Managing Marine Fisheries to Maximize Recreational Values

Ray Hilborn
Professor, School of Aquatic and Fishery Science, University of Washington

Commercial fisheries management often involves finding a way to provide long term maximum harvest, or, in some cases, economic value of a fishery. However, a harvest strategy that maximizes commercial benefits may not provide high recreational value. In this talk I describe an effort to identify how to maximize recreational benefits from a marine fishery by developing a utility function for recreational value, and then using a bioeconomic model to evaluate how to maximize recreational utility. We created utility functions via interviews and questionnaires for private boat anglers, charter boat anglers and charter boat operators in two case studies: the recreational halibut fishery in Oregon and a recreational red snapper fishery in the S.E. Atlantic of the U.S. We found that anglers placed high value on fishing opportunity, and harvest strategies that provided reliable fishing seasons typically maximized recreational utility.

About Ray Hilborn

Ray Hilborn is a Professor in the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, University of Washington specializing in natural resource management and conservation. He teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in food sustainability, conservation and quantitative population dynamics. He authored several books including “Overfishing: what everyone needs to know” (with Ulrike Hilborn) in 2012, “Quantitative fisheries stock assessment” with Carl Walters in 1992, and “The Ecological Detective: confronting models with data” with Marc Mangel, in 1997 and has published over 300 peer reviewed articles. He has received the Volvo Environmental Prize, the American Fisheries Societies Award of Excellence, The Ecological Society of America’s Sustainability Science Award, and the International Fisheries Science Prize. He is a Fellow of the American Fisheries Society, the Washington State Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society of Canada and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.