



Bestilling vedrørende garnforbud i Limfjorden

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Notat

Til Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri, Bæredygtig Fiskeri
v. Peter Knuhtsen Egelund

Vedr. Bestilling vedrørende garnforbud i Limfjorden.

Fra DTU Aqua – PSFR, RIF, MEKJS, JGS, JEKJP

Dato 18. marts 2024

Anmodning

Kontoret for Bæredygtigt Fiskeri (FVM) sendte 6. marts 2024 følgende anmodning:

Departementet anmoder om forslag til konkret periode og område for et givent garnforbud i Limfjorden med det formål at beskytte sorthummer og forebygge mod spøgelsesnet.

"The European lobster fishery in the Limfjorden" (Pedro S. Freitas et al.), den eksisterende rapport omkring hummerfiskeri i Limfjorden anbefaler forbud mod garn.

Frist for besvarelse er den 20. marts, men om muligt må den meget gerne oversendes 18. marts.

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Resumé

Dette notat præsenterer DTU Aquas forslag til konkret periode og område for et givent garnforbud i Limfjorden med det formål at beskytte sorthummer og forebygge mod spøgelsesnet.

Det meste hummerfiskeri fra både erhvervsfiskere og fritidsfiskere foregår ikke med garn, men med andre typer fiskeredskaber, dvs. tejner, multitejner og ruser.

Baseret på forsøg udført af DTU Aqua kan det imidlertid antages, at hvis fangsterne af hummere af lovlig størrelse holdes konstante, vil udelukkende brug af redskaber udstyret med flugthuller reducere fangsten af juvenile hummere. Uanset omfanget af skader forårsaget af gælle- og toggergarn, vil et forbud mod brug af disse redskaber reducere fangsten af juvenile, reducere lufteksponeringen og fjernelse fra primære levesteder samt risikoen for ulovlige landinger af undermålsommer – og det vil gavne hummerbestanden.



Et forbud mod anvendelse af gælle- og toggergarn vil have en lav indvirkning på fangsterne og den økonomiske værdi for erhvervsfiskerne.

Et forbud mod gælle- og toggergarn vil dog højst sandsynligt sætte en stopper for fritidsfiskernes fiskeri efter fladfisk og andre fisk i Limfjorden.

Medmindre det indeholder en undtagelse, vil et forbud mod gælle- og toggergarn bringe en værdifuld langsigtet tidsserie af data indsamlet i Nøglefisker-programmet til ophør. For så vidt angår rekreative fiskere kan utilsigtet tab af fiskeredskaber falde som følge af den rapporteringsforpligtelse, der blev indført i 2023.

Opfiskning af tabte redskaber i Limfjorden har demonstreret af en stor del af disse udgjordes af garn og toggergarn og at der var høje koncentrationer af tabte redskaber i den vestlige og centrale del af Limfjorden hvilket også er her den primære del af hummerfiskeriet finder sted

Om en konkret periode for et eventuelt forbud mod gælle- og toggergarn i Limfjorden:

- Med henblik på at beskytte hummerbestanden bør et forbud dække perioden mellem den 1. april og den 30. november.
- Med henblik på at reducere spøgelsesgarn bør et forbud dække hele kalenderåret.

Om et konkret område for et eventuelt forbud mod gælle- og toggergarn i Limfjorden:

- Med henblik på at beskytte hummerbestanden bør et forbud omfatte de områder, hvor hummerfiskeriet foregår mest, dvs. den vestlige og centrale Limfjorden: Nissum Bredning, Venø Sund og Bugt, Kås Bredning, Salling Sund, Sønder Bredning, Dråby Vig, Livø Bredning, Løgstør Bredning og Bjørnsholm Bugt. Følgende områder / underområder i den vestlige, centrale og østlige Limfjorden har ikke et stort fiskeri efter hummer og kan derfor undtages i et eventuelt forbud: Agerø Sund, Visby Bredning, Dragstrup Bredning, Vilsund, Thisted Bredning, Risgårde Bredning, Skive Fjord, Lovns Bredning, Agger Sund til Hals.
- Med henblik på at reducere spøgelsesnet, ethvert fiskeri med garn udgør en betydelig risiko for spøgelsesgarnsfiskeri, og derfor bør et eventuelt forbud omfatte hele Limfjorden.

1. Background

Lobster fishery

Despite the current high abundance of European lobsters in the Limfjorden with landings in 2022 and 2023 historically the highest (40.4 and 50.2 tonnes), challenges nevertheless exist for a sustainable management of the Limfjorden lobster fishery:

1. Periods of low abundance occurred as recently as 2020 and 2021 (lowest since 2013-2014 at 20.6 tonnes)
2. Unknown fishing effort.
3. No limits to fishing effort in the commercial fishery.
4. No regulation in access to the fishery: commercial fishing boats can vary by up to 20% year on year (e.g. 2022 to 2023).
5. No restrictions on fishing gear type used, other than in the recreational fishery.
6. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing may be significant.
7. Different regulations between the Limfjorden and other nearby fishing areas regarding minimum landing size and closed season may facilitate IUU fishing.
8. No data other than official landings of the commercial fishery.
9. Lack of data-based biological knowledge of local lobster populations (except results from a recent EMFF project; Freitas et al., 2022).

Context on DTU Aqua recommendation for a ban on nets in the Limfjorden

In the context of the EMFF Hummerfiskeri i Limfjorden project, DTU Aqua arranged several meetings with stakeholders of the lobster fishery, both as open meetings and in an advisory group (Freitas et al., 2022). The advisory group had the participation of representatives from the commercial fishery, the Centralforeningen for Limfjorden (local section of DFPO, CF), The Danish Fishers Producent Organisation (DFPO), and Foreningen Skånsomt Kystfiskeri Producentorganisation (FSK-PO); from the recreational fishery (fritidsfiskere), Dansk Fritidsfiskerforbund (DFF) and Dansk Amatørfiskerforening (DAFF); and other stakeholders, Limfjordsrådet, Fiskerikontrollen (FK) and Bæredygtigt Fiskeri - Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri (BF).

Based on project results, input from stakeholder meetings and viewpoints, several recommendations were discussed in the advisory group, with a varying degree of support from stakeholders (Chapter 9 in Freitas et al., 2022). One of the recommendations was the ban of gill and trammel nets in the lobster fishery. DTU Aqua suggested various possibilities for a ban on gill and trammel nets use for lobster fishing in the Limfjorden: A ban during defined periods and/or in geographically defined areas, which should incorporate a “sunset” clause if populations of flat fishes and other fishes increased and lobster populations decreased in the Limfjorden (Chapter 9 in Freitas et al., 2022).

Stakeholders were divided in support for this measure (Chapter 9 in Freitas et al., 2022), with commercial fishery associations against (DFPO and FSK-PO) and one recreational fishermen association and fisheries control supportive (DFF and FK).

Context on gill and trammel nets fishing

Fishing with gill and trammel nets is now residual with little economical value for commercial fishermen in terms of its target fish species catches and value, declining in parallel with the decrease in fishes in the Limfjorden over the last few decades (< 7 tonnes and < 40,000 kr. per year in the last 10 years, but < 600 kg and 11,000 kr per year since 2021, Fiskeristyrelsen).

In European lobster fisheries, only France allows the use of gillnets to fish lobsters, with a minority of landings (ICES, 2021). In other countries, lobsters can be a by-catch of gill or trammel net fisheries (e.g. Ireland, UK). Note that these fisheries even if coastal are all located in systems and habitats fairly different to the Limfjorden, which is a highly enclosed and shallow system.

Most lobster fishing by both commercial and recreational fishermen is not done with gill and trammel nets, but with other types of fishing gear, i.e. pots, multi-pots and fyke nets, which will likely increase in use with a ban on gill and trammel nets.

Compared to gill and trammel nets, other lobster fishing gears (i.e. pots, multi-pots and fyke nets) are more species selective and when equipped with escape vents or panels (mandatory in the recreational fishery from 2024) the retention of juvenile lobsters is minimized, and thus have lower by-catches and discards.

There are important historical and cultural values associated with gill and trammel nets fishing for recreational fishermen, even if fish catches are low. A ban on gill and trammel nets will most likely end recreational fishing for flat-fishes and other fishes in the Limfjorden.

Unless it contains an exemption, a ban of gill and trammel nets, will terminate the valuable long-term timeseries collection of data collected through the Nøglefisker programme, providing data on fish and lobster catches in the Limfjorden (Pedersen et al., 2023).

Context on ghost net fishing

Fishing of lost gear in the Limfjorden has demonstrated that a large part of these consisted of gill and trammel nets, and that there were high concentrations of lost gear in the western and central part of the Limfjorden from Nissum Bredning in the west to Løgstør Bredning in the northeast, which is also where a major fraction of lobster fishing takes place (Pedersen et al., 2021; Pedersen and Thompson, 2022).

In the Limfjorden, intentional abandon or discard of fishing gear was found to be a significant problem, in addition to unintentional losses due to weather, snagging on bottom structures (rocks or wrecks), gear defects, conflicts with marine traffic or other fishing activities (Pedersen et al., 2021).

2. Proposals for a concrete period and area for a ban on gill and trammel nets in the Limfjorden

BF requested from DTU Aqua proposals on a concrete period and area for a ban on gill and trammel nets in the Limfjorden, not on the ban itself. The stated purposes of such ban in the request from BF are to protect the lobster population and to reduce ghost nets. No distinction was made in the request from BF regarding commercial and recreational fishing.

On a concrete period for a ban on gill and trammel nets in the Limfjorden, DTU Aqua proposes:

Impact on lobsters

1. The potential impact of gill and trammel nets fishing on the lobster population is assumed to be higher between April and December when the activity and catchability of lobsters is higher, since it is determined to a large extent by water temperature (Chapters 3 and 7 in Freitas et al., 2022).
2. Potential damage of fishing to lobsters is assumed to be more significant during and after the main moulting and mating period between June and September.
3. From the perspective of protecting the lobster population, an eventual ban of gill and trammel nets in the Limfjorden should cover the period between 1 of April and the 30 of November.

Impact on ghost nets

4. The contribution of gill and trammel nets to ghost nets is assumed to occur during the entire calendar year.
5. From the perspective of reducing ghost nets in the Limfjorden, an eventual ban of gill and trammel nets in the Limfjorden should cover the entire calendar year.

On a concrete area for a ban on gill and trammel nets in the Limfjorden, DTU Aqua proposes:

Impact on lobsters

6. From the perspective of protecting the lobster population, an eventual ban of gill and trammel nets should cover the areas where most lobster fishing occurs in the western and central Limfjorden: from Nissum Bredning in the west to

Løgstør Bredning in the northeast. Therefore, the following areas would be excluded from the ban: the lateral basins in the western and central Limfjorden (Agerø Sund, Visby Bredning, Dragstrup Bredning, Vilsund, Thisted Bredning, Risgårde Bredning, Skive Fjord and Lons Bredning) and the eastern Limfjorden (Agger Sund to Hals).

Impact on ghost nets

7. From the perspective of reducing ghost nets, considering that any fishing with gill or trammel nets poses a relevant risk of ghost net fishing, an eventual ban of gill and trammel nets should cover the entire Limfjorden.

DTU Aqua recommends recreational fishermen taking part in the Nøglefisker programme are exempt from the ban on gill and trammel nets and thus allowed to continue to collect data on fish and lobster catches in the Limfjorden.

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