



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Marine Policy

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/marpol](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/marpol)

# The emerging politics of the Arctic Ocean. Future management of the living marine resources

Njord Wegge<sup>1</sup>

Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 27 May 2014

Received in revised form

8 September 2014

Accepted 8 September 2014

## Keywords:

Central Arctic Ocean

High seas

A5

Management

Living marine resources

## ABSTRACT

This article seeks to identify and analyze the most important political issues at stake with respect to the ongoing process regarding the future management of living resources in the high seas of the Arctic Ocean. Through assessing the potential for future commercial utilization of marine resources in the Arctic Ocean and analyzing the differences between the interests of engaged stakeholders in the process, the article seeks to answer whose interests and norms seem to most strongly influence the unfolding political processes and preliminary outcomes. The article concludes by identifying how the five Arctic coastal states have retained the upper hand in this process through skilled political entrepreneurship, the devotion of necessary resources and the political commitment of their respective governments.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

As the Arctic sea ice is shrinking due to global warming, human activity is increasing in the Arctic Ocean. With expectations rising concerning the potential for Arctic shipping routes, along with high hopes of finding rich untapped natural resources from the region, Arctic politics has been increasing in importance on the global policy agenda. This article investigates a key dimension of this topic of current relevance, namely the emerging politics concerning the management of living marine resources in the Arctic Ocean. The article hence has an objective to review the ongoing political process playing out concerning the regulation of the high seas of the central Arctic Ocean. To contextualize this political process, the article will also assess and point out the key biological and physical changes taking place in the Arctic Ocean, as well as embed the abovementioned political process in its legal and multilateral-organizational contexts. While the article addresses scientific and legal issues, as well as multilateral institutions dealing with resource management beyond the Arctic Ocean, the article's main scope and research focus will be limited to issues that are mostly relevant to the high seas of the Arctic Ocean.

### 1.1. Research questions, delimitations and article structure

This article seeks to identify and analyze the most important political issues at stake with respect to the management and

governance of the living resources of the Arctic Ocean. The article will in particular investigate the interests and policies of the Arctic Ocean's coastal states, often shortened to the "Arctic Coastal states" or simply "A5" (that is, the five Arctic countries: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway, Russia and the USA), but also other actors, including NGOs such as Pew Charitable Trust, will be analyzed. Specifically, the research questions are as follows:

(1) What is the potential for future commercial utilization of marine resources in the Arctic Ocean? (2) Are there differences between engaged governmental and NGO stakeholders concerning the future management of the Arctic Ocean, and, if so, what explains the dividing lines between them? (3) Whose interests and norms seem to most strongly influence the unfolding political processes concerning the future management of the Arctic Ocean, and what explains why some actors seem to have more control than others with regard to the unfolding processes and preliminary outcomes?

Different delimitations exist concerning the definition of the Arctic Ocean (AO). While more or less all definitions include the High Seas of the central Arctic Ocean—the sea beyond 200 nautical miles (nm) from the shores of the coastal states—the southern border in areas such as the Chukchi or Beaufort Seas varies more. The drawing of the outer limits of the AO matters, as this defines who is entitled to be an AO "coastal state". The most authoritative chart of limits of seas and oceans in the world is found in the International Hydrographic Organization's (IHO) Special Publication no. 23, 1953 on the Limits of Oceans and Seas [1]. In this special issue, all major oceans and seas are defined by the IHO, and recognized by the UN as the authority on hydrography and

E-mail address: [nw@fni.no](mailto:nw@fni.no)<sup>1</sup> Senior Research Fellow.

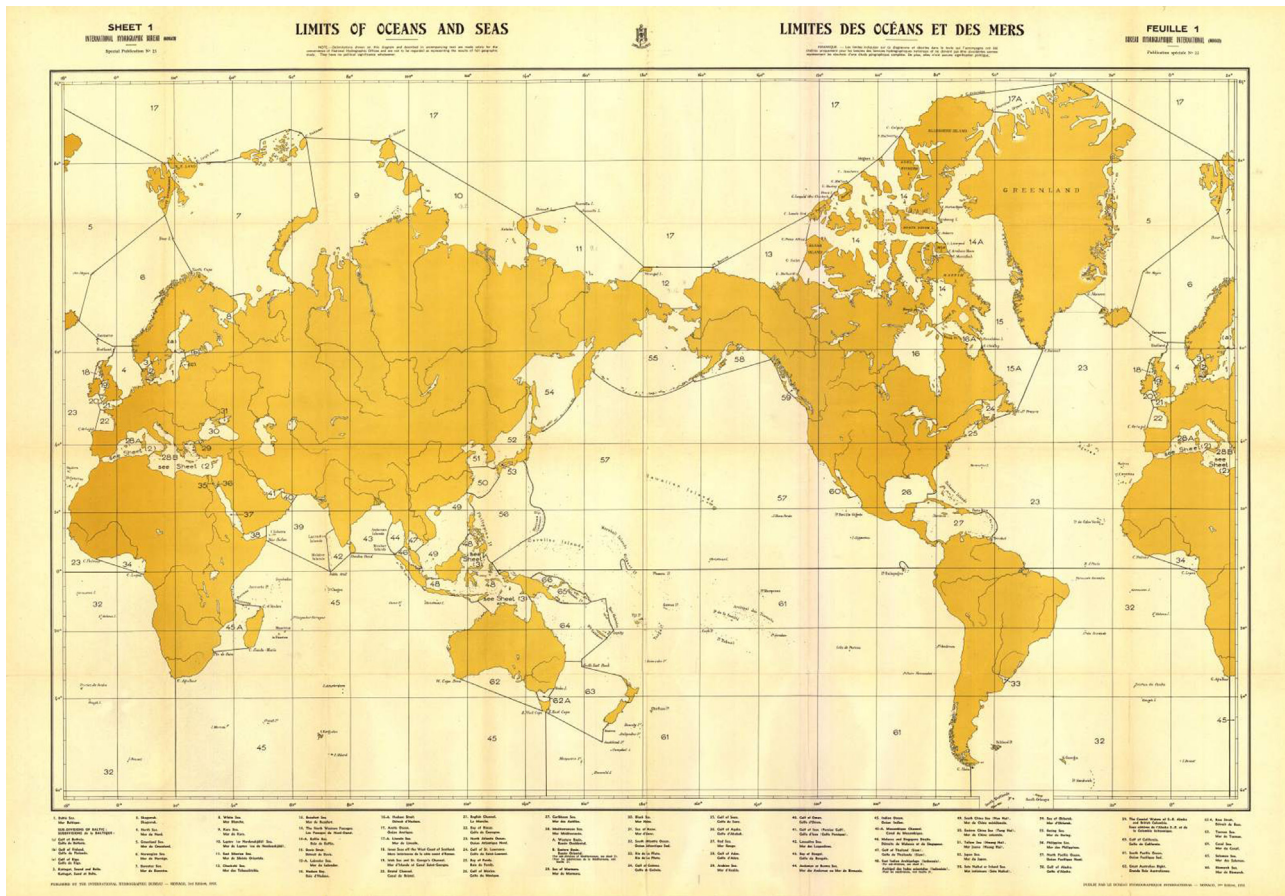


Fig. 1. The World's seas and oceans. IHO 1953.

nautical charting.<sup>2</sup> The article will apply the IHO's established boundaries as my own definition of the AO in this article (see figure below) Fig. 1.

This article will be structured in the following manner: It will start out by briefly reviewing the general legal basis for issues regarding the jurisdiction and management of living resources in the world's seas and oceans, before specifically addressing the case of the AO. Second, it will assess the potential for the commercial harvesting of marine living resources in the AO, through giving an update of the current evaluations made by marine researchers. After having sketched out the legal and biological basis for the management of living resources, the views of the stakeholders who are engaged in the politics pertaining to the management and ownership of these marine living resources will be analyzed. Finally, the article will investigate differences in opinion among the key stakeholders and also assess and analyze the reasons why and the degree to which some actors seem to have the upper hand in the unfolding process.

## 2. Method

The data collected and analyzed in this article stems from scientific journals, news reports, governmental documents, and information from interviews conducted with representatives from the A5, engaged NGOs, as well as scientists doing research on the biological data addressed in this article. As the political talks and scientific meetings among A5 representatives on the future regulation of the high seas of the AO are an ongoing process, interviewing participants and representatives from the five countries as well as other relevant states and stakeholders has been crucial in order to obtain the most reliable and updated information. The interviews were conducted during the period from January through August 2014, and were primarily done in person, even though some informants were reached only by phone or e-mail. The number of informants amounts to about 15–20 persons, some of whom have been directly participating in the A5 meetings or working in engaged ministries in the relevant state capitals. Others interviewees represent involved NGOs, and experts at research institutes or universities. The questions posed to the informants have particularly focused on how the state or NGO assesses the current as well as future situation with respect to the need for managing living marine resources in the AO. Questions have also focused on their views on the ongoing political process, including assessments of the other participating stakeholders' influence and importance, or the representatives' own views on what ought to be the desired outcome with respect to a potential future management regime for the ocean. It has been important to collect data from as many relevant stakeholders as possible.

<sup>2</sup> According to the IHO, the Arctic Ocean is (approximately quoted) defined to be the ocean area to the north of Svalbard, Frans Josef Land, New Siberian Islands, Cape Molotov on Severnaya Island, Wrangel Island, Point Barrow in Alaska, the north-western shores/points of the Canadian Archipelago and Cape Morris Jesup, Greenland. With respect to the many marginal seas to the south of the AO, such as the Beaufort Sea, the Chukchi Sea, the East Siberian Sea, the Greenland Sea or the Barents Sea, these seas are not regarded as a part of the Arctic Ocean. In practical use though, the border lines might on some occasions be more blurred than the IHO's strict definition.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7490899>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7490899>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)