Arctic Fisheries: between sovereign rights and freedom of fishing

Irene Dahl
Associate Professor
K.G. Jebsen centre for the Law of the Sea
Tromsø

- 350 km north of the Polar Circle
- 74 000 citizens
- Point of departure for hunting- and research expeditions to the Arctic region
- Head office for the Arctic Council
- Several edu and research institutions
- Midnight sun 20 May - 20 July
The Arctic region?

No overall statutory definition

Geographical delimitation

Several functional definitions:

- **climatic, botanical, marine**

- **political** (8 States with territory north of the polar circle: Norway, Sweden, Denmark/Faroe Islands and Greenland, Iceland, Finnland, Russia, USA og Canada)

- **the Arctic 5** (coastal States surrounding the Arctic Ocean: Norway, Denmark/Greenland, Russia, USA and Canada)
Områder under nasjonal jurisdiksjon og internasjonale områder i Polhavet

Grenser for EEZ (200 nm) og delelinjer

Uavklarte delelinjer

Grense for Norges ytre kontinentalsokkel

Områder under nasjonal jurisdiksjon innenfor 200 nm

Åpent hav og Norges ytre kontinentalsokkel

Åpent hav, andre lands ytre kontinentalsokler (ikke avgrenset), og dyphavet
Fisheries

200 miles exclusive economic zone of the Arctic 5.

Fisheries jurisdiction of Canada, USA, Denmark/Greenland, Russia and Norway.

The Arctic 5 have a special interest in management on the high seas.
The story of the Loop hole

Unregulated fishing during the 1990s

Fishing on the joint Norwegian-Russian north-east arctic cod

How to stop this?

- presence of No Ru coast guard
- negotiations with 3 countries on quotas
- commitment to comply
The story of the Barents Sea Treaty
The Delimitation Line
Law of the Seas – highlights (1)

200 miles EEZ:

- Coastal State: sovereign rights of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources

- Shared stocks: duty to cooperate on conservation

- Through appropriate regional organizations
Law of the Seas – highlights (2)

High seas:

- Freedom of fishing, subject to:
- Interests of coastal States
- Duty to cooperate in conservation and management of the living resources
- Within regional fisheries organizations/arrangements
RFMOs/RFMAs

**ICCAT** (the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna)

**NASCO** (the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization)

**NORUFI** (the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission)

**NAFO** (the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization)
NEAFC (North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission)
Potential for commercial fishing?

- Unlikely in the near future

- Rapid changes in the Arctic

- PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH
“Broader Process”

“Broader Process” on international regulation of high seas fishing in the central Arctic Ocean:

- June 2015 (Oslo Declaration – Concerning the Prevention of Unregulated High Seas Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean)

- December 2015 (Washington Meeting on High Seas Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean)

- Purpose: prevent unregulated commercial fishing
Broader Process – work in progress

A very successful start of the Broader Process on international regulation of high seas fishing in the central Arctic Ocean.

Second meeting of the BP: Washington 19-21 April:

• Delegations: Arctic 5 plus China, EU, Iceland, Japan and the Republic of Korea

• Continued discussions concerning the prevention of unregulated commercial fishing in the high seas area of the central Arctic Ocean

• Develop interim measures

• Third meeting: Canada 6-8 July 2016
Thank you!