

Abstract

Fishery resources in Thai sea rapidly degraded after trawl development during 1960 – 1972. There has been overfishing since 1973. Commercial vessels fished outside Thai water territory. The announcement of 200 mile exclusive economic zone drove some of these commercial vessels back to Thai sea, increasing resource degradation during 1973 -1985. In 1986 – 1993, fishermen who still fished in Thai sea adapted fishing gears to increase their catches. Thai vessels fishing outside Thai sea, legally and illegally, were about four thousand. During 1994 – 2011 the number of Thai vessels fishing outside Thai sea was more than double. Due to fishery resource degradation, fishing vessels at length > 18 meter could not cover their cost fishing in Thai sea. More than two-thirds of engine vessels fished outside Thai sea. Increase in catches mainly came mainly from outside Thai sea fisheries. Small fishing vessels with inboard-engine and outboard engine did not have alternative, had to continue fishing in degraded Thai sea.

Knowledge from previous studies evidenced over-fishing especially in the Gulf of Thailand and recommended decreasing fishing effort by reducing trawlers and push netters. Department of Fisheries (DoF) planned reducing fishing effort via trawler and push netter buy-back program. Due to inefficient control on the number of fishing vessels, the buy-back program could not be

implemented. There were also studies on loss from using too fine mesh size net thus by catching small juveniles to be sold as trash fish and studies on community-based fisheries management for co-management in the fishing areas.

Conflicts among fishing stakeholders include conflicts among the fishers using various fishing gears e.g. trawl, push net, anchovy fishing, and folded crab trap against artisanal fishers; conflict between commercial and small scale fisheries; using trash fish in fish meal industry; and conflicts between fish traders and the fisher folk. DoF usually employed measures to renew fishery resources abundance and was still unable to effectively control fishing effort. In small scale fisheries management, community-based fisheries management was promoted for sustainable fisheries.

Government policy put emphasis on fishery development to earn foreign exchange. When resource was degraded, government has turned to Thai sea rehabilitation since the 9th development plan (2002 – 2006). Master plan for Thai marine fisheries management (2009 – 2018) focused on integrated fisheries management. DoF intends to collaborate with relevant government and non-government agencies as well as fishing communities.

Research issues from the most in need includes (1) The supply including the resource condition, reducing fishing effort,

labor outmigration from fishing sector, alien work force, and development of fishing gears. (2) The demand including demand from importing countries as well as trade measures and domestic logistics as well as marketing system and supply chain with an emphasis on value-added commodities. (3) Enhancing capability of community organization via the study on development of population cluster, games theory to reduce conflict and increase cooperation and ecosystem approach for fisheries. (4) Fishing outside Thai sea, in other coastal state water territories and in high seas. (5) Policy research to evaluate the feasibility of command and control measure and management via economic instruments and policy on fisheries outside Thai sea. These researches should be conducted as integrated inter-disciplines.

Keywords: Fishery resources, marine fisheries, fisheries management, knowledge, government policy, research issues