

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: July 16, 2025

Report Number: DA2025-0005

Report Name: Denmark Introduces a New Fisheries Agreement

Country: Denmark

Post: The Hague

Report Category: Agriculture in the News, Fishery Products

Prepared By: Marcel Pinckaers

Approved By: Laura Geller

Report Highlights:

On July 2, the Danish government, backed by several political parties, announced a new direction for the country's fishing industry, including a range of new initiatives. These measures include the creation of zones where bottom trawling is prohibited, as well as restrictions on mussel fishing and aquaculture within these protected areas. As a result, Denmark's domestic seafood supply is expected to decline somewhat, leading Danish seafood processors to seek sustainably certified seafood from international suppliers, including those in the United States.

Background:

Danish fisheries and the marine environment are facing serious challenges, including the loss of fishing quotas to the UK after Brexit, rising fuel prices, and growing competition for space at sea. At the same time, the marine environment, particularly in inner Danish waters, suffers from poor seabed conditions and declining biodiversity, affecting key species like cod and lumpfish and disrupting marine food chains.

To address these pressures on both the ecosystem and fishing industry, Denmark has introduced a new fisheries agreement aimed at making the sector more robust, competitive, and sustainable. The agreement outlines specific measures to create stable conditions for the industry, protect fish stocks, reduce environmental impact, and support jobs in coastal communities, reflecting Denmark's responsibility as a leading fishing nation to safeguard the marine environment for future generations.

Danish Seafood Industry's Outlook:

The Danish seafood industry is a globally oriented industry and last year, seafood imports totaled nearly 1.2 million metric tons (MT). Over 70 percent of these imports originated from outside the EU with Norway, Greenland, Faroe Islands, Iceland, the United Kingdom, and the United States being the largest non-EU suppliers. The United States was Denmark's ninth largest supplier of seafood in 2024, and supply was dominated by frozen Alaska Pollock (AP), shrimp and prawns, fish feed (flours, meals, pellets, and livers), cod, and wild salmon.

Denmark's domestic seafood supply is expected to somewhat decline as a direct consequence of these measures. The trawl ban affects species such as cod, plaice, and other demersal fish traditionally caught using bottom trawls – species that have been key to Denmark's seafood industry.

As domestic supply faces these constraints, Denmark's need to import seafood will grow to not only meet domestic consumption but also to maintain processing industry capacity. It is expected that Denmark will seek sustainably certified seafood from international suppliers, aligning with its green transition goals.

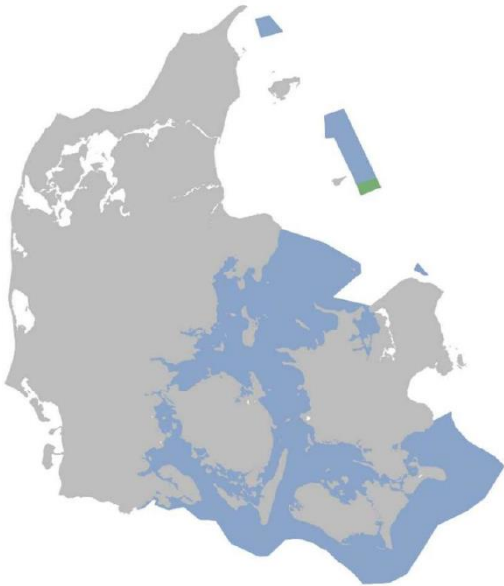
It is, however, too early to forecast to what extent these measures will impact Denmark's catch numbers. *Øresund* and *Kattegat* are not the areas where Denmark catches most of its fish – this continues to be the *North Sea*. Also, with the ban on bottom-trawling gear, some fishermen might opt to change to other fishing gear, while others could explore other areas to catch fish which makes it even more difficult to predict.

Some of these measures are further explained below. For more information, please read the [Political Agreement](#) on the Danish fishery industry.

1). The introduction of zones with a ban on bottom trawling gear

The parties to the agreement agree to prohibit the use of bottom-trawling fishing gear in the entire *Danish straits*, including *Isefjord* and in several naturally important areas in the *Kattegat* around existing Natura 2000 areas, the area off *Djursland* and in the area "*Kilen*" north of *Zealand*. The Fisheries Partnership was consulted in relation to the precise geographical delimitations of the prohibition zones, taking into account environmental effects and fishing efficiency in the areas around the zones and that the level of ambition is not reduced.

Figure 1. Zones with a ban on bottom trawling gear



Areas covered by the ban on bottom-trawling gear (blue areas) correspond to approximately 19 percent of total Danish waters. A ban on bottom-trawling gear will be introduced simultaneously for both Danish and foreign fishermen under the auspices of the EU's common fisheries policy. This process is expected to take at least two years. The upcoming zones with a ban on bottom-trawling gear will, among other things, cover the two upcoming marine national parks in Lillebælt and Øresund.

The blue areas have a ban on bottom-trawling gear. The smaller green area is a proposed test area with semi-pelagic trawl doors.

2). Restriction of mussel fishing and farming in the prohibited zones

The agreement also states that rights to mussel fishing in the affected areas of the Danish Belt Sea will be terminated with eight years' notice. However, the parties to the agreement aim to phase out wild mussel fishing in the zone even sooner. To support this transition, they have agreed to develop a voluntary conversion scheme that will allow current mussel fishermen in the soon-to-be restricted areas to shift to more sustainable methods, such as mussel farming in the water column or on culture banks.

As part of the transitional scheme, fishermen relinquish their fishing rights to the [Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency](#) for in return for in exchange for financial compensation, a permit to engage in mussel farming, and a contractual commitment to contribute to nature restoration efforts. Nature restoration can, for example, consist of the removal of mussels that contribute to the creation of biogenic reefs. The parties to the agreement agree to allocate \$2 million (DKK 13 million) to the scheme, and there will be a focus on ensuring that the scheme is simple and manageable. In addition, support can be applied for to convert from mussel fishing to mussel farming in the water column (see initiative 19 of the agreement).

The contracting parties agree that harvesting with traditional mussel scrapers will be prohibited in 2034 in the prohibition zone. If significantly more gentle mussel gear is developed, the possibility of also converting to these will be discussed in the contracting party (see initiative 18 of the agreement). The effect of the gentler mussel gear will have to be monitored.

3). Compensation for the CO2 tax

The parties to the agreement agree that fishermen should be able to apply for full compensation for the tax payment that the CO2 tax entails in 2025. The compensation is done via a scheme administered by the Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency. “It is a relief that a political solution has finally been found,” said Svend-Erik Andersen, chairman of the Danmark Fiskeriforening (Danish Fishermen’s Association)¹.

They also agree that the introduction of a CO2 tax for fisheries, which is a consequence of the Agreement on green tax reform for industry etc. from June 2022, will be suspended in the period 2026-2028. The CO2 tax will be collected again beginning in 2029 and those revenues will be allocated to green, business-oriented initiatives in this agreement.

Funding:

All measures will start in the first half of 2026, after Denmark’s EU presidency. Total costs of these measures are estimated at \$291 million (DKK 1,848.40) million of which half \$148 million (DKK 941.5 million) will come from the [European Maritime, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Fund](#), the remainder from the Danish government.

Attachments:

No Attachments.

¹ <https://thefishingdaily.com/danish-fishing-industry-news/danish-fisheries-sector-divided-over-co2-tax-deal-and-trawl-ban/>