

Saithe (*Pollachius virens*) in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach is applied, catches in 2025 should be no more than 24 281 tonnes. ICES is not in a position to advise on the corresponding level of fishing effort.

Non-fisheries conservation considerations

ICES has not identified any conservation aspects other than those relating to the commercial fisheries.

Stock development over time

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

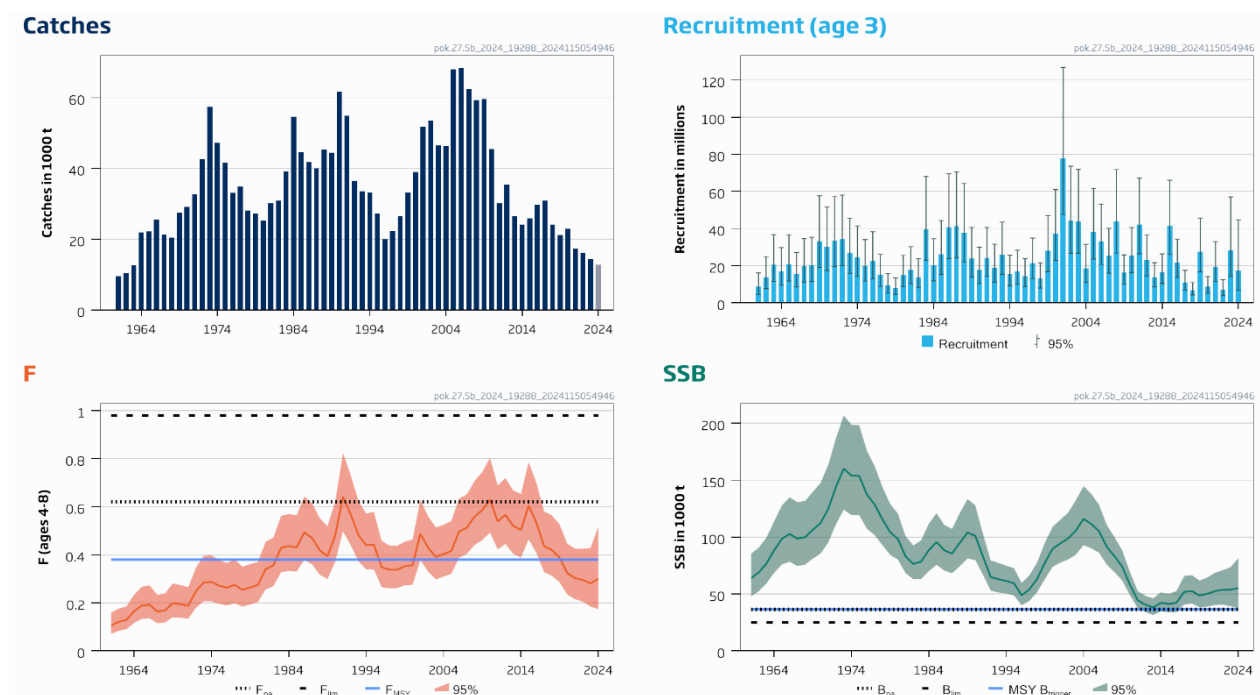


Figure 1 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Summary of the stock assessment. Catches in 2024 are estimated for the full year based on reported catch in Q1 - Q3, and used in the assessment to produce an estimate of F in 2024.

Catch scenarios

Table 1 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Assumptions made for the interim year and in the forecast.

Variable	Value	Notes
$F_{ages\ 4-8}$ (2024)	0.31	Based on catch estimate of 12708 tonnes in 2024
SSB (2025)	67335	in tonnes
$R_{age\ 3}$ (2025 and 2026)	19489	Median of resampled estimates 2019–2023; in thousands
Landings (2024)	12708	Catch estimate for 2024 based on catch statistics to the end of September extrapolated to the entire year; in tonnes
Discards (2024)	0	Discarding is considered negligible; in tonnes

Table 2 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Annual catch scenarios. Weights are in tonnes.

Basis	Catch (2025)	F ₄₋₈ (2025)	SSB (2026)	% SSB change*	% advice change**
ICES advice basis					
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach: F _{MSY} = 0.38	24281	0.38	71896	7	58
Other scenarios					
F = 0	0	0	94005	40	-100
F = F ₂₀₂₄	20178	0.306	75489	12	32
F = F _{pa}	35686	0.62	61265	-9	132
F = F _{lim}	49187	0.98	49629	-26	221

* SSB (2026) relative to SSB (2025) (67 335 tonnes).

** Advice value for 2025 relative to the advice value for 2024 as issued in 2023 (15 323 tonnes).

The catch advice for 2025 is higher compared to the advice for 2024 because of increasing stock biomass and increasing recruitment.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Maximum sustainable Yield (MSY) approach
Management plan	A management plan (Fiskidagaskipan og umsitingarættan, 2019) was implemented in 2021, but ICES has not been requested to evaluate it

Quality of the assessment

The assessment in 2024 produces estimates of F and SSB that are similar to the 2023 assessment. There have been large changes in estimates of recruitment between assessments.

The relationship between catches from January to September and total year catch gives a preliminary estimate of catch in 2024 that is well below the ICES advice.

Starting with the summer survey in 2021, there was a change in survey vessel and a further change in survey footgear in the summer 2024 survey. The indices have not been adjusted for these changes. The impact of these changes is unknown and should be explored.

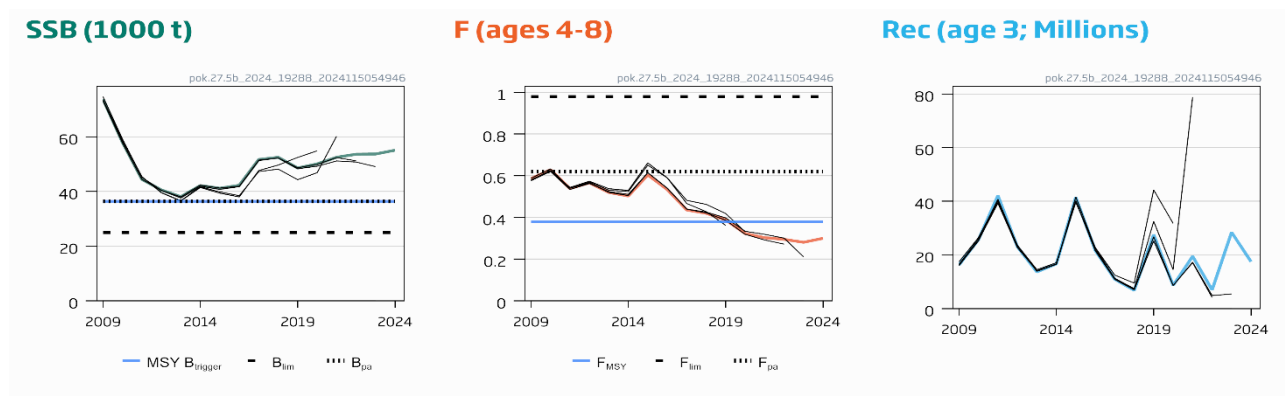


Figure 2 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Historical assessment results. Results of the last five assessments are plotted, with the solid coloured line representing the current assessment. The plot does not show the line for fishing mortality that ends in 2021 because this year's assessment estimated fishing mortality in the current year (year y), while the last year in previous assessments was the last full calendar year (year y-1). The final year F in 2024 for the current assessment is based on estimated catch.

Issues relevant for the advice

In 2021, the Faroese authorities implemented a management plan (Fiskidagaskipan og umsitingarætlan, 2019) with a control rule that regulates the number of fishing days for cod, haddock, and saithe in the Faroe Plateau fishery. The management plan has not been evaluated by ICES; therefore, ICES bases its advice on the MSY approach.

ICES cannot quantify the relationship between effort and F for this stock.

There have been a number of lower recruitments in the past 10 years.

Catches have been below the ICES advice since 2011.

Reference points

Table 4 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Reference points, values, and their technical basis. Weights are in tonnes.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	36 412	B_{loss} (SSB in 2013)	ICES (2022)
	F_{MSY}	0.38	Stochastic simulations	ICES (2022)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	24 990	$B_{pa}/\exp(1.645 \times \sigma)$, where $\sigma = 0.228829$	ICES (2022)
	B_{pa}	36 412	B_{loss}	ICES (2022)
	F_{lim}	0.98	Stochastic simulations; the F that gives a 50% probability of $SSB > B_{lim}$	ICES (2022)
	F_{pa}	0.62	F_{POS} , stochastic simulations (ICES, 2022): the F that leads to $SSB \geq B_{lim}$ with 95% probability	ICES (2022)
Management plan	SSB_{mgt}	Not applicable		

Basis of the assessment

Table 5 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	1 (ICES, 2023)
Assessment type	State-space model (SAM) using catches in the model and in the forecast (ICES, 2024).
Input data	Commercial catches (mainly Faroese catches, ages and length frequencies from catch sampling); Preliminary estimate of catch-at-age in the year (January to September) in which the assessment is carried out; Faroese bottom-trawl surveys FO-GFS-Q1 (G1264) and FO-GFS-Q3 (G3284); annual maturity data from FO-GFS-Q1 (G1264); natural mortality set at $M = 0.2$
Discards and bycatch	Discarding is considered negligible
Indicators	None
Other information	An interbenchmark assessment was performed in 2022 (ICES, 2022)

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 6 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). ICES advice, total allowable catches (TACs), and catch. Weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC*	ICES catch
1987	No increase in F	< 32000		40020
1988	No increase in F	< 32000		45285
1989	Reduction in F	< 40000		44477
1990	Reduction in F	< 41000		61628
1991	TAC	< 30000		54858
1992	Reduction in F	< 27000		36487
1993	Reduction in F	< 37000		33543
1994	TAC	< 26000	42000 **	33182
1995	TAC	< 22000	39000 **	27209

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC*	ICES catch
1996	TAC	< 39000	-	20029
1997	20% reduction in F from 1995 level	< 21000	-	22306
1998	30% reduction in effort from 1996/1997 level	-	-	26421
1999	F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 14000		33207
2000	F below than F_{pa} (0.28)	< 15000		39020
2001	Reduce fishing effort to generate F well below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 17000		51786
2002	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 28000		53546
2003	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 47000		46555
2004	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 48000		46355
2005	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 32000		67967
2006	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 24000		68465
2007	Average catch considerations	40000		62351
2008	Do not increase effort	-		57044
2009	Reduce fishing effort by around 20%	-		59558
2010	Reduce fishing effort by around 20%	-		45441
2011	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{pa} (0.28)	< 38000		30084
2012	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{MSY} (0.28)	< 40000		35448
2013	$F < 0.28$	< 29100		26539
2014	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{MSY} (0.30)	< 29000		24103
2015	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{MSY} (0.30)	< 26000		25899
2016	Reduce fishing effort to generate F below F_{MSY} (0.30)	< 36000		29672
2017	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach ($F \leq 0.30$)	≤ 46000		30852
2018	MSY approach ($F \leq 0.30$)	≤ 35003		24046
2019 ***	MSY approach	≤ 23967		21179
2020	MSY approach	≤ 35636		22920
2021	MSY approach	≤ 27368		17306
2022	MSY approach	≤ 37444		16119
2023	MSY approach	≤ 17843		14347
2024	MSY approach	≤ 15323		
2025	MSY approach	≤ 24281		

* Not applicable since 1997.

** 1 September in the quota year to 31 August the following year.

*** Since 2019, fishing year equals to calendar year.

History of the catch and landings

Table 7 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Catch distribution by fleet in 2023 as estimated by ICES.

Catch	Landings		Discards
	Pair trawls	Other gears	
14 347 tonnes	98%	2%	Negligible
	14 347 tonnes		

There are no reported catches in NEAFC regulatory areas.

Table 8 Saithe in Division 5.b. History of commercial catch and landings; official catches by country and ICES estimated catches are presented. Weights are in tonnes.

Year	Denmark	Estonia	Faroe Islands	France	Germany #	Ireland	Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	UK	USSR/ Russian Fed. ***	Greenland	Iceland	Total	ICES estimate^
1989			43624	**	29		22	51		9				43735	44477
1990	2		59821	**	15		67	46		33	30			60014	61628
1991			53321	**	32		65	103		84				53605	54858
1992			35979	120	5			85		172	12			36373	36487
1993			32719	75	2			32		704				33532	33543
1994			32406	19	1			156		589				33171	33182
1995			26918	10	41			10		221				27200	27209
1996			19267	12	3			16		633	18			19949	20029
1997		16	21721	9	5			67		460	28			22306	22306
1998			25995	17				53		356				26065	26421
1999			32439		100	0	160			508				33207	33207
2000			*	273	230	0	72		20	566				1161	39020
2001			49676	934	672	0	60		1	788				52131	51786
2002			55165	607	547	0	77		10	598				57004	53546
2003			47933	370	281	0	62		32	699				49377	46555
2004			48222	147	186		0	82	5	833	71			49546	46355
2005			71496	123	1		0	82		4354	210			76266	67967
2006	34		72169	315	49		0	35		1099	104	73		73878	68465
2007			66319	108	3		3	81		412	160	239		67325	62351
2008			63424	97	3		0	38		400	38	0		64000	59243
2009			63339	68	0		0	23		685	44	1	148	64308	59558
2010			48279	46			0	28		706	3			49062	45441
2011			32357	135						19				32511	30084
2012			38278	40								1		38319	35448
2013			28655	31						1	1			28688	26539
2014			25655	28				4		340				26027	24103
2015			27496	122				40		304				27961	25899
2016			30849	336			1	198		601				31986	29672
2017			32966	40				27		291				33325	30852
2018			25692	27				40		214		1		25973	24046
2019			22764	5				40		71			0	22877	21179

Year	Denmark	Estonia	Faroe Islands	France	Germany #	Ireland	Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	UK	USSR/ Russian Fed. ***	Greenland	Iceland	Total	ICES estimate^
2020			24334	20				38		352				24745	22920
2021			18684	63				20					3	18770	17306
2022			16599	68				7		747				17421	16119
2023			14973					6		491					14347

* No official catches reported.

** Quantity unknown 1989–1991.

*** Catches up to 1990 are from USSR and, since 1991, from the Russian Federation.

^ Includes catches from Division 2.a in Faroese waters, as reported to the Faroese Coast Guard.

Catches from Germany in 1989 and 1990 are sum of catches from the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic.

Summary of the assessment

Table 9 Saithe in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). Assessment summary. Weights are in tonnes, recruitment in thousands.

Year	Recruitment			SSB			Total Catch	F		
	Low	Midpoint	High	Low	Midpoint	High		Low	Midpoint	High
1961	4567	8589	16154	47742	63773	85187	9592	0.070	0.105	0.159
1962	7658	13788	24825	52211	68833	90745	10454	0.083	0.121	0.176
1963	11529	20579	36731	59055	76664	99523	12693	0.090	0.129	0.185
1964	9496	16817	29783	68465	88283	113839	21893	0.116	0.165	0.23
1965	11728	20743	36687	75814	98393	127697	22181	0.133	0.189	0.27
1966	8645	15319	27146	78339	102845	135015	25563	0.135	0.192	0.27
1967	11122	19620	34611	74556	98730	130743	21319	0.115	0.164	0.23
1968	11529	20189	35353	75760	99895	131718	20387	0.118	0.168	0.24
1969	19067	33164	57683	80942	106371	139790	27437	0.140	0.199	0.28
1970	17363	29925	51575	85347	112207	147522	29110	0.137	0.194	0.27
1971	19599	33517	57320	95177	124797	163635	32706	0.134	0.188	0.27
1972	20109	34174	58078	111166	144205	187062	42663	0.179	0.25	0.35
1973	15876	26906	45598	123993	160168	206895	57431	0.21	0.28	0.40
1974	14269	24317	41441	119380	154089	198888	47188	0.21	0.29	0.40
1975	11696	19960	34063	119221	153792	198389	41576	0.195	0.27	0.38
1976	13026	22346	38335	107234	137329	175869	33065	0.189	0.26	0.37
1977	8894	15243	26123	101731	128597	162558	34835	0.198	0.28	0.38
1978	5394	9240	15829	92768	115668	144222	28138	0.184	0.25	0.35
1979	4560	7827	13435	84317	104375	129204	27246	0.193	0.26	0.36
1980	8733	14933	25536	80161	98392	120771	25230	0.20	0.27	0.37
1981	10298	17660	30283	68243	82962	100855	30103	0.26	0.34	0.45
1982	8093	13873	23780	62929	76333	92592	30964	0.27	0.36	0.47
1983	22983	39563	68104	63312	78437	97176	39176	0.33	0.43	0.56
1984	11823	20212	34552	69933	88458	111889	54665	0.33	0.44	0.57
1985	15322	26063	44333	75581	95664	121084	44605	0.33	0.43	0.56
1986	23820	40712	69581	70487	88355	110752	41716	0.38	0.49	0.64
1987	24216	41339	70569	68225	85515	107185	40020	0.36	0.47	0.62
1988	22030	37645	64328	74292	94896	121214	45285	0.32	0.42	0.55
1989	14013	23869	40658	80990	103949	133417	44477	0.30	0.39	0.52
1990	10380	17636	29965	79828	101143	128149	61628	0.37	0.48	0.62
1991	14240	24057	40641	66849	82974	102990	54858	0.50	0.64	0.83
1992	11101	18735	31620	52895	64841	79487	36487	0.44	0.57	0.73
1993	15254	25760	43503	51242	62953	77340	33543	0.37	0.48	0.63
1994	9214	15361	25611	50421	61431	74844	33182	0.34	0.44	0.57
1995	10114	16937	28362	48622	59491	72791	27209	0.34	0.44	0.58
1996	8778	14463	23831	39964	48864	59747	20029	0.27	0.35	0.46
1997	13006	21304	34895	43872	54016	66507	22306	0.26	0.34	0.44
1998	7963	13081	21489	51498	63264	77716	26421	0.26	0.34	0.44
1999	16828	28134	47036	63018	77463	95219	33207	0.27	0.35	0.46
2000	22825	37338	61079	73711	89666	109075	39020	0.28	0.36	0.46
2001	47575	77675	126821	77479	94510	115285	51786	0.38	0.49	0.63
2002	26684	44329	73644	80212	98731	121527	53546	0.33	0.43	0.56
2003	26683	43815	71948	84408	105746	132479	46555	0.30	0.39	0.51
2004	11056	18667	31520	92890	115990	144836	46355	0.31	0.40	0.53
2005	23623	38168	61667	90116	111526	138023	67967	0.32	0.42	0.54
2006	20691	33184	53219	86165	105212	128469	68465	0.39	0.50	0.63
2007	15940	25292	40133	75689	91567	110776	62352	0.40	0.51	0.65
2008	26832	43905	71843	69076	83102	99976	59243	0.44	0.56	0.71
2009	10196	16225	25817	61733	73891	88445	59557	0.46	0.59	0.75
2010	16241	25666	40560	48720	58084	69247	45441	0.49	0.63	0.80
2011	26384	42111	67214	37597	44477	52617	30083	0.42	0.54	0.69
2012	14551	23041	36486	34023	40593	48433	35448	0.45	0.57	0.72
2013	8643	13675	21636	31434	38127	46245	26539	0.40	0.52	0.67

Year	Recruitment			SSB			Total Catch	F		
	Low	Midpoint	High	Low	Midpoint	High		Low	Midpoint	High
2014	10490	16650	26427	34675	42205	51370	24103	0.39	0.50	0.65
2015	26066	41494	66054	33926	41218	50079	25899	0.46	0.60	0.79
2016	13656	21658	34350	34090	42309	52511	29672	0.41	0.53	0.70
2017	6863	10957	17493	40691	51749	65813	30852	0.33	0.44	0.58
2018	4210	6786	10937	41493	52558	66574	24046	0.31	0.42	0.56
2019	16681	27590	45633	38258	48630	61814	21179	0.28	0.39	0.53
2020	5249	8631	14192	38918	50139	64595	22920	0.23	0.32	0.45
2021	11502	19489	33020	40238	52573	68691	17306	0.22	0.30	0.43
2022	3899	6970	12462	40577	53663	70968	16119	0.21	0.30	0.43
2023	14173	28441	57073	39267	53753	73583	14347	0.184	0.28	0.43
2024	6841	17494	44734	37289	55145	81553	12708*	0.174	0.30	0.52

* Catch estimate based on catch statistics to the end of September, extrapolated to the entire year.

Sources and references

Fiskidagaskipan og umsitingarætlan. Frágreiðing og tilmæli frá arbeiðsbólkinum at gera uppskot til umsitingarætlan og at eftirmeta skipanina í fiskiskapinum eftir botnfiski undir Føroyum (Fisheries management plan and harvest control rule for cod, haddock and saithe in Faroese waters) (in Faroese). 2019. 34 pp. https://lms.cdn.fo/media/12444/fiskidagaskipan-og-umsitingar%C3%A6tlan-fr%C3%A1grei%C3%B0ing-fr%C3%A1-arbei%C3%B0sb%C3%B3lki-mai-2019.pdf?s=k4aSmLc1W4eXb_RidnITC-WYwDA. Last accessed: 25 November 2024.

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Recommended citation: ICES. 2024. Saithe (*Pollachius virens*) in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2024. ICES Advice 2024, pok.27.5b, <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.25019471>