NAMIBIA COUNTRY PROFILE: FISHERIES*

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Introduction

Namibia's fishing industry is well known for its world class capabilities, in handling, distributing, and marketing of fish products. Today the fisheries sector is one of the highest contributors to the Namibian economy, and second only to the mining sector in terms of exports. Management of commercial fisheries is based on a system by which rights are granted, total allowable catch are set based on research results and quotas are issued to rights holders.

Policy objectives

There are three broad policy objectives for the fisheries and aquaculture sector:

- To ensure sustainable utilisation of marine and inland fisheries resources
- To develop industries based on national fisheries resources to contribute to overall economic and social development
- To develop sustainable aquaculture industries for household food security, employment creation and export earnings

The reader should note that a virtual open access regime characterized Namibian marine fisheries before independence, with virtually no participation of Namibians.

Three key strategies were implemented to achieve policy objectives for the marine resources sector. These are:

- Stock rebuilding due to overfishing prior to independence
- Namibianisation, by integrating the fisheries sector into the mainstream economy
- Empowerment, ensuring broad-based participation

Table 1. Namibian aquatic resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshwater systems</th>
<th>Perennial rivers; Orange river; Kunene; Kavango and Zambezi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of coastline</td>
<td>5,500 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of EEZ</td>
<td>536,805 km²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legal Framework

The policy and legal framework governing resource and aquaculture management in Namibia is provided for the fisheries and aquaculture white papers and attendant legislation.

The following legal instruments, incorporating regulations, correspond to the conduct of fisheries and aquaculture management:

- Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1990.
- Marine Resources Act (No. 27 of 2000).
- Aquaculture Act (Act No. 18 of 2002).
- Inland Fisheries Act (Act No. 1 of 2003).

Table 2. Main commercial species in Namibian waters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Commercial species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horse Mackerel (Trachurus capensis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hake (Merluccius paradoxus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sardine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchovy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fish oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange Roughy (Hoplostethus atlanticus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Sea Red Crab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Lobster (Scyllaridae)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified (seaweed, tube worms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swordfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Sardine</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Management System

Ocean fisheries management system is rights-based. Private fishing access rights and Individual Quota (IQ) regime was introduced in the fisheries at independence (1990).

The granting of rights is in accordance with set criteria, corresponding to national objectives. Relative to national objectives, fishing rights are subject to evaluation, given their duration.

Enforcement of regulations is undertaken on-land and at-sea. This is done by fisheries inspectors. Namibia has three patrol vessels and one patrol air craft for sea patrols.

Government policy


Institutional Structure

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources is responsible for the management and administration of Namibia’s fisheries resources and aquaculture activities. Certification of fisheries and other products resides under the Ministry of Trade and Industry with institutional and technical collaboration of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). All merchandise exports correspond to Customs authorities of the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources consists of four directorates:

- Directorate of Resource Management
- Directorate of Policy, Planning and Economics
- Directorate of Operations
- Directorate of Aquaculture

Other Statutory Bodies

- The Marine Resources Advisory Council
- Aquaculture Advisory Council
- Fisheries Observer Agency
- Namibia Marine and Fisheries Institute (NAMFI)

Research Institutions

The National Marine Institute Research Centre is responsible for undertaking scientific research on marine resources.

As well, research on freshwater resources is undertaken by the Division Inland Fisheries of the Resource Management Directorate.

A national Research and Training Centre for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture is under construction in Kavango Region in the north-eastern part of Namibia.

Summary

Namibia has a well developed industrial fishery, concentrating on mackerel and hake as well as other species. The fisheries sector is built up in a similar way as most Northern hemisphere fisheries with a quota system. Artisanal fisheries are only found in fresh water systems. The country has considerable aquaculture potential, which is being developed.

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