

# Traditional Marine Salmon Fisheries Sustaining Cultural Heritage and Coastal Communities

John Miller\*

Department of Ocean Security, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia

**Corresponding author:** John Miller, Department of Ocean Security, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia, E-mail: johnmiller@gmail.com

**Received date:** May 02, 2023, Manuscript No. IPIAB-23-17310; **Editor assigned date:** May 04, 2023, PreQC No. IPIAB-23-17310 (PQ); **Reviewed date:** May 18, 2023, QC No. IPIAB-23-17310; **Revised date:** May 25, 2023, Manuscript No. IPIAB-23-17310 (R); **Published date:** June 01, 2023, DOI: 10.36648/Ipiab.7.2.50

**Citation:** Miller J (2023) Traditional Marine Salmon Fisheries Sustaining Cultural Heritage and Coastal Communities. Insights Aquac Cult Biotechnol Vol.7 No. 2: 50.

## Introduction

Biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services have been deteriorating worldwide. Along with this, the nexus of natural and cultural diversity is gaining wider global recognition as intrinsically and inextricably linked, together holding the key to sustainable development. As a result, the concept of biocultural diversity has been championed by a series of international declarations. For example, the Florence Declaration on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity emphasises that “rural and urban livelihoods and wellbeing are closely connected to the status and trends in biological and cultural diversity” and that “landscapes rich in biocultural diversity are often those managed by small-scale or peasant farmers, traditional livestock keepers/pastoralists, and small-scale/artisanal fishers”. In practice, however, the holistic approach to biocultural diversity often remains underutilised in management of ecosystems and cultural heritage. Here, the challenges of conserving biocultural diversity of coastal landscapes are explored by investigating a case of small-scale salmon fishers in Norway.

There has been a global decline in the total abundance of wild Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* L. during the last three decades. Along with this, the number of marine salmon fishers in Norway has also been declining, for example from 3,000 in the 1990s to 915 in 2019. The decline in traditional fishing culture is caused by complex socio-economic transformations, including changing lifestyles among coastal communities, decreasing prices for wild salmon and political pressure on marine fisheries. In this context, the paper focuses on a small group of marine fishers in Norway, who still fish using traditional bagnets and are carriers of traditional knowledge and culture around Atlantic salmon.

## Significance of Marine Salmon Fisheries

When looking into the tradition and current status of marine salmon fisheries in Norway, one cannot avoid the ongoing heated debates around the fishing rights. Conflicts over management and distribution of salmon among various stakeholders, including river owners, marine net fishers, governmental and non-governmental organisations, show up regularly in the local media and escalated during spring 2021. In March 2020, the Norwegian Scientific Advisory Committee for

Atlantic salmon issued a report that contained recommendations for the future of marine salmon fisheries. As of March 2021, this means that the salmon fisheries will be further regulated. All marine fisheries are now being prohibited, and the result is that the cultural heritage of marine fishing communities is endangered.

The disappearance of marine fishing heritage is seen as part of a larger trend of biocultural homogenisation, one of the Anthropocene's wicked problems, defined as “interwoven losses of native biological and cultural diversity at the local, regional, and global scales”. As a contributing factor to biocultural homogenisation, there is a tendency to prioritise monetary metrics, simplify complex sociocultural contexts and underestimate traditional knowledge when it comes to natural resource use. Scientific research has focussed extensively on economic value of salmon fishing, while comparatively less research has been undertaken to understand these marine fisheries in terms of their cultural and historical significance for the coastal communities in Norway. Similarly, little has been done to understand motivations, beliefs and values of marine fishers who continue to engage in marine fishing despite the comparatively little income it generates.

Human relationships with nature are complex and multi-faceted, including usage of natural phenomena as confirmation of who we are, and linking our identity to nature through beliefs and practices. Social identity theories explain how we perceive ourselves, based on how we interact with others, our perceptions of group belonging. As stated by Colvin et al., “An individual's social identity is not simply a statement of who they are, but also describes how they perceive their place in social groups and indicates the social norms to which they are likely to adhere.”

## Recreational River Angling

Most of our everyday decisions are made based on intuitive reasoning and previous experiences. However, this can also hinder learning, innovation and problem-solving, as well as create bias. Moreover, we naturally develop ideas and stereotypes that influence how we interact with other people and social groups. A group's social identity leads its members to act in accordance with its goals, values, beliefs and behaviours.

We tend to define ourselves and our peers as members of an in-group, while viewing outsiders as members of out-groups. It is important to emphasise that social identity is linked to local cultures and traditions and spans beyond purely economic status.

Traditional knowledge and practices have always sustained livelihoods, culture, identities and agricultural resources of local and indigenous communities throughout the world. Non-scientific knowledge is increasingly recognised as an important source of information about ecosystem processes and sustainable natural practices. This recognition is, for example, embedded in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and UNESCO's recommendation of closer links between modern science and other forms of knowledge. Many terms exist for non-scientific knowledge, for example traditional knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge and local ecological knowledge (LEK).

Traditional knowledge is often defined as a dynamic form of knowledge that contains practices and beliefs – a way of living. LEK, in turn, can be defined as practical, informal knowledge, obtained through direct interaction with the natural surroundings. Common to these terms is the focus on knowledge as a system and an emphasis that this knowledge is drawn from lived experiences of people throughout their history of interaction with the environment.

In this paper, LEK is used as an umbrella term for place-specific, non-scientific, informal knowledge that is passed down the generations through cultural practices and traditions. Local knowledge, therefore, is different from the scientific one, both in content and expression. In this context, LEK and social identity are assumed to be inextricably linked, since perpetuation of cultural continuity as a transfer of knowledge between generations forms and maintains the feeling of belonging to a certain group, in this case marine fishers.