The Challenge of Managing Artisanal Fisheries Embedded in Protected Areas – Valdes Peninsula (Argentine Patagonia) as a Complex Commons

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• The theory of the commons was initially constructed on the basis of relatively simple cases, with strong emphasis on local dynamics.

• Is it still applicable in more complex situations? What challenges emerge?

Valdes Peninsula: tourism & fisheries

Multiple user groups, CPRs, and legal frameworks
• Small-scale fisheries occurring inside protected areas are typical examples of complex commons
• Frequent in Latin America: differing objectives and design
• Our case study: diving and hand-gathering shellfisheries that operate inside the multiple-use Valdes Peninsula Protected Area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
Protected Area Category VI (IUCN): “with sustainable use of natural resources”

- Maintain ecosystems and natural processes
- Protect the natural, landscape and cultural heritage
- Promote sustainable activities compatible with conservation, like tourism, artisanal fisheries and cattle ranching
These fisheries exhibit many conditions conducive to sustainability, from a simple CPR’s perspective:

[i] clearly bound region: \( \sim 800 \text{ km}^2 \)

[ii] geographical setting that facilitates enforcement: remoteness, few landing spots, only one exit rode
[iii] small number of users (~100 active fishers)

[iv] constructive relationship between technical staff of management agencies, organized fishers and scientists consolidated over the years

[v] collaborative monitoring and design of management regulations, including exclusive access rights
Collaborative resource monitoring & design of management regulations
...including exclusive access rights

TURFs for coastal gathering (historical users)

Limited entry for diving (21 permits)
Yet, achieving biological, economic and institutional sustainability has proved elusive.
1960

Discrete Fauna Reserves

1970

SJG Marine Park

Integral Reserve

Fishers’ Association

1980

Declared World Heritage Site

Reserve re-categorized: VI (IUCN)

Protected Area Agency joins FTC

1990

Participatory MP development

Scallop dredging
Dredge ban & diving trials
Re-opens as diving

2000

CLOSURE

RE-OPENING
Fishers’ proposal for sustainable use (limited entry, participation, MP)
Fisheries Technical Committee
Scallop survey and catch quota

FTC debilitated

FTC interrupted

Participatory development of Fisheries Management Plan and Regulatory Decree

2010

Failed participatory revision of MP

MP process interrupted

Regulatory Decree unimplemented

Collapse and closure of diving fishery

World Heritage Site ratified

Revision of MP through consultants

Open access

Exclusive access rights
Protected Area MP development and revisions

1998-00

Participatory MP development

- N° meetings: 56
- Process duration: 2 years

2012

Failed participatory revision

- N° meetings: 1
- Interrupted by NGO’s and political pressures

2014-2015

“secret” revision through consultants

- N° meetings: 1 four-hour meeting with each sector.
- Process duration: ~1 year

PA GOVERNING BODY COMPOSITION

Decided by consensus during MP dev.

Permanent members:
- PA and Tourism Agency (presiding)
- Municipalities
- Land owners association
- Artisanal fishers association

Elected members (in Assembly):
- Universities, research institutes and NGOs

Change in State Government

Implemented under the new government

Permanent members:
- PA and Tourism Agency
- State (Ministry)
- Municipalities
- Land owners association
- Industry and commerce chambers

Advisory committee:
- Universities, research institutes and NGOs, and tourism operators
Development of Fisheries Management Plan
(developed independently from PA Agency, by initiative of fishing sector)

Change in State Gov.

- 2000 - 2003 (1)
- 2004 - 2011 (3)
- 2012 - 2015 (2)

F 2000
RE-OPENING 2011
FTC created 2012
FTC interrupted 2015

Fishers’ proposal for sustainable use (ask for a MP)
Participatory development of Fisheries MP

Process interrupted (Ministry restructured)

9 meetings, exhaustive document (17 chapters)

Propuesta para el Uso Sustentable de los Recursos Marisqueros del Golfo
San José (Chubut).
Asociación de Pescadores Artesanales

Puerto Madryn – Chubut Á±o 2000
• End result: dilution of responsibility and lack of political will to address the fisheries issues identified, felt mostly in politically costly aspects of implementation, like enforcement

In 2008, the Fishers’ Association filed a complaint to the State Prosecution Service against the Fisheries Agency for “the poor performance of their duties in reference to enforcement in the SJG”.

Artesanales repudian pesca furtiva en el San José

 сайлалардың шархысының нәсиялдөө мүмкүнчүлүгүн камтылуу, менен куңуздук жататын азыркы өзгөрүшүүнү жаттылуу өзгөчөлүктөрү менен жатышкы.
How did the fishers respond?

- Organization emerged spontaneously due to perceived threats to livelihood when the PA was established
- Was once strong and very active (~100 newspaper notes released to claim recognition and State support), but progressively debilitated by the inconstant and failed state calls to participate
- Leaders are frustrated and reluctant to continue participating
Livelihoods and resources seriously compromised

Crisis
- Biological
- Socio-economic
- Environmental
- Sanitary (red tide risks)

Closure

April 2015: Confiscated scallop muscles, processed at the beach
Conclusions

- Conditions potentially enabling sustainability are disabled by the dilution of responsibility on the side of the multiple management agencies, and the erosion of incentives for self-organization of the users, as the government retains authority but is incapable to exercise it.

- Without true commitment of the State, or significant devolution of management authority (unlikely), the future is unpromising.

Thank you!
To the giant Lobo