

Pirate fleet shrinking

After several years of battling with these pirates of the seas, it would appear illegal trawler activity has diminished considerably in the North East Atlantic.

Norway blacklisted "Mumrinskiy" after the incident in June 2007 and the vessel is not permitted to enter Norwegian waters or Norwegian ports. The North East Atlantic Fisheries Committee, (NEAFC), is now waiting to see what action, if any, is taken by the Russian authorities regarding this. Regardless the incident will be on the agenda for discussion when the NEAFC countries meet this autumn. In April "Mumrinskiy" was anchored nice and quiet just off Tórshavn.

When the journalist for the news programme "Dagur og vika" on Faroese television, presented documentation to the Faroese Minister of Fisheries, Tórbjørn Jacobsen, the minister made his intentions quite clear in his address. Everything connected to pirate activities in the Atlantic are unwelcome on the Faroe Islands.

It took a long time before Norway chose to blacklist the "Mumrinskiy" – they had been served documentation several times, but it was not before they caught the cargo boat red-handed together with an illegal trawler that they were sufficiently sure of their case, and subsequently expelled the vessel from Norwegian ports and Norwegian waters.

The fisheries commission for the North East Atlantic (NEAFC), has worked for many years to try and stop the illegal fishing. The major problem has long been that the trawlers were able to sell their fish to buyers in Europe. It was first after the NEAFC countries agreed to implement a stricter port control

that life became so difficult for most of the pirates that they gave up.

Leader of the NEAFC secretariat in London, Kjartan Hoydal, said that after the member countries tightened up their port control they have seen a distinct decline in the number of illegal trawlers in the NEAFC area – no activities have been registered from flagless vessels for many months now. The NEAFC is working together with the other fisheries committees such as NAFO in the fight against pirate fishing. The aim is to close off all the world's seas to flagless pirates. In the NEAFC area it would appear as if the authority has put paid to the worst offenders.

The Job is going on

In May the North Atlantic fisheries ministers met for its 13th annual conference – this time on Malta. There was agreement that the battle against pirate fishing had come a long way. But at the same time there was broad agreement that the fight has still not ►



12 June 2007:
The Norwegian coastguard vessel "Andenes", while in international waters in the so-called "Smutthavet", engaged the Russian vessel "Mumrinskiy" and Georgian vessel "Sindbad", which at times also operates under the name of "Marlin". The crews on board the two vessels were busy transshipping massive quantities of cod when the Norwegian Coastguard apprehended them.
(Photo: Kystskvadron Nord)

April 2008:
From the governor's office out on the tip of Tinganes, Faroe Islands' Governor can see the Russian trawlers lying at anchor there. For a number of days he has been able to see the "Mumrinskiy." A former trawler, now a cargo vessel, which for several years has been a regular sight in Faroese waters. In April the "Mumrinskiy" lay for more than two weeks at Tórshavn.
(Photo: Jógvan H. Gardar)



National regulations – but cooperation across frontiers

► been won. The ministers concluded this is a global problem. They are counting and focusing on the next step, which is traceability, so that it will be possible to distinguish between fish caught legally, and the illegally caught fish. ■

Facts:

The NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission) has its headquarters in London and regulates among others, fishing of blue whiting and Norway haddock in the eastern stretches of the Atlantic Ocean. Currently, the members are Denmark (on behalf of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the EU, Norway, Russia, Estonia and Iceland.

NAFO (North Atlantic Fisheries Organization) regulates the fishing in the western stretches of Atlantic and is located in Canada. The organisation currently has 13 member countries from Central and North America, Europe and Asia.

(Source: NEAFC OG NATO)

Swedish KRAV sets standard on how fish from smaller fishing catches can be approved.



In recent years, organisations such as Swedish Krav and Norwegian Debio – best known from the agriculture sector – have begun to look more closely at the fish that are sold on the market, and they see a considerable advantage in open systems that are easy to keep a check on – and where it is also possible through dialogue to change the regulations – where this is needed – along the way. Morten Ingvaldsen of Debio, referred to that the fisheries industry, among others, is regulated through quota systems, designed to ensure sustainable fishing.

– Not all consumers are convinced this is sufficient. They are looking for an extra assurance that consideration has been taken towards sustainability and the environment, and that all interested parties can participate in influencing the criteria that shall be applic-

able. That is why supplementary civil law regulations have been prepared that are connected to various label classification. All official criteria must be complied with first. The market for products with these supplementary labels is growing, said Ingvaldsen. – One prerequisite for gaining consumer confidence is that an independent third party has certified the fish according to the regulations governing the label classification. Due the development, management and use of label arrangements is associated with costs, which in the end the consumer has to pay. This can be a drawback for some. Too many labels on the market can also cause confusion, he said.

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Swedish KRAV's regulations and label classification is currently used by the



Norwegian fisheries industry. Norwegian Debio collaborates with KRAV on inspection and certification, and is currently developing a separate Norwegian label that can be used in addition to, or instead of the Krav label. Krav/Debio-labelling builds on regulations concerning sustainability for stocks, fishing equipment and vessels, and on content of environmental toxins. MSC only examines sustainability in relation to the actual fish stock, Ingvaldsen said.

What about national label arrangements in relation to international?

– The arrangement that Krav and Debio work according to entails a cooperation across Northern European frontiers. There are also national arrangements in several European countries. Naturland in Germany has similar terms and conditions to Krav. An arrangement with mutual acceptance of each other's regulations is under development now. When completed it will mean both a national label and a label that belongs to the import product can be used. This will facilitate trading between countries that each has its own label arrangements. It is fully doable to have national labels recognised and accepted in other countries and continents, Ingvaldsen explained.

In terms of international label certification arrangements, the MSC is the best developed now. It is worldwide and recognised in many major regions. Krav's regulations are first and foremost directed at fishing in the North Atlantic. In Krav's regulations, assessments of stock sustainability are based on ICES, which provides recommendations for this area.

Pros and cons of civil law label arrangements?

– Private arrangements are easier to administrate, and easier to influence for various interested parties, herein consumer and environmental interests. Public arrangements are easily steered, all depending on which ever political intention/consideration. A civil law arrangement that covers a considerable geographical area, such as the MSC, is of course also a heavyweight in terms of influence. For Norwegian interests though

the distance to MSC's head office is greater than to Stockholm (Krav) – and perhaps even greater than to the Norwegian authorities, said Ingvaldsen.

Marc Wester said the MSC is not in competition with the arrangements that Krav and Debio are working on.

– The MSC and Krav complement each other. Through several of these arrangements, also the one the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is working with, we achieve a more complete-coverage system that ensures the fish that come on to the market have been fished sustainably, Wester said.

Marc Wester said that Swedish consumers are eager to buy cod.

– The Swedish nation is a cod-eating people. Therefore it's important to find arrangements that ensure the cod that's offered is also fished in a sustainable manner. We are working on this problem, and hope that for instance cod from the Barents Sea can be stamped the KRAV label, Wester said.

He is optimistic on behalf of those wanting to eat fish.

– In Sweden our aim is that by 2010, 25 percent of all food served in our schools shall be ecological food. The fish that gains Krav certification is counted in the 25-percent quota, and thus there is no reason not to buy these species. ■

Explicit criteria needed for labels

Agreement must be reached on what is sustainable, and who can use this, says research director.

Jostein Storøy, head of research at Sintef Fisheries and Aquaculture, said the drawback with several labels – which applies to for example the MSC and the Svane label – is that the label is insufficiently specific. If for instance the MSC are to label sustainable fish, we have to first agree on what is a sustainable fish, Storøy said. – Initially, it's not a problem with many labels, as long as those who administrate the label are explicit about what the label stands for, and that it can be documented, and that those employing the label can document that they comply with the criteria of the label's arrangement. If they can achieve this it would be an advantage for companies to be certified in relation to different labels, Storøy said. ■

Examining which eco-label arrangements suit Northern Europe

Farmed fish have more eco-labelling arrangements than wild catch fish.

Early this spring the Norwegian firm Det Norske Veritas was engaged by the Nordic Council of Ministers to chart and evaluate various eco-labelling arrangements. Det Norske Veritas has considered several factors such as the environment, social issues and illegal fishing.

Hollum Valsvik, Det Norske Veritas' area manager for Food & Beverage said; – We have made a number of searches on eco-label arrangements and ended up with 10-15 different arrangements that we are presenting in the report to the Nordic Council of Ministers. Valsvik said it would appear that farmed fish in particular have more arrangements they can work within, than wild catch fish have. The results from the report will be presented at the Nordic ministerial conference in the Swedish town of Vaxsjo on June 25, and the total report will be available at the end of June. ■



The fish hanging racks are important to local coastal communities. Several eco-labelling arrangements also include the local community in their considerations. Photo: NikolajBock/norden.org

Stop for cod in Swedish municipalities



Cod is loved throughout Northern Europe, but stocks are struggling in various fishing grounds, and that can make things difficult to obtain certain eco-labelling arrangements. Photo: Patrik Edman/norden.org



Fish have to meet ever-increasing requirements before going on sale, with eco-labelling arrangements steadily gaining in importance. Photo: Johannes Janson/norden.org

Swedish municipalities will not buy cod as long as it is impossible to get guarantees for the fish having been fished legally and sustainably.

A number of Swedish municipalities have decided against buying in cod for their institutions. Among these are eight Western Swedish municipalities that have signed a joint agreement on not buying cod from this autumn. The reason is the situation for cod stocks in the Baltic Sea.

Ronny Odervång, purchasing manager for Trollhättan, which is one of the eight municipalities, said when the municipalities were preparing the new purchasing agreement, they sought information on the condition the seas were in. Some of this information was obtained from the Swedish environmental council.

– We also require that you can read on the packing where the fish comes from, Odervång said. The eight municipalities have chosen to follow the advice of the WWF.
– As customers we have the right to know if the fish was caught in a so-called ‘red sea’ or ‘green sea’. We don’t want to contribute to certain fish species being over-fished, Odervång said.

The Baltic cod has been under pressure for many years, while the pressure for cod stocks

in other parts of the world has not been quite so bad. On the question of whether they have taken such consideration, Odervång replied.
– We look at the whole picture, which means the situation as a whole in the world. We buy fish from almost all over the world, Odervång said, adding that they haven’t just followed WWF advice, but have also listened to what other interest organisations have offered of information.

The Western Swedish municipality does not intend to buy cod, even though there are certain cod fisheries that are sustainable.

– Naturally we are interested in buying and serving cod in our institutions. But as long as we can’t get a guarantee for how the fish are caught, then we don’t have any other option than to say no to all buying of cod, he said.

How can the municipalities be sure the so-called “green fish species” that they buy in are better managed than the cod stocks.

– We’re not marine research scientists. We are simply consumers. We have to rely on what scientific knowledge has concluded, and make our decisions on that basis.



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