

A matter of scales. The management of marine recreational fisheries in the EU

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There is growing recognition of the importance of inclusion human dimension in models for the assessment of stocks and the development of fisheries management measures. The sustainable management of these complex socio-ecological systems involves integrating different administrative levels or incorporating bottom-up management approaches. The objective of this paper is to present a critical review of the current management of Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) in Europe, in the context of increasing demand for marine ecosystem services that is leading to conflicts between groups of stakeholders. In particular, we analyzed how the European regulations on MRF support the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) in different geographic areas. The European Union (EU), national, and regional legislation were analyzed for four countries (Germany, Portugal, Spain and the UK) chosen to represent the full range of conditions across Europe. An Integrated Policy Legal Index (IPLI) for each of the countries was calculated from 57 criteria including biophysical attributes (geographical, ecological and biological aspects), social drivers across a range of stakeholders, and attributes of the governance systems. The IPLI was used to assess if the different legal frameworks follow the principles considered prerequisites for long-term, sustainable management of community-based common pool resources. Scale and institutional issues impacting on the management of MRF in Europe will be discussed including impacts on targets for ecological and socio-economic sustainability.

Oral presentation at theme session 5: MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE