

Nordic Recreational Fishing Workshop Series

2014–2016



Project description

Stronger Nordic collaboration

Recreational fishing is an important leisure activity in the Nordic countries. This is illustrated by the fact that participation rate in this activity is higher than in the rest of Europe as well as globally. From this baseline, it is possible to target increasing public welfare, health, green growth and tourism from recreational fishing and water-based ecosystem services. The outcome of the workshop series are supposed to provide advice to the Nordic Council of Ministers on how to support future ecologically and economically sustainable recreational fishing and fishing tourism in the Nordic countries. The workshop series are also supposed to result in a closer and stronger collaboration between the Nordic countries in the ambition to promote development of long-term sustainable recreational fishing, research, education and fishing tourism.

Funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers

With funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers Working Group for Fisheries Collaboration, AG-Fisk, there have been a workshop series consisting of three workshops held in Helsinki (2014), Arendal (2015) and Jönköping (2016). The workshops have brought the angling communities, NGOs, businesses, marketing, national agencies and research communities in the Nordic countries together to discuss and elaborate on different aspects of recreational fishing and fishing tourism.

The Nordic way forward

In 2014, FishBrain AB hosted the workshop in Finland. The main focus was on joining Nordic and North Atlantic forces to discuss recreational fishing data and international marketing of fishing tourism destinations. Participants consisted of Nordic, Russian and North American bodies responsible for management of public fisheries, bodies responsible of fishing licenses and bodies responsible of national recreational fishing research. Expected results were shared understanding of Nordic recreational fishing data and how Nordic recreational fishing tourism destinations could be marketed together internationally. The workshop had a proactive approach addressing not only the problems but also the case examples of successful solutions for recreational fisheries management and ecotourism in a local, national and even international level.

Recreational fishing data and socioeconomics

In 2015, the Institute of Marine Research hosted the workshop in Norway. The main focus was on

bringing the angling community, NGOs, business, management and international research communities together to assess how best to realize the potential of the recreational fishing in Nordic countries. An important aim was to get an overall overview of status of recreational fisheries in the respective Nordic countries when it comes to management regulations and activities in the country, and availability of national data on number of fishers/effort, catches and socio-economics. Participants consisted of different stakeholders from Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Sweden, Great Britain and Norway. Iceland were unable to attend. Expected results were increased collaboration between Nordic countries and recreational fishing sectors, agreeing on a roadmap of a way forward and research needs of recreational fishing, discussing the need of a joint strategy for application of future research and producing a report and presentation of results to the Nordic Council of Ministers and national management authorities.

Development of Nordic fishing tourism

In 2016, the Swedish Board of Agriculture hosted the workshop in Sweden. The main focus was to hammer out recommendations to the Nordic Council of Ministers on what is needed to develop and strengthen the recreational fishing tourism sector. The recommendations will also work as guidelines in producing national strategies on development of recreational fishing and fishing tourism in the Nordic countries. Participating countries were Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Åland Islands and Greenland were unable to attend. Other outcomes were discussions of how a future Nordic center for recreational for recreational fishing research can contribute to the development of both fish stock, recreational fishing and fishing tourism. There was also discussions on the status and knowledge of the socioeconomic impact of recreational fishing and fishing tourism, what the Nordic countries can learn from other countries and each other and how that knowledge can be implemented in national management and legislation.

This report summarizes the main findings and recommendations from all three workshops. For more information on the workshops, see separate reports for 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The workshop in Helsinki was planned and organized by Otso Valta (FishBrain AB, Finland). The workshops in Arendal and Jönköping were planned and organised by a planning group consisting of Alf Ring Kleiven (IMR, Norway), Christian Skov (DTU-Aqua, Denmark), Otso Valta (Fish Brain AB, Finland), Daniel Melin (Jordbruksverket, Sweden),

Keno Ferter (IMR, Norway), Kieran Hyder (Cefas, England), Sveinn Agnarsson (University of Iceland, Iceland), Ingemar Eriksson (Ålands fiskevårdsförening, The Åland Islands), Päivi Eskelinen (Finnish Game and Fisheries Research, Finland) and Martin Falklind (Fiskejournalen, Sweden).

Hosts of the 2014–2016 workshops:



Otso Valta, FishBrain AB (FI)



Alf Kleiven, Institute of Marine Research (NO)



Daniel Melin, Swedish Board of Agriculture (SE)

Presentations from Helsinki and Jönköping are available at: <http://en.calameo.com/accouunts/3567570>

Videos from Helsinki are available at: <https://goo.gl/mdKxUm>

[The Swedish Board of Agriculture has been responsible for putting together this report.](#)

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Main take home messages and recommendations

Helsinki 2014

One of the worlds most popular hobbies

Recreational fishing is one of the world's most popular hobbies. According to some estimates, anglers globally spend around \$200-billion a year on traveling, boating and gear. For comparison, that is more than ten times global recorded music sales of \$15-billion in 2013, music industry body IFPI estimates.

Nordic countries are recreational fishing hot spots. The popularity of the hobby has not been measured to be as high almost anywhere else on the planet (Economic value of recreational fisheries in the Nordic countries, TemaNord 2000:604).

Moderate ecological status

The ecological status of Nordic surface water bodies is only moderate (European Environmental Agency, Surface Water Viewer) and state of fisheries in Nordic countries and Baltic Sea Region is in historical minimum.

Urgent need for socioeconomic research

There is an urgent need for socioeconomic research on Nordic recreational fishing. Nordic countries have an economic, social and environmental responsibility to stop the degradation of water ecosystems for the sake of invaluable nature itself, to comply EU Water Framework Directive, and as a prerequisite for sustainable growth of ecotourism.

We believe that Nordic countries should sharpen their leading role in EU level to speak pro the sustainable use of ecosystem services overtaking the tragedy of commons.

Arendal 2015

Participation rate in recreational fisheries in the Nordic countries is one of the highest in the western world with expected significant impacts on stock and importance for the economy.

Lack of scientific data

Lack of high quality scientific data prohibits targeted management actions and a sustainable development of the recreational fishing sector in the Nordic countries

We share common challenges

The Nordic countries share common challenges and need to collaboratively establish a Nordic center for research on recreational fisheries and to seek funding for a research grant to develop survey tools and to estimate effort, catches and socio-economic impacts of recreational fisheries in the Nordic countries.

All Nordic countries should seek to implement a future strategy for recreational fisheries.

Jönköping 2016

Recommendations for development of fishing tourism

The most important recommendations for developing sustainable and thriving fishing tourism in the Nordic countries are:

- Fisheries management and conservation should be based on knowledge and scientific data, long term sustainability and aim to optimize the social and economic values of the fish resource.
- The needs of recreational fishing and fishing tourism, such as abundant wild stocks and large individuals of important gamefish species, should be taken into high consideration in fisheries management and conservation.
- Negative influences on fish stocks of importance for recreational fishing and fishing tourism should be pinpointed and measures taken to decrease or eliminate such influences.
- Public interest and participation in recreational fishing should be promoted by introducing children, youth, elderly and immigrants to the sport.
- Marketing of countries and regions as fishing destinations should be funded and coordinated by relevant authorities and executed by expert stakeholders and organizations.
- The role and responsibility of authorities and stakeholders in promoting development of recreational fishing and fishing tourism should be better defined and financed.

Need for a Nordic recreational fishing research center

Recreational fishing and fishing tourism are facing similar possibilities and challenges in the Nordic countries and there is need for a multidisciplinary Nordic recreational fishing research center to be established, involving both fishery science and socio-economics.

The main aims of the center should be to co-ordinate recreational fishing research on

- Fishery impacts; effort and catches
- Catch and release; impacts and guidelines
- Socio-economics; health, tourism and economic values

Another important aim should be to develop a Nordic education system for recreational fishing research based on collaboration between countries and institutions.

Key success factors

Finally, in establishing sustainable and profitable fishing tourism destinations, the key success factors are to:

- See the business opportunity, understand the product and the target group
- Cooperate and gain acceptance in the local communities
- Provide competent staff, great service and infrastructure
- Offer a long term sustainable product (cultural and biological)
- Manage the fish stocks in a way that attract anglers

