The Main Tools of Fisheries Management in Russia

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: Russia
The main tools of fisheries management in Russia

1. Fishery regulation: determination of fishing grounds, types of the caught spices and TAC volume (including fishing seasons scheduling, fishing gear regulation and other rules).

2. Marine ecosystem biodiversity support: establishing the list of the protected species and marine protected areas.

3. Social support via exclusive fishery access rights.

4. Technology support via limited fisheries subsidies.

Support marine ecosystem biodiversity

Russia pays a lot of attention to support of marine ecosystem biodiversity. Russia has one marine reserve - The Far East Marine Reserve in the Pacific Ocean, and 20 land reserves, which have marine protected areas. The total amount of marine protected area is about 9100 square km, or about 1.8% of the area of the Russian continental shelf has protection status.

There is another form of marine ecosystem protection - establishing the areas for marine mammals protection. These areas also have a protection status.
Social support via exclusive fishery access

There is special social support of the small groups of people, special rights of which vested by Russian Constitution. The main Russian law notes that marine resources are used and protected as the source of the main living activity of the people, who lives in these territories.

These small groups of people, including minority people and ethnic communities of the Russian North and the Russian Far East have a preferential right to catch these aquatic resources, because their lifestyle, employment and activity depend on traditional fishing.

Technology support via limited fisheries subsidies

Additional support and positive influence provide subsidies, which allow fisherman compensate the bank interest of the borrowed funds, loaned for technology upgrade. Subsidy programs support by both the federal budget and budgets of regional administrations.

Besides technology upgrade subsidies, there is another subsidy programs, aimed to aquaculture development. This program also have support the federal budget and the budgets of regional administrations.

Russia refused to subsidies fuel fishermen’s costs, there for subsidies program have a beneficial effect, both on the industry and on the resources sustainability.
Fishing quota distribution system

In the year 2000, Russian government has expanded the power of the regional administrations in field of local fishing quota distribution among those users, which are supplying seafood products to the local markets for domestic consumption.

There for, there are two systems of fishing quota distribution rights: centralized and decentralized, depending on fishing ground and type of consumption.

System of total allowable catches

Russia is using all possibilities of exploration and preservation of aquatic resources, based on the continuous monitoring of the fish stocks, ensures development and sustainable fishing which are allowing us to get a sustainable annual volumes of total allowable catches (TACs) and convey them to a fishing companies for long term conditions.
System of total allowable catches

The current system of fishing regulation has main management tool - TAC. This is an efficient tool, which allows to determine the optimal level of commercial fishing in each fishing ground.

Understated reserve estimates may also give lower values of the TACs, therefore, a real knowledge of stocks is an essential element of fisheries management.

Thus, the main method of fishing regulating in the Russian Federation is a limitation of the volume of catches for the purposes of preservation and reproduction of marine resources, which can be schematically represented in this draft.

System of total allowable catches

Here is the main method of fishing regulating in the Russian Federation.
The existing system of TAC is improving. It should be noted that the model of the TAC based on a supposition about a close relationship between the abundance of spawners and progeny which is often lacked. Because of differences in biology among the different fish species, for some species, firstly for fish with long life cycle, the TAC development process should been correlated with such natural factors as climate changes, solar cycles and anthropogenic factors such as air and water pollution, ocean acidification and IUU. There for the TAC model becomes more complicated each year.

As the important trend in the diversification of approaches in upgrading of TAC model should be considered usage of the precautionary approach to the assessment of the total allowable catch (TAC), which offers methods to find a balanced between the current tasks of the commercial fishing and its sustainable interest in the long term.

Here is the example of the precautionary presuppositions, which are using as rules during TAC calculations:
Precautionary presuppositions

1. incompleteness of knowledge of the status and/or incompleteness of knowledge about dynamic of the commercial fishing stock cannot be considered as reasons to allow the intensive exploitation of this stock, but it requires the greater caution in fishing activities, the higher the level of uncertainty the lower level of fishing;
2. fishing should not be violated the stability of the ecosystem, or it cannot be a cause of irreversible changes in the ecosystem, especially in the case of natural anomalies;

Precautionary presuppositions

3. commercial fishing allowed when values of biosafety (border management, biomass parameters, spawning biomass, natural fishing mortality and etc.) have been achieved or recommended level of commercial usage of stock was determined by science-based methods;
4. in the case of a real threat to the reduction of the stock volume, which can effect to serious and irreversible consequences associated with the stock elimination, promptly accepts arrangements to restore the natural stock up or implement of fishing moratorium.
System of total allowable catches

The most important in this methodology is not only correct use of mathematical models, but the right usage of the procedure of decision-making at all stages of the TAC volume development.

The main features of the system analysis in decision management during fisheries management are as follows:

System analysis principals

1. for analysis of available information it needs to be used all available methods and models, which are allowing to implement to the current stock measurement;

2. basic methodology is adapted to each specific stock with taking into account all biology specifics;

3. during the choosing optimal solutions among the possible options, it needs to be focused on risks and uncertainties;

4. evaluation of the effectiveness of different management strategies should be implemented by the probabilistic analysis of long-term consequences implementation.
IUU combating

IUU fishing is the main threat for the resources sustainability. Under the current system of fishing quotas distribution, including assignment of fixed percentage of TAC on each user in the ten-year period, all kinds of IUU threats reduce the TAC in the next fishing season, and as a result, reduce the user’s raw material base and their income.

IUU fishing violates the interests of law-abiding fishing quota users. Therefore the law-abiding users are also interested in maximizing its long-term profit via IUU combating.

 IUU combating

There are three main forms of IUU fishing:

1. IUU fishing without the necessary permits, (actual IUU);

2. IUU fishing in excess of the fishing quota (hidden IUU);

3. IUU fishing within the established limits of fishing quota, but in violation of fishing rules (also hidden IUU).
FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

Russia suppose, that 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (here and after FAO Port Agreement) is the real instrument which will be able to eliminates IUU fishing.

But if we take a look at mechanism of FAO Port Agreement, we may see that the main tool of the FAO Port Agreement contains in confirmation from each economy of the legal origin of the catches, when its vessel comes to any port.

FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

It means that sooner or later all countries should start the dialog about universal document, which confirms the origin of the product.

There for Russia would like to suggest to open discussion about the global traceability system, which will eliminate IUU fishing in the future.

Russia supposes that in terms of fishery, after implementation of FAO Port Agreement, all flags of convenience will become the flags of inconvenience.
System of traceability of catches

In 2013 Russian Government was approved National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, which provides to set measures to combat IUU fishing, as well as:

Paragraph 3.1. arrangement of the monitoring of the quality and safety of catches and the establishment of the rules of its implementation;

Paragraph 3.2. developing of the system of tracking of product origin during all movement operations.

To provide a comprehensive system of traceability of catches as well as to combat IUU fishing, Russia pays a great importance to international cooperation in the field of fisheries and combating IUU fishing.

System of traceability of catches

Russia has made intergovernmental agreements on cooperation in the field of fisheries and IUU combating. Especially we should note IUUF agreements with APEC economies: China, Republic of Korea, Japan and new IUUF agreement with United States, which was signed this year.

It should be particularly noted, that each bilateral IUU Combating Agreement with APEC countries, has each its own catch traceability program with confirmation of document origin via Internet.

However, the ability for smuggling still remains, thus IUU products still come to the consumer markets of APEC economies. One of the main reasons why these IUU product channels supply is still exist, is the lack of uniform of global standards of the catch certificates.
For example, if it needs to export seafood product from Russia, it requires at least 5 certificates:

1. The quality and safety certificate (confirming the safety of the product, issued by Quarantine Authority);
2. The custom export permission certificate (confirming the safety and legal origin of the product, issued by Quarantine Authority for Russian Custom Authority);
3. The health certificate (document accompanying the products, if there is transit through a thirds countries, issued by Chamber of Commerce);

4. The catch certificate (or anti-IUU certificate, which is confirming the legal origin of the product issued by Federal Agency for Fisheries in accordance with the bilateral agreement on combating IUU fishing);

5. The confirmation legality of the catch certificate (IUUF certificate issued by Federal Agency for Fisheries in accordance with EU regulation).
Concept of the new system of APEC certification and electronic documents exchange

So how poachers manage to go throw all four certification systems? The answer is very simple: with help of transit their products through a third countries, with counterfeiting of certificates, using office equipment on board and bribing port authorities, engaged in document checking.

Concept of the new system of APEC certification and electronic documents exchange

Elimination of this IUU channel supply is a big challenge for Russia, and we suppose that this problem can be solved only in multilateral format as well as APEC fora format.
Concept of the new system of APEC certification and electronic documents exchange

In this connection, Russia approaches APEC economies to start discussion of the concept of the new system of APEC catch confirmation and electronic documents exchange to coordinate APEC work of IUUF certificate, verified throw the Internet.

We also recognize that only with collective efforts of all APEC economies it is possible to develop a new universal standard of document (certificate), which in the future will eventually be involved into all fishing quota regulation of all regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in the Pacific Ocean and will be able to introduce a common form of free-of-charge certification catches of APEC economies, based on the new standard certificate’s electronic confirmation.
It should be noted that there are few versions of international system of fishing certification, one of them is created by Marine Steward Council.

However, instead of proving free of charged and unified catch traceability system, MSC is just using popular keyword “sustainability”, offers its customers paid eco-labeling, without on-line confirmation or checking, because the consumers must trust MSC without possibility to trace product themselves.

If we take into the consideration as an example of MSC certification of Alaska Pollock in Russia, we can find that MSC receives funds, firstly, from Russian fishing companies (for fishery certification), secondly from European segment of HORECA (for brand usage), and finally consumers pay more, because the prices of MSC-certified products are bigger than the same but non-certified.
And finally, why only one half of the Russian Pollock is certified? Russia has the same regulation and the same companies are fishing both in the Sea of Okhotsk and in the Bering Sea, but only Sea of Okhotsk Pollock is certified. This selectivity is inexplicably.

Thus, the desire to create a system of common confirmation of the fisheries sustainability turns into a profitable business, and in some cases, despite WTO rules, the certification process itself is using as a method of non-tariff regulation and restriction of competition.
Concept of the new system of APEC certification and electronic documents exchange

Russia believes that the sustainability of fisheries cannot be achieved by the implementation of a paid eco-labeling. Instead of this, it is necessary to develop new APEC standard of the catch certificate verification with using of a unique electronic code (e.g. QR-code) as quick and efficient tool for document’s checking procedure, together with innovative verification procedure.

At the same time the main know-how of this procedure contains in simple step-by-step procedure of uploading of the scanned image of the certificate to the website for automatic verification. Then this image will be automatically recognized by the web site. The idea of this procedure is to make impossible verification without preliminary uploading. Thus, we completely exclude the human factor in the decision-making process during import procedure and we will be able to identify the IUU and other non-certified products.
Concept of the new system of APEC certification and electronic documents exchange

And when this simple procedure will be discussed and improved, APEC can find solution to develop a common form of catch certificate and perhaps it will be called: “Blue Economy Certificate”. This will probably be a first free trade and free of charged certification system to provide safe trading procedure and achieve sustainable development among APEC economies.

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