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EIFAAC International Symposium and 28th EIFAAC Session in Lillehammer

Picturesque small Norwegian town Lillehammer hosted EIFAAC International Symposium and 28th Session from 14th to 19th June 2015. Both events began by paying respect and honouring the unexpectedly passed away, former president of the EIFAAC Phil Hickley (Fig. 1). Although retired he never stopped informing us regularly on the international fisheries community about the fisheries meetings around the globe.



Fig 1. Honour to the late former EIFAAC president Phil Hickley

The title of Symposium „Recreational fishing in an era of change“ pointed out the present state of such an activity in Europe and in the world. Among nearly 200 participants from 22 countries and 4 continents there was only one representative from Croatia, Tomislav Treer, acting member of the Organising committee of the Symposium and as the Croatian focal point and official delegate at the EIFAAC 28th Session. His presentation was „The Co-existence of Recreational and Commercial Fisheries in the Croatian rivers.“ Part of this presentation regarding the Sava river is published in the abstract book (Treer T., Piria M., Tomljanović T., Matulić D., Aničić I., Safner R. and Suić J.) Besides the plenary sessions, every day of the three day Symposium had four parallel sessions, on Pike (*Esox lucius*) management, Crayfish, Participation and Outreach, Catch and Release Social Dynamics, Atlantic salmon, Angler data, Trans-disciplinary approaches to stocking, Catch and Release Biology, Right angle (Balancing Biological, Social and Economic Goals), Trait based vulnerability, Sustainable Fishing Tourism and Stocking for Conservation (IMPRESS project). Out of many valuable ideas presented, the president of the EIFAAC Cathal Gallagher, who masterfully led the Session, summarised the discussions as follows (Fig. 2):



Fig 2. EIFAAC's president Cathal Gallagher summarises the discussion of the Symposium

- Countries should take into consideration the establishment of the European Fisheries Society;
- There is a value change in the decrease in commercial fisheries and the increase in conservation;
- The key question is whether there is a management for conservation or for fisheries?;
- There is a need to strengthen the role of applied fisheries science within the academic arena;
- Also, the need to increase the understanding of the impacts of management policy on fisheries;
- Increased focus on smoother transition of scientific results and management actions;
- Need to have better transfer of information between freshwater and marine science;
- From policy perspectives Citizen Science should be more welcomed, even encouraged;
- The question is how to bridge the gap between the science and policy?

The 28th EIFAAC Session that followed, offered very valuable discussions and conclusions, despite the fact that quite a number of country members didn't send their representatives (Fig. 3). The following are the key four recommendations. In order to achieve them, EIFAAC is able to offer the support of its international network of experts:

- Need to calculate the economic value or recreational fishing and inland aquaculture;
- As the impact of cormorants on the status of fish stocks and eco-systems is of the trans-boundary nature, there is a need for international co-ordination and species management;



Fig 3. Some of the delegates at the 28th Session

- Need of pan-European approach to identification, classification and removal of obstructions to fish passages;
- Further management actions are urgently needed to ensure that all anthropogenic mortality be significantly reduced in order to support the recovery of the eel stock.

The results of the current EIFAAC projects were presented and elections performed. Irish Cathal Gallagher, the president of EIFAAC, Danish Thomas Moth-Poulsen, the secretary of EIFAAC, were re-elected, as well as Croatian Marina Piria as a member of the Technical and Scientific Committee. She is going to organize the FINS II conference in Zagreb in 2016.



Fig 4. Maihaugen open air fisheries museum

Excursions were organized for those participants willing to visit Hunderfossen dam, the Reinsvatnet trout farm and the Maihaugen open air museum, where traditional fisheries' houses, boats and even church transferred us to the times of the ancestors (Fig. 4). Even the ancient fairy tales were told by a fairy coming out of nowhere, playing her fife for us, its overwhelmed sounds connected the rich freshwater fisheries history to its bright future (Fig. 5).

Tomislav Treer



Fig 5. Fairy plays a fife to the fisheries' audience