

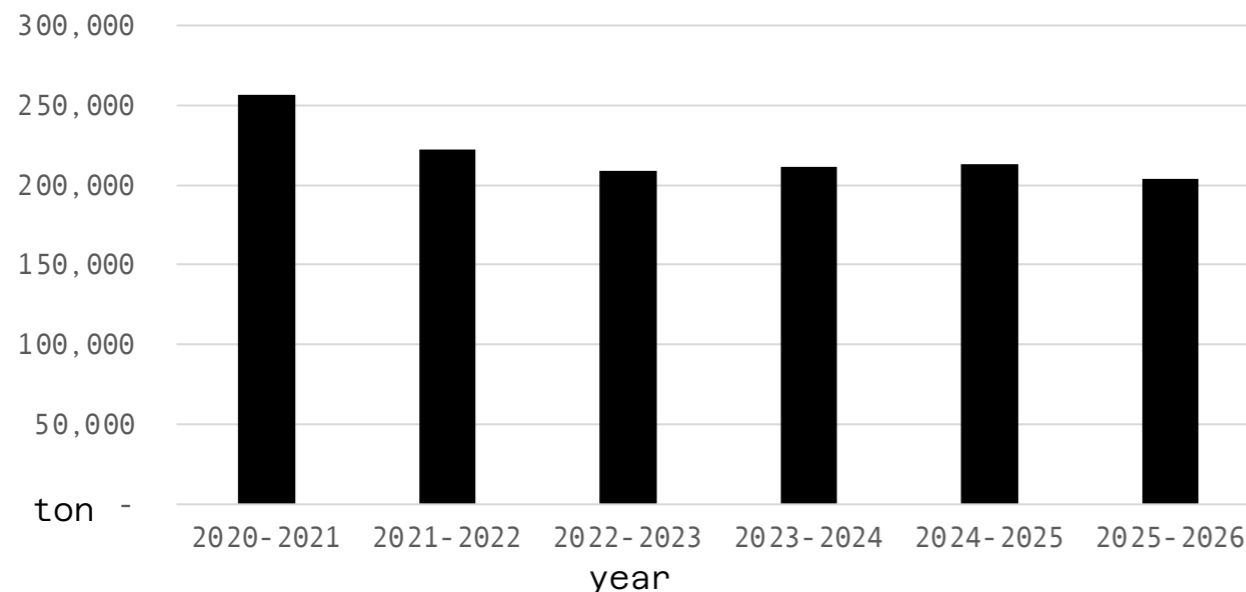
# atlantic cod

*gadus morhua*

Cod is “the fish” in Iceland. It is by far the most important ma-



Cod quota



**Cod** spawns all around Iceland, the largest and most important fishing grounds are off the south-western coast. Spawning takes place in late winter when mature cod aggregate on the spawning grounds. In previous centuries the main fishing season used to be along the south-west coast at that time, targeting the large spawning cod. After spawning, the cod migrates, spreading out over the continental shelf, but the highest abundance is on the main feeding grounds off the northwest and southeast coast where the warm Atlantic waters meet the cold Polar currents.

The cod is also a large, fecund, greedy and rather fast growing fish and therefore has great impact on other marine species in Icelandic waters. The cod can grow quite large; the largest individual measured in Icelandic waters was 186 cm long and 17 years old. Common size in catches is much smaller, or in the range of 45 to 85 cm long in most fishing gear. This corresponds to roughly 4 to 7 year old and 1

to 4 kg fish.

## Catch method

Long term landings of cod have varied from 160,000 tonnes to 470,000 tonnes per year in the last 30 years, with an average of close to 290,000 tonnes. Total catches increased steadily from around 100,000 tonnes in the beginning of the 20th century to a total of around 500,000 tonnes around 1935. Catches fell after that due to a decline in the fishing fleet and also due to the Second World War when foreign fleets could not fish in Icelandic waters. After the war, catches increased rapidly again to a maximum of 551,084 tonnes in 1954. Total catches have gradually declined since then to the current level.

Cod is the main target species in the handline, longline and gillnet fisheries, and also the most important target in the Danish seine and bottom trawl fisheries.

