

THEME
SESSION



*Integration of fisher experiential
knowledge (FEXK) into marine
science and management*

ICES 2022

**ANNUAL
SCIENCE
CONFERENCE**

19-22 September 2022
Dublin, Ireland

Share your science at **#ICESASC22**

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

H.C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46
DK-1553 Copenhagen V
Denmark
Telephone (+45) 33 38 67 00
Telefax (+45) 33 93 42 15
www.ices.dk
info@ices.dk

No abstracts are to be cited without prior reference to the author.

Cite this Book of Abstracts:

ICES. 2022. Theme Session K – Integration of fisher experiential knowledge (FEXK) into marine science and management. ICES Annual Science Conference 2022, Dublin, Ireland.
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21618084>

Cite an abstract:

[Abstract authors]. 2022. [Abstract title]. CM 2022 /K: [CM code]. In: Theme Session K - Integration of fisher experiential knowledge (FEXK) into marine science and management. ICES Annual Science Conference 2022, Dublin, Ireland. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21618084>

CM 527: What's your story? Capturing fishers' experiential knowledge through biographical interviews

Sophia Kochalski, Marjan Braun, Maraja Riechers, Fanny Barz

Fisheries are constantly undergoing profound and often long-lasting changes. Such transformations are difficult to predict, difficult to reverse, and can have far-reaching impacts. They include changes in fish stocks and ecosystems, but also socio-economic shifts and a modified use and relationship between humans and the ocean. Importantly, institutions, values, and technology are produced, sustained and changed by single or repeated actions of individual people, while at the same time these structures constrain and direct people. Likewise, ecological changes depend to some extent on subjective individuals, since it is people who choose adaptive or transformative behavior depending on their subjective perception of the circumstances and their own behavioral control.

In this study, we investigate the experiential knowledge of fishers in the Baltic Sea to link social and ecological change, and to explore questions of subjectivity, different timescales and the meaning of "transformations". We use in-depth biographical interviews, a specific form of open, narrative interviews, to document how a German fishing fleet has changed in recent decades. Biographical interviews are a well-established method to collect and analyze data in sociology, but have not been used to a noticeable degree in fisheries and marine science. For this study, we interviewed fishers working in the western Baltic Sea. From the fishers' stories, their individual professional careers are reconstructed, and further patterns are revealed through the comparison between them.

Based on the analysis of the biographical interviews, we discuss how the systematic assessment of fishers' professional life histories can raise awareness of social issues in fisheries, and how this approach can make social aspects more accessible to fisheries management. The fishery is currently under immediate threat due to a reduced catch quota and other challenges, and we investigate the relationship between past behavior and current adaptation responses. We are particularly interested in what fishers' experiential knowledge can tell us about socio-ecological dynamics and hope that this work will contribute to steer future transformations towards environmentally and socially desirable outcomes.

Keywords: fisheries, qualitative research, social-ecological change, Baltic Sea, resource user, livelihoods, adaptive strategy

Contact information: Sophia Kochalski, CRETUS Department of Applied Economics, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, sophia.kochalski@usc.es