

North-East Atlantic Commission

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Trends in the Management of Salmon Fisheries in Norway

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Since 1989 Norway has implemented a number of regulatory measures which have led to a restructuring of the salmon fisheries. The biggest changes have been brought about by the ban on driftnets and reduction in the number of bendnets and development of more diversified and locally adapted fishing regulations.

The objective is to develop a fishery that can be adapted to the condition of the stocks which it exploits. We found, like many others, that offshore fisheries are contrary to this objective, since they exploit a large number of stocks, and the effect on the individual stock is unpredictable. By restricting the commercial fishery to one type of shore-based fishing gear, the bag net, the bulk of the fishery has been shifted to the fjords where it exploits local stocks and can be locally regulated. The management authorities are following up by developing local regulations, which take into account the state of the local stocks. This process is still in progress and new regulatory means, like local quotas, are being discussed and will be tested.

Short Overview of Regulatory Measures and Reduction of Fishing Effort in Norwegian Salmon Fisheries

In Norway, all salmon anglers and net fishermen are required to purchase a state fishing licence. The number of licences issued has been almost halved, from 143,000 in 1989 to 90,000 in 1999, representing a substantial reduction in fishing effort during this period.

Marine fisheries

The number of fixed gears has been reduced from 8,000 units in 1970 to 2,600 units in 1999 (a 68% reduction). In addition, Norway has removed all driftnets, which, at the peak of the driftnet fishery, totalled 30,000 units.

Since the driftnet fishery was banned in 1989, there have been further reductions in effort in the marine fisheries:

- From 1996 to 1999 the number of bagnets declined by 28%.
- From 1996 to 1999 the number of bendnets declined by 65.4%. This was due to the removal of all bendnets along the coast with the exceptions of the county of Finnmark and the Skagerrak coast. In total, the number of bendnets has been reduced from 4,100 units in 1989 to 989 units in 1999 (a 76% reduction). From the year 2002 the ban on bend nets will be extended to the entire coast with the exception of the Finnmark county.
- During the 1990s, prohibition zones were established in marine areas close to important salmon rivers.

- The length of the bagnet season has been reduced by about 30% with the exception of the county of Finnmark and the Skagerrak coast. In several fjords with threatened stocks the bagnet fishery has been greatly reduced or banned. Trolling with multi-hook lines and fishing with otter-boards has been totally banned in the same area.

River fisheries

Since 1989 there has been a substantial reduction in fishing effort in the rivers:

- During the 1990s, the opening of the fishing season in the rivers was gradually delayed, and in most rivers the season has been shortened by 2 – 4 weeks.
- There have been reductions in fishing effort as a result of restrictions on gear and limitations of catch.