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The European Union's fisheries ministers agreed on the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas for the fish stocks in the Baltic Sea on October 12th. In regards of the salmon in the main basin, ICES advised for a zero TAC, both for commercial and recreational fisheries. ICES however, advised that spatial-temporal management could be implemented, allowing for some fishing opportunities, with a maximum of 75,000 salmon. For 2022, the Council agreed to reduce the TAC by 32% to 63,811 salmon. It phases out commercial fishing at sea, as the quota will need to be caught by coastal fisheries. For recreational fishers, ministers agreed to introduce a bag limit of one fin-clipped salmon per day (EAA 29.10.2021).

The opinion of the Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing was to maintain the same rules as for the year 2021 for recreational fishermen in the Gulf of Bothnia in Finland. This also follows the ICES advice.

Recreational salmon trolling in Finland mostly takes place further from the coastline than commercial fishing. The total salmon catch, including both recreational and commercial fishing in the Gulf of Bothnia area and near the coastline, consist mainly of spawn migrating salmon from strong wild stocks from the northern rivers (mainly Tornio and Kalix). Studies show that there are no salmon from the weak stocks of the Main Basin or other southern weak stocks in the catch of the Finnish coastal salmon fishery in the Gulf of Bothnia. The annual catch of salmon from trolling at sea in the whole of Finland is estimated to be only around 1700 salmon per year and has no weakening effects on the wild northern salmon stocks. On the other hand, salmon trolling is a great mean for recreation and has big financial effects. Therefore, the FFRF did not support the four nautical miles line from the coast as a borderline for salmon trolling after wild salmon in the before mentioned area. The advised time period (May-August) by ICES for salmon fishing in the Gulf of Bothnia, is considered good and at that time the catch will consist of spawn migrating salmon and not the so called mixed-stock.

However, the EU Council gave a common rule for season 2022, for recreational fishing happening further out than four nautical miles from the coastline, and the quota is one fin-clipped salmon per fisherman and day. All wild salmon caught must be released. This rule covers the whole Main Basin and the Gulf of Bothnia. An exception to the rule exists, as it is possible to fish for salmon at a sea area norther than 59°30`N and nearer than four nautical miles from coastline, as stated in the national law. In Finland this equals to a quota of two salmon (fin-clipped or wild) per day and fisherman, concerning recreational fishing.

The new rules for salmon fishing outside the four nautical miles line will weaken the salmon trolling opportunities in the Åland Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia. It is difficult to estimate how many of the salmon trolling boats will stay inside or outside the four nautical miles line. There is a risk of overcrowding the best salmon fishing spots near the shore and this may cause issues amongst recreational fishermen, as well as commercial fishermen. If the new rule causes weakening effects in the numbers of boats going after salmon, it will also signify a lower income for the local economy.

Concerning the salmon fishing in the Main Basin, the FFRF did support a stop or reduction for all salmon fishing during the season of 2022, as in that area all salmon fishing is mixed-stock fishing.

*Finnish Federation for Recreational Fishing*

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