



Current issue in tourism

Marine angling tourist behavior, non-compliance, and implications for natural resource management



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Marine angling tourists' non-compliance with Norwegian regulations is examined.
- Pro-environmental behaviour at home correlated against strengthened regulations.
- No significant correlations found with willingness to accept stricter regulations.
- Strengthening regulations would negatively impact willingness to return/recommend.
- Tourists prioritize the fishing experience over protection of fish as a resource.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25 May 2013

Accepted 22 March 2014

Available online 19 April 2014

Keywords:

Marine angling tourism
Sustainable tourism development
Consumptive wildlife tourism
Wild living marine resource management
Recreational fishing
Tourist behavior

ABSTRACT

Wild living marine resources are a common pool resource in Norway, and successful development of marine angling tourism (MAT) – a form of consumptive wildlife tourism is dependent on healthy fish stocks. This article examines foreign tourists' non-compliance with Norway's 15 kg export quota, and the effects of the non-compliance on community wellbeing. Analyses of 528 responses to a 63-question questionnaire compare tourists' pro-environmental behavior at home, with behavior on holiday, and opinions on more stringent management regulations. No statistically significant correlations were found between pro-environmental behavior at home and support for more stringent regulations. Strengthening regulations would likely have a negative impact on both willingness to return and recommend. Findings suggest that the majority of tourists do not view fish as a resource that should be more tightly controlled, if their holiday fishing experience would be negatively affected. Results are compared against studies investigating management strategies for non-consumptive forms of wildlife tourism. Management solutions are identified which might mitigate non-compliance, positively influence environmentally responsible behavior, and address community wellbeing.

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1. Introduction

The country of Norway has a sea-fishing tradition deeply imbedded in the cultural identities of the remote coastal towns and villages. With dramatic decline in small-scale fishing activities in Northern Norway (NN) in recent decades, marine angling tourism (MAT) has emerged as a new way for coastal communities to earn an income from fishing. Marine angling (MA) is steadily growing in popularity in NN and this can certainly be considered positively with regard to economic revival (see f.ex. Borch et al., 2008; Borch

et al., 2011). However, MAT is a form of consumptive wildlife tourism (Lovelock, 2008) – a form of tourism in Norway dependent on viable fish stocks in the fjords. For the local communities, “their fish” are now being fished by exponentially increasing numbers of foreign tourists. As with all other forms of tourism, MAT cannot exist in social isolation from the host community. Tourist activities impact directly and indirectly on ecosystems (Gössling, 2002a), with the potential for economic benefit but also detrimental impacts both to host communities and host environments (Buckley, 2012; Gössling, 2002b; Gössling & Hall, 2006; McKercher, 1993).

1.1. Consumptive wildlife tourism management – a socio-ecological systems perspective

Lovelock (2008) defines consumptive wildlife tourism as a form of leisure travel undertaken for the purposes of hunting or shooting

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game animals, or fishing for sports fish, either in natural sites or in areas created for these purposes. Managing this specialized sector of tourism requires management of the living natural resources, while simultaneously managing the complex relationships between humans and wildlife (Bramley, 1993; Budowski, 1976; Davis & Gartside, 2001; Hall, 2001; McKercher, 1993; Priskin, 2001). This becomes a significantly greater challenge when having to consider tourists from several different cultural backgrounds and their differing perspectives on living natural resources (Qingming et al., 2012). The complex, interrelated socio-cultural and natural resource management (NRM) dimensions (Berkes, 2010; Briassoulis, 2002; Ioannides, 1995) of MAT necessitate a socio-ecological systems (SES) research approach (Arlinghaus et al., 2013; Berkes & Folke, 1998; Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004, 2005; Fennell & Butler, 2003; Folke, 2007).

1.2. Temptations with a common pool resource

In Norway, the law on the management of the wild living marine resources (Marine Resources Act) defines the ocean's fish as a common pool resource (CPR) (MFCA, 2008). This does not necessarily imply the resource will be overexploited, with one critical determining factor being how the CPR is managed (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom et al., 1999). Another critical factor is how the regulations are followed. To attempt to control excessive exporting of fish by foreign MA tourists, Norway enacted a regulation in 2006 restricting export to no more than 15 kg of fish or fish products (e.g. fillet) in a 24-h period² (the equivalent of approx. 60 kg of whole fish depending on how the fish is filleted³). Irrespective of this regulation, a percentage of MA tourists in Norway demonstrate non-compliance, an ethical issue that violates the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.⁴ Compounding this problem is that such a Leviathan-type regulation cannot be effectively enforced in Norway given the geography and limited resources for border control (Solstrand, 2013).

To understand tourist behavior with regard to non-compliance and the temptation with the fish, a starting point is found in the seminal paper by Hardin (1968), using the analogy of herdsmen in the "tragedy of the commons". Each herdsman will be motivated to add cattle to their individual herd to better their status. Each individual has personal incentive to increase their herd, but the pastureland is a shared resource and the inevitability of overgrazing is a problem shared by all.

MA tourists are free to fish as much as they want as long as they remain in Norway. However, Customs officials patrolling the borders confiscated the following fish fillet from foreign tourists leaving NN from 2009–2013⁵: year 2013 – 4568 kg; year 2012 – 3075 kg; year 2011 – 1112 kg; year 2010 – 2916 kg; year 2009 – 4157 kg; altogether totaling almost 16 tonnes of confiscated fillet (approx. 64 tonnes of whole fish). Tourists are regularly caught with several hundreds of kilograms of fillet over the export quota; confiscations that are often reported with sensational headlines in the local and regional newspapers. Half-way through the 2012 fishing season, a regional newspaper headline read: "New Smuggling Wave" (Høyer, 2012, 31 July).

² This regulation was not enacted as an attempt to control fish mortality, given that tourists remain able to fish as much as they want for the duration of their stay in Norway.

³ Tourists take the best fillet – approx. 25% of the whole.

⁴ United Nations World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics for Tourism – a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide governments, the travel industry, communities, and tourists. <http://ethics.unwto.org/en/content/global-code-ethics-tourism>

⁵ Department head, Regional Customs for NN, personal communication 14 November 2013.

By Norwegian Law, confiscated fish must be thrown away. The Director of Customs for NN interviewed for this study indicated that confiscations at the borders were "only the tip of the iceberg", and "approaching the scale of organized crime" (personal communication, 14 September 2011) with a guesstimate of 10% of smuggled fish being confiscated or perhaps even less. These figures were reinforced in a web article published in May 2013 with the headline: *Fish smuggling is completely out of control*.⁶ In 2011, MAT in Norway was fast approaching a one billion kronur industry.⁷ Using the 10% guesstimate, over these five years well over 640 tonnes of whole fish has been illegally exported just in NN. The majority of this fishing by MA tourists is taking place in the local fjords, not the open sea.

The problem of "externalities" is central to the conflict in CPR management. Specifically, people are unlikely to restrain their own behavior when the immediate benefits of their actions are their own. However, the costs of this are passed on to the society as a whole (Lloyd, 1977(1833)). With open access, tourists as visitors lack incentive (Healy, 1994; McCay & Acheson, 1987) to conserve the resource being exploited. Some tourists have the argument that the landings and exports by tourists are negligible in comparison to commercial landings. This study shows that such a comparison is invalid given that MAT is an SES. It misses two critical points: the impact on the local communities; and the impact on local fish stocks. The local residents of these remote coastal communities are the stewards of the commons, and the tourists should be accountable to the locals for their actions (Briassoulis, 2002), but incentive for the tourists to comply with regulations is lacking. On the contrary, there is strong economic incentive for those tourists who choose to ignore the export regulation. Prices for Norwegian fish fillet in Germany can be well over 300 NOK per kilogram.⁸ Restricting CPR solutions to intervention by external authorities, as the 15 kg export quota represents, overshadows the development of other solutions, including local community involvement and management (McCay & Acheson, 1987).

1.3. Examining tourists' pro-environmental behavior

The literature review on tourist behavior addresses two main themes: 1) the psychology of MA tourist behavior; and 2) the effect of this behavior in a cultural context – i.e. effect on the host communities.

1.3.1. Tourists' pro-environmental behavior: holiday versus home

Early models of pro-environmental behavior from the 1970s assumed that simply educating people about environmental issues would result in more pro-environmental behavior. These models were based on a linear progression of environmental knowledge leading to a change in environmental attitude thus inspiring pro-environmental behavior (Pearce, 1987). However, more recent studies have found that ecological behavior seems to be susceptible to a wide range of influences (Hines et al., 1986); and factors on the personal level seem to come into play and operate on judgments of given pro-environmental behaviors (Kaiser, 1998; Pearce, 1982).

As part of a vacation mentality, tourists are known to demonstrate an unwillingness to follow the rules of the host country, with

⁶ Fiskesmuglingen er helt ute av kontroll: <http://www.nrk.no/nordland/fisketuristene-smugler-mer-fisk-1.11045957> Website accessed 27 September 2013.

⁷ Fisketurisme er milliardindustri: <http://www.tv2.no/nyheter/okonomi/fisketurisme-er-milliardindustri-3513856.html>. Website accessed 27 September 2013. One billion NOK in 2013 = 166 million USD or 123 million Euro.

⁸ This price per kilogram was stated in two separate interviews with groups of German tourists and independently verified with Norwegian Customs. 300 NOK in 2013 is equivalent to 50 USD or 37 Euros.

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