

Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14 (Iceland and Faroes grounds, West of Scotland, North of Azores, East of Greenland)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach is applied, catches in 2027 should be no more than 21 079 tonnes.

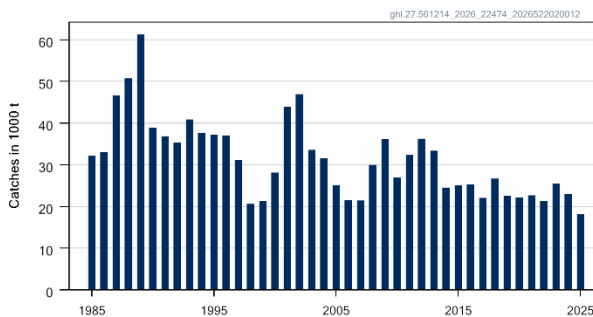
Non-fisheries conservation considerations

Conservation aspects and associated management measures may exist at a national or regional level but were not reviewed by ICES.

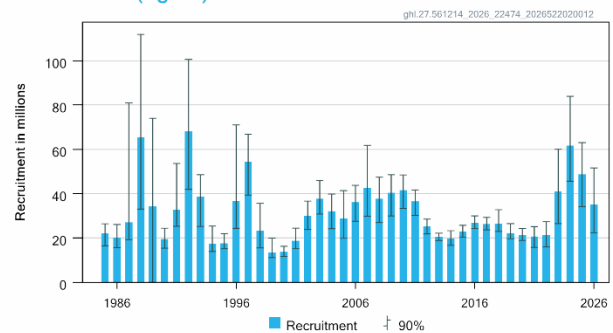
Stock development over time

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

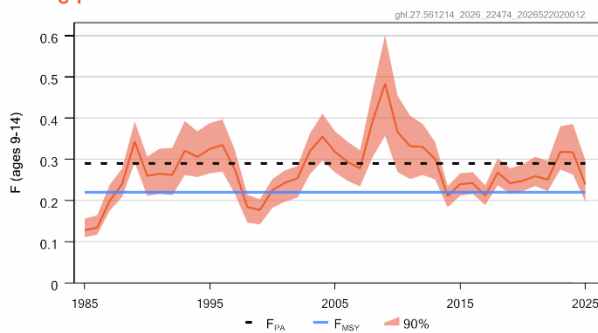
Catches



Recruitment (age 5)



Fishing pressure



Biomass

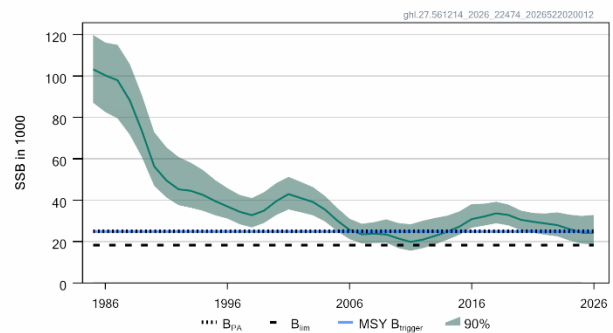


Figure 1 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Summary of the stock assessment. Spawning-stock biomass (SSB) refers to the mature female part of the stock only.

Catch scenarios

Table 1 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Values in the forecast and for the interim year.

Variable	Value	Notes
$F_{ages\ 9-14}$ (2026)	0.25	F based on catch in 2026
Spawning-stock biomass (SSB; 2027)	27 769	Short-term projections; tonnes
R_{age5} (2027)	27 132	From the assessment; thousands
Total catch (2026)	20 992	Catch corresponding to advice (2026); tonnes

Table 2 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Annual catch scenarios (all weights are in tonnes).

Basis	Total catch (2027)	F (9–14) (2027)	Spawning-stock biomass (SSB; 2028)	% SSB change*	% advice change^
ICES advice basis					
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach: F _{MSY}	21 079	0.22	30 820	11	0.41
Other scenarios					
F ₂₀₂₇ = 0	0	0	34 989	26	-100
F ₂₀₂₇ = F ₂₀₂₅	21 079	0.22	30 820	11	0

* SSB in 2028 relative to SSB in 2027.

^ Advised catches for 2027 relative to the advice value for 2026 (20 992 tonnes).

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach
Management plan	ICES is aware of an agreed management plan, between Iceland and Greenland, for Greenland halibut in this area, but has not evaluated it

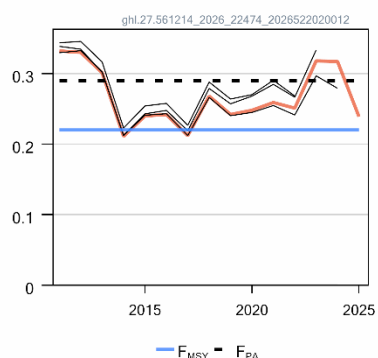
Quality of the assessment

This year’s assessment is in line with previous assessments.

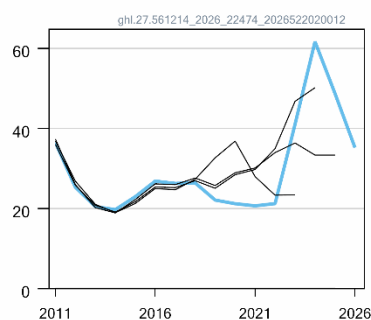
Connectivity to the adjacent Greenland halibut stocks (Northeast Arctic stocks in ICES subareas 1 and 2 and NAFO subareas 0 and 1) is known but still unquantified (Albert and Vollen, 2015; Westgaard *et al.*, 2017; Vihtakari *et al.*, 2022, Gislason *et al.*, 2023; Ubeda *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, the current assessment trend may be influenced by more than one population. This issue adds to the uncertainty in the assessment.

The lack of consistency in age readings between the relevant fishing nations prevents the full use of age information in the assessment.

Fishing pressure



Rec (age 5; Millions)



Biomass

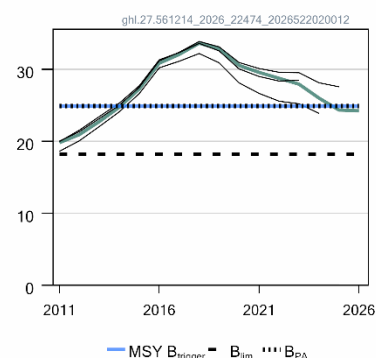


Figure 2 Historical assessment results. Final-year recruitment and biomass estimates are included. The assessment method was changed at the benchmark in 2023. Previously, the assessment generated relative values only, and therefore these results cannot be compared.

Issues relevant for the advice

No formal agreement on the management of fisheries on Greenland halibut exists among the three principal coastal states of Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. An agreement exists between Iceland and Greenland since 2021 on the management of the Greenland halibut fishery based on the ICES MSY approach.

This stock is classified as Category 4 in the NEAFC categorization of deep-sea species/stocks (NEAFC, 2016). This implies that fisheries are primarily restricted to coastal state exclusive economic zones (EEZs); therefore, management measures are not taken by NEAFC unless complementary to coastal state conservation and management measures.

Reference points

Table 4 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Reference points, values, and their technical basis.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
MSY approach	MSY B_{trigger}	24 895	B_{PA} ; tonnes	ICES (2024)
	F_{MSY}	0.22	Fishing mortality that leads to MSY; estimated using stochastic simulations	ICES (2024)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	18 213	B_{loss} (SSB in 2010); tonnes	ICES (2024)
	B_{PA}	24 895	$B_{\text{lim}} \times e^{1.645\sigma}$, $\sigma = 0.19$; tonnes.	ICES (2024)
	F_{PA}	0.29	F_{P05} , maximum F at which the risk of spawning-stock biomass (SSB) falling below B_{lim} is < 5%	ICES (2024)

Basis of the assessment

Table 5 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	1 (ICES, 2025)
Assessment type	Analytical age-based assessment model (Gadget) used also in the forecast (Begley and Howell, 2004; ICES, 2026)
Input data	Commercial catches (international landings); length composition by gear; one combined survey biomass index (Greenland Deepwater Survey [G5943]), 1998–2016 & 2022 onwards, and the Icelandic bottom-trawl survey – autumn (IS-SMH [G4493]) since 1996; age and length distributions from the Icelandic bottom-trawl survey [G4493]. Natural mortality is set at 0.15. Maturity from Icelandic bottom-trawl survey – autumn (IS-SMH [G4493]). Stock weight from Icelandic bottom trawl survey – autumn. Catch weights from commercial sampling.
Discards	Discarding is negligible
Indicators	None
Other information	The stock was benchmarked in 2023 (ICES, 2023). Reference points were updated in 2024 (ICES, 2024).
Working group	Northwestern Working Group (NWWG)

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 6 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. ICES advice, Iceland and Greenland total allowable catches (TACs), and catch. Other TACs are set which may cover catches from this stock. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	TAC for Iceland Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)*	TAC for Greenland EEZ	ICES catch subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14
1987	No increase in F	28 000	30 000		46 514
1988	No increase in F	28 000	30 000		50 356
1989	TAC	33 000	30 000		60 484
1990	No advice	-	45 000		38 164
1991	TAC	40 000	30 000		36 597
1992	TAC	30 000	25 000		35 304
1993	No increase in effort	28 000	30 000		40 601
1994	No increase in effort	34 000	30 000		37 196
1995	TAC	32 000	30 000		37 589
1996	TAC	21 000	20 000		37 334

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	TAC for Iceland Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)*	TAC for Greenland EEZ	ICES catch subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14
1997	60% reduction in F from 1995	13 000	15 000		29 395
1998	70% reduction in F from 1996	11 000	10 000	8 100	2 0464
1999	65% reduction in F from 1997	11 000	10 000	8 000	21 186
2000	60% reduction in F from 1998	11 000	10 000	8 000	27 971
2001	Catch less than 1998–1999 catch	< 20 000	20 000	14 500	29 528
2002	F reduced below $0.67 \times F_{MSY}$	< 21 000	20 000	14 500	29 850
2003	F reduced below $0.67 \times F_{MSY}$	< 23 000	23 000	14 500	33 509
2004	F reduced below $0.67 \times F_{MSY}$	< 20 000	23 000	14 100	31 439
2005	Effort reduced to 1/3 of the 2003 level	< 15 000	15 000	12 000	24 308
2006	Effort reduced to 1/3 of the 2003 level	< 15 000	15 000	10 000	21 363
2007	Adaptive management plan, start at 15 000 tonnes	< 15 000	15 000	11 700	20 970
2008	Adaptive management plan, start at 15 000 tonnes	< 15 000	15 000	11 000	29 715
2009	Adaptive management plan, reduce to 5 000 tonnes	< 5 000	15 000	10 000	34 017
2010	Adaptive management plan, reduce to 5 000 tonnes	< 5 000	12 000	12 000	24 996
2011	Adaptive management plan, reduce F substantially below F_{MSY}	< 5 000	13 000	12 000	25 067
2012	No directed fishery, multiannual management plan to be developed and implemented	-	13 000	13 000	27 327
2013	F reduced to F_{MSY}	< 20 000	15 000	10 000	26 419
2014	F reduced to F_{MSY}	< 20 000	12 500	8 300	20 259
2015	F reduced to F_{MSY}	< 25 000	14 100	9 500	24 925
2016	Fishing at F_{MSY}	< 22 000	12 400	8 300	25 319
2017	Fishing at F_{MSY}	< 24 000	13 500	9 000	22 092
2018	Fishing at F_{MSY}	< 24 000	13 535	9 024	26 650
2019	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	< 24 150	13 621	9 080	22 606
2020	MSY approach	$\leq 21 360$	12 047	8 031	22 195
2021	MSY approach	$\leq 23 530$	13 271	8 847	23 402
2022	MSY approach	$\leq 26 650$	15 031	10 020	21 947
2023	MSY approach	$\leq 26 710$	15 064	10 043	25 425
2024	MSY approach	$\leq 19 703$	13 463	8 099	23 132
2025	MSY approach	$\leq 17 890$	10 090	6 727	18 101
2026	MSY approach	$\leq 20 992$	11 826	7 893	
2027	MSY approach	$\leq 21 079$			

* For the fishing year starting 01 September of the preceding year.

History of the catch and landings

There are no landings reported from the NEAFC regulatory areas (RAs).

Table 7 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Catch distribution by fleet in 2025 as estimated by ICES. All weights are in tonnes.

Catch (2025)	Landings		Discards
	Bottom trawl 74%	Gillnet/longlines 26%	
18 101	18 101		Negligible

Table 8 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. History of commercial catch; official values for each country participating in the fishery with ICES estimates of total catch. All weights are in tonnes. + indicates catches < 0.5 tonnes.

Country	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Denmark							6	+	
Faroe Islands	767	1 532	1 146	2 502	1 052	853	1 096	1 378	2 319
France	8	27	236	489	845	52	19	25	
Germany	3 007	2 581	1 142	936	863	858	565	637	493
Greenland		1	5	15	81	177	154	37	11
Iceland	15 457	28 300	28 360	30 080	29 231	31 044	44 780	49 040	58 330
Norway			2	2	3	1	2	1	3
Total	19 239	32 441	30 891	34 024	32 075	32 985	46 622	51 118	61 156
ICES estimate	19 239	32 441	30 891	34 024	32 079	33 011	46 514	50 356	60 484

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Denmark							1	+	+
Faroe Islands	1 803	1 566	2 128	4 405	6 241	3 763	6 148		3 817
France	21	6	3	2	37	140	29	11	8
Germany	336	303	382	415	648	811	3 368	3 342	3 056
Greenland	40	66	437	288	867	533	1 162	1 129	747
Iceland	36 557	34 883	31 955	33 987	27 778	27 383	22 055	18 569	10 728
Norway	50	34	221	846	1 173	1 810	2 164	1 939	1 367
Russia			5			10	424	37	52
Spain									89
UK	27	38	109	811	513	1 436	386	218	190
UK (Scotland)		+	19	26	84	232	25	26	43
Total	38 834	36 896	35 259	40 780	37 305	36 043	35 762	30 242	20 360
ICES estimate	38 164	36 597	35 304	40 601	37 196	37 589	37 334	29 395	20 464

Country	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Estonia				8			5	3	
Faroe Islands	3 884		121	334	458	338	1 150	855	1 141
France		2	32	290	177	157		62	17
Germany	3 082	3 265	2 800	2 050	2 948	5 169	5 150	4 299	4 930
Greenland	200	1 740	1 553	1 887	1 459		2 116		
Iceland	11 180	14 537	16 590	19 224	20 366	15 478	13 023	11 798	9 567
Ireland			56						
Lithuania					2	1		2	3
Norway	1 187	1 750	2 243	1 998	1 074	1 233	1 124	1 097	78
Poland			2	16	93	207			
Portugal			6	130				1094	
Russia	138	183	187	44		262		552	501
Spain		779	1 698	1 395	3 075	4 721	506	33	
UK (E&W)	261	370	227	71	40	49	10	1	
UK (Scotland)	69	121	130	181	367	367	391	1	
UK		166	252	255	841	1304	220	93	17
Total	20 001	22 913	25 897	27 609	30 900	29 286	23 695	19 890	16 410
ICES estimate	21 186	27 971	29 528	29 850	33 509	31 439	24 308	21 363	20 970

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Estonia							429		
Faroe Islands	26	270	1 408	1 705	2 811	2 788	3 393	3 214	4 656
France	114			150	67	133		117	88
Germany	4 846	423	5 287	5 782	4 620	3 814	3 701	3 808	4 420
Greenland		2819		3 415	5 239	3 251	1 897	3 642	1 511
Iceland	11 671	15 765	13 293	13 192	13 749	14 859	9 861	12 400	12 652
Lithuania	566				99				
Norway	639	124	233	171	856	614	764	1 126	1 007
Poland	1 354	988	960		786				
Russia	799	762	1 070	1 095	1 168	1 369	587	600	600

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Spain								110	2 105
UK	422	581	577	323	12	95		127	348
Total	20 411	22 247	22 901	25 693	29 407	26 923	20 743	25 145	27 388
ICES estimate	29 715	34 017	24 996	25 067	27 327	26 419	20 259	24 925	25 319

Country	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Estonia								89	
Faroe Islands	3 999	2 949	1 973	1 888	2 070	1 607	2 506	1 991	1 547
France	51	71	78	97	82	88	30	37	23
Germany	2 994	4 463	4 483	4 769	4 354	4 441	4 097	3 724	3 420
Greenland	2 692	2 970	2 999	1 992	2 834	2 893	3 226	1 902	1 565
Iceland	11 926	15 214	12 390	12 535	12 837	11 141	14 185	13 930	10 377
Norway	1 002	937	995	813	993	1 052	1 161	1 137	979
Russia	599	400	398	399	390				
Spain	114	125	82	100				103	527
UK	90	13	29	76	243	276	219	202	189
Total	23 466	27 142	23 428	22 669	23 802	21 498	25 424	23 213	18 101
ICES estimate	22 092	26 650	22 606	22 195	23 402	21 947	25 425	23 132	18 282

* Provisional data.

Summary of the assessment

Table 9 Greenland halibut in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14. Assessment summary. Recruitment is in thousands, weights are in tonnes. “High” and “Low” values correspond to 90% confidence intervals.

Year	Recruitment (age 5)			Stock size			Catches	Fishing pressure (ages 9–14)		
	Low	R	High	Low	SSB	High		Low	F	High
1985	16480	21986	26400	87124	103668	119906	32116	0.111	0.127	0.156
1986	15671	20072	26082	82609	100514	116231	33027	0.117	0.132	0.164
1987	19242	26960	80958	79518	98942	115107	46665	0.175	0.198	0.24
1988	33104	65295	111845	71641	88997	105812	50774	0.21	0.24	0.28
1989	41	34210	74019	60730	73329	90635	61202	0.29	0.35	0.39
1990	15385	19488	24411	46884	55438	72908	38903	0.21	0.26	0.31
1991	25267	32697	53629	41328	48047	65565	36869	0.22	0.27	0.33
1992	41931	68028	100526	37555	44368	60851	35326	0.21	0.27	0.33
1993	25215	38605	48584	36320	43349	58102	40909	0.26	0.32	0.39
1994	13898	17434	25426	34839	41677	54534	37640	0.26	0.31	0.37
1995	15149	17617	21964	32673	38956	49697	37177	0.27	0.32	0.39
1996	24405	36690	71056	31080	37045	45799	37105	0.27	0.33	0.40
1997	39348	54370	66760	28365	34912	42524	31086	0.22	0.27	0.32
1998	15527	23127	35686	26809	33657	41014	20598	0.146	0.179	0.21
1999	11145	13549	19929	28978	36227	43884	21304	0.142	0.173	0.20
2000	11614	13647	16275	32835	40273	48275	28106	0.182	0.22	0.25
2001	15181	18687	24437	35497	43131	51262	43934	0.197	0.24	0.27
2002	23799	29909	36649	34124	40847	48850	46965	0.21	0.25	0.28
2003	30832	37624	45910	32683	38686	46331	33590	0.26	0.32	0.36
2004	24146	32163	39835	29634	34883	41915	31485	0.30	0.36	0.41
2005	19873	28791	41422	24944	29430	36187	25185	0.27	0.32	0.37
2006	27550	36150	43788	21140	25350	31002	21526	0.25	0.29	0.34
2007	29804	42582	61766	19072	23207	28569	21452	0.23	0.27	0.32
2008	27016	37651	47454	19259	23912	29346	29991	0.30	0.37	0.47
2009	29940	40389	48540	19445	24441	30713	36144	0.36	0.46	0.60
2010	33324	41584	48448	16760	22354	28920	26954	0.27	0.34	0.46
2011	30209	36504	41659	15539	21190	28352	32295	0.25	0.32	0.41
2012	21841	25316	28565	16766	22502	30058	36253	0.26	0.32	0.39
2013	18815	20488	22186	18639	24319	31390	33381	0.25	0.29	0.34
2014	16718	19727	23303	20857	26160	32502	24490	0.183	0.20	0.24
2015	20403	22965	25703	23336	28625	34584	25020	0.21	0.23	0.27
2016	24229	26856	30016	26661	32296	38155	25320	0.22	0.24	0.27
2017	23676	26267	29320	27686	33463	38257	22092	0.189	0.21	0.24
2018	22959	26392	32780	28795	34941	39204	26650	0.24	0.26	0.30
2019	19679	22116	26478	27812	34144	37865	22595	0.22	0.23	0.28
2020	18874	21211	24326	25506	31865	35025	22195	0.22	0.24	0.29
2021	15737	20679	25171	24269	30858	33807	22643	0.24	0.25	0.31
2022	16017	21222	27413	23283	30053	33561	21326	0.22	0.24	0.30
2023	26457	41036	60074	22537	29556	34110	25450	0.28	0.30	0.38
2024	45673	61684	83901	20482	27506	32978	23012	0.26	0.30	0.39
2025	34041	48732	63081	18986	26082	32362	18101	0.197	0.22	0.30
2026	22432	35202	51611	18550	26016	32838				

Sources and references

- Albert, O. T., and Vollen, T. 2015. A major nursery area around the Svalbard archipelago provides recruits for the stocks in both Greenland halibut management areas in the Northeast Atlantic. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 72: 872–879. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsu191>
- Begley, J. and Howell, D. 2004 An overview of Gadget, the Globally applicable Area-Disaggregated General Ecosystem Toolbox. ICES CM 2004/FF: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/conference_contribution/An_overview_of_Gadget_the_Globally_applicable_Area-Disaggregated_General_Ecosystem_Toolbox/25349308?file=44891098
- ICES. 2023. Benchmark workshop on Greenland halibut and redfish stocks (WKBNORTH). ICES Scientific Reports. 5:33. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.22304638>
- ICES. 2024. Northwestern Working Group (NWWG). ICES Scientific Reports. 6:39. 958 pp. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.25605738>
- ICES. 2025. Advice on fishing opportunities. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2025. ICES Advice 2025, section 1.1.1. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.30712466>
- ICES. 2026. Northwestern Working Group (NWWG). ICES Scientific Reports. 08:37. 994 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.32414577>
- Gislason, D., Estevez-Barcia, D., Sveinsson, S., Hansen, A., Roy, D., Treble, M., Boje, J., *et al.* 2023. Population structure discovered in juveniles of Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides* Walbaum, 1792). *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 80(4), 889–896. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsad011>
- NEAFC. 2016. The NEAFC approach to conservation and management of deep-sea species and categorization of deep-sea species/stocks. Adopted at the 35th Annual Meeting, November 2016. https://www.neafc.org/system/files/NEAFC_approach_to_DSS_conservation-and-management_Nov16.pdf
- Úbeda, J., Nogueira, A., Tolimieri, N., Vihtakari, M., Elvarsson, B., Treble, M., and Boje, J. 2023. Using multivariate autoregressive state-space models to examine stock structure of Greenland halibut in the North Atlantic. *Fisheries Management and Ecology*, 30(5), 521–535. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fme.12639>
- Vihtakari, M., Elvarsson, B., Treble, M., Nogueira, A., Hedges, K., Hussey, N. E., Wheeland, L., *et al.* 2022. Migration patterns of Greenland halibut in the North Atlantic revealed by a compiled mark-recapture dataset. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 79: 1902–1917. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsac127>
- Westgaard, J. I., Saha, A., Kent, M., Hansen, H. H., Knutsen, H., Hauser, L., Cadrin, S. X., *et al.* 2017. Genetic population structure in Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) and its relevance to fishery management. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, 74: 475–485. <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfas-2015-0430>

[Download the stock assessment data and figures](#)

Recommended citation: ICES. 2026. Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) in subareas 5, 6, 12, and 14 (Iceland and Faroes grounds, West of Scotland, North of Azores, East of Greenland). *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2026 ICES Advice 2026, ghl.27.561214, <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.30932051>