

An abstract of a proposed presentation:

A Historical Example of Fisheries Mismanagement:

The Case of Atlanto-Scandian Herring

Herring in the ocean between Iceland and Norway was one of the largest fish stocks in the world until the fishery crashed in the late 1960s after relatively regular migration for at least a century. The catch in 1971 was only 20 thousand metric tons in contrast with the record of 2 million tons in 1966 and the spawning stock declined from 10 million tons to 10 thousand tons in 20 years. After 25 years of almost no fishing the stock finally recovered. With hindsight the cause of this dramatic change was a combination of biological, technological and ecological factors and the socioeconomic effect was austere. At that time there was no fisheries management authority to limit either catch or effort and signs of overfishing, poor recruitment, lowering sea temperature and reduced plankton abundance came so late that the collapse surprised fishermen, scientists and managers. After describing this development with statistical data and models several questions arise:

Could it have been prevented?

Are we able to prepare us for another similar ecosystem change?

Is international cooperation in research, surveillance and regulation sufficient?

Can we learn from history or are we doomed to repeat its mistakes?

Thorir Sigurdsson has been a lecturer in the Faculty of Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Akureyri, Iceland, for 25 years. His teaching duties included basic courses in mathematics, physics, econometrics, operational research and fisheries economics. Before joining the university, established in 1987, he was for a number of years a grammar-school teacher in mathematics, physics and astronomy. After studies in Sweden (Stockholm University, Gothenburg University and Chalmers University of Technology), USA (Purdue University) and UK (University of Portsmouth and London School of Economics) his current research interests are bioeconomic models of fisheries. He has participated in several seminars and conferences, for example IIFET 2002 (Wellington, New Zealand), 2006 (Portsmouth, England), 2010 (Montpellier, France) and MARE 2007 and 2009 (Amsterdam, Holland).

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