

## **REFURBISHING THE COAST: The Invention of the Tourist-Fisher**

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*Abstract* The fishing industry is traditionally perceived as an economic sector in which professional fishermen make a living by catching fish intended for processing and marketing. While this type of fishing will continue to be important, it will probably not be as dominant as the sector moves towards increasing cyborgization. An important agent of change in this respect is the closing of the fisheries commons. This closure, which has sped up dramatically in the wake of UNCLOS, has had two different effects. On the one hand, it has helped turn the fishing industry into a smaller and tighter affair. The fishing industry is changing from its traditional role into a modern capitalist sector. On the other hand, it has left fishing as a recreational activity open to commercialization. In this paper, we argue that professional and recreational fishing are interacting in interesting ways. That is, they form two components of a sector that is becoming increasingly heterogeneous. Instead of treating recreational fishing as an add-on, which can be left unmanaged because of its presumed marginality, we argue that this type of fishing must be accepted and managed as a legitimate and important part of the sector. Recreational fishing in its commercial form, tourism, can transform the fisheries in significant ways.

### **Introduction**

The cyborg fish is a creature constructed for management purposes. It is what the natural fish turns into when it is systematically targeted by the modern machinery of governance. As suggested by Johnsen, Murray and Neis (this issue), the cyborgization process involves the transformation of fishing from a way of life into a tight and rationalized economic affair. In this paper, we focus on some of the things that are left behind as fishing is reformatted and turned into an industrial machine. In parallel with the closing of the fisheries commons for commercial fishing, the commons remains largely intact with respect to recreational fishing. This means that at least some of the values inherent in fishing in its organic form have not been erased but have shifted societal location and are now expressed and performed as recreation.

It would be tempting to suggest that the process of cyborgization primarily applies to the closed commercial sector, while recreational fishing simply has been passed by and remains untouched. This, however, would be to underestimate the power of the cyborg fish. Instead, we suggest that increasingly, the process of cyborgization is effecting recreational fisheries. Although fishing for fun has until now been largely left open and unmanaged, it is not likely that it will remain that way in the future.

The rest of this paper examines the drivers behind the cyborgization process by focusing on recreational fishing undertaken by tourists. In the Norwegian setting, the notion of tourist fishing covers foreign travelers visiting Norway and fishing in the ocean. Clearly, this notion of tourist fishing is not an analytical concept, but a practical label reflecting important institutional facts. One of these facts is that fishing in the ocean for leisure, as opposed to freshwater angling, is fairly open and unregulated. In contrast to recreational fishing undertaken by Norwegians, for which the institution of open access has a strong cultural and political standing, the legitimacy of such access for foreigners is fragile and contested. The specific reasons for this will be discussed in detail below. The main point we want to emphasize is simply that foreign tourist fishing represents the next step in the process of cyborgization. We argue that the tourist fisher should be included as a legitimate and responsible user of ocean resources.

On the surface, the idea of fish tourism sounds almost too good to be true. Instead of building a fishing industry to carry out a plethora of tasks in order to market fish, consumers are invited to do everything themselves. Instead of transporting the fish to the consumer where they reside, consumers come to the fish. Fish no longer have to be prepared for travel. The work of dressing, filleting, packing and icing are no longer industrial tasks; the tourists take care of it themselves. Recreational fishing also contributes to the local economy. Tourists need places to sleep, places to buy vegetables and wine to go with the fish they catch. When they take a break from fishing, they will seek out other leisure activities, thereby supporting the local culture. Tourists can also be charged for the privilege of fishing.

Compared to conventional commercial and subsistence fishing the potential economic value of recreational fisheries is enormous, however this potential is not easy to realize. While a tourist interested in fishing may be regarded as a potential goldmine for coastal communities, profitability is not guaranteed. Tourists can bring most of what they need with them from home, including food and drink, accommodation and equipment. If their excursions provide them with a winter supply of fish, the tourists may not even have to buy Norwegian fish from their local supermarket when they return home. Given that tourists presently fish for free in the Norwegian commons, rather than money the most significant things they may leave behind are garbage, diminished stocks and a smaller market for the commercial fishing industry.

Fish tourism, then, contains pitfalls as well as promises. How can the economic promises be realized and the pitfalls avoided? This is the question we address in this paper by focusing on the evolving context of Norwegian fisheries where tourism has grown into a sizable industry during the last two decades.

While fish tourism in Norway continues to develop and change we argue that it is not reaching its economic potential. One reason for the underdevelopment of fish tourism is that it has been perceived by the conventional fishing industry as a competitor to overcome rather than a companion to support. We discuss the various barriers that will have to be overcome if a tourist fishery is to realize its potential in Norway. We conclude the paper by describing a future scenario where the tourist and the professional fisherman live profitably side-by-side.

Our paper is written in the form of an essay rather than a research article in the conventional style. The main character of our study, the tourist-fisher that materializes under cyborgization, does not yet fully exist. Currently there is an absence of investment and systematic development of fishery tourism in Norway due to an underdeveloped institutional regime. While it is surely an important exercise to try to imagine what will happen if and when an enabling institutional framework is constructed, such an undertaking can only remain speculative and is best explored through an essay format rather than a formal research article.

The essay style of this paper allows us to deviate from a highly cherished sentiment at the core of social science writing on fisheries. Instead of the typical firm stance against Hardinist thinking, we start by acknowledging with Hardin that open access and common property are feeble institutional configurations in many areas of modern life. We therefore do not accept that the transformation of the fisheries from its traditional organic into a cybernetic form necessarily represents a history of loss and tragedy. While the cyborg fish in its future materialization in tourism may turn out to be bad, we shall not assume that up front. Instead, we understand cyborgization as a force to be welcomed, as a potential source of improvement, happiness and wisdom in fisheries. This reversal is an explicit decision to attempt a writing experiment to see what happens when we let go of nostalgia and approach the future with optimism and confidence.

The essay style we have chosen structures the way empirical material is mobilized in support of our argument. While the analysis that follows is based on long-term and systematic research on fisheries issues, including fish tourism, we do not present our story as one driven by empirical facts. Our main interest is to playfully explore the constitution of the cyborg fish as it may materialize in the tourist fishery in the near future. In order to realistically imagine that future, we have had to balance a discussion of contemporary empirical realities with a consideration of the quickening pace through which present realities are made into things of the past.

### **Tourist Fishing in Norway**

A number of interests are contending for space in the Norwegian coastal landscape. Fish tourism is one of the newcomers in this struggle. In the blurred zone between the travel industry and the fisheries, tourism based on fishing has developed as a new and promising source of income and employment. From a marginal start in the 1990s, this sector has grown rapidly. The following is an attempt to evaluate the current status of tourist fishing in Norway.

First, it should be noted that tourist fishing, partly because it represents a new venture and partly because it is not easily classified as belonging to any particular sector, is currently underdeveloped as an industry in Norway. This means that the information and management instruments that are expected from a mature industry, which allow insiders and interested bystanders to monitor its functions and manage its performance, are not well developed. As a recently established social formation, stakeholder groups associated with tourist fishing have not yet been able to organize themselves and develop appropriate strategies. While, on the one hand this is an important fact about the industry, on the other it is a trait that makes it difficult to understand the industry. Some of these difficulties involve questions such as: who and what activities should count as belonging to the fish tourism sector? Exactly how many foreign tourists in Norway are fish tourists? What economic benefits does tourist fishing contribute to Norway? What is the significance of fish tourism in resource management terms; for example, what is the tourist catch relative to the size of overall landings of coastal codfish? Questions such as these do not have readily available answers. Nobody knows exactly how many and which types of fish tourists bring with them when they leave Norway, or how many outfitters, brokers and vendors are operating in the market and the services they offer to tourists.

While specific answers to the above questions are sketchy, previous research does present some useful information. A survey from 2001, including 936 companies (Hallenstvedt and Wulff 2001), concluded that approximately 224,000 tourists caught between 12,000 and 15,000 tonnes of round weight fish per year in Norwegian marine waters. In this report fish tourism was estimated to be growing by 37,000 to 38,000 tourists per year. As emphasised by Borch (2004), however, these figures contain a number of uncertainties. A reanalysis of the data suggested that between 6,000 to 9,000 tonnes would be a more realistic figure for annual tourist landings and calls for additional studies to establish more reliable data (Cap Gemini Ernst & Young 2003). Finally Jacobsen and Steen (2005) estimated that foreign tourists took approximately 5,000 tonnes of round fish (without differentiating between species) out of the country in 2004.

A report from the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs reported 939 businesses related to fish tourism and coastal culture, of which seventy-one percent were family operated. In total these 939 businesses provided 1,246 jobs. The majority of the fishery tourism businesses in Norway are located in rural areas allowing tourist spending to stay in local economies. The total annual amount spent by fish tourists in Norway is estimated to be somewhere between 2,2 and 2,4 billion nok while the average tourist spends between 240 and 400 nok per kilogram of fish that they catch (Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs 2004). While there are inland and lake fisheries in Norway, and tourists do take part in this activity, the main focus of the fish tourism industry is on coastal and ocean fishing.

Fish tourism first began out as an attempt to expand a short and intensive summer season for a few camp site owners (Nordstrand 2000). Marine tourism, with fishing as an important attraction, has been established and organised on the south coast of Norway since the late 1980s. Several projects have been initiated since the 1980s and several have been cooperative efforts. The initiative for

the first cooperative tourist fishing project came from a group of travel-industry leaders who recognised the advantages of coordinating and marketing their travel products as a group. The background for this initiative was the desire to extend the capacity of their facilities beyond the two or three months each year which then comprised the tourist season. The businesses had many tourists who came to the beaches in June, July and August, but the activity could not be sustained outside these months. The travel-industry group saw fishing as a way to capture the interest of tourists in the months prior to and following the main tourist season. However, as a consequence of negative reactions from commercial fishermen concerned about potential conflicts with the commercial fishing industry, the Norwegian Fishermen's Association was invited to participate in the tourist fishing planning committee (Andenes and Bjørnerem 1995). In the end the project was deemed successful and received a marketing award from the Norwegian Tourist Association in 1993. The final report estimated that the number of guest overnight-stays for tourist fishing grew from 9,000 to 39,000 over the duration of the Vest-Agder project (Nordstrand 2000).

The Vest-Agder project emphasised that fish tourism should adopt a sport model rather than a harvesting model. When framed as a sport fishery tourist fishing was welcomed by the commercial fishing sector and Norwegian fishery authorities. Efforts were made to develop and cater to sports fishermen. The key customer of the tourist industry would be the noble guest whose passion resided in the activity and experience of fishing, not so much in the quantity of the catch. As part of this effort, journalists from dedicated sport fishing magazines, such as *Rout'n Roll*, *Blinker* and *Kutter und Kuste*, were invited to visit and write about the possibilities for catching large fish. The legacy of these initiatives is visible in several places in Lofoten and Sørøya, the latter known as 'The kingdom of the big fish'. World competitions are arranged annually, and attract sports fishing enthusiasts from within and outside the country (Hallenstvedt and Kræmer 2001; Nordstrand and Johnsen 2008).

Despite efforts to promote fishing as a recreational sport, a large number of fish tourists come to Norway by car, many of them with mobile homes equipped with freezers. These tourists, sometimes called 'freezer tourists' (*fryseboksturister*), represent – in the minds of Norwegian professional fishermen and their organizations – the exact opposite of the noble sports fisherman. Where the sport fisherman spends a lot per fish caught and is welcomed, the freezer tourist is perceived as a harvest machine that spends little and leaves garbage and decimated resources. As a way to discourage 'freezer tourism' a fifteen kilograms export quota was established in 2006 by the fishery minister. This export quota was established after the fisheries minister received recommendations from the Committee on Foreign Tourist Fishing (Norwegian Fishermen's Association, 2001) who were responding to reports that tourists were being stopped at the border carrying up to 500 kilograms of Norwegian fish fillets they had captured during their stay (Fiskeribladet 14.03.06).

While the export quota may curb extreme individual cases, questions remain about the extent to which Norwegian vendor companies actually cater to and encourage this type of activity. There are certainly a number of companies

which promote freezer-fishing. Typically, the fish tourists arrive in vans carrying three or more men, who fish for eight to nine hours per day for a whole week. The fishing vessels offered for hire are equipped with a GPS, echo sounder and radar. When a catch is brought on shore, it can be dressed in fillet rooms with stainless steel benches and running cold water at every work station. A number of vendors offer vacuum packing machines, and have considerable freezing capacity. Freezer rooms of more than ten square meters, or ten to twenty boxes of 300 litres each are not uncommon. The vendors say they have to keep up with the demand, otherwise the customers will go to their competitors (Nordstrand and Johnsen 2008).

The Norwegian fish tourist industry is of course heterogeneous, comprising a whole gamut of forms, ranging from the noble tourist fisher, on the one hand to the single-minded, semi-professional freeze box harvester on the other. Income per kilogram of fish is estimated to be between 147 and 200 NOK by Hal-lenstvedt and Wulff (2002; 2004) and between 244 and 400 NOK by Cap Gemini Ernst & Young (2003). In comparison, the revenue per kg of fish in professional fishing is estimated to be eleven NOK/kilogram. Whatever the average number, the revenue of fish tourism varies considerably. The sport model tourist is likely to spend more money than the harvesting model tourist. The sport fisher uses very expensive rods and equipment, pays more for his trip and cares little about expenses. The tourist-harvester comes in his own van, and brings as much of his food and beverage as possible from back home to cut costs.

With landings ranging from 5,000 to 12,000 tonnes, the total tourist catch seems small compared with the overall size of Norwegian fishery resources. The problem, of course, is that the tourist catch is not spread evenly over all stocks. There is good reason to believe that tourist fishing focuses on exploiting the coastal cod stock. This stock has been declining over the last few years. Since the turn of the century, the International Council of Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has recommended sharp reductions of the harvest rate of coastal cod stocks. For many reasons, the advice to cut coastal cod quotas was not followed immediately, and the TAC remained at the historical level of 40,000 tonnes. For 2004 ICES suggested zero catch, and the quota was reduced to 20,000 tonnes (Berg 2008). There is no firm consensus on the causes for the decline of the coastal cod stock, and the share of the responsibility that falls on tourist fishing is an open question. Nevertheless, tourist fishing and its impact on coastal cod stocks have produced conflict and mistrust (Borch 2004; Borch, Aas and Policansky 2008). Whatever the causes of the decline of coastal cod, and the relative social value attributed to different kinds of fishing, it remains a fact that tourist fishing is dependent on and harvests resources, some of which are vulnerable and in crisis. If the industry is going to develop into a strong and legitimate sector, this problem has to be met in a systematic and responsible way.

In summary, the Norwegian fish tourist industry may be characterized as fragmented, controversial and underdeveloped. That it is *fragmented* refers to the fact that the enterprises catering to fish tourists in Norway tend to be small, scattered, and lack management infrastructure to coordinate efforts and help solve common problems. That tourist fishing is *controversial* is evident from the fact that the industry has not managed to establish a social space for itself within

which it is accepted as a valuable asset by the major stakeholders on which it depends. While this point is developed in more detail below, for now it can be noted that there are two outstanding issues that are currently unresolved and continue to undermine the legitimacy of the tourist fishing industry. These are, first, the problem of fish tourism as a harvest fishery, and hence an illegitimate competitor of commercial fishing, and, second, the absence of monitoring and control of fish tourism. That tourist fishing is *underdeveloped* in Norway follows in part from the two previous points. More precisely, such underdevelopment takes a specific form. The main product of the tourist industry is not the profitable sports fishery. Instead, the industry is focused on the low-cost, easily accessed, and unprofitable recreational harvest fishery.

### **Open Access: A Blessing and a Curse for Fish Tourism**

Having taken stock of the industry, the disappointing conclusion is that its great promises have yet to be realized. Instead of a highly prized, legitimate and profitable industry, fish tourism is underdeveloped and perceived negatively by many fishery stakeholders. Instead of a valuable addition to life on the coast, fish tourism is sometimes perceived as an illegitimate and irresponsible newcomer to the coastal seascape. This reception can be explained to some extent by the way the tourist industry is currently positioned in relation to the natural resource on which it relies: the fish. As will be seen, the regime can almost be characterized as open access. While at first glance this regime appears to be a major asset, it makes it difficult for the industry to develop into a profitable and legitimate business.

Recreational fishing in Norway is not totally unregulated. For Norwegian residents, fishing in the ocean is explicitly allowed with hand line and rod (including one jigg machine), nets (with a total length of no more than 210 meters), long lines with up to 300 angles, and twenty lobster or crab pots. Although gear types like trawl, Danish seine and seine are not allowed, these gear restrictions in general must be characterized as generous and allow for fairly ambitious recreational fishing activities (Directorate of Fisheries 2007). There are no licences or fees for recreational fishermen, and although fishing for some species is regulated (lobster, salmon, king crab), there are no general restrictions on catch. As a Norwegian recreational fisherman, you are also allowed to sell your catch. While there are no general limits, specific restrictions apply for certain stocks. For instance, recreational fishermen cannot sell more than 2,000 kilograms of cod during a calendar year (Directorate of Fisheries 2006). While there are restrictions on recreational fishing, the limitations are fairly generous. Indeed, the presence of such limitations does not in any practical sense restrict access for recreational fishermen to the ocean commons. What they do instead, is impose a division between recreational and commercial fishing.

In comparison with Norwegian residents, foreign citizens visiting Norway are subject to stricter regulations. While tourist fishers can fish with hand line and rod, they are not allowed to use fixed gear like long lines, nets or pots. Fish tourists cannot sell their catch and they are only allowed an export quota of fifteen

kilograms of fillets per person. In addition, each tourist can bring one trophy fish out of the country. On top of this, all fish that have been caught on a vessel operated by a professional fisherman can be exported without restriction (Directorate of Fisheries 2008).

Whereas the regulations on tourists are clearly stricter than those for residents, the overall picture is still one of open access to the ocean commons with respect to recreational fishing. This is different from a number of other countries, like New Zealand (Hersoug 2002), where recreational fishermen have stakeholders status within the management system, with all the privileges and duties that this implies. In New Zealand, a part of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is reserved for recreational fishing, and access to harvesting this quota is subject to individual license restrictions. In contrast, foreigners fishing in Norway are treated similarly to traditional Norwegian recreational fishers who view fishing as an important cultural institution, with rights of access governed by law. For non-commercial purposes, the Norwegian marine fishery resources are still common property. Whereas access to the fisheries commons for professional fisherman during the last thirty years has been narrowed and subjected to all kinds of restrictions, this regulation has not been extended to recreational fishing.

At the outset, this situation may be thought of as an asset for the tourist industry, since it allows open access to the fishing grounds and the fish stocks. From the individual tourist's perspective, the promise of rich and open fishing grounds is a major attraction, especially if this is seen against a background of scarce and heavily restricted fishing at home. The idea of open access to abundant resources is like a return to paradise, that dreamlike state which has now – in general – been lost. For the tourist operator, open access is also a great attraction, and for many of the same reasons, since it can easily become the main selling point of their product and sets them apart from competitors in other countries. Above all, it is given to the industry free of charge. All that is required is to bring the tourist into the country and provide them with a rod.

The blessing of open access easily turns into a curse, however. There are at least three different but interconnected reasons for this. The first is simply that the fishery resources are vulnerable and that unrestricted access to harvest them is unsustainable. The argument that the tourist catch is insignificant when compared to the commercial catch, and therefore can be ignored, is weak, since it is the combined pressure of commercial and non-commercial catches that is important. In some areas and for some stocks, tourist catches are, or may easily become, significant. It would be contrary to any principle of precaution to pretend otherwise. Unless the tourist industry commits itself to insignificance or illegitimacy, which in light of its great potential would be a pity, the fish tourist industry must take responsibility for the sustainable use of fishery resources.

The second reason open access easily becomes a curse has to do with the legitimacy of tourism, and is closely connected to, but not identical with, the sustainability issue. The basic problem is that open access neither grants the fish tourists, nor the industry catering to them, a status of legitimate stakeholders. Whereas the Norwegian (coastal) population has a reasonably strong claim to these resources, foreign fish tourists do not. They are not legitimate 'owners', but guests. As such,



they are expected to be modest, well-behaved and respectful. When their numbers grow, the notion of the tourist as a guest can no longer license their presence. Instead of the candour expected from guests, the sheer volume and visibility of tourist activity suggest that they are more accurately regarded as intruders. The (informal) licence to fish for free in the commons, in the name of recreational fishing, turns into a cover-up for semi-professional activity – at least in the eyes of the coastal population.

If this might be a slight problem for the individual tourist, for whom a less than friendly welcome easily fades away when the fish are biting, it is different when we shift the attention from the clients to the tourist operators that cater to them. Here lies the third reason why open access turns into a curse. As an industry, a commercial activity based on fishing, fish tourism cannot develop its full potential on an open access basis. As an organized activity for commercial exploitation of fishery resources, there is little in principle to set a professional fish tourist operation apart from a commercial fishing operation. While the form of fishing may be different, both types of activities rely on systematic utilization of fishery resources and must be included as legitimate stakeholders and responsible partners in the management of those resources. Whereas the activities of individual tourists may be plausibly considered recreational, it does not provide a *de facto* commercial licence. On the contrary, open access for fish tourism actively prevents the tourist industry taking on responsibility with regard to the sustainable utilization of fisheries resources. Under these conditions it becomes extremely difficult for the tourist fishing industry to secure its presence as a legitimate and valued actor within the coastal seascape. If perceived as legalized poaching, open-access fish tourism will remain trapped in an underdeveloped state and find it difficult to turn itself into a professional and mature industry. The general proposition of this paper is therefore that open access for the fish tourist industry is a major obstacle for the economic development of the sector. The combined effect of the sustainability and legitimacy problems, which increase drastically as the size of the tourist activity grows, is to produce an underdeveloped industry with a bias towards harvesting as much fish as possible.

Armed with such a diagnosis, the solution is relatively simple, at least in principle. If a major problem is open access for tourist fishing operations, such access must be closed down and regulated. In practice, this can be done with a general licence requirement for tourist operations combined with the allocation of fish quotas to professional tourist operators. This will help make the tourist industry into a fully recognized and legitimate participant in the Norwegian fisheries and provide a sound basis for developing a sound and professional fish tourism industry.

It should be noted here that there is an important distinction between recreational fishing, seen as an unorganized or individual activity, and fish tourism, an organized, commercial activity. While a strong case can be made that all recreational fishing should remain accessible and open, no such case can be made with respect to the fish tourist industry. A major problem, however, is that that this distinction has not been made explicit. To have individual visitors try their luck with a hook and hand line is one thing. To have professional operators organ-

izing tourist activity based on freezer fishing is an entirely different thing. It is the tourist industry's access to the fishery resources that needs to be managed, not so much that of the individual tourist or recreational fisher.

There are a number of challenging questions associated with establishing a management regime for the tourist fishing industry. How much quota should be allocated for tourist purposes? Should the tourist quota be specified by stocks? What kind of actors should get to use such quotas? How can the distinction between casual recreational fishing and organized tourist fishing be drawn and upheld? Answers to these questions will require considerable work and are beyond the scope of this paper. What we are interested in exploring is if the establishment of a management regime for tourist fishing would provide a sound basis for developing a professional and profitable tourist industry.

In general, it is assumed that the Norwegian fish tourist industry is hampered by a free rider problem. Since there is open access to the fishery, it is difficult to develop the industry. To establish profitable, legitimate and sustainable fish tourism will require a concerted effort and considerable investment. Because bookings, transportation, accommodation, local support and expertise, appropriate licensing and quota systems need to be coordinated a framework of cooperation between different private and public partners needs to be developed. Such a complicated task cannot be undertaken if anyone, under the open commons regime, can simply access the resource for free. As long as such is the case, the industry will leak tourists and those who invest in developing professional tourist projects will systematically lose out to free riders.

Sport fisherman can be seen as an example of a highly refined product that can only be realized by heavy and long-term investment. The freezer fisherman, in contrast, is the natural outcome under open-access conditions. Closing the commons for the tourist industry is a logical extension of the general enclosure process. The substitution of a tourist quota for open access will make it much easier to develop the industry. Within such a framework it will be possible to have customers pay directly for the key product they seek, the fishing experience itself. As an added bonus, the vendor companies that want to manage tourist quotas can be made responsible participants in the management process. Indeed, a part of the product they can sell is a credible promise that the tourist operation is sustainable and that the tourists can go back home with a conviction that they did not take part in the systematic destruction of the place they visited.

### **Who Owns the Fish?**

Set against the promise of fish tourism the realities in Norway are quite disappointing. Where the industry could have been wealthy, legitimate and sustainable with the sports fishing tourist, it has turned out to be poor, illegitimate and unsustainable with the freezer fisherman. The diagnosis offered here for this sad state of affairs is open access, and the solution and way forward is enclosure.

While in principle enclosure is rational and simple, it is easy to see that in practice it will be highly controversial and perhaps even appear unrealistic. It is, of

course, accepted that this issue involves basic questions of identity and valuation, and as such must find its solution in the political arena. Whereas it is not suggested that these issues can be turned into and resolved as a research question, there remain important things to say – from an academic viewpoint – about the way the question of tourist fishing is framed in Norwegian political discourse.

As a starting point, it can be noted that a proposal to restrict access for and allocate quotas to fish tourism is likely to be resisted by commercial fishermen as well as the tourist industry. From the tourist industry's point of view, this will remove that which until now has been regarded as a major asset, open access to the resource. The establishment of the industry has been built on this premise, and hence has developed into a form that caters to a specific type of tourist, that is, the freezer tourist. This is easy to understand and is tied to the structural problems as diagnosed above. Up to now, the dominant stakeholder interests in the industry are tied to the open access condition of the fishery resources. While the industry will surely embrace the possibility of quota allocations dedicated to fish tourism, it is not likely to be willing to pay the cost of such a privilege – restricted access.

What, then, about the position of commercial fishermen? While they are likely to welcome any proposal to restrict access to fishing outside their own ranks, they will not happily accept the suggestion of a tourist quota. This would basically represent the authorization of yet another contender in an already highly politicized and difficult struggle for a share of fishing quotas. While different groups of fishermen will be at odds with each other along several dimensions in this struggle, they will at least agree on the issue of tourist fishing. A quota allocation for fish tourism will subtract from what is available for conventional fishers and will not be perceived as in their interest. That the fishermen will see the issue in this way is hardly surprising. What is more interesting, however, is the way the existing management and allocation system grants priority to the fishermen's viewpoint. In brief, one can say the management system represents an institutionalization of the commercial fisherman as the (only) legitimate interest group with regard to fishery resources (Jentoft and Mikalsen 2004). The notion that commercial fishermen are the rightful 'owners' of the quota, and that fish tourism hence represents 'poaching' is built into the allocation system and thus indirectly sanctioned by the authorities. Instead of the solution proposed here, that tourism is accepted as a legitimate stakeholder and granted a formal position as quota holder, fish tourism is defined as a problem to be policed rather than a possibility to be developed. From this perspective, it makes perfect sense that the major regulatory initiative with regard to fish tourism so far is the fifteen kilograms export ban, branding the fish tourist as a potential poacher and someone that must be monitored and controlled.

In this way, dominant stakeholder groups within tourism as well as in commercial fisheries conspire to reproduce an underdeveloped fish tourism industry that is illegitimate and unsustainable. Despite these conditions, however, the politics of the coast is rapidly changing, and the hopes for the development of more legitimate, sustainable and profitable fish tourism should not be abandoned.

## Refurbishing the Coast

Traditionally, there has been open access to fishery resources in Norway. Since everyone could become a fisherman, there was an overlap between the interest of the fishermen and the interests of the coastal society (Holm, 1996). This was also connected to the small scale nature of coastal fishing. In the open commons, through the dominance of small scale coastal fisheries, the fish belonged to the coastal communities.

With UNCLoS and the closure of the fisheries commons, the situation has changed. With the state as owner and sustainable resource management as the primary focus of fisheries policy, the status of the fisherman in society has been transformed. Fish have gradually been turned into de facto state and private property. In the coastal fleet, this process accelerated from 1990, when a system of individual quotas was introduced. While these quotas were not formally tradable, they quickly took the form of quasi property rights, which were bought and sold among the fishermen. From 2001, this system was formalized and made part of an effort to control the structural development and overcapacity of the fleet (Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs 2006; Holm and Nielsen 2007).

The closing of the commons and the move towards privatization of fish quotas have been a highly controversial topic in Norway. Who owns, and who should own, the fish? In particular, there is the tricky question of the relationship between the fishermen, who increasingly are seen as quota owners, and the coastal people, who traditionally have been the users and owners-in-common of the resources. Within the commons, as institutionalized within Norwegian fisheries until the new oceans regime, there was a shared identity between these two. Since anyone could become a fisherman, they could represent coastal interests. With the closing of the fisheries commons, and the development of the fisherman into a quota and fish owner, this is no longer the case. Instead of overlaps of interest and common identity between professional fishermen and the coastal population in general, there is increasing tension. While there have certainly been compelling reasons behind the closing of the commons, there have also been unexpected consequences with regard to the legitimacy of commercial fisheries. Under an open commons it could be assumed that 'what is good for the fisherman is good for the coast'. When the commons is closed, this is no longer the case and the legitimacy of commercial fishing is an open question. While the traditional status and imagery of coastal fishing will still be available as social and cultural capital to build on, the legitimacy of fishing has become fragile. What is good for the fisherman might still be good for the coast. However, that cannot be assumed up front because what is 'good' depends on the form of fishing in question.

The fragile legitimacy of commercial fishing under the new management regime is of course a great challenge for the sector as such. It falls outside the scope of this essay to go into detail here. The point we want to make concerns the potential represented by tourist fishing in this respect. Organized under open access, tourist fishing will tend to increase the tension between commercial fishing and the coastal population. By the same token, however, the tourist industry under a different institutional setting turns into a possibility for restoring the

relationship between the fisheries and the coastal population. Developed with an explicit quota allocation, the tourist industry will no longer be seen as an illicit commercialization of recreational fishing. At the same time, since tourist fishing, at its best, brings so much back to the local community, it is an ideal way to restore the relationship between the coastal population and the commercial utilization of fishery resources.

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