

LIMITED ENTRY AND HAWAII'S FISHERIES INTERACTION PROBLEM

SAM POOLEY, National Marine Fisheries Service, Honolulu, Hawaii

ABSTRACT¹

Limited entry alone offers little solace for a fishery faced with discards or bycatch. Limited entry schemes may intensify discard problems in multispecies or multipurpose fisheries. Discards and bycatch, particularly in a multipurpose fishery, may weaken limited entry schemes. However, limited entry may reduce the scope of the discards or bycatch regulatory problem. As a result, the problem of limited entry as an economist's solution to fishery problems may be reduced. Limited entry should not be viewed as generating a single optimum solution (frequently viewed as monopolistic), but as contributing to a multi-sided solution to a multi-sided problem.

Limited entry initially was promoted because of two salient observations: (1) unrestricted access to a fishery results in biological and economic depression; and (2) direct regulations on the operations of individual harvesting firms (i.e., quotas, area and gear restrictions, etc.) provide one-sided constraints on production (i.e., they are inefficient).² Limited entry provides the advantage of restricting an easily quantifiable input (number of vessels) and thus provides a constraint on fishing effort without restricting actual fishing practices. Unfortunately, regulation of bycatch or discards is a form of direct regulation, since output taxes have not been considered in U.S. fisheries. Interestingly, McConnell and Norton identified bycatch in a limited entry system oriented toward a multispecies fishery (an ecosystem basis) as a major problem. Therefore, the problem is to adjust limited entry schemes to account for the joint production nature of the discards or bycatch fisheries.

Managers have used limited entry primarily in fisheries where bycatch is not a major problem. However, in its current application in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands bottomfish and its proposed application to main Hawaiian Islands pelagics (tunas and billfish), bycatch can be a major portion of the production.

One should view limited entry in these situations as placing a general

¹A transcript of the complete presentation is available from the author.

²McConnell, K. E. and V. J. Norton. 1980. An Evaluation of Limited Entry and Alternative Fishery Management Schemes. In: *Limited Entry as a Fishery Management Tool*. R. B. Rettig and J. J. C. Ginter, editors. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

limit on overall productive capacity, probably in an operating environment of multispecies and multipurpose fisheries, rather than solving the problem or providing a single point optimum. Alternative management measures should be devised to deal with the joint production problems.