

Summary of the report "Economic impact of salmon fisheries: professional fishing in the Gulf of Bothnia (+Åland Islands) and recreational fishing in the rivers Tornio and Simo"

The aim of the report was to produce preliminary comparable numbers of the economic effects of professional and recreational salmon fishing in Finland. A study like this has never been carried out in Finland. The study was done using the input-output method.

The production effects of professional salmon fishing (including all species in the fishermen's catch), is 6,5 million Euros annually (average 2003-2007) and the employment impact is 87 person-years. The production effects of recreational salmon fishing is 3,2 million Euros annually and the employment impact 45 person years.

The nature of professional and recreational fisheries is very different, even though the same natural resource is the target. The aim of professional fishing is to produce food, efficiently and profitably. For recreational fisheries the fishing experience is mostly the most important.

Professional salmon fishing

The biggest change in the salmon fisheries recently has been the ban of drift-nets. The drift-net ban will bring more salmon for fishing to the coastal areas as well as to the rivers.

- Even though salmon fishing forms only 5 % of the value of the total sea catch, salmon is for part of the coastal fisheries the most important species. Without salmon it would not be profitable to continue fishing.
- The professional catch of salmon was 339 tons in the year 2007 (54 % of that was taken by coastal fisheries).

Recreational salmon fishing

- The recreational catch of salmon was 107 tons in the year 2006. This is 0,25 % of the total catch by leisure fishing. In northern Finland, the salmon is a very important species though.

Comparing the economic effect of professional and recreational fisheries

- Comparison is difficult because the nature of the two fisheries is so different, as is the background data available. There is a need for this kind of comparison though, because there has for years been a dispute on how and by whom the salmon should be exploited.
- In earlier statements and inquiries, both in Finland and abroad, the general idea has been that the recreational salmon fisheries and fishing tourism generates much more money than professional salmon fisheries as well as gives a higher price per kilo fish. This thesis is discarded in this study, as earlier studies haven't taken into account the economic effects of salmon processing and salmon-trade. Earlier results have therefore not been comparable, as calculating the economic effects of professional fisheries only has taken into account the fishermen's direct profits, while the calculations for recreational fisheries has surveyed the whole chain.

Future scenarios for professional salmon fisheries

- There are three foreseeable scenarios: the level of today (2007) is more or less kept, one third of the fishermen will give up fishing completely or there will be a 50 % growth in the fisheries, due to stronger salmon stocks (as the drift-net ban has reduced fishing at the Baltic proper significantly).

<i>Scenario</i>	<i>Production, mil. €</i>	<i>Prod.effects, mil. €</i>	<i>person-years</i>
1/3 gives up fishing	1,35+1,4	4,2	56
Level of 2007	1,90+2,0	5,7	76
50 % growth	2,85+3,0	9,0	120

Future scenarios for fishing tourism and recreational salmon fisheries

<i>Scenario</i>	<i>Production, mil. €</i>	<i>Prod.effects, mil. €</i>	<i>person-years</i>
<i>river Tornio</i>			
Level of 2008	2,83	4,86	58,8
40 % growth	4,05	6,96	84,2
<i>river Simo</i>			
Level of 2004	0,48	0,84	10,3
30 % growth	0,64	1,12	13,7

Comparing the results

Using the input-output method has given comparable results, even though the starting material has been different. The Game and Fisheries Research Institute's statistics for salmon fisheries has formed the base for calculating the value of the professional fishing. Information about fishing licences as well as a questionnaire about how the recreational fishermen spend their money has formed the base for calculating the value of the recreational fishing.

When including all the catch the fishermen fishing for salmon gets, the professional salmon fisheries generates more effects than the recreational salmon fisheries. If looking strictly at only the salmon in the fishermen's catch, the value of the recreational fisheries is slightly bigger.

From the point of view of sustainable use it is important to keep the salmon stocks productive. If the control of the professional fisheries is too weak, the fisheries can threaten the natural salmon stocks and the prerequisites for the fishing tourism. It is worth noticing though, that the professional salmon fishing to a big part is directed on reared salmon, which has no need for protection. The impacts of recreational fisheries on the salmon stocks are generally smaller (as the catch is lesser) but if the catch grows, it will of course also affect the stocks. The fishing in rivers is also mostly directed at wild salmon.

The full report (in Finnish) can be downloaded from the Game and Fisheries Research Institute's webpage: http://www.rktl.fi/www/uploads/pdf/lohenkalastuksen_taloudelliset_vaikutukset.pdf