

FISHERIES POLICY OF ICELAND

T. Treer, O. Skarphedinsson²

Summary

Fisheries has recently been very exploited area in the Croatian media, either regarding the EU accession negotiations or regarding the interrelationships of the involved parties within Croatia. Iceland is one of the strongest fishery nations in the world that passed through some heavy struggles to protect its fishery grounds (so called “fishery or cod wars”). Therefore its experience in fisheries can be useful when creating Croatian fishery policy. So, the aim of this article is to present the Statement on Responsible Fisheries in Iceland signed by all the parties involved in the Icelandic fishery industry.

Key words: Iceland, Croatia, responsible fisheries, fisheries policy

INTRODUCTION

As an ascendant country to European Union, Croatia faces many issues that need to be dealt with. One of the priorities is the implementation of Croatian Protected Ecological and Fisheries Zone. As Croatian neighbouring EU countries Italy and Slovenia are firm opponents to this action, the problem will, of course, be solved at the political level. Hence, the aim of this article is only to give the information on the fishery policy of Iceland as one of the strongest fishery nations in the world (Fig. 1). Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, under whose presidency Iceland became the first country to recognize Croatia’s independence, recommended in his recent interview for the Croatian media (Orešić, 2007) that Croatia should not disclaim its program for protection of its marine zone. Moreover, Mr. Hannibalsson accentuated that before entering EU, Croatia should make a precise contract with Italy and Slovenia on fishery quotas, bordering lines and other details concerning management in the Adriatic.

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*Fig. 1. Reykjavík harbor is full of fishing boats of all sizes.
Slika 1. Luka u Reykjavíku puna je ribarskih brodova svih veličina.*

THE STATEMENT ON RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES IN ICELAND

Although Iceland is situated at the other side of the continent and has different geopolitical position, its experience in fisheries can be useful when creating Croatian fisheries policy (Fig. 2). Iceland being a small country far in the north Atlantic ocean, although neighbourless passed through some heavy struggles to protect its fishery grounds (so called “fishery or cod wars”). Fishery in Iceland is one of the most important sources of income. With the related industries it contributes significantly to GDP and to 70% of the export. It also employs 4% of human resources. These facts also place Iceland among the countries with the highest rate of yearly fish consumption per capita (91.5 kg). Therefore, the fishery policy belongs to the main political, economical and preservation issues of Iceland, aiming to secure both, good life and sufficient resources for future generations. Consequently, in August 7th 2007 all the parties involved in the Icelandic fishery industry signed The Statement on Responsible Fisheries in Iceland. It was signed by the Minister of Fische-



Fig 2. The fish biologist Össur Skarphéðinsson (on the photo with the president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of The Philippines), promotes the use of geothermal energy as the Icelandic Minister responsible for energy.
Slika 2. Ribarski biolog Össur Skarphéðinsson (na slici s filipinskom predsjednicom Glorijom Macapagal-Arroyo), kao islandski ministar za energiju promovira uporabu geotermalne energije

ries, Einar K. Guðfinnsson (Fig. 3) and representatives of the Marine Research Institute, Jóhann Sigurjónsson, Directorate of Fisheries, Þórður Ásgeirsson and Fisheries Association of Iceland, Pétur Bjarnason. The entire text of the statement can be reached on the Internet (Anonymous, 2007). Here, we will only present the Abstract of it:



Fig. 3. Icelandic Minister of Fisheries Einar Kristinn Guðfinnsson was the first reviewer of this paper.
Slika 3. Islandski ministar ribarstva Einar Kristinn Guðfinnsson bio je prvi recenzent ovoga članka.

1. Sustainable and responsible fisheries are fundamental to the Icelandic fishing industry as one of the principal pillars in Iceland's economy. Fisheries management is based on extensive scientific research, responsible allocation of fishing rights and effective monitoring and enforcement of management decisions.
2. Stock assessment and scientific advice by the Marine Research Institute are the basis for the total allowable catch (TAC) allocation from each stock. Icelandic fisheries scientists are members of international scientific organizations and their work and methods are constantly evaluated to ensure conformity with demands that meet international scientific criteria.
3. Iceland operates a system of individual transferable quotas (ITQs). All commercially important stocks are subject to catch limitations by a TAC issued every year and quotas for individual vessels are allocated on that basis. The quotas represent shares in the TAC for each stock. The shares are permanent, and freely transferable.
4. Effective control of landings is fundamental in responsible fisheries management. Landings are weighed by certified harbour officials and regularly monitored by inspectors from the Directorate of Fisheries. Landings are reported on a daily basis. Inspectors also check fishing gear, catch composition and handling on-board. Conformity between reported landings, reported sales of fish for processing and reported export of products is checked on a regular basis. Violation of fisheries management legislation is punishable, whether it is caused by intent or negligence. Discards are prohibited and punishable by law.
5. Research on fishing gear and its impact on the marine habitat further underpins knowledge of the ecosystem of the ocean around Iceland.
6. Complete area closures or limitations on fishing gear are in force for protection of juveniles, spawning areas and vulnerable habitats.
7. Systematic research in the Icelandic fisheries goes back 70 years but their management continues to be a process of improvements and learning. In recent years, the ecosystem approach to the fisheries management has become a field of concerted research.

This statement is a part of information on the Icelandic fishing industry and the measures taken to ensure responsible fisheries and the proper treatment of the marine ecosystem around Iceland. The statement is intended for everyone concerned about the status of the fish stocks and responsible fisheries, particularly the numerous parties that purchase and consume Icelandic fish products.

CONCLUSIONS

Croatia created its fisheries strategy several years ago (Žimbrek, 2001) and has a competent team of negotiators with EU. Nevertheless, these important, yet simple and easily understood statements from the potent fishery country as Iceland, may assist Croatia in the conviction that it is possible to orchestrate quite opposite interests to the advantage of common welfare.

Sažetak

ISLANDSKA RIBARSKA POLITIKA

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Ribarstvo je u posljednje vrijeme medijski vrlo eksploatirano područje, kako u pregovorima oko ulaska Hrvatske u EU, tako i u odnosima među različitim zainteresiranim stranama unutar Hrvatske. Island je, kao jedna od najjačih ribarskih nacija u svijetu, svojedobno prošao kroz velike borbe u nastojanju da zaštiti svoja ribarska područja (tzv. ribarski ili bakalarski ratovi), pa njegovo ribarsko iskustvo može biti korisno u kreiranju hrvatske ribarske politike. Stoga je cilj ovoga članka prikazati Dogovor o odgovornom ribarstvu na Islandu, koji su potpisale sve strane uključene u islandsku ribarsku industriju.

Ključne riječi: Island, Hrvatska, odgovorno ribarstvo, ribarska politika

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