

Fishy Fishing: Decision-Making and Economic Performance in Swedish Fishery Policy – A Summary

This report contains two studies on aspects of Swedish fishery policy. From different perspectives, these papers try to understand the domestic factors that contribute to make fishery policy nationally and internationally a delicate and difficult political topic; failing to achieve a sustainable and efficient management of fishing stocks.

The first study by Ylva Hasselberg focuses the decision making. She reviews the main policy issues including those seldomly discussed and she maps the main parties with influence in the policy making. The latter review is pursued by the so called "snow-ball method", asking a central decision maker about the ten most influential persons, then queering them in the same way, and so on. She finds that only a narrow group is involved in the policy making, and the policy is to a large extent formed outside the domain open for public insights. Interest groups are considered to be very influential and, among them, by far most important is the National Association of Fishermen. Within the group of decision-makers there is a strong consensus on the need to safeguard a viable domestic fishery industry giving policy a strong flavour of mercantilism. Consumer and efficiency objectives have weak support. An important finding by Hasselberg is also that weak political guidance is given to the authorities when it comes to resource conservation policy.

The paper by Daniel Stigberg analyses the economic performance of the Swedish fishery sector and the public subsidies given to the sector. These are divided in three groups: Direct subsidies,

mostly given in EU programmes, support given through the unemployment insurance, which in the case of fishery to a large degree is an off-season subsidy, and finally by tax evasion. The first two items sum up to 24 kronor per working hour in fishery, and the third item is estimated from various circumstantial evidence to be substantial. Hence fishery policy is counter-productive from the perspective of resource conservation, as it subsidises depletion of stocks. Moreover, policy is not even successful in fulfilling the income target. The value added per working hour in fishery 1995 was 84 kronor, while the economy average was 281 kronor per hour.