

From: postmottak@tromsfylke.no
Sent: 10 December 2014
To: 13:09 NFD Postal Office
Copy: nord@fiskarlaget.no; post@norgeskystfiskarlag.no; firmapost@fhl.no
Subject: CONSULTATION STATEMENT TROMS COUNTY
MUNICIPALITY - MANAGEMENT OF SNOW CRAB
Attachment: TFK HEARING MANAGEMENT OF SNOW CRAB
FYR276.14 SAKSFREMLEGG.PDF; 140000135367.DOC

OUR REFERENCE: Case no: 14/7954-4 Serial no: 45430/14
Case manager: Kjetil Helstad Their ref: 14/7545-1

Transmitting the attached document.

Yours sincerely,
Kjetil Helstad
Nutrition and Regional Development Department

The Royal Ministry of Food and Fisheries P.O. Box
8090 Dep

0032 OSLO

Our ref.: 14/7954-4	Case manager: Kjetil Helstad	Archive: U40&13 CASE	
Serial no: 45430/14	Tel. dir.innvalg: 77 78 81 94	ARCHIVE	Date: 10.12.2014
		Your ref: 14/7545-1	

**CONSULTATION STATEMENT TROMS COUNTY MUNICIPALITY -
MANAGEMENT OF SNOW CRAB WITH CONSULTATION DEADLINE 10
DECEMBER 2014**

At its meeting on 16 December 2014, the County Council will consider the Ministry of Food and Fisheries' proposal for the management of snow crab. The county council for industry, culture and health's proposal for a consultation statement is sent here. The county council's decision will be forwarded if it differs from the proposed decision.

Proposed adoption:

The County Council has considered the Ministry of Food and Fisheries' proposal for the management of snow crab with a consultation deadline of 10 December 2014.

The County Council notes that since snow crab was first observed in the Barents Sea in 1996, the stock has increased considerably and could provide a basis for a fishery in the future. It is therefore positive that work is being initiated on a comprehensive management plan for snow crab.

The County Council supports the proposal that until the management plan for snow crab is adopted, it will not be possible to grant a licence to vessels over 15 m that are to have snow crab as an independent operational species. This will prevent capacity building in the fleet during a period when the management strategy for the stock is unclear. At the same time, all vessels with an ownership permit will be able to obtain a derogation to participate in snow crab fisheries if they meet the reporting requirements etc. It is assumed that the regulation of snow crab fisheries does not now impose constraints on the future management of snow crab.

The County Council expects regulations to be implemented that contribute to the least possible area/gear conflicts between snow crab fishermen and between snow crab fishing and other fisheries in the area.

./.A copy of case 276/14 is attached.



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Yours sincerely

Kjetil Helstad
special advisor

This document is authenticated electronically and does not require a signature.

Copy:

- Fish Team North, nord@fiskarlaget.no,
- Norwegian Coastal Fishermen's Association, post@norgeskystfiskarlag.no,
- Fisheries and Marine Nutrition Association, firmapost@fhl.no,

Attachments:

-Proposal FYR 276/14, Consultation. management of snow crab, consultation
deadline 10 December 2014,



FLEET ADVISORY

Sak 276/14

Order no. : 44960/14
Reference : 14/7954-3
Ark.nr. : U40&13SAKSARKIV
Date: 08.12.2014

To: County Council
From: County Council for Food, Culture
and Health

HEARING. MANAGEMENT OF SNOW CRAB, CONSULTATION DEADLINE 10 DECEMBER 2014

Setting:

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Case investigation:

The Ministry of Food and Fisheries (NFD) has on consultation with deadline 10.12.2014 proposal for regulation of fishing for snow crab in Norwegian jurisdiction.

A general ban on snow crab fishing is proposed for the entire Norwegian area of jurisdiction, including the Svalbard Sound, until a more comprehensive snow crab management plan is established. At the same time, exemptions from the ban may be granted under conditions laid down by the Directorate of Fisheries until such time as a comprehensive management plan is

in place. Until the management plan is adopted, there will be no

granted inheritance permit for new vessels (over 15 m) which are to be snow crab as independent operating base. At the same time, no restrictions are proposed that would prevent vessels with a licence today from obtaining an exemption to participate in snow crab fisheries when they meet the requirements of the Fisheries Directorate.

Fishing for snow crab today - status and current regulations:

Today, Norwegian registered vessels can catch snow crab without quantity limitation in the NØS, the Svalbard Sound and in international waters (Smutthullet). Norwegian vessels are not allowed to catch snow crab in the Russian zone.

NFD has registered an increasing interest from Norwegian and foreign operators to fish for snow crab in the Barents Sea. In 2013, three Norwegian vessels delivered snow crab caught in Smutthullet. In addition, a Spanish vessel with Russian interests delivered a significant quantity of snow crab to Norway (506 tonnes). NFD points to a trend where more vessels are rigged to catch snow crab. Area/gear conflicts between vessels catching snow crab and other fishing activities have also been reported.

Knowledge status - research needs

The snow crab was first observed in the Barents Sea by Russian scientists in 1996, and since then a large population has been established in the Russian Sound. In the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea, the density of snow crab is currently relatively low. The snow crab is adapted to colder waters, and it is therefore expected that the crab will spread north and west in the Svalbard Sea. It is thus expected that the crab will have a significantly more northerly distribution than the king crab.

According to Norwegian and Russian scientists, the snow crab most likely migrated to the Barents Sea on its own, from the Chukchi Sea north of the Bering Strait. However, it will not be possible to determine this with 100% certainty.

NFD points out that it is a reality that the snow crab has established itself in the Barents Sea and that the stock must be managed on the basis of the knowledge available at any given time. The aim is to increase knowledge about the distribution of this species in Norwegian marine areas, and its impact on other species in the ecosystem. In this context, catch reporting from vessels fishing snow crab could contribute to strengthening knowledge on the spread of the species.

The NFD points out that ecosystem effects are to be expected when the snow crab establishes itself in an ecosystem that naturally lacks large crustaceans. The snow crab feeds on bottom-dwelling crustaceans, mussels, snail stars, shrimp and fish, and is likely to be a competitor for bottom-feeding fish. There is a need for a broader knowledge base on the impact of the snow crab on the ecosystem. At the same time, the NFD points out that based on the development, size and range of the stock, it would be unrealistic and thus not very appropriate to have conservation as a management objective. According to the scientists, the population growth has been much faster than what was the case with the king crab stock. The snow crab biomass in the Barents Sea is already estimated to be ten times larger than the king crab biomass. On the research side, there will be close knowledge exchange and dialogue with Russia.

Need for regulation of fisheries

Until a broader knowledge platform is developed, NFD considers it appropriate to manage this stock according to the principle of sustainable harvesting. At the same time, the need for data from the fisheries is great. Unnecessary restrictions should therefore not be placed on the desired activity.

Proposals for regulation

NFD proposes that a general ban on snow crab fishing be established in the entire Norwegian area of jurisdiction, including the Svalbard Sound, until a more comprehensive management plan is available. A time-limited derogation from the ban until

management plan is available on terms set by the Directorate of Fisheries. Conditions that allow for derogation must comply with registration and reporting requirements to give the management a geographical overview of the activity and activity level in the fishery. This will allow vessels established in the snow crab fishery and new entrants with an ownership certificate (vessel is fishing registered) to be allowed to participate in the fishery. From 24.10.2014, it will not be possible for new entrants to obtain an ownership permit for vessels over 15 metres that will have snow crab fishing as their main activity.

Through this fishery, the management obtains the necessary information and data material for further work on the management plan. Exemption conditions shall respect recording and reporting requirements to provide the management with a geographical overview of the activity and the level of activity in the fishery.

A temporary derogation is granted until the work on a management plan is completed, after which a more permanent management regime is established. The derogations will not lay down guidelines for future management. Prohibitions and derogations may also include regulations on areas, periods, gear restrictions, etc.

Assessment

Fishing for snow crab is under development and therefore there is a need for regulations in relation to areas, periods, gear limitations that reduce the level of conflict with other fisheries. The development of a comprehensive management plan for snow crab is therefore important. This is underlined by the fact that there are already conflicts of use today and that these are likely to increase in the future as the fishery increases in size. The snow crab fishery will also provide a basis for significant nutrient activity.

The researchers Hvingel and Sundet at the Swedish Institute of Marine Research show in a chronicle in BarentsObserver from 20.03.2014 that based on model simulations, fishing for snow crab over a 10-year period can give an annual catch in the order of 25 000 to 75 000 tonnes and have a first-hand value similar to the Norwegian cod fishery. The stock is likely to be significantly larger than the king crab stock. The crab may have a significant impact on the benthic fauna, and whether the effect is negative or positive from a human point of view is difficult to predict. The conclusion is "*The Snow crab is here and we need to make the best of it*"

Trawls are the most important fishing gear in the Barents Sea today (cod, hake, shrimp, etc.) and the potential for synergies between active gears such as trawls and dredges is high. In the article "Battle for space in the Smutthull" in FiskeribladetFiskaren 17.11.2014, it is stated that in the fishery that takes place furthest south and east in the Smutthull, there are already conflicts of use between shrimp trawlers and snow crab haulers, and snow crab haulers in between. In the same article it is indicated that vessels from countries other than Norway and Russia are planning to start snow crab fishing in international waters (the Smutthullet).

Several vessels have been rebuilt or are being rebuilt for snow crab fishing in recent years. The catch is now landed live in Finnmark. As the fishery takes place far offshore, some vessels will probably process and freeze the catch on board, which is common in most other fisheries in the Barents Sea. Ports in Troms are central to the landing of catches from these vessels and this will probably also apply to the landing of frozen snow crab. The snow crab fishery may thus provide significant food activity in Troms in the future.

It is positive that until the management plan is ready, NFD will regulate fisheries to a limited extent beyond what is necessary to raise the knowledge base. Vessels that have a licence today can choose to participate in the fishery in the future even if they do not operate such a fishery today. At the same time, capacity increases in the fleet will be avoided by not making it possible to obtain an exploitation permit for new vessels that will have snow crab as an independent activity. In the past, new fisheries have been established where a significant fleet has been built up based on good forecasts and where

the stock and/or the market has collapsed. There was then pressure for these vessels to be given fishing rights in other fisheries when fishing became unprofitable. One such example is the Barents Sea rooster fishery in the 1980s.

At the same time, it is important, as NFD proposes, that the regulations adopted today do not lay down rules for future management, inter alia, in relation to participation in fisheries.

It is recommended that the County Council supports NFD's proposal for the management of snow crab in the Barents Sea.

Financial and administrative impact

The case concerns the regulation of snow crab fishing and has no financial or administrative consequences for Troms County.

Tromsø, 08.12.2014

Line Miriam Sandberg
County Council for Food, Culture and Health

Attachments:

-NFD, Consultation letter - management of snow crab, 24.10.2014

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