

An Evolutionary Perspective on the Development of Coastal Zone Management: A Case Study of Recreational Fishing in Japan

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The idea of coastal zone management (CZM) has been widely accepted among various coastal states because it is believed to contribute to the sustainable uses of coastal zone environment. The system of CZM is formulated by a set of policies and acts that are mainly governing coastal zone environment and utilizations. They are not formed by a single administrative action or political decision-making, but through several different processes. In addition, the successful implementation of CZM is not achieved over a short period, but is the result of long-term efforts among coastal administrations, stakeholders and people concerned about the sustainable use of the coastal zone.

This study provides an overview of the development of regional CZM based on a case study of a commercial and recreational fishing dispute off the Fukui-Ishikawa region in Japan. The presence of transboundary users and the involvement of two prefectural governments at the same administrative level characterize the case. The author describes the evolutionary process of management development by investigating past records and relationships among stakeholders. A series of evolutionary stages are identified.

The original situation stemmed from management based on unwritten local rules and monopolistic use by local fisheries. At this early stage, no recreational fishermen can access to the fish stocks due to the strong presence of the local fishery community. However, this was challenged by repeated use of the fishing ground by local recreational fishermen because they found there was no regulation banning access to the fishing ground. Thus, the relationship became unstable due to the increase in catch size by recreational fishermen and a decrease in catch size for commercial fisherman. To resolve and also stabilize the dispute between commercial and recreational fishermen, a regional contract was decided among them.

However, this stabilization faced a challenge from new users, namely, recreational fishermen who traveled from outside the regional boundary. Despite this progress, the dispute re-occurred, in this case over an estimated reduction in fish stocks in the area. Strong antagonism developed between local users complying with local agreement and the recreational users from outside. To resolve the dispute, the two prefectural governments attempted reconciliation between both sides by setting up a committee called the Transboundary Coastal Zone Coordination Committee. Nonetheless, no improvement has been observed except that the committee provided a chance of discussion between the two sides.

The evolution of CZM originated from custom-orientated management. The second step was to form local and closed stakeholder-orientated management. After outsiders challenged the second step, administrative-orientated management was introduced. However, introduction of a user-orientated management system to stabilize the situation is strongly recommended. It is hoped the result of this study will help contribute to the implementation of the CZM program by providing a conceptual framework of its development.