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Regional governance of the relation between aquaculture and wild salmon in the North Atlantic

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Marine aquaculture is a major element of fisheries production in Northern Atlantic countries; in Norway the realized amount of farmed fish in 2013 had a value of 40 billion NOK. It is an expressed aim that the sector shall increase. The Norwegian Government initiated a consultation procedure in June 2014 with time limit for comments 6 January, 2015. The main content in the legal amendment is permission for established actors to increase maximum allowable biomass within licences for salmon, trout and rainbow trout with 5%. Several of the bodies entitled to comment are not implicit positive to such an increase. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority advises against a permanent increase of the production capacity before the industry has better control with the situation of salmon louse. On the contrary, 15 December, 2015 the authority announces that it withdraws the license for a portion of the production of several facilities, on the reasons of significant amount of louse. The salmon louse is a native parasite on wild salmon, and it falls off after short time in freshwater. However, if the amount of louse on one unit increases, the skin will suffer from sores that may result in other organisms of infection. The problem with escaping salmon from net cages contributes to a further escalating of the distribution of louse. In a recent research report, the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research concludes that the Alta fjord in Finnmark (a national salmon fjord) is under an increasing pressure from salmon louse. The increase was significant in areas with aquaculture. The report contains several similar cases. The paper examines to what extent existing international legal framework, especially within the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), deals with the conflict between the aim of constant more food resources from aquaculture and the aim of conservation of the wild salmon.

Biography

Irene Dahl is an Associate Professor with PhD (2009) from the Faculty of Law, University of Tromsø. She graduated in 1996 and has worked at the Faculty since then, now at the K.G. Jebsen Centre for the Law of the Sea. She has done research on Norwegian fisheries law and international fisheries law. Her PhD thesis was about Norwegian fisheries jurisdiction over foreign fishing vessels. Articles from 2014 that may be mentioned are "Maritime delimitation in the Arctic: Implications on Fisheries Jurisdiction and Cooperation in the Barents Sea", under publication in International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law and "Fisheries Cooperation between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea", under publication in a Marsafnet editorial book project. Together with David Vanderzwaag and Nigel Bankes, she constitutes the organizing committee for the editorial book project "Aquaculture Law and Policy: Global, Regional and National Perspectives", after which agreement with Edward Elgar Publishing Limited will be published in 2015.

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