

THE **FISHERS** OF DENMARK

WORKING TOGETHER FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY
AND SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

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THE DANISH FISHERS PRODUCER ORGANISATION

Denmark is a proud fishing nation. Every year Danish fishers land more than 500,000 tonnes of fish for consumption and processing. This is high quality fish from well managed fisheries. The Danish fisheries are very diverse but certainly have one thing in common: they are based on sustainable

exploitation of the resources so healthy marine ecosystems is ensured for future generations to come. Since 1990, Danish fisheries have reduced CO2 emissions by 60%. Moreover, Danish fisheries are known for the high level of social and safe working conditions. A very high priority for the Danish Fishers PO

Danish Fishers Producer Organisation

Danish Fishers Producer Organisation represents about 675 vessels.

Together with the Danish Pelagic Producer Organisation, landings from our members represent about 97 percent of all Danish landings.

About half of the vessels are gillnetters, using static gears, about 35 percent are trawlers, and about 5 percent are fishing for mussels. Of the total number of vessels about 520 are below 17 meters.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are the guiding principles behind some of this work. Sustainability Goal 14 regarding Oceans is about ensuring a healthy marine environment, whilst Sustainability Goal 8 is about creating growth, development and proper working conditions. The sustainability Goal 13 which deals with climate action is also important to the fisheries. Finally, Danish fisheries play an important role in supplying sustainable food to especially the European markets.



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND A CLEAN MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The Danish fishers are proud suppliers of sustainable fish and shellfish products – and

a healthy and clean marine environment is the cornerstone for any sustainable fishery.

The fishers work for a healthy marine ecosystem

In Denmark most of the fisheries are subject to yearly quotas decided by the EU following advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea - ICES. The quota system is a cornerstone of fisheries management in the fisheries policy of the EU. The fishing quotas ensure a sustainable use of the resources and prevent overfishing of the stocks.

A study from 2019 points out that globally, overfishing is still a problem, but that in Northeast Atlantic we generally have healthy stocks that are exploited sustainably. The EU has also adopted management plans for most of the waters where Danish fishers are operating, and more and more protected areas are being designated. Linked to this, the Danish Fishers PO, together with the Danish Society for Nature Conservation, has proposed to strictly protect 10 percent of the Danish waters.

Nationally, most quotas are individually and transferable. This system makes it possible

for fishers to develop a business plan and invest in their fisheries with a long-term perspective. It gives a high degree of responsibility to the fishers of the fisheries management. Even with EU quota system, it must be ensured that the fishers have the quotas available that reflect the catches they see in their fisheries.

Here, the Danish pooling system is crucial, as it ensures Danish fishers the flexibility needed for the fisheries' sustainable utilization of quotas. Through the national pooling system, fishers have the opportunity to buy, sell, rent, and exchange quotas with other fishers. In concrete terms, this means that the fisher should always be able to secure a quota for the fish he/she catches – even if he/she does not have the initial quota basis for their fishery. This also contribute to compliance with the rules e.g. landing obligation, and give fishers the necessary flexibility to secure the quota basis necessary for the performance of the different fisheries.



One of the leaders when it comes to sustainable labelling of fisheries

Today Denmark is one of the leading countries on sustainability labelling of the fisheries. For more than 10 years the Danish Fishers PO has been working intensively with the blue MSC label (Marine Stewardship Council). MSC was created in 1997 by WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and the consumer goods company Unilever, but has since 1999 been an independent organisation. MSC works with three principles which independent experts follow to assess and score fisheries, before they can be certified:

- Sustainable exploitation
- Effect on other species and ecosystems
- Sustainable management

The process can take up to two years and even after a fishery has been certified, the data is re-visited every year at audits. Certifying Danish fisheries is no small task, but the Danish Fishers PO's work on this means that Danish fishers can land most of their catches with the blue MSC label – such as mussels from the Limfjord, shrimps from the Skagerrak, Norway lobster from the Kattegat or plaice from the North Sea.

The work with the MSC labelling is a strong commitment to actively work for sustainable fisheries management.



Danish fishers for a clean marine environment

The world's seas are under pressure. Pollution, plastic, and waste are ending up in the seas around the world. In Denmark we also see the waste washed up on our beaches.

The Danish fishers generally bring all the waste that they catch into harbours. And important reason for this is that it is free of charge to bring the waste and fished up and end-of-use fishing gear to the harbours. Therefore, over the last years we have generally seen a reduction in the amount of waste in Danish waters.

Furthermore, plastic fishing crates used to be a not unusual seeing washed up on the beach. However, since 2008, Pack

and Sea which a collaboration between ten Danish fishing harbours took off with an integrated tracking system for fishing crates. Now the Danish fishers have a system where most of the fishing crates that the fishers use today are fitted with a so-called RFID tag with a bar code and number, so it is easy to know, which vessel has rented the crate. This is good for traceability and means that the fishers

jointly take responsibility for the fishing crates, and they bring them ashore should they find them out at sea.

Furthermore, we work to ensure that our fisheries maintain and develop good practices for waste handling at sea and to minimise the loss of fishing gears or net cuttings. This has resulted in three sets of guidelines for Danish fishers.



You can read more at:
packandsea.dk



The guidelines

5 pieces of good advice for handling waste on board

This comes from cooperation with the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries on handling waste on board: "Working together towards a sea without waste".

Best practices for handling net cuttings

This has been developed together with the KIMO (Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) which is leading the fishing for litter initiatives. KIMO has produced concrete ideas for best practices for how the fisheries can deal with net cuttings.

Guidelines on how to set passive gears to minimise loss

These have been developed together with two recreational fishing organisations and are based on good advice from the commercial fishers.

ROLE MODEL ON SOCIAL CONDITION

Fishing in Denmark has historically played an important role in coastal communities. It has been the core of many families, by providing jobs in the fishery, in the harbours, in processing, and other associated sectors. Fishing contributes to the community and continued development in small coastal communities.

But a fisher's life has also been associated with risk, and only 30-40 years ago working conditions were often relatively primitive. Since then, things have improved considerably through major fleet renewal, but also growing focus on working conditions and safety onboard. Opportunities for education and continued training have been given high priority by the Danish Fishers PO for many years.

Denmark is at the forefront of social sustainability by being well organised and having agreements on pay and working conditions. The Danish model includes collective agreements which ensure good conditions in terms of pay and work. This also applies in the Danish fishing industry. We work with the trade union movement, and all vessels in the Danish Fishers PO are included in collective agreements.

The Danish Fishers PO is also actively involved in the education of fishers, and we guarantee that all trainees can get a traineeship onboard a vessel. This illustrates the community in the fisheries.

Collective agreement ensures decent payment and working conditions

Together with the Danish Pelagic PO, the Danish Fishers PO has a collective agreement with 3F – one of the largest trade unions in Denmark. The agreement secures Danish fishers' rights with respect to wage, holiday, working conditions and pension contributions. The wage when fishing is normally a dividend of the vessel's catch. However, if catches are low, collective agreement ensures a minimum pay. The agreement applies to all crew members who are onboard a Danish vessel, irrespective of nationality or whether they are a member of 3F or not.

The agreement ensures basic rights of free movement and a healthy and safe working environment for those in the fishery. It also prevents social dumping.

As for rules on safety equipment, it is the responsibility of the vessel owner to provide this.

Denmark has also ratified the international Work in Fishing Convention on workers' fights in the fishery (ILO 188). This happened on 3rd February 2020.

World leader on safety at sea

In 2016 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation concluded that fishing is one of the most dangerous working places in the world. In Denmark a lot of work has been done over the years to make the fisher's workplace at sea safe.

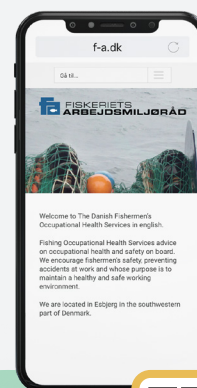
Most of the work is done in the Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Council. The Danish Fishers PO is member of the board, and fishers take part on committees dealing with safety and the working environment. The Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Council and its Occupational Health Services work to improve fishers' safety and prevent accidents, for example by proposing changes to the rules on safety and health on fishing vessels based on their work with the sector. The aim is to maintain a healthy and safe working environment – physically and mentally, to prevent wear and tear and accidents, and to make it easier for fishers to deal with health and safety issues onboard.

All fishing vessels with a port registration number must be registered with the Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Council and Services. This has ensured that Danish fishers have a safe work environment where the

number of reported work-related accidents in the fishery has been significantly reduced over the last 20 years. From 176 in 2000 to only 15 reported accidents in 2020. In Denmark, this means that fisheries are no longer considered a more dangerous working place compared to so many other places to work.

The fishers have taken responsibility for their own working environment and safety. Nowadays, there is a safety culture onboard the vessels. The work is discussed by the skipper and the crew, and together they work out procedures and instructions for the tasks onboard. A workplace assessment has become a regularly used tool and must as a minimum be reviewed every three years.

In Denmark working conditions on all fishing vessels must be inspected. Vessels below 15 metres must be inspected at least every 5 years. For vessels of 15 metres or more checks must be carried out at least every 4 years. The Danish Maritime Authority approves and inspects the fishing vessels, and this includes contracts of employment, payment of salary, health certificates, food, work, and rest rooms.



You can read more about the Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Council at: www.f-a.dk



Education of the future of danish fisheries

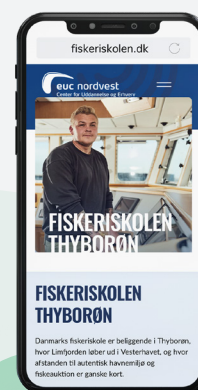
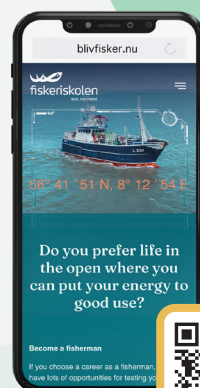
Recruitment and training of young people in the fishing sector are important. None under 18 is allowed to work on a fishing vessel unless they are or have been under education and training.

Fishers are educated at the Fishing School in Thyborøn. The Danish Fishers PO is on the board and guarantees traineeships on the vessels. One unique thing is that the fishing industry collectively pays the trainees whilst in education and training.

Trainees must be at least 16 years old, have passed a 3-week safety course and have a valid health certificate for seafarers. The education lasts two years and includes theory and practical work on vessels. At the end of the course, they get a Blue Certificate and many of them get hired on one of the vessels they were trained on. The Blue Certificate also allows a fisher to start as self-employed fisher. Further education and training are important, and the Fishing School offers courses in everything from safety at sea to fisheries regulations to the use of gear.

Many fishers choose to study further at the Skipper School in Skagen, northern Jutland, to become a skipper, which qualifies them to sail as a mate, shipmaster and be in charge of fishing vessels of all sizes.

You can read more at:
blivfisker.nu



You can read more at:
fiskeriskolen.dk



You can read more about the education to become a skipper at the website for the Maritime and Polytechnic University College:
www.martec.dk

The fishers own insurance company

Danish fishers have established their own insurance company. The company is mutual, which means that they are owned by the fishers who are insured in the company. The insurance company offers occupational injury and accident insurance as well as ship hull and P&I insurance.

If you are employed as a fisher or ship's assistant, helmsman or other occupation onboard the vessel, you must be covered by a statutory occupational injury insurance, which your employer establishes and pays. In addition, all self-employed fishers, spouses and owners of commercial

vessels can take out voluntary occupational injury insurance in the company. The fact that the insurance company is established by the fishers ensures easy and affordable access to insurance schemes for Danish fisheries.

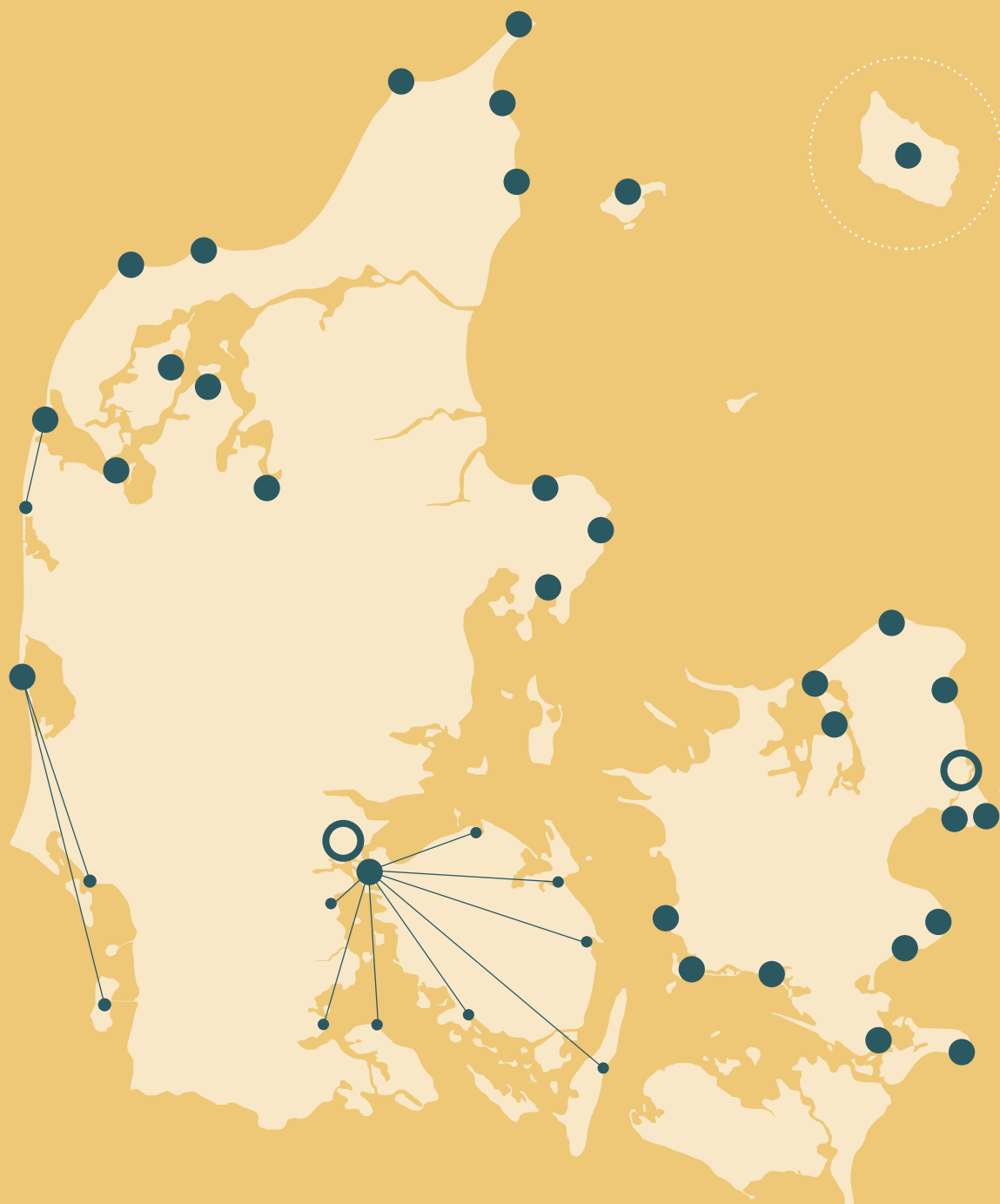
WE ARE THE FISHERS OF DENMARK

DANISH FISHERS PO

WITH FISHERS ORGANISED IN 31 LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

● Local association

○ DFPO



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