

Australian Recreational Fisheries and Indonesian Small Scale Fisheries: challenges and similarities.

Dr Paul E. McShane, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Clayton, Australia.

As an archipelagic state, Indonesia has vast aquatic natural resources. Opportunities abound for its 250 million people. However, Indonesia faces three major challenges to sustainably develop its fisheries so as to provide economic and social wellbeing. It must eliminate destructive fishing practices (bombing and poisoning) and address other impacts on coastal ecosystems (e.g. pollution). It must improve cold chain management so that safe high quality seafood can be provided to meet domestic and international demand. It must find ways of effectively regulating fisheries. Indonesia has about 2 to 3 million people directly dependent on fishing for livelihoods. Typically, these fishers are small family-operated operations for subsistence or modest livelihoods. Australia has about 5 million persons who enjoy recreational fishing: fishing for sport or to get some food for their families. Both the Indonesian subsistence fishery and the Australian recreational fishery are, in effect, unregulated. In Australia, daily catch limits and size limits apply to certain popular recreational fish species. However, participation rates are unlimited which means that constraints on total catches are few. As for Indonesia, information on total catches and the effects of fishing on the biomass of targeted species, or on the ecosystem more generally (given increasing participation rates for recreational fishers) is scant. Yet Australia has made progress, largely through coordinated awareness raising campaigns, in encouraging conservative practices among the recreational fishing community. Similarly, education and awareness raising, harnessing traditional wisdom (where this aligns with conservative fishing practices) are key to eliminating destructive fishing practices and conserving vitally important fish stocks in Indonesia.