

The Barents Sea red king crab invasion- risky business or good business?

Jannike Falk-Petersen*

*University of Tromsø

Abstract

The alien invasive red king crab in the Barents Sea represents both a threat through impacts on benthic ecosystem functions, and a source of income for fishing communities in Northern Norway. Determining the risk the king crab represents is central both with respect to international obligations and to determine the socially acceptable level of king crab invasion. Uncertainties due to the inherent difficulty of predicting the impact of invasive species and the socio-economic consequences of management options make conventional risk assessment and application of the precautionary approach based purely on scientific considerations inappropriate. Q-methodology was applied in order to identify the different perspectives among key stakeholders and researchers on the risk the king crab represents and how the crab should be managed. The study identified the areas of agreement and disagreement between the different social perspectives and how these groups perceive what risk the crab represents. This information can be used as input in a broader evaluation on how the king crab should be managed in Norwegian waters.