet catches. However, bycatch updates from longline (main gear used to catch >95% of tusk) and trawl gear (very small catches used to catch <4% of tusk) are certainly more relevant to the tusk fishery.</p> <p>The MFRI has not provided any further bycatch data for marine mammals and seabirds. The latest data from 2016 to 2019 was provided at the previous surveillance.</p> <p>Relevant updates for species for which data is available is provided below. All the species below were identified and analyzed as vulnerable or ETP species in the full assessment that resulted in the current certificate for this fishery (see relevant audit report at https://www.responsiblefisheries.is/certification/certified-fisheries).</p> <p>Harbour Porpoises (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)</p> <p>Harbour porpoises are classified as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List¹¹⁶ (population trend unknown, last assessed in 2020). They are also classified as Least Concern in the Icelandic National Redlist (based on a 2016 assessment)¹¹⁷. Annual estimates of harbour porpoise bycatch have decreased in recent years as gillnet effort has decreased, from a high of 7,300 animals in 2003 to about 1600 animals in 2009–2013¹¹⁸ and down to about 750 animals in 2014-2015.</p> <p>The latest Report of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee Working Group on Harbour Porpoise (19-22 March 2019)¹¹⁹ reported the following about the Icelandic harbour porpoise population.</p>
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¹¹⁵ <https://www.responsiblefisheries.is/media/1/form-11.2-icetusk-initial-assessment-final-report-and-determination-1.pdf>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/17027/50369903>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.ni.is/node/27406>

¹¹⁸ Pálsson ÓK, Gunnlaugsson Th, and Ólafsdóttir D. 2015. By-catch of seabirds and marine mammals in Icelandic Fisheries. Marine Research no 178. <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/fjolrit-178pdf>

¹¹⁹ https://nammco.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/final-report_hpwg-2019.pdf

3.1 Guiding Principle

After reviewing the assessment and noting the recent decline in by-catch, the WG agreed that there was no specific cause for concern for harbour porpoises in Iceland. However, they also concluded that the lack of time and expertise meant they were not in a position to provide management advice on sustainable removals.

An aerial survey in Iceland is planned for harbour porpoise in 2023.

Harbour seals

The MFRI 2021 advice for harbour seals¹²⁰ indicates that the 2020 harbour seal census resulted in a population estimated of 10,319 animals (95% confidence intervals: 6,733-13,906). The current population estimate is 69% lower than the first abundance estimate from 1980 and the estimate is 14% under the management objective of 12 thous. Animals (Hafrannsóknastofnun 2021). In 2019, new regulation regarding seal hunting in Iceland was enacted (Atvinnuvega- og nýsköpunarráðuneytið 2019). All seal hunting is banned, but it is possible to obtain an exemption for traditional hunt. It is also forbidden to sell Icelandic seal products. Bycatch in gillnets is probably the highest mortality risk for harbour seals in Iceland currently. Limited data are available on seal bycatch, but data collected by on-board observers of the Directorate of Fisheries, and in the MFRI gillnet survey, indicate that on average, 1389 (coefficient of variation, CV=35) harbour seals have been bycaught annually in the lumpfish fishery between 2014 and 2018. Bycatch in cod gillnet fishery and bottom trawls is less common and more uncertainty associated with the bycatch estimates in those fisheries. Between 2014 and 2018, it has been estimated that annually, 15 harbour seals were bycaught in cod gillnet fisheries (CV=102) and 17 harbour seals in bottom trawls (CV=100) (Hafrannsóknastofnun, 2019). Negative effects from the cod gillnet fisheries (and associated fisheries that land fish in those nets) are considered to be very limited.

Other marine mammals

The MFRI confirmed that no interaction with Blue whales and Northern right whales recorded in recent years.

There are no further updates from NAMMCO or the MFRI in relation to other marine mammal species (i.e. seals), aside from what we reported in the previous surveillance report.

Pingers testing

The MFRI has been conducting pinger/acoustic device testing in gillnet fisheries for several years now, with mixed results. The last device tested in 2019-2020 showed promise, and publication on the results and possible larger scale trials were planned for 2021 (MFRI, personal communication, November 4th, 2021).

Sharks

Generally speaking, landed catches of sharks remain quite small. Some catch of leaf scale gulper sharks has been recorded, last in 2016. Grey skate (*Dipturus flossada / batis*) landed

¹²⁰ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/extras/images/radgjof-landselur20201286028.pdf>

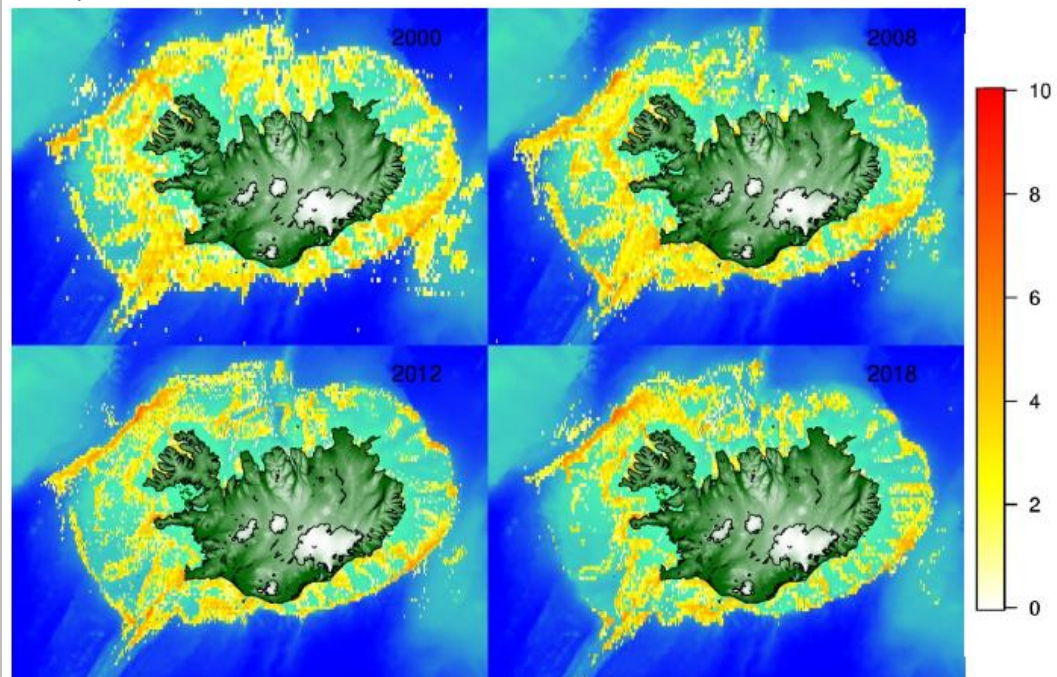
3.1 Guiding Principle

catch in 2019 was 194 t, and 160 t in 2020. Survey abundance is variable but has been on average relatively stable in recent years. Landed catch of dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) was 1 t in 2019 and 3 t in 2020. Survey trends are very sporadic. Landed catch of Greenland shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*) was 6 t in 2019 and 2 t in 2020. Survey trends are also very sporadic. Landed catch of porbeagle in 2019 was 2.6 t and 3.6 t in 2020. Porbeagles (*Lamna nasus*) are rarely caught in surveys, but two were caught in the autumn survey in 2021 and one in the gillnet survey in 2019.

Trawl effort spatial extent

The ICES 2020 Icelandic ecosystem overview report¹²¹ indicates that within the ecoregion, abrasion caused by bottom trawls has been shown to impact fragile three-dimensional biogenic habitats in particular (e.g. sponge aggregations, coral gardens, and coral reefs), with impacts happening mainly in deeper waters (> 200 m). Effects of bottom trawling on soft substrates in shallow waters have been shown to be minor. Other impacts involve overturning boulders, scouring the seabed, and direct removal of and/or damage to epifaunal organisms.

Using vessel monitoring system (VMS) and logbook data ICES estimates that mobile bottom trawls used by commercial fisheries in the 12 m+ vessel category have been deployed over approximately 132,485 km² of the ecoregion in 2018, corresponding to ca. 17.5 % of the ecoregion’s spatial extent. A map of spatial distribution of bottom trawl effort is shown below. The Icelandic bottom trawl fleet consists of about 50 vessels (30–80 m length) fishing mainly for cod, haddock, saithe, redfish, and Greenland halibut.



¹²¹ https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2020/2020/EcosystemOverview_IcelandicWaters_2020.pdf

Figure 39. Spatial distribution of bottom-trawl effort (1000 kW hr) based on logbooks from trawl fishery targeting demersal fish, shrimp, and Norway lobster in 2000, 2008, 2012, and 2018.

Habitat mapping, NovasArc project

Records of sensitive benthic species were used in the project NovasArc – a Nordic project on vulnerable marine ecosystems and anthropogenic activities in arctic and sub - arctic waters (<https://novasarc.hafogvatn.is>). In the NovasArc project, distribution forecast maps were prepared for sensitive species off the Faroe Islands, eastern Greenland, Iceland and Norway. The forecast maps indicate areas that could be suitable for these species based on available information on known distribution and environmental factors related to them (Buhl - Mortensen et al. 2019)¹²². These maps were also compared to the footprint of bottom fishing and the collision between them discussed. The project was a collaborative project of the Marine Research Institute with Havstovan in the Faroe Islands and the Institute of Marine Research in Bergen, supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers NORDEN.

The 2019 NovasArc report highlighted through a risk assessment method that within the Icelandic EEZ, overlap between the fishing effort and the optimal predicted habitat was high for several VMEs, including sublittoral sea pen communities (54.8% of their optimal habitat), hard bottom sponge aggregations (51.2%), stylasterid corals (50.5%), cold-water coral reefs (50.4%), soft bottom sponge aggregations (41.6%), and hard bottom gorgonians (42.3%). However, the authors also note that historical trawl disturbance may have decreased the amount of suitable habitat for these benthic groups.

Also, a paper was published by Burgos et. al (2020)¹²³ based on the findings of the Novasarc work. The group that produced this publication has received an additional funding to develop this work further including managemental aspects in 2021. The MFRI highlighted during the November 2021 site visits that Novasarc II is now ongoing and will concentrate on updating predictive models and discuss the output for managemental purposes.

Benthos recorded in the MFRI survey

Recording of benthic animals as a bycatch in the autumn MFRI trawl took place for the fifth time in 2020 (Jakobsdóttir et al. 2020¹²⁴) (Figure 31). Benthic animals were collected at 105 stations. Benthic animals are classified into species as far as possible, counted and weighed. Amount of benthic animals in tows ranged from 0.028 kg to 97.5 kg and the number of individuals counted in tow ranged from 1 to 1,213 (Fig. 21). The largest number of individuals were fungi. Maximum number of identified species or groups in tow there were 71 species at a station west of Kolbeinseyjarhrygg and the fewest species, a total of 3, occurred two stations in the continental shelf south of the country. At one point west of Reykjanes was the total weight of benthic animals in a tow was 97.5 kg and a total of 50 species, most of which contained 80 kg of coral. Sponges weighed the most at other stations. Six benthic species were identified at the Faroe Islands ridge that have not occurred in previous surveys. A total of over 700 species have been identified from the five autumn surveys since benthos bycatch has been recorded.

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Policy for vulnerable marine ecosystems

The Ministry of Industry and Innovation has begun work on formulating a protection policy for vulnerable bottom ecosystems (or vulnerable marine ecosystems) within the Icelandic economic zone to shape procedures for the protection of fragile benthic ecosystems based on international standards criteria that Iceland is signatory to. This includes defined demersal fishing areas and protected areas. Therefore, the Ministry requested that the Marine Research Institute compile information in addition to evaluating five aspects of fragile benthic ecosystems, reported on by Ólafsdóttir et al. 2021¹²⁵. These five aspects are:

1. An assessment of which species in Icelandic waters are considered fragile ecosystems in Iceland. At the same time, an overview of the state of knowledge is compiled the distribution and density of the species. The summary will take into account FAO guidelines as well as the work of ICES, NAFO and NEAFC.
2. Define for each species or groups that can be considered as characteristic species ecosystems, when their density is considered so high that an area is considered to be a fragile ecosystem.
3. Perform an analysis of any of the areas that have been closed for a long time to evaluate if it meets the criteria for being considered a vulnerable bottom ecosystem.
4. Propose a definition of what can be considered a significant negative effect from bottom fishing gear on fragile bottom ecosystems.
5. Define demersal fishing areas where fishing has taken place for the past 20 years (or other years if this describes fishing in recent decades better), with bottom fishing gear (bottom trawls, seines, nets, lines, dredges).

The MRFI has proposed new closures to protect vulnerable ecosystems to the Ministry of Fisheries.

Foodweb considerations

Tusk feed on a variety of crustaceans and fishes, such as Nephrops, crabs, Norway pout and redfish. For the current fishery there are no further updates in terms of foodweb considerations aside from the data from Sturludóttir *et. al.* 2018¹²⁶ which described the results of an ecological end-to-end model built using the Atlantic framework for the

¹²² <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1304079/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

¹²³ <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2020.00131/full>

¹²⁴ Klara Björg Jakobsdóttir, Höskuldur Björnsson, Jón Sólmundsson, Kristján Kristinsson, Steinunn Hilma Ólafsdóttir og Valur Bogason. 2020. Protected areas within Iceland's territorial waters and fragile ecosystems. Summary for the Ministry of Industry and Innovation of the available data from areas in the sea around Iceland that have been closed for over 10 years and fishing with demersal gear has been restricted or banned. HV 2021-49 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/hv2020-54.pdf>

¹²⁵ Steinunn Hilma Ólafsdóttir, Stefán Á. Ragnarsson, Julian M. Burgos, Einar Hjörleifsson, Klara Jakobsdóttir og Guðmundur Þórðarson. 2021. Protection of fragile benthic ecosystems. Summary of information and evaluation of five factors is concern sensitive bottom ecosystems for the Ministry of Industry and Innovation. HV 2021-50 <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/hv2021-50.pdf>

¹²⁶ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165783618301620>

3.1 Guiding Principle	
	Icelandic marine ecosystem, and in which Icelandic tusk (likely grouped within the classes FOC=Other codfish, FDC=Demersal commercial or FDF=other demersal fish) was found to be reasonably well connected to other key fish species as both prey and predator, and as such did not appear to be a key prey species in the Icelandic marine ecosystem, like capelin for example.
References:	Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.
Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard	The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.

7.6.10 Clause 3.2 Specific Criteria

3.2 Specific Criteria including:	
3.2.1	Information gathering and advice
3.2.2	By-catch and discards
3.2.3	Habitat Considerations
3.2.4	Foodweb Considerations
3.2.5	Precautionary Considerations
Summary of relevant changes:	<p>Information is available on the legal specification of fishing gear in the Icelandic groundfish fishery. The primary aim of fishing gear regulations is size selectivity with a secondary aim being species selectivity. Gears are regulated in several ways to regulate both size and species selectivity. The MFRI provide advice for 40 fish stocks in Iceland as well as advice for harvest of marine mammal species (e.g. fin whale and common minke whale). Their most recent advice(i.e. 2021), which include results of routine monitoring and assessment efforts is available online at https://www.hafogvatn.is/en/harvesting-advice. The Directorate of Fisheries monitors catches of a larger suite of species (many of them non-target species) including starry ray/thorny skate, common skate, dogfish, Greenland shark, Porbeagle shark, Atlantic halibut, orange roughy, shagreen ray, etc... Catch records for over 50 species can be retrieved on their website.¹²⁷</p> <p>There have been no changes in the gear used in Icelandic waters. Fiskistofa and the Client group confirmed that longliners use night settings and lasers of sounds cannons to keep birds off the longlines, while trawlers use semi-pelagic trawl doors and rock hoppers to decrease drag on the seabed to save fuel and decrease gear habitat contact. Gillnetters are mainly restricted through area closures.</p> <p>The status of bycatch and associated species has been detailed in the previous clause. Vulnerable species effects are considered generally limited and not significantly affecting any of the species listed by OSPAR, or the marine mammals and seabirds regularly caught in the gillnet fisheries (mostly in lumpfish).</p> <p>According to section 2 of Act no. 57/1996, concerning the treatment of commercial marine stocks, discard of catches (although with minor exceptions) is prohibited, hence the very</p>

¹²⁷ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/veidar/aflastada/aflastodulisti/>

<p>3.2 Specific Criteria including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.1 Information gathering and advice 3.2.2 By-catch and discards 3.2.3 Habitat Considerations 3.2.4 Foodweb Considerations 3.2.5 Precautionary Considerations 	<p>vast majority if not all catches are landed. Actual discards are illegal and considered relatively small in Icelandic waters. Discarding violations are subject to penalty ranging from ISK 400K to 8M. One feature of this ban is that it has some inbuilt flexibility, as any 5% of demersal catches from a fishing trip (called VS catch), irrespective of fish species or size, may be excluded from quota restriction (which means that VS catches are additional to the TAC). On sale of VS catches in public fish markets 20% of the revenue generated is paid to the vessel with the remaining 80% going to a designated research and development fund (the VS fund, under the auspices of the Ministry). A maximum of 20% return on VS catches means that there are limited incentives for fishermen to land such catches.</p> <p>Habitat considerations are listed in the yearly ICES ecosystem report for the Icelandic waters, the last of which was published in December 2020¹²⁸. Key findings summarised in the report highlight that using vessel monitoring system (VMS) and logbook data ICES estimates that mobile bottom trawls used by commercial fisheries in the 12 m+ vessel category have been deployed over approximately 132,485 km² of the Icelandic ecoregion in 2018, corresponding to ca. 17.5 % of the ecoregion’s spatial extent. Extensive spatial closures are also shown in the region.</p> <p>Tusk feed on a variety of crustaceans and fishes, such as Nephrops, crabs, Norway pout and redfish. For the current fishery there are no further updates in terms of foodweb considerations aside from the data from Sturludottir <i>et. al.</i> 2018¹²⁹ which described the results of an ecological end-to-end model built using the Atlantic framework for the Icelandic marine ecosystem, and in which Icelandic tusk (likely grouped within the classes FOC=Other codfish, FDC=Demersal commercial or FDF=other demersal fish) was found to be reasonably well connected to other key fish species as both prey and predator, and as such did not appear to be a key prey species in the Icelandic marine ecosystem, like capelin for example.</p> <p>Precautionary considerations are integrated in the management of associated and non-target species.</p>
<p>References:</p>	<p>Please refer to the footnotes and references in the summary/background section and the Reference section at the end of this document.</p>
<p>Statement of continuing consistency to the IRF Fishery Standard</p>	<p>The fishery continues to remain consistent with the standard.</p>

¹²⁸ https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2020/2020/EcosystemOverview_IcelandicWaters_2020.pdf

¹²⁹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165783618301620>

8 Update on compliance and progress with non-conformances and agreed action plans

This section details compliance and progress with non-conformances and agreed action plans including:

- a) A review of the performance of the Client specific to agreed corrective action plans to address non-conformances raised in the most recent assessment or re-assessment or at subsequent surveillance audits including a summary of progress toward resolution.
- b) A list of pre-existing non-conformances that remain unresolved, new nonconformances raised during this surveillance, and non-conformances that have been closed during this surveillance.
- c) Details of any new or revised corrective action plans including the Client’s signed acceptance of those plans.
- d) An update of proposed future surveillance activities.

During the full assessment audit¹³⁰ of this fishery in 2019 (of the first certification cycle), all clauses but one was found to be in full conformance. In this respect, one minor non-conformance was identified against clause 2.3.2.4 of the IRFM Standard (V2), relating to the appropriate recording of marine mammal and seabird bycatch data in fishing logbooks. Progress against the NCs for this 2nd Surveillance is shown below. No new non-conformances were identified during the current Surveillance.

Non-conformance 1 (of 1)	
Clause:	2.3.2.4. Catch amounts by species and fishing area shall be estimated and continually recorded in fishing logbooks on-board the fishing vessels
Non-conformance level:	Minor Non-conformance
Non-conformance:	Although required by legislation, there is evidence of extensive non-reporting/under-reporting of seabirds and marine mammals bycatch such that the Assessment Team cannot be confident that catch amounts by species and fishing area (of marine mammals and seabirds) are estimated and continually recorded in fishing logbooks.
Rationale:	The recording of marine mammals and seabirds by number and species is required by Icelandic regulation ¹³¹ . Despite the implementation of new mandatory logbook reporting procedures for seabird and marine mammal bycatch, available evidence suggests that far fewer incidences of seabird and marine mammal bycatch are reported via the electronic logbook system than would be expected given the levels reported by onboard observers. This suggests significant levels of under-reporting and/or non-reporting of seabird and marine mammal bycatch. Examples of available evidence to support this conclusion include the findings of Pallson <i>et al.</i> 2015 ¹³² and the March 2018 MFRI report titled: “Bycatch of Seabirds and Marine Mammals in lumpsucker gillnets 2014-2017”.

¹³⁰ <https://www.responsiblefisheries.is/media/1/form-11.2-icetusk-initial-assessment-final-report-and-determination-1.pdf>

¹³¹ <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/sjavarutvegsraduneyti/nr/18967>

¹³² <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/research/files/fjolrit-178.pdf>

	<p>Pallson <i>et al.</i> 2015 highlighted the fact that their bycatch estimates were based on limited data that needed to be increased and improved with a functioning reporting system for the fishery and better follow up.</p> <p>The MFRI 2018 report found that although reported bycatch in E-logbooks by the fleet has increased (suggesting better compliance with reporting requirements) the overall bycatch rates are still much lower than observed in the trips by inspectors. Overall, the marine mammal and seabird bycatch rate during inspector trips was around four times higher than reported by the fleet in 2017¹³³.</p> <p>Furthermore according to a 2017 presentation to NAMMCO’s Working group on bycatch of marine mammals; <i>“logbooks have unfortunately proven unreliable”</i> and <i>“bycatch of birds and marine mammals is 18x higher when observer is present vs logbook records”</i>.</p> <p>While much of the evidence related to non-compliance with reporting requirements may relate to the lumpsucker fishery, this fishery is still part of the management system under review and in addition there is insufficient evidence to show that compliance in the fisheries under assessment here is better.</p>
<p>Corrective Action Plan</p>	<p>In accordance with rules of the IRF Programme, the Client is required to submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) within 28 days.</p> <p>The Client submitted the following CAP in February 2019</p>

¹³³ <https://www.hafogvatn.is/static/files/skjol/techreport-bycatch-of-birds-and-marine-mammals-lumpsucker-en-final-draft.pdf>



To whom it may concern

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The Icelandic fisheries management system is based on responsible conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and an integral part of the system is to manage ecosystem effects of fishing, including bycatches of commercial and non-commercial species. All management decisions are taken based on the best available science.

Effective control and enforcement is a pivotal element of a responsible fisheries management system. The Directorate of Fisheries monitors fisheries to ensure that rules are being followed. Real-time status of landings is delivered to a live database through a synchronized weight control system at all landing ports. The Directorate also carries out surveillance and inspections of the fishing operations, landing of catches and processing plants in close collaboration with the Icelandic Coast Guard, the Food and Veterinary Authority as well as accredited municipal harbor officials responsible for proper recording of the weight of the landed catch.

Icelandic law explicitly prohibits discards of commercial species, i.e. bycatches of unwanted species or undersized fish. There are certain flexibility options and incentives for compliance incorporated into the system, to make it function well in practice.

Incidental catch of non-commercial species such as seabirds and marine mammals is monitored by mandatory recordings in electronic logbooks. These measures are meant to maintain the delicate balance between effective harvesting and good environmental health to support sustainable fisheries.

The Marine and Freshwater Institute in Iceland issues reports on incidental bycatches of non-commercial species. One issue that is currently being addressed as a result of the recommendations of these reports is the need for further measures to encourage the reporting of these catches in logbooks to prevent the transition from paper-logbooks to electronic reporting from resulting in lower levels of reporting. According to the reports from the MFRI, bycatch of marine mammals and seabirds are most frequent in gillnet fisheries.

The Minister of Fisheries recently received a response to his request to the Committee for consultation on responsible management of living marine resources regarding addressing

non-commercial bycatches. On the basis of the conclusions of this committee, work has commenced to improve data recording, data availability and reliability and explore certain management measures to reduce bycatch of these species.

The committee comprises individuals from main stakeholder organizations in the fishing industry as well as the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute and the Ministry of Fisheries.

The Ministry will be working with the MFRI, the Directorate and the fishing industry in the next months with the aim of acquiring accurate and more detailed information on frequency of non-commercial bycatches, by fishing-gear, area and time. This information is essential for the MFRI as basis for recommendation on management actions to address any significant adverse impacts of fisheries on these species in question and the ecosystem health in general. These actions could include time and area closures and fishing gear amendments.

On behalf of the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture



Brynhildur Benediktsdóttir

Further to the corrective action letter provided, the client also clarified that the Committee has recommended the following to the Ministry of Industries and Innovation:

- 1) Improvement of information collection and monitoring activities to gather reliable seabird and marine mammal bycatch information from vessel e-logbooks (and directly addressing the non-conformance) through technology development (e.g. mobile app in development by the Directorate), a species identification training program for fishermen and observers, and a general improvement in the quality of bycatch data (i.e. narrower confidence limits) and depth of information recorded (e.g. catch information on area, time, depth etc.) to help design mitigation measures that will result in appropriate industry acceptance and buy in;
- 2) Measures to reduce bycatch (e.g. potential spatial/temporal closures at sensitive times such as around seal pupping or bird breeding season); and
- 3) US Marine Mammal Protection Act importing requirements collectively dealt with through improvements in the previous two points (i.e. information gathering and management measures).

	<p>Accordingly, the Ministry is now considering further action with a view to determine what arrangements are realistically achievable and by when, potentially resulting in the following corrective action timelines:</p> <p>Year 1: Ongoing work to further refine the actions identified above in terms of specific deliverables with their accompanying timeline; Year 2: Initiate deliverable x, y, z identified in Year 1; Year 3: Fully implement and report on progress; Year 4: Continued implementation and reporting.</p>																		
<p>Assessment Team CAP response</p>	<p>The Assessment Team has accepted the Corrective Action Plan provided by the Client for the fishery under assessment.</p>																		
<p>Progress at 1st Surveillance (2021)</p>	<p>During the 2021 remote audit, Fiskistofa confirmed that starting in September 2020 smaller Icelandic vessels (including gillnetters that are responsible for most of the recognised bycatch of marine mammals and seabirds) are now required to log their catches in an app (essentially a e-logbook) which contains information on catch and bycatch, including that of marine mammals and seabirds. This follows regulation 298/2020¹³⁴. The App was designed and trialled between 2018 and 2020. The App also called Afladagbókina or catch diary¹³⁵ automatically records the location of the boat during fishing and the captains then records the catch, its condition and by-catch, in a very simple way. The app replaces paper logbooks in the small boat sector, with an electronic catch recording system. It is expected that this app will make the recording of bycatch easier for the fleet.</p> <p>Additionally, the MFRI has provided the latest (available) reported bycatch from the fishing fleet by gear. They report that (as somewhat expected) logbook records were generally much lower than the estimated bycatch. As an example, the total bycatch of reported harbour porpoises in the gillnet fishery over the 4 years was 171 porpoises while the total observed by inspectors and in the MFRI cod gillnet survey (3.7% of total effort) was 119 porpoises (yearly).</p> <p>Bycatch of marine mammals and seabirds by gear type in 2016-2019 as reported by the fishing fleet. Source MFRI, January 2021.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="381 1514 1219 1696"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Cod and Greenland halibut gillnets</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Species</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> <th>2019</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Harbour porpoise</td> <td>52</td> <td>45</td> <td>48</td> <td>26</td> <td>171</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Cod and Greenland halibut gillnets						Species	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total	Harbour porpoise	52	45	48	26	171
Cod and Greenland halibut gillnets																			
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¹³⁴ <https://www.reglugerd.is/reglugerdir/eftir-raduneytum/atvinnuvega--og-nyskopunarraduneyti/nr/21887>

¹³⁵ <http://www.fiskistofa.is/umfiskistofu/frettir/afladagbokin-smaforrit-fyrir-rafraena-skraningu-afla>

¹³⁶ https://www.mbl.is/200milur/frettir/2020/08/31/oll_aflaskraning_rafraen_fra_og_med_morgundeginum/

White beaked dolphin	1	0	0	1	2
Harbour seal	11	12	7	8	38
Grey seal	4	1	1	1	7
Harp seal	2	0	0	0	2
Ringed seal	0	0	0	1	1
Humpback whale	1	0	0	0	1
Northern bottlenose whale	0	0	1	0	1
Risso's dolphin	0	0	7	0	7
Total marine mammals	71	58	64	37	230
Common guillemot	32	40	35	38	145
Northern fulmar	0	2	0	0	2
Brünnich's guillemot	0	0	0	3	3
Black guillemot	0	2	0	26	28
Cormorants	0	1	2	4	7
Total seabirds	32	45	37	71	185
Demersal longline					
Species	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Northern fulmar	61	303	539	195	1098
Northern gannet	0	27	3	0	30
Seagull species	25	8	3	0	36
Total seabirds	86	338	545	195	1164
Demersal otter trawl					
Species	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Harbour seal	0	0	3	1	4
Unidentified dolphin	0	0	1	0	1
Total marine mammals	0	0	4	1	5
Northern gannet	0	0	0	3	3

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Total seabirds</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>	Total seabirds	0	0	0	3	3	
Total seabirds	0	0	0	3	3			
	<p>All in all, it is expected that the new App will facilitate more precise data collection from the (small boat) fleet. Further progress will be measured at each subsequent surveillance.</p>							
<p>Assessment Team Determination on 1st Surveillance (2021) Corrective Evidence</p>	<p>The Assessment Team has determined that the information supplied is sufficient to meet the original CAP deliverable for year 1 and 2. The non-conformance remains open and on track towards appropriate closure.</p>							
<p>Year 2 progress (2nd Surveillance, late 2021)</p>	<p>The 2nd surveillance activities will review evidence that the corrective actions highlighted above have been carried out.</p> <p>As of November 2021, the App continues to be used in the small vessel sector and catch and bycatch data is being collected by Fiskistofa and the MFRI for management purposes. MFRI staff reported that data from the App is in the process of being made available to the MFRI through MFRI/Fiskistofa IT staff collaboration, although timelines for completion are unclear as of November 2021. Fiskistofa has also reported as part of this 2nd surveillance audit that since the beginning of the App's implementation it has been mandatory to register all catch and bycatch according to regulation 298/2020 and the data is being received by the authorities. Their inspectors have been busy training fishermen and captains at the quaysides during landing, and their helpline was quite busy in the beginning of the coastal fleet season. Also, one physical meeting was held in Akranes with coastal fishermen. A tutorial video on the use of the App was also published on the Fiskistofa website https://www.fiskistofa.is/ymsaruppl/tilkynningar/afladagbocarapp-myndband and on the Fiskistofa Facebook site¹³⁷.</p> <p>Furthermore, a traceability component to the App has been implemented in April 2021 which is been used to further help with the detection of discrepancies in catch records and to allow better traceability across the supply chain. This traceability component is currently subject to further development.</p>							
<p>Assessment Team Determination on Year-2 Corrective Evidence</p>	<p>The Assessment Team has determined that the information supplied is sufficient to meet the original CAP deliverable for year 2. The non-conformance remains open and on track towards appropriate closure.</p>							
	<p>The 3rd surveillance activities will review evidence of continuous implementation of the App in the small vessel sector.</p>							

¹³⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Fiskistofa-1151844504903713/videos/304666984614930/>

9 Recommendations for continued certification

9.1 Certification Recommendation

Following this surveillance audit, the Assessment Team recommends that the fishery be awarded continuing certified against the IRF Responsible Fisheries Management Standard Revision 2.0.

9.2 Certification Committee Determination

The involvement of a Certification's Certification Committee is only required where one or more new non-conformances are raised during a Surveillance Audit.

As no new non-conformances were raised during this Surveillance Audit, the involvement of a Global Trust's Certification Committee is not required; therefore, the above recommendation of the assessment team constitutes a Determination.

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11 Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 – Assessment Team Bios

11.1.1 Assessment Team Bios

Based on the technical expertise required to carry out this assessment, an Assessment Team was selected as follows.

Vito Romito, Lead Assessor

Vito has 10 years of expertise in fisheries certification and is an ISO14001 Certified Lead Auditor and MSC FCR v.2.0 and FCP v.2.1 approved Fisheries Team Leader for SAI Global with extensive experience in ecosystems effects of fisheries. Vito received a BSc (Honours) in Ecology and a MSc in Tropical Coastal Management from Newcastle University (U.K.), in between which he worked for a year in Tanzania, carrying out comparative biodiversity assessments of pristine and dynamited coral reef ecosystems around the Mafia Island Marine Park. For five years he worked at Global Trust Certification/ later SAI Global as Lead Assessor for all the fishery assessments in Alaska, Iceland and Louisiana. Vito has also carried out several IFFO forage fisheries assessments in Chile, Peru, Europe and other various pre-assessments in Atlantic and Pacific Canada. To date, Vito has headed and conducted dozens of assessments involving 40+ different species including salmonid, groundfish, pelagic, flatfish, crustacean and cephalopod species in Europe, North and South America, and SE Asia. For three years, as a senior fisheries consultant and then manager with RS Standards Ltd., he was involved in the development and testing of a Data Deficient Fisheries framework and v.2.0 fisheries standard for the ASMI Alaska RFM Scheme, and IFFO RS Improver/FIP projects related to South East Asia multispecies bottom trawl fisheries. Vito re-joined the SAI Global Fisheries Team in 2018 and has since been involved in MSC and RFM fisheries assessments in Canada, New England, Iceland, Alaska and Louisiana, the Baltic Sea, Ireland and Italy.

Dankert Skagen, Assessor

Dankert retired from the Institute of Marine Research (IMR), Bergen in 2010, where he worked for 22 years. His responsibilities included stock assessment, multispecies work, in particular in the North Sea, work connected to the introduction of the precautionary approach in fisheries and more recently, on development of harvest control rules and management strategies.

He was leader of the IMR research program for population dynamics and multispecies investigations in 1996-97 and for the development of new assessment tools for North-East arctic cod in 1998-99 and the assessment package TASACS in 2007-08. In addition, he has developed several programs for simulating harvest control rules that are commonly used in fisheries management today. Within ICES, he has participated in a wide range of working groups and has been chairman of several of them, including the Study Group of Management Strategies. He was chairman of the Resource Management Committee for 3 years and member of ACFM for 7 years. Dankert has been involved with sustainability assessment of Icelandic fisheries for 10 years.