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Irikla Reservoir Perch and Pikeperch Gillnet Fishery

Certificate No: MSC-F-31234

4th Surveillance Report

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) | MRAG Americas, Inc. |
| Assessment team | Amanda Stern-Pirlot and Dmitry Sendek |
| Fishery client | Followfood GmbH, Metzstr.2, D-88045 Friedrichshafen, Germany |
| Assessment type | Fourth Surveillance |
| Author name | Amanda Stern-Pirlot and Dmitry Sendek |
| Date | 12 April 2021 |

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2 Executive summary

The Irikla Reservoir perch small-mesh gillnet fishery was certified in April 2016, and the larger-mesh pikeperch Unit of Certification (UoC) was added via scope extension in November 2019. This report contains the findings of the 4th surveillance cycle in relation to the Irikla Reservoir Perch and Pikeperch Gillnet Fishery and contains an update on the fishery since the previous surveillance audit. A remote surveillance site visit was held in conjunction with the reassessment site visit for this fishery assessment in February 2021. In summary, the one condition that was still open on external review of the management system has now been closed, and MRAG Americas confirms that this fishery continues to meet the MSC Fisheries Standard and shall remain certified.

3 Report details

3.1 Surveillance information

Table 1. Surveillance information

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 Fishery name | |
| Irikla Reservoir perch and pikeperch fishery | |
| 2 Unit(s) of Assessment (UoA) | |
| Species | Common or European perch (<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>) and Pikeperch (<i>Sander lucioperca</i>) |
| Stock | Stock of common perch and pikeperch inhabiting Irikla Reservoir |
| Fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s) | Common perch – small gillnets (30-36 mm mesh size) Pikeperch – large gillnets (50-70 mm mesh size) |
| Client group | FOLLOWFOOD GMBH |
| Other eligible fishers | All licensed commercial fishermen nominated by the client. |
| Geographical area | Irikla Reservoir on Ural River, Orenburg Province; Russian Federation |
| 3 Date certified | |
| 07 April 2016 | Date of expiry |
| | 06 October 2021 |
| 4 Surveillance level and type | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indicate surveillance level and type, e.g. Surveillance level 4, off-site surveillance audit (FCP v2.2 7.28.1-7.28.7). - If surveillance activity has changed from what was indicated in the surveillance program in the PCDR or a previous surveillance report, also note that this is the case and provide updated surveillance program in Appendix 2. - Not applicable for Expedited Audit Reports | |
| Level 5, off-site (Due to COVID-19 pandemic) | |
| 5 Surveillance number | |
| 1st Surveillance | |
| 2nd Surveillance | |
| 3rd Surveillance | |
| 4th Surveillance | X |

| | |
|--|--|
| Other (expedited etc) | |
| 6 Surveillance team leader | |
| <p>- Indicate name of team leader and areas that they are responsible for. Explain how they meet the competency criteria (FCP v2.2 7.28.14.1-7.28.14.4, 7.29.4.1.a). If relevant, indicate whether team leader will be on-site or off-site.</p> | |
| <p>Ms. Amanda Stern-Pirlot will serve as team leader for the assessment. Amanda is an M.Sc graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Pirlot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Stern-Pirlot meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team leader as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree and more than three years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • She has passed the MSC team leader training; • She has the required competencies described in Table PC1, section 2; • She has passed the MSC Traceability training module; • She meets ISO 19011 training requirements; • She has undertaken two fishery assessments as a team member in the last five years, and • She has experience in applying different types of interviewing and facilitation techniques and is able to effectively communicate with clients and other stakeholders. <p>In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 2 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Stern-Pirlot has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> | |
| 7 Surveillance team members <i>[remove if not applicable]</i> | |
| <p>- If more than one auditor, also list additional auditors and explain how they meet competency criteria (FCP v2.2 7.28.14.1-7.28.14.4, and 7.29.4.1.a If relevant, indicate which auditors are on-site and which are off-site.</p> | |
| <p>Dr. Dmitry Sendek. Dmitry Sendek is a senior researcher scientist in the State Research Institute on Lake and River Fishery (GosNIORKh), St. Petersburg Russia. Dr. Sendek holds a BS and MS from St. Petersburg University, and a PhD from the GosNIORKh. His research interests include evolution, phylogeny and systematics of coregonids fishes, population biology of freshwater and anadromous fishes, genetic conservation of salmonid fishes, and population dynamics. Dr. Sendek has authored numerous scientific articles, book chapters, and scientific reports.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Sendek meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries; | |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has undertaken at least two MSC fishery assessments or surveillance site visits in the last five years; • He is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored; • He has passed the MSC Traceability training module. <p>In addition, he has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 1 and 3 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3, and MRAG Americas confirms he has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>The whole assessment team collectively meets the requirements as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.</p> |
| 8 | Audit/review time and location |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time and dates of surveillance or expedited audit activities. Location activities will be carried out (if off site or review of new information, this could be from CAB/auditor office). <p>A remote site visit occurred in the week of 05 February 2021 in conjunction with the reassessment site visit.</p> |
| 9 | Assessment and review activities |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was assessed/reviewed during the audit. <p>The surveillance reviewed any changes in science and management and monitored progress in closing out open conditions.</p> |
| 10 | Stakeholder opportunities |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include link to MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Surveillance Audits (not applicable for expedited audits). - Inform stakeholders that during the surveillance audit all team members are available to meet either in person or remotely (FCP v2.2 7.28.15.b). <p>Participate in the site visit: all team members were available to meet remotely (FCP v2.2 7.28.15.b).</p> <p>Provide input or comments to the team regarding the Surveillance Audit. Stakeholders must use the MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Surveillance Audits v1.0 (Ctrl+click to follow link).</p> |

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Target stocks update

An assessment of the status of perch and pikeperch (target stocks) within the Irikla Reservoir was conducted in 2020 by Saratov Research Institute using existing methodology. The results indicate the current status of perch has remained stable in 2020 at around 900 mt (Figure 1). The pikeperch stock continued to rise and grew from 399 mt in 2016 to 635 mt of commercial stock biomass in 2020 (Figure 2). These levels are considered to be at or fluctuating around the proxy target reference point, *Ba* for both species (MRAG, 2016).

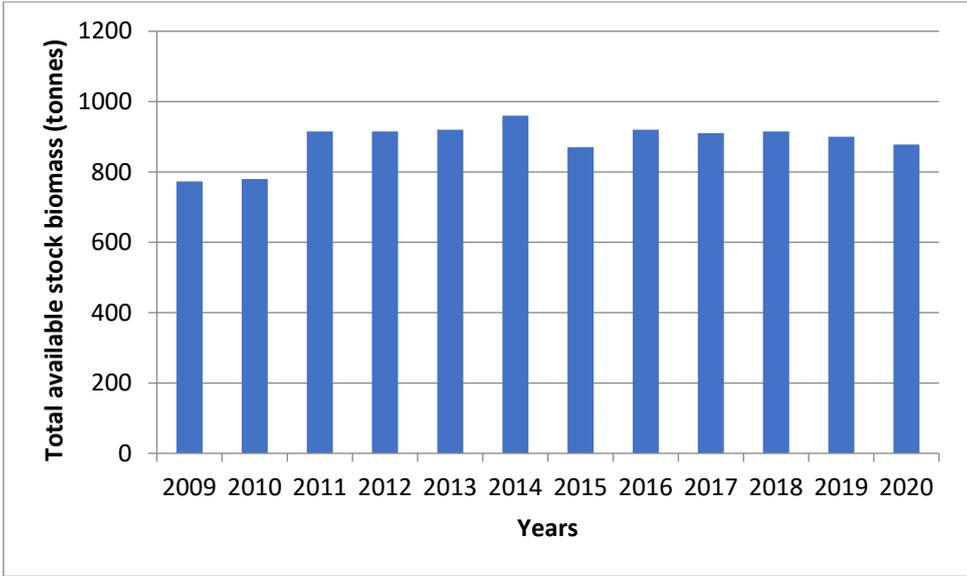


Figure 1: Trends in stock status of perch (tonnes) in Irikla Reservoir between 2009 and 2020. Data Source: Saratov Research Institute, 2019, 2021.

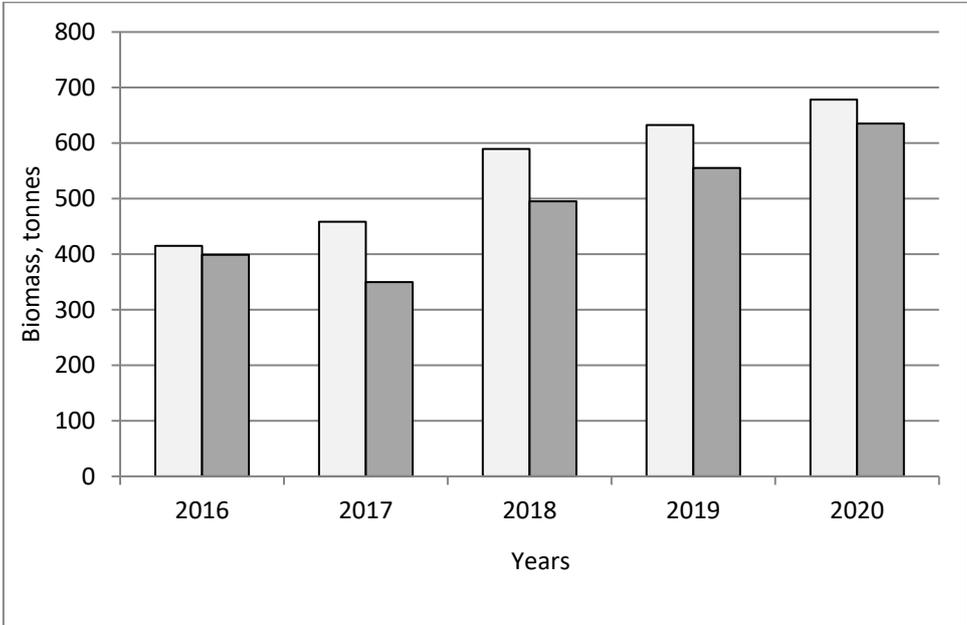


Figure 2. The dynamics of total stock biomass (white columns) and commercial stock biomass (dark columns) of pikeperch in the Irikla Reservoir for 2016-2020. Data Source: Saratov Research Institute, 2021.

With exception to perch and pikeperch stock status there have been no changes to the scientific base of information that are likely to impact scores in the Irikla Reservoir perch small mesh gillnet fishery and pikeperch large mesh gillnet fishery. The first wave of Covid-19 in early 2020 made it somewhat difficult to collect ichthyological data in the spring, but the necessary volume for assessing fish stocks and establishing predicted TAC (RAC) values was collected.

3.2.2 Ecosystem update

There have been no reported changes within the reservoir that are expected to significantly impact the ecosystem structure and function. The fishermen emphasized that in recent years, the zebra mussel, which sits on the lower line of the net, has begun to interfere with fishing. To remove it, fishermen sometimes have to tear the net, which causes material damage. If the expansion of the mollusk into the Irikla reservoir continues, the fishermen may have to change their fishing technique over time.

As part of the work on the artificial reproduction of fish for compensation of water intake at the Irikla power station, the Saratov branch of VNIRO gives recommendations on the advisability of using certain species of fish for these

purposes. The institute also determines the volume of annual stocking. Recommendations for the release of silver carp and carp into the Irikla reservoir are due to the fact that the first species is a natural ameliorator, and the second is a commercial species. According to the scientists of the Saratov Institute, both species occupy rather narrow ecological niches and are not in competition with perch and pikeperch. Young fish for annual releases can be supplied from a hatchery based on the Irikla reservoir, or imported from the Saratov region. In 2020, five releases were carried out, as a result of which about 5 tons of silver carp and carp were released into the Irikla reservoir.

There were thirteen total bird interactions recorded in the fishery for 2019 and 2020, all with great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), two of which were fatal, and the rest released alive.

Table 2. Record of bird interactions for 2019 and 2020, from Fish-ka bird interactions journal.

| 2019 год | | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------|------|----------|------------------|
| Date | Location | Species | Number | Dead | Released | Photo ref. |
| 06.10.2019г. | Суундукский залив (Еськов В.А.) | Поганка обыкновенная | 2 | 1 | 1 | - Рис.9 |
| 2020 год | | | | | | |
| 10.10.2020г. | Чапаевский плёс (Перехожев А.П.) | Поганка обыкновенная | 4 | - | 4 | Фото отсутствует |
| 02.11.2020г. | Суундукский залив (Еськов В.А.) | Поганка обыкновенная | 7 | 1 | 6 | - Рис.10 |

3.2.3 Potential or actual changes in the management system

To date, commercial fishing rights continue to be granted to a limited number of companies ('Fish-ka', 'Volna' and 'Irikla Ryba'), which in turn grant rights to individual fishermen (see Appendix). These fishing rights are issued on a ten year basis, and current agreements are in place for twenty years. This generates a clear incentive for licence holders to practice sustainable fishing practices.

The system of fishing parcels in the Irikla reservoir is preserved. By the decree of the Government of the Orenburg region, the fishing areas of the Irikla reservoir were approved, tenders were held, the period of use of the sites is 15 years, the catch volumes are set proportionally for each fishing site.

To date, only seven of the nine parcels have been allocated to the companies (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) with parcels 8 and 9 (southern-most near the dam) not open to commercial fishing. Of these seven parcels, three have been allocated to Volna and three to Fish-ka (Orlovsky reach, Sofinsky reach, Chapaevsky reach, Tanalyk-Suunduk reach, Tanalyk bay and Suunduk Bay). Irikla Ryba LLC operates at the Solenny reach; this company mainly deals with artificial reproduction issues. Currently, new contracts for the use of four parcels are in the Ministry of Agriculture for signing. Fishing in all parcels will fully begin after the end of the spring fishing ban (from 04/15/2021 to 06/15/2021), starting from 06/16/2021.

According to official statistics (Table 3) commercial fishing for perch accounted for 88.0% of the total reported annual catch between 2011 and 2020, whereas the recreational represents only 12.0% and research catches negligible (0.0005%). In 2019 and 2020, there has been a fuller utilisation of the allocated resource by the fishery (e.g. 99.1% in 2020), which, in particular, is associated with the opening of Suunduk Bay for fishing. Taking into account the volume of catch by amateur fishermen, the excess of the total catch over the established value of RAC was 9% in 2020.

Table 3: Catch of perch (tonnes) in the Irikla Reservoir for commercial, recreational and research purposes and total quota for 2007-2020 fishing seasons.

| Year | Commercial catch (t) | Recreational catch (t) | Research catch (t) | Total catch (t) | Total quota (t) | Ratio of total catch and total quota |
|------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2007 | 234.52 | 30.0 | 0.058 | 264.578 | 423.0 | 62.5% |
| 2008 | 192.18 | - | 0.0125 | 192.1915 | 257.0 | 74.8% |

| Year | Commercial catch (t) | Recreational catch (t) | Research catch (t) | Total catch (t) | Total quota (t) | Ratio of total catch and total quota |
|------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2009 | 221.60 | 35.3 | 0 | 256.901 | 279.75 | 91.8% |
| 2010 | 185.69 | 17.0 | 0.343 | 203.033 | 195.61 | 103.8% |
| 2011 | 246.63 | 28.0 | 0.316 | 274.946 | 379.28 | 72.5% |
| 2012 | 227.39 | 30.5 | 0.235 | 258.125 | 311.52 | 82.9% |
| 2013 | 222.70 | 22.2 | n.a. | 246.900 | 354.85 | 69.6% |
| 2014 | 230.45 | 26.6 | n.a. | 257.100 | 320.0 | 80.3% |
| 2015 | 74.10 | 30.0 | 0.16 | 104.26 | 450.0 | 23.2% |
| 2016 | 212.90 | 32.9 | 0.16 | 245.96 | 470.0 | 52.3% |
| 2017 | 248.20 | 36.6 | 0.16 | 284.96 | 435.0 | 65.5% |
| 2018 | 280.40 | 45.4 | 0.108 | 325.91 | 460.0 | 70.8% |
| 2019 | 334.30 | 46.9 | 0.154 | 381.35 | 457.0 | 83.4% |
| 2020 | 452.80 | 45.5 | 0.156 | 498.46 | 457.0 | 109.1% |

Data source: 2007-2008, Yermolin (2014); 2009-2018, Saratov Research Institute (2019, 2021).

The total annual catch of pikeperch has exceeded the quota in recent years by approximately 6-30%. It should be noted that the quotas established for commercial fishing were previously agreed with the State Agency. Actual catches from the commercial sector were less than their allocated quotas (Table 4). Some excess of quotas does not cause concern for managers, since when calculating TAC for pikeperch, scientists of Saratov research institute leave about 10% of fishing mortality in reserve, which is partly utilised by recreational fishers. That is the part of precautionary approach in pikeperch fishery.

Table 4. Catch of pikeperch (tonnes) in the Irikla Reservoir for commercial, recreational and research purposes and total quota for period 2012-2020

| Year | Commercial catch (t) | Recreational catch (t) | Research catch (t) | Total catch (t) | Total quota (t) | Quota uptake (%) |
|------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 2012 | 17.5 | 4.6 | 0.085 | 22.200 | 23.0 | 96.5% |
| 2013 | 26.2 | 4.2 | 0.100 | 30.500 | 28.0 | 108.9% |
| 2014 | 22.98 | 5.0 | 0.020 | 28.000 | 29.0 | 96.5% |
| 2015 | 27.8 | 9.8 | n.a. | 37.600 | 35.0 | 107.4% |
| 2016 | 27.5 | 10.7 | 0.107 | 38.307 | 35.0 | 109.4% |
| 2017 | 31.5 | 11.9 | 0.090 | 43.490 | 41.0 | 106.1% |
| 2018 | 40.6 | 12.7 | 0.047 | 53.347 | 41.0 | 130.1% |
| 2019 | 67.2 | 13.9 | 0.092 | 81.192 | 70.0 | 116.0% |
| 2020 | 85.7 | 13.4 | 0.064 | 99.164 | 86.0 | 115.3% |

Data source: Saratov Research Institute (2017; 2019)

3.2.4 Changes or additions/deletions to regulations

There have been no changes in the regulations affecting the fishery since the previous surveillance audit.

3.2.5 Relevant personnel changes in science, management or industry

There has been some changes to the management structure of industry. In 2020, the fishery areas (rybopromyslovye uchastki - RPU) were renamed into fishing parcels (rybolovnyye uchastki - RU). The renaming was rather formal, however, along with the renaming, there was a change in the number and boundaries of parcels on the Irikla reservoir: instead of 6 RPUs, 7 RUs appeared. To date, only seven of the nine parcels have been allocated to the companies (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) with parcels 8 and 9 (southern-most near the dam) not open to commercial fishing. Of these seven parcels, three have been allocated to Volna and three to Fish-ka (Orlovsky reach, Sofinsky reach, Chapaevsky reach, Tanalyk-Suunduk reach, Tanalyk bay and Suunduk Bay). New fishery company - Irikla Ryba LLC - operates at the Solenny reach; this company mainly deals with artificial reproduction issues.

The introduction of the Suunduk reach into the fishing turnover influenced the more complete utilization of the fishing quotas for the entire Irikla reservoir both for perch (99.1% of RAC) and pikeperch (99.7% of TAC).

3.2.6 Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Update

It was explained by Rustam Karimov (head of the department for supervision in the Orenburg region) and Evgeny Temirdzhanov (senior inspector of the department, responsible for the city of Energetik) that in total, the department for supervision of the Orenburg region employs 16 people, among them half are state inspectors. One of the inspectors constantly works at the Irikla reservoir, he has two specialists under his command, i.e. only 3 people supervise the situation on the reservoir.

In addition to the staff working at the Irikla reservoir, the raid group may include other inspectors and specialists from Orenburg as well as police, the environmental prosecutor's office and other law enforcement agencies. At spring time, mobile groups of inspectors from other cities can come for reinforcement. Sometimes the inspectorate works on signals of violations that come from amateur and professional fishermen (Volna, Fish-ka).

The main task of inspectors is control, supervision and protection of aquatic biological resources. In case of violation of the Fishing Rules (or the regime of stay and / or work in a water protection zone), administrative or criminal protocols are drawn up against the violator. In recent years, no violations have been revealed in fishermen of Fish-ka and Volna.

In addition, inspectors conduct explanatory work with amateur fishermen. The inspectors check the size of the fish they catch, the volume of the catch, which should not exceed 5 kg in a day. Illegal fishing using nets is also being monitored: about 200 lost nets were caught and disposed of in 2020.

Over the past 5 years, there has been a twofold decrease of offenses. In total, 207 violations were noted in the Irikla reservoir in 2020, of which 92 were poaching. An increase in fines for both illegal fishing and an increase in tariffs for each illegally caught fish contribute to the decrease in the number of violations. At the same time, the total amount of fines for the last 5 years has increased for the same reason.

3.2.7 Traceability Update

No changes to the traceability system have occurred since the previous surveillance.

3.3 Version details

The report shall include a statement on the versions of the fisheries program documents used for this assessment.

Table 5. Fisheries program document versions

| Document | Version number |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| MSC Fisheries Certification Process | Version 2.2 |
| MSC Fisheries Standard | Version 1.3 |

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| MSC General Certification Requirements | Version 2.4.1 |
| MSC Surveillance Reporting Template | Version 2.1 |

4 Results

4.1 Surveillance results overview

4.1.1 Summary of conditions

Table 6: Summary of conditions

| Condition number | Condition | Performance Indicator (PI) | Status | PI original score | PI revised score |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | A research plan should be prepared and implemented for the Irikla Reservoir perch fishery that is designed to provide the management system with a strategic approach to research and reliable and timely information sufficient to achieve the objectives consistent with MSC's Principles 1 and 2. | 3.2.4 | Closed at 3 rd surveillance | 70 | 80 |
| 2 | There should be a system of external monitoring and evaluating the performance of the fishery-specific management system against its objectives. There is effective and timely review of the fishery-specific management system. | 3.2.5 | Closed at 4 th surveillance | 70 | 80 |

4.1.2 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data

The total quota for perch is usually not taken completely (average total catch for the period 2011-2020 was 62.5% of the total quota). However, in the last two years, there has been a fuller uptake of the allocated quota by the fishery: in 2020 the proportion of the total removals (452.8 t) was around 99% of the allocated quota (457.0 t), that, in particular, was associated with the opening of Suunduk Bay for fishing. A summary of the total allowable catch (TAC) and associated landings for the Irikla Reservoir perch fishery is shown in Table 6.

Table 7. Catch data for the Irikla Reservoir perch fishery

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| TAC | Year | 2020 | Amount | 457.0 tonnes |
| UoA share of TAC | Year | 2020 | Amount | Unallocated share of commercial RAC† |
| UoA share of total TAC | Year | 2020 | Amount | Unallocated share of commercial RAC |
| Total green weight catch by UoC | Year (most recent) | 2020 | Amount | 452.8 tonnes |
| Total green weight catch by UoC | Year (second most recent) | 2019 | Amount | 334.3 tonnes |

† Recommended allocated catch (RAC). The commercial fishery get a quota managed in-season, and the recreational and research get quotas managed post-season.

Actual catches from the commercial sector were less than their allocated quotas for pikeperch. At the same time, in the last three years, there has been an almost complete use of the allocated quota by commercial fishing at the level of 96.0% - 99.7%. Subsequent levels of recreational catches, combined with commercial and research catches, usually exceeded the quotas by approximately 6-30%. A summary of the total allowable catch (TAC) and associated landings for the Irikla Reservoir pikeperch fishery is shown in Table 7.

Table 8. Catch data for the Irikla Reservoir pikeperch fishery

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| TAC | Year | 2020 | Amount | 86.0 tonnes |
| UoA share of TAC | Year | 2020 | Amount | Unallocated share of commercial TAC† |
| UoA share of total TAC | Year | 2020 | Amount | Unallocated share of commercial TAC |
| Total green weight catch by UoC | Year (most recent) | 2020 | Amount | 85.7 tonnes |
| Total green weight catch by UoC | Year (second most recent) | 2019 | Amount | 67.2 tonnes |

† The commercial fishery get a quota managed in-season, and the recreational and research get quotas managed post-season.

4.1.3 Recommendations

No recommendations.

4.2 Re-scoring Performance Indicators

Evaluation Table for PI 3.2.5

| PI 3.2.5 | | There is a system of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the fishery-specific management system against its objectives There is effective and timely review of the fishery-specific management system | | |
|---------------|----------------------|--|---|--|
| Scoring Issue | | SG 60 | SG 80 | SG 100 |
| a | Guidepost | The fishery has in place mechanisms to evaluate some parts of the management system. | The fishery has in place mechanisms to evaluate key parts of the management system | The fishery has in place mechanisms to evaluate all parts of the management system. |
| | Met? | Y | Y | N |
| | Justification | The fishery has in place mechanisms to evaluate key parts of the management system. Key elements such as the quota monitoring process and the stock assessment that determine the level of removals occur during the annual fishing season and at the end to ensure the possibility of quota over-run are minimised. There are mechanisms in place to adjust quotas or the allocation of quotas between parcels and companies and these will be evaluated annually | | |
| b | Guidepost | The fishery-specific management system is subject to occasional internal review. | The fishery-specific management system is subject to regular internal and occasional external review. | The fishery-specific management system is subject to regular internal and external review. |
| | Met? | Y | N Y | N |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>PI 3.2.5</p> | <p>There is a system of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the fishery-specific management system against its objectives</p> <p>There is effective and timely review of the fishery-specific management system</p> | |
| | <p>Justification</p> | <p>As indicated in PI 1.2.4 the annual results of the fishing season and the effectiveness of management actions undertaken are evaluated by the management agencies, in particular, in the Middle-Volga territorial branch of FAR. These represent an internal review as they are part of the management process. An external review is not conducted for perch as it as an RAC species. In this way the fishery-specific management system is subject only to regular internal review and therefore meets the SG60. The SG80 scoring guidepost is met, based on an external review of the management system in Irikla completed in 2020 by Redik Eshbaum (Eshbaum 2020), which provides a review of the Irikla management system with particular comparison to other Russian lake fisheries and provided to Fish-ka. However, as this was only conducted once, it does not constitute “regular” external review, thus the SG100 guidepost is not met, however, are not met as at the current time In addition, there is no evidence that there is an external review or that the MGS function is reviewed externally and as there is a known risk of IUU from recreational fishers this would be needed to fully meet the requirements at SG100.</p> <p>It is recommended that an external review of the management system and monitoring, control and surveillance functions are introduced on a regular basis. This need not be annual but the team recommends that unless significant changes occur to the management system, a period of 5 years (equivalent to the MSC certification period is sufficient for the scale an intensity of the fishery. Annual milestones should be developed within the client action plan to formalise the introduction of an external review of the management system and monitoring, control and surveillance functions to address Condition 2 raised here.</p> |
| <p>References</p> | <p>Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 12.05.2008 № 724. “Rules for fisheries of the Volga-Caspian basin” (2009). “On Protection of the Environment” (2001). (Yermolin & Belyanin, 2015). Section 3.5 of this report. Eshbaum, R. (2000). External review of the perch fishery management system at Irikla Reservoir according to the standards of the Marine Stewardship Council. Estonian Marine Institute, University of Tartu.</p> | |
| <p>OVERALL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SCORE: All scoring issues at SG60 and SG80 are met and none at SG100.</p> | | <p>70 80</p> |
| <p>CONDITION NUMBER (if relevant):</p> | | <p>2</p> |

4.3 Conditions

4.3.1 Closed Conditions

Table 8. Condition 2--Closed

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Performance Indicator | 3.2.5 | |
| Score | 70 | |
| Justification | The SG80 and SG100 guideposts, however, are not met as at the current time there is no evidence that there is an external review or that the MCS function is reviewed externally and as there is a known risk of IUU from recreational fishers this would be needed to fully meet the requirements at SG100. | |
| Condition | Establish a system such that performance of the fishery-specific management is subject to regular internal and occasional external review. | |
| Condition start | April 2016 | |
| Condition deadline | April 2021 | |
| Milestones | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of the year 1, the Client will prepare the manuscript describing the perch fishery in the Irikla Reservoir with a focus on sustainability of that fishery, i.e. addressing three MSC principles, and will start yearly publishing current available information on the fishery. • By the end of year 2, the Client will produce a report on progress to demonstrate sufficient progress has been made during the first 2 years • By the end of year 3, the Client will offer published information on the fishery to independent experts seeking for their review. • By end of year 4, fishery arrange an independent third-party audit to review the fishery in addition to publication of the manuscript. | |
| Progress on Condition (Year X) | The progress made by the fishery client to address conditions shall be detailed, along with any observations from the assessment team. The CAB may include progress summaries from previous surveillance audits. | |
| | Year 1 | The client has made sufficient progress and started to draft a manuscript describing the perch fishery. The condition is on target. |
| | Year 2 | A draft manuscript has been prepared and presented to the assessment team. A review of progress indicated that the manuscript was available to be submitted in a government agency journal. The condition is on target. |
| | Year 3 | The assessment team discussed the proposed peer review process required to publish the manuscript describing the MSC certification of the perch fishery. It became evident that while a description of the MSC certification would be externally reviewed through the journal's peer review system, the process would only review the quality of the manuscript and its findings and not necessarily provide feedback and recommendations how to improve management of the fishery. The condition has therefore been extended to year 4 to enable an external review to be conducted on the fishery. |

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| | Year 4 | Both the commissioned review by Redik Eschbaum (Eschbaum 2020) and the peer reviewed publication (Lajus et. al. 2020) were provided to the assessment team for review ahead of the Year 4 audit. These reports satisfy the year 4 milestone for this condition and constitute the external review necessary to close this condition. |
| Progress status | Closed at 4 th audit. | |

4.3.2 Progress against conditions

No conditions remain open at the conclusion of the 4th audit. Condition 1 is reported below, but it was closed, and PI 3.2.4 was rescored at the 3rd audit.

Table 8 – Condition 1 (closed at 3rd audit)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Performance Indicator | 3.2.4 | |
| Score | 70 | |
| Justification | A research plan provides the management system with a strategic approach to research and reliable and timely information sufficient to achieve the objectives consistent with MSC's Principles 1 and 2. | |
| Condition | A research plan should be prepared and implemented for the Irikla Reservoir perch fishery that is designed to provide the management system with a strategic approach to research and reliable and timely information sufficient to achieve the objectives consistent with MSC's Principles 1 and 2. | |
| Condition start | April 2016 | |
| Condition deadline | April 2021 | |
| Milestones | Develop and implement a research plan and meet the SG80 milestone by end of year 3. Resulting score: 80 | |
| Progress on Condition | The progress made by the fishery client to address conditions shall be detailed, along with any observations from the assessment team. The CAB may include progress summaries from previous surveillance audits. | |
| | Year 1 | Progress with this condition is on target. To date, two key information gaps have been identified: improved non-commercial (recreational and IUU) catch statistics and continue to reduce poaching within the Irikla Reservoir. |
| | Year 2 | Preliminary results from research plan into review of catches from recreational fisheries sector were presented with recommendations to improve ongoing MCS activities. Progress with this condition is on target. |
| | Year 3 | A range of documents were presented to the assessment team for review related to the development of a research plan. The final research plan has been prepared for the Irikla Reservoir perch fishery. It includes an analysis of activities to study the status of the target species (perch), as well as a number of ecosystem components (non-target species, protected species, biota elements) that are currently being carried out as part of State monitoring of fishery water bodies. In order to better meet the State monitoring work with the certification requirements according to MSC standards, the research plan offers a description of the improved methods that have already become part of everyday practice (for example, assessing methods of fishery removals from the target population - commercial, illegal, amateur), as well as expanding the analysis to assess the interaction of fishery with ecosystem |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | | components (for example, study of macrophytes will be held since 2020 in addition to the annual monitoring of phytoplankton, zooplankton and zoobenthos). The document does not contain schedules and obligations for the implementation of the plan in order to improve indicators for Principles 1 and 2 of the MSC, however, the organizations responsible for the implementation of individual points of the plan are defined. Thus, the research plan is being implemented for the Irikla Reservoir perch fishery. |
| | Year 4 | Condition was closed in Year 3. |
| Progress status | Closed during 3rd Audit | |
| Remedial action | N/A | |
| Additional information | N/A | |

4.4 Client Action Plan

No updates or changes were made to the client action plan between years three and four.

5 Appendices

5.1 Evaluation processes and techniques

5.1.1 Site visits

The surveillance audit process as defined in the MSC Fishery Certification Process version 2.1 was followed in this audit.

Information supplied by the clients and management agencies was reviewed by the assessment team ahead of the remote meeting, and discussions with the clients and management agencies centred on the content within the provided documentation. In cases where relevant documentation was not provided in advance of the meeting, it was requested by the assessment team and subsequently supplied during, or shortly after the meeting.

Thirty days prior to the audit site visit, all stakeholders identified by the client were informed of the visit and the opportunity to provide information to the auditors in advance of, or during, the site visit. The site visit was conducted remotely via the Zoom meeting platform, with meetings scheduled on 5, and 8-11 February, 2021. The MSC's September 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic Derogation permitted the site visit to be conducted remotely when national or local travel restrictions that impact the assessment team or certificate holder are in place. (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/RussianFederation.html>)

The following participants were in attendance:

| Name | Affiliation |
|---------------------|--|
| Amanda Stern-Pirlot | MRAG Americas assessment team leader |
| Dmitry Sendek | Assessment team member |
| Dmitry Lajus | Fish-ka client consultant |
| Elena Ermolova | Fish-ka MSC contact person |
| Aleksandr Anikin | Fish-ka, Director |
| Konstantin Ageev | Volna, Director |
| Iliya Belyanin | VNIRO, Saratov branch |
| Nadja Kraus | followfood GmbH |
| Julia Kranewitter | followfood GmbH |
| Anatoliy Davygora | Russian Bird Conservation Union, Orenburg Branch |
| Alexandr Ageev | Fishka, Head of Fisheries Department |
| Igor Alymov | Volna, Fisherman brigadier |
| Oleg Turta | Fish-ka, Fisherman brigadier |
| Rustam Karimov | FFA Compliance and Enforcement |
| Evgeniy Temidzhanov | FFA Compliance and Enforcement |
| Vitaly Kilyakov | Glavrybvod Orenburg fisheries management agency |

The site visit was held remotely via videoconference according to the agenda shown below. Unless otherwise stated, "Assessment Team" comprises Amanda Stern-Pirlot and Dmitry Sendek.

Friday, 5 February, 2021

| Time (Moscow) | Meeting | Participants | Location | Topics/Information |
|---------------|--|---|--|--------------------|
| 17.00-19.00 | Opening meeting with Fish-ka and Volna (clients) | Konstantin Ageev Aleksandr Anikin Elena Ermolova Dmitry Lajus Assessment Team | See Zoom link and call information above | 1,2, and 5 |

Monday 8 February, 2021

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|---|--|-------|
| 16.00-18.00 | Saratov branch of VNIRO | Ilia Belyanin Assessment team | See Zoom link and call information above | 2,3,4 |
| 18.00-19.00 | followfood GmbH | Nadja Kraus Julia Kranewitter Assessment team | See Zoom link and call information above | 1,2,5 |

Tuesday 9 February, 2021

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|---|--|-----------|
| 16.00-17.00 | Russian Bird Conservation Union, Orenburg Branch | Anatoliy Davygora Assessment team | See Zoom link and call information above | 4 |
| 17.00-18.00 | Meeting with fish-ka and Volna fishermen | Alexandr Ageev Igor Alymov Oleg Turta | See Zoom link and call information above | 1,2,3,4,5 |

Wednesday, 10 February, 2021

| Time (PST) | Topic | Participants | Location | Topics/Information |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| 16.00-18.00 | FFA-Compliance and Enforcement | Rustam Karimov Evgeniy Temidzhanov Assessment team | See Zoom link and call information above | 2,5 |

Thursday, 11 February, 2021

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|---|--|---|
| 16.00-17.00 | Glavrybvod Orenburg fisheries management agency | Vitaly Kilyakov Assessment Team | See Zoom link and call information above | 4 |
| 17.00-17.30 | Assessment team post-site visit meeting | Assessment team | See Zoom link and call information above | |
| 17.30-18.30 | Closing meeting with clients: Summary of findings, next steps and timeline | Elena Ermolova Dmitry Lajus Assessment team | See Zoom link and call information above | |
| 15:30 | End site visit | | | |

Topics

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Introductions</p> <p>Brief overview of the MSC Sustainable Fishing Program and Objectives of the Reassessment Audit.</p> <p>Key areas of the surveillance audit for Fishery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the fishery and its management including to key personnel • Overview of 2019 and 2020 fishing seasons. • Any developments or changes within the fishery which impact traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products; and • Any other significant changes in the fishery |
| 2 | <p>Review of 2019/2020 fisheries, including impact of pandemic</p> |
| 3 | <p>PRINCIPLE 1 Target Stocks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target stocks status and dynamics • Target stocks assessments (most recent? Any changes to methods since last time?) • TAC determination and other stock management advice (trends? Any changes in methods?) • Research programs or papers on the abundance, biology and ecology of perch and pikeperch? • Fishery data collection. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | <p>PRINCIPLE 2 Ecosystem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main retained species information (Roach (<i>rutilus rutilus</i>), Prussian carp (<i>Carassius gibelio</i>), Bream (<i>Abramis brama</i>), others as available (vendance, wild carp, ide, pike, wells). Stock status, assessment, management, information available? • Birds interactions/encounters? Any Russian Red Book or IUCN red list bird species interactions (e.g. <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>)? • Other ETP species possible interactions, management, or research (e.g. sturgeon, brown trout, otters/other mammals)? • Habitat and ecosystem information, new research and management (e.g. any changes to closed areas? Regulations and practices of lost gear recovery? New studies on habitats or ecosystem dynamics?) |
| 5 | <p>PRINCIPLE 3 Management System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal framework: any changes in international agreements, national fisheries legislation, or other overarching policy that could affect the Irikla Reservoir fisheries? • Adjudication: any new legal challenges or disputes. • Management systems: any potential or actual changes during 19/20 seasons: management objectives, decision processes, advisory processes, consultation, stakeholder engagement, dispute resolution, research plan, performance evaluation. • Regulations: any changes or additions/deletions to regulations in 2019 and 2020. • Enforcement: any potential or actual changes in enforcement coverage, level of compliance, disputes. • Personnel: any changes in 2019 and 2020 in science, management or industry and their impacts on the management of the fishery. |
| 6 | <p>Traceability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes affecting traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products? • Any new or relevant laws or regulations related to traceability affecting this fleet? |

5.1.2 Stakeholder participation

Thirty days prior to the audit site visit, stakeholders (see Table x) were informed of the visit and the opportunity to provide information to the auditors in advance of, or during, the site visit. We received no requests from outside stakeholders to take part in meetings, nor did we receive written comments.

| ФИО | Name | Организация | Affiliation |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Буч Гарри | Butch Harry | followfood GmbH | followfood GmbH |
| Аникин Александр Алексеевич | Anikin Aleksandr | Фишка | Fishka Ltd |
| Ермолова Елена Петровна | Ermolova Elena | Фишка | Fishka Ltd |
| Агеев Константин Александрович | Ageev Konstantin | ООО "Волна" | "Volna" Ltd. |
| Давыгора Анатолий Васильевич | Davygora Anatoly | Оренбургский педагогический университет | Orenburg Pedagogical University |
| Мирошникова Елена Петровна | Miroshnikova Elena | Оренбургский государственный университет | Orenburg State University |
| Белянин Илья Александрович | Belianin Ilia | Саратовский филиал ВНИРО | Saratov branch of VNIRO |
| Зобков Александр Семенович | Zobkov Aleksandr | Оренбургский отдел ФАР | Orenburg branch of FFA |
| | MSC Peer Reviewer College | | |

5.2 Stakeholder input

No written stakeholder inputs were presented to the assessment team for review. Instead, a verbal summary of the current status of the perch and pikeperch fishery was provided by attendees at the remote site visit (see above for agenda).

The following sections provide a summary of the information provided during the site visit interviews.

Fish-ka

Surveillance team members Amanda Stern-Pirlot (team leader) and Dmitry Sendek held a remote meeting with Konstantin Ageev, Alexander Anikin, Elena Ermolova and Dmitry Lajus at 17:00 hrs on Friday 5th February 2021.

This served as the opening meeting for both the 4th surveillance audit and reassessment.

Konstantin Ageev (director of the Volna fishing company), Alexander Anikin (director of the Fish-ka fishing company) and Elena Ermolova (standardization engineer at Fish-ka) confirmed that Volna and Fish-ka companies are engaged in fishing in the Irikla reservoir, and Followfood GmbH buys fish from them and sells it abroad.

The changes in the fishery for 2020 were as follows. In 2020, the fishery areas (rybopromyslovye uchastki - RPU) were renamed into fishing parcels (rybolovnyye uchastki - RU). The renaming was rather formal, however, along with the renaming, there was a change in the number and boundaries of parcels on the Irikla reservoir: instead of 6 RPUs, 7 RUs appeared. To date, only seven of the nine parcels have been allocated to the companies (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) with parcels 8 and 9 (southern-most near the dam) not open to commercial fishing. Of these seven parcels, three have been allocated to Volna and three to Fish-ka (Orlovsky reach, Sofinsky reach, Chapaevsky reach, Tanalyk-Suunduk reach, Tanalyk bay and Suunduk Bay). New fishery company - Irikla Ryba LLC - operates at the Solenyy reach; this company mainly deals with artificial reproduction issues Fish-ka or Volna could not take over the Solenyy reach parcel due to antitrust restrictions. Currently, new contracts for the use of four parcels are in the Ministry of Agriculture for signing. Fishing in all parcels will fully begin after the end of the spring fishing ban (from 04/15/2021 to 06/15/2021), starting from 06/16/2021.

Largely due to the opening of the Suunduk Bay parcel for fishing, the Fish and Volna companies managed to more fully use the fishing quotas for perch and pikeperch. So, for the period 2018-2020, the total fishing catch for perch increased from 280.4 to 452.8 tons, for pike-perch from 40.6 to 85.7 tons. The Covid-19 pandemic did not negatively affect fisheries in 2020. Companies bought fishing gear for their fishermen in 2020.

The client explained that the opening of the Suunduk Bay fishing parcel will not directly affect fish reproduction, since the shallow water zones of the bay are not included in the fishing area (RU). The increase in bird by-catch due to the opening of this parcel will need to be clarified with specialists. But in general, all interactions of fishing gear with birds are recorded by fishermen in accordance with a memo developed by fishing companies. The death of one bird in the nets was noted with several cases of entanglement of ducks in the nets.

The new fishing company Irikla-ryba is interested in obtaining the MSC certificate. Volna and Fish-ka will be ready to help Irikla-ryba in this aspiration, but the old companies want to assess first how the new company will organize the fishery.

At present, Irikla-ryba compensates for the damage from the water intake of the Irikla HPP by growing and releasing silver carp into the Irikla reservoir. Silver carp consumes plant food, which is abundant in the Irikla reservoir, i.e. this species lowers the trophic level of the reservoir.

Saratov Research Institute

Ilya Belyanin (Head Fish Stocks Sector) said that there have been no significant changes in the work of the laboratory of ichthyology since the last audit. The laboratory staff remained the same and totals 13 people.

Work on the Irikla reservoir is carried out in spring, when the conditions for spawning of fish in a given year are studied, and in summer, when the success of spawning of various fish species, their growth rate, nutrition, and the state of stocks are investigated. To study the state of stocks, gillnets, minnow seines, and beach seines are used. In addition, the parasite fauna of fish, by-catch of birds and mammals, which have not yet been found in scientific fishing gear, are being investigated.

When assessing the state of reserves, as before, two methods are used - the so-called 'square method' and method based on fishery statistics. The latter is used to a greater extent as an additional method, the main one being the square method.

The state of the pike-perch stock is characterized by a continued increase in biomass (635 tons in 2020) and stabilization of the population in a number of indicators (size and weight indicators, age structure); in perch, some rejuvenation of the herd is observed due to the increased fishing load. At the same time, the stock of perch remains at a consistently high level (878 tons in 2020). The assessment methodology to monitor the status of fish stocks in the Irikla Reservoir remains unchanged and TAC/RAC quotas calculated on an annual basis. Biological reference points for calculating TAC (pikeperch) and RAC (perch) remain the same and are associated with the size of the commercial part of the population (available biomass): 0.2 Ba for pikeperch and 0.5 Ba for perch.

For pikeperch, the minimum fishing size (TL=40 cm in 2020) is set by the Fishing Councils, while the Saratov branch of VNIRO scientifically substantiates this size and is one of the initiators of possible changes. At present, for a more complete and rational exploitation of water resources, the Institute is working on the unification of fishing gear in the fisheries (design, mesh size, number of fishing gear).

The tasks of the institute include agreeing on the timing of fishing, areas permitted and closed for fishing, and the commissioning of new fishing parcels (RU). The last example for the Irikla reservoir is the Solenny reach, the opening of which is initiated by a quota user (a fishing company) and is coordinated by the Saratov branch of VNIRO.

To study the volume of fish catch by amateur fishermen, the Institute conducts special research. To do this, one of the employees regularly conducts their own fishing and conducts a survey among amateur fishermen. In addition, within the framework of the institute's monitoring, a group of employees from time to time comes to the Irikla reservoir to study the species composition of catches, the number of different species in the catches, the amount of catch in terms of all amateurs in different seasons of the year. In general, according to Ilya Belyanin, the catches of amateurs make up about 20% of the total fish catch in the reservoir.

Ilya Belyanin noted a further decline in IUU fishing. According to him, the inspectors record roughly about 1 ton of fish in IUU catch. Estimated IUU volumes are considered as natural mortality when assessing fish stocks.

Some excess of quotas when summing the catch volumes of fishermen and amateurs is due to the lack of monitoring of the catch of amateurs during the season. However, the calculation of the TAC for pike perch is made at an underestimated estimate of 0.2 Ba (instead of the methodical 0.3 Ba). This leaves a reserve for fishing mortality, where the annual excess of the quota for pike perch due to the catch of amateurs fits.

Fishery Inspection

Rustam Karimov (head of the department for supervision in the Orenburg region) and Evgeny Temirdzhanov (senior inspector of the department, responsible for the city of Energetik)

In total, the department for supervision of the Orenburg region employs 16 people, among them half are state inspectors. The inspection has at its disposal 7 off-road vehicles, a snowmobile, 2 boats, all inspectors are provided with boats with outboard motors, video recording devices, and special clothing. One of the inspectors constantly works at the Irikla reservoir, he has two specialists under his command, i.e. only 3 people supervise the situation on the reservoir.

Every week from Orenburg, raid tasks are received, in accordance with which inspections are carried out at the Irikla reservoir in different parts of the water body. In addition to the staff working at the Irikla reservoir, the raid group may include other inspectors and specialists from Orenburg. During certain periods (for example, during the spring spawning period), teams of inspectors may work together with the police, the environmental prosecutor's office and other law enforcement agencies. At the same 'hot' time, mobile groups of inspectors from other cities (Samara, Moscow, etc.) can come for reinforcement. Sometimes the inspectorate works on signals of violations that come from amateur and professional fishermen (Volna, Fish-ka).

The main task of inspectors is control, supervision and protection of aquatic biological resources. In case of violation of the Fishing Rules (or the regime of stay and / or work in a water protection zone), administrative or criminal protocols are drawn up against the violator. During the inspection of fishermen fishing gear, documents, and the correctness of filling out the logs are checked. Sometimes fishers are checked during the delivery of the catch ashore. Once a month, information about the catch by fishers is transmitted to Orenburg, and the accuracy of the information

submitted is also checked by the inspection. In recent years, no violations have been revealed in fishermen Fish-ki and Volna.

Professional fishermen work according to long-term contracts. If a fisherman has two violations per year, the contract may be terminated before the next competition, which is held once every 15 years. Therefore, fishermen try to comply with the Fishing Rules. By the size of the mesh in the fishing gear used, the inspectors have practically no complaints about the fishermen. In 2010, the inspectorate found the catch of small pikeperch above the established norm, and when registering the violation, the inspectors found out whether the intent was in violation. If there was intent, then the fisherman is prosecuted as a poacher. Fines for violations have recently increased significantly; in relation to organizations, they are, on average, 10 times higher than in relation to an individual. Now fishermen try to avoid catching undersized pikeperch and, if they are caught, they immediately release it back into the water.

In addition, inspectors conduct explanatory work with amateur fishermen. The inspectors check the size of the fish they catch, the volume of the catch, which should not exceed 5 kg in a day. Illegal fishing using nets is also being monitored. Every spring, measures are taken to cleanse the reservoir from abandoned nets. In 2020, about 200 abandoned nets were caught and disposed of. In general, the number of nets has decreased since cheap Chinese chains have disappeared from circulation (they are forbidden to sell).

The number of offenses has been steadily decreasing over the past 10 years. Over the past 5 years, there has been a twofold decrease. In total, 207 violations were noted in the Irikla reservoir in 2020, of which 92 were poaching. An increase in fines for both illegal fishing and an increase in tariffs for each illegally caught fish contribute to the decrease in the number of violations. At the same time, the total amount of fines for the last 5 years has increased for the same reason.

Another function of the inspection is control and supervision during the release of farmed fish. This fish (mainly silver carp and carp) is produced as compensation for water intake at the Irikla HPP. In 2020, five such releases were carried out, as a result of which about 5 tons of fish were released into the Irikla reservoir.

Fishermen

Alexander Ageev (engineer of the fishing department), Igor Alimov (foreman of fishermen of Tanalyk-Suunduk reach) and Oleg Turta (foreman of fishermen of Sofinsky reach)

Fishermen informed that there have been no significant changes in the fishery lately. Since September 2019, the Suunduk reach has been opened for fishing, which makes it possible to make fuller use of the general quotas for perch and pikeperch. The Fishing Department hired one more employee, which made it possible to improve the chain of delivery of fish from fishing parcels to processing sites and thereby improve the safety of the catch.

Birds nest on two islands located on the Suunduk reach, but one large island is located in shallow water, where fishing is not conducted. Near the second island, where seagulls nest, the birds themselves do not allow fishermen to fish, and fishermen can approach it only in winter, when there are no birds on the island.

Fishermen keep records of the interaction of fishing gear with birds in fishing logs. There are few such incidents (in 2020, 6 birds entangled in nets were recorded in one reach and 4 birds - toadstools - on the other). Usually nets are buried 5-10 meters from the surface of the water, which prevents birds from entangling in them. Besides, fish are better preserved at depth. In addition, nets installed close to the surface of the water interfere with navigation. According to the Fishing Rules, in winter nets are checked at least once every 96 hours, in summer - 2 times a day. Perch is better caught in summer, pikeperch begins to be caught in September and is caught in winter from under the ice. The nets are set as deep as possible from the ice.

Fishing begins with setting control nets. If there is a lot of undersized pike perch in the by-catch (no more than 20% per unit is allowed), then the team changes its place. The results of the control catches are recorded in the internal logs of the fishing companies. In any case, oversized pike perch caught in the nets is immediately sent back into the water. In addition, there is a size control at the reception of the fish.

The inspectorate does not note violations in Volna and Fish-ka companies. Problems sometimes arise due to the activities of amateur fishermen who spoil the fishing gear of the fishermen (cut off the buoys, tags). In 2020, there was a claim from the fishery inspection against the company because of the installation of gill nets outside the boundaries of the fishing site, but in court it was possible to show that there was no violation, and the incident occurred due to the activities of amateur fishermen who rearranged the fishing gear. The problem of exacerbation of relations with

amateur fishermen is caused by the fact that in the past the fishing places of fishermen and amateur fishermen were different, now both of them could fish in the same fishing parcels (RU).

Fishermen note that the problem of poaching is not very relevant for the Irikla reservoir. In connection with the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, a lot of holidaymakers from neighboring regions (Bashkiria, Chelyabinsk region) came to the reservoir for the weekend, which, it would seem, could increase the pressure of poaching, but a large crowd of people prevented offenses with the installation of prohibited fishing gear. In addition, very high fines deter potential violators. Fish-ka and Volna have purchased a thermal imager to detect illegal fishing at night and thereby contribute to better surveillance of the reservoir.

The fishermen emphasized that in recent years, the zebra mussel, which sits on the lower line of the net, has begun to interfere with fishing. To remove it, fishermen sometimes have to tear the net, which causes material damage. If the expansion of the mollusk into the Irikla reservoir continues, the fishermen may have to change their fishing technique over time.

Glavrybvod

Vitaly Kilyakov (head of the Orenburg branch of the Glavrybvod)

Vitaly Kilyakov explained that the former Kamuralrybvod is now called the Kamsko-Volzhsky branch of Glavrybvod. The responsibilities of Glavrybvod include monitoring of aquatic biological resources (VBR), reclamation and artificial reproduction. As part of the monitoring of the VBG, employees investigate the biological indicators of fish. Monitoring by Glavrybvod is carried out within the framework of the State Monitoring, while the obtained data are exchanged with a specialized institute engaged in assessing the state of commercial fish stocks, i.e. with the Saratov branch of VNIRO. Glavrybvod also shares the data obtained on the state of amateur fishing in the Irikla reservoir. To do this, twice a month, employees of the Glavrybvod go to the reservoir, assess the catches of fishermen and fill out questionnaire fishing cards (60-70 pieces per year).

Reclamation basically means the mowing of aquatic vegetation and the installation of artificial spawning grounds. For the Irikla reservoir, the task of mowing algae is not very relevant, since this reservoir has a canyon shape and grows little in the coastal areas. Artificial spawning grounds are established in spring, their number is determined by the water regime in a given year. This work is also carried out under the State Assignment. Artificial spawning grounds are of factory origin, in total they can be installed about 2 thousand pieces. Artificial spawning grounds can be used by different fish species. The effectiveness of the use of artificial spawning grounds is annually monitored by a specialist of the Glavrybvod.

As part of the work on the artificial reproduction of fish, the Saratov branch of VNIRO gives recommendations on the advisability of using certain species of fish for these purposes. The institute also determines the volume of annual stocking. Recommendations for the release of silver carp and carp into the Irikla reservoir are due to the fact that the first species is a natural ameliorator, and the second is a commercial species. Young fish for annual releases can be supplied from a hatchery based on the Irikla reservoir, or imported from the Saratov region. Previous plans to restore the stocks of coregonid fishes (whitefish, vendace) in the Irikla reservoir due to their artificial reproduction in a specially built fish hatchery have been suspended due to lack of funds for hatchery construction.

The volume of water discharge from the Irikla reservoir is determined annually by the flood commission. Until 2006, the flood commission included both specialists in hydrology and representatives of the fishery. For the latter, it was important to defend the preservation of the highest possible water level in the reservoir, since this has a positive effect on fish spawning. However, later, officials came to the flood commission, for whom the most important thing is to prevent possible flooding of settlements lying below the reservoir dam. To do this, they try to dump as much water as possible in autumn and spring, reserving the released volume for possible floods. According to Elena Ermolova, in the past three years, the interests of the fishing industry have begun to be taken into account to a greater extent and there are no sharp fluctuations in the water level. This can be seen, in particular, from the improvement in the state of whitefish stocks, for which successful reproduction requires a sufficiently high water level in autumn.

The rules for regulating the level of water in reservoirs in Russia are now old, 1967. There is a draft of new rules, but it is being coordinated in Moscow.

Ornithologist

Anatoly Davygora (Chairman of the Orenburg branch of the Russian Bird Conservation Unit; Associate Professor of the Orenburg State Pedagogical University)

According to Anatoly Davygora, the interaction of fishery with birds in the Irikla reservoir can occur only in spring and summer. The likelihood of bird interaction with gear is low due to the fact that fishing gear is set out on average 5-10 m from the surface of the water. According to the journal with photographs, which Anatoly Davygora has, he noted only two species that fell into the nets of fishermen: these are toadstools and mergansers (2 specimens of long-nosed mergansers were identified to species).

According to the list of birds proposed by Amanda Stern-Pirlot for commenting, Anatoly Davygora said the following:

For all Anseriformes (гусеобразных), the nets of fishermen in the Irikla reservoir are not a problem, because these birds do not dive that deep.

The Curly Pelican (Кудрявый пеликан) is practically not found in this area.

Spoonbill (Колпица) is also a stray species.

The black stork (Черный аист) is a casual species that hunts in shallow waters.

Red-breasted goose (Краснозобая казарка) - occurs on migration, not fish-eating species. Resting and feeding in the fields.

Lesser White-fronted Goose (Пискулька) is the same as the previous species.

The small swan (Малый лебедь) is the same as the previous species.

The white-tailed eagle (Орлан белохвост) is a large predator hunting wounded animals, sometimes catching fish in the upper layers of the water.

Seagull (Чайка) - Pallas's gull, near the village of Novy Sevastopol there is a colony of this species (about 600 pairs). This species is more of a problem for fishermen, because it is a very large seagull that pulls fish out of its nets, but it does not dive. Fishing can only give this gull some concern, but in general for this bird the presence of fishermen in the reservoir is not a problem.

According to Anatoly Davygora, in connection with the opening of the Suunduk reach for fishing, the birds do not suffer.

followfood GmbH.

Followfood GmbH is the customer in Germany who pays for the MSC assessment and purchases perch and pikeperch from the fishery client participants. Representatives indicated there have been no recent changes to their relationship with the fisheries, or to traceability systems.

5.3 Revised surveillance program – delete if not applicable

Not applicable—as this is the 4th surveillance audit for this cycle, a new surveillance program will be established if the reassessment is successful.

5.4 Harmonised fishery assessments – delete if not applicable

Not applicable.