

Study on the Current Situation and Countermeasures for Promoting the "Ten-Year Fishing Ban" in the Yangtze River Basin

Yan Song

Jilin Agricultural University, ChangChun, JiLin, 130000, China

ABSTRACT

The ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River is an important decision made by the state from the perspective of strategic overall situation and long-term development, and it is a landmark and historic project to promote the construction of ecological civilization and implement the great protection of the Yangtze River. In recent years, the research work carried out by relevant state departments has covered the upper, middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, and symposiums on the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt have been held many times to systematically plan, deploy and promote the strategic decision of jointly protecting and not developing the Yangtze River Economic Belt. In 2025, relevant documents explicitly demanded once again that the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River should be firmly promoted, and the rescue of rare and endangered species in the Yangtze River and the ecological restoration of important habitats should be strengthened, which indicated that the ban on fishing in the Yangtze River had entered a critical stage.

KEYWORDS

Ten-year fishing ban in the yangtze river; Ecological civilization; Governing the country in accordance with the law

1 Introduction

The ban on fishing in the Yangtze River is an important decision made by the state from the long-term interests of the Chinese nation for the overall situation and for future generations. The Yangtze River is the mother river of the Chinese nation and the core carrier of China's fresh water resources and ecological security. The economic output of the Yangtze River Economic Belt accounts for about 40% of the national total. Therefore, to further promote the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, we must firmly promote the ten-year fishing ban, which is an ecological and livelihood project that must be seriously implemented. To this end, the relevant policy documents have repeatedly given important instructions, repeatedly stressing the need to strengthen law enforcement and supervision and severely crack down on illegal fishing, so as to achieve solid results in the fishing ban. Relevant departments has organized many video and telephone conferences to study and promote related issues. As the lead unit, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has thoroughly implemented the relevant strategic spirit, regarded the ban on fishing in the Yangtze River as a major political task, gradually improved the coordination mechanism involving 12 departments, set up a special inter-departmental work class, and promoted the great protection of the Yangtze River with relevant departments and river basin provinces and cities to speed up the restoration of the vitality of the mother river of the Yangtze River.

2 The inevitability and urgency of adhering to the strategic measures to ban fishing in the Yangtze River

The relevant ecological protection strategy emphasizes: "The Yangtze River's 'Ten-Year Fishing Ban' is a strategic measure, primarily aimed at restoring the Yangtze River's ecology." In order to further promote the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, we need to continue to promote the fishing ban, ensure high-quality supply on the premise of protecting the ecological environment at a high level, promote the green development of the Yangtze River basin as a whole, carefully understand the strategic considerations of the no-fishing policy, fully appreciate the significance of the Ten-Year Fishing Ban, and clearly define the strategic orientation of joint protection and no development, and the strategic orientation of ecological priority and green development.

The 10-year ban on fishing on the Yangtze River is an initiative to accelerate the restoration of the vitality of the Yangtze River and effectively protect the water ecological balance of the basin. The second half of the fishing ban on the Yangtze River is a strategic synergistic task in which high-level protection and high-quality development complement each other. The fishing ban is not a matter of simply prohibiting fishing and stopping there, but rather, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of "grasping the great protection without engaging in the great development" and "green water and green mountains are the gold and silver mountains", and at the same time, under the premise of insisting on On the premise of the ten-year fishing ban on the Yangtze River and the protection of the ecological environment, how to correctly deal with the relationship between protection and development to achieve a more scientific and balanced state

needs to be further explored, and to establish a sound policy mechanism suitable for the new phase of the ten-year fishing ban on the Yangtze River to promote the effectiveness of the policy and the enhancement of the governance capacity.

The 10-year fishing ban on the Yangtze River is a concrete manifestation of strengthening organizational leadership at the national level and implementing the people-oriented development concept. It is a concrete embodiment of the concept of people-oriented development. In-depth implementation of the fishing ban work related instructions, consolidate the existing results of work, do a good job of fishing ban work relay, we must adhere to the working mechanism of national coordination, inter-departmental collaboration, and responsibility implementation at the city and county levels, to ensure that continue to consolidate and improve the level of resettlement and protection of retired fishermen, cultivate the residents of the ecological awareness, enhance the degree of civilization of the community, and encourage social organizations to participate in the ecological protection and restoration of the work, so that the masses participate in the management, governance, and people share the results. The results will be shared by the people, so as to jointly promote green and sustainable development.

At the same time, the ten-year fishing ban on the Yangtze River is an important measure to effectively shoulder the political responsibility of building an ecological civilization and promote the deepening of Chinese-style modernization. The relevant strategy states: "Ecological civilization construction is a fundamental plan for the sustainable development of the Chinese nation." The implementation of the Yangtze River fishing ban, in order to promote the sustainable development of the Chinese nation, implies the simple philosophical thinking of the unity of heaven and man of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, fully embodies the ecological priority, green development of the goal-oriented, able to market will be able to recuperate and lead the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Delta with green development, and realize the harmonious coexistence of human beings and nature.

Yangtze River fishing ban as a holistic, systematic, long-term work, the fundamental purpose is to protect the Yangtze River ecosystem, the provinces and municipalities of the fishing ban on the overall situation is good, effective, but the Yangtze River is now at best "recovering from a serious illness", protection is not a ban, not only to continue to consolidate and enhance the results of the Yangtze River fishing ban, detailed implementation of the policy measures. In addition, the relevant departments, key staff and other members of the community should actively participate in the concerted efforts to truly pool efforts, refrain from large-scale development, and jointly promote large-scale protection, and unswervingly and unswervingly grasp the ten-year ban on fishing on the Yangtze River.

Since the comprehensive ban on fishing, we have made a lot of encouraging achievements, and the amount of fish resources and biodiversity are in a recovery trend, but we should also see that there is still a long way to go to truly realize the overall ecological balance of the Yangtze River. At present, the key waters of the Yangtze River Basin Aquatic Biological Integrity Index is still in the "poor" grade, the protection of some rare and endangered species is not optimistic, the employment of fishermen who have withdrawn from fishing is unstable, there is a rebound pressure on illegal fishing, angling management difficulties and other problems co-exist. The next step is to do a few key things to ensure that the fishing ban is long-lasting and effective.

3 The Yangtze River Basin "ten years of fishing ban" facing the reality of the dilemma

To effectively implement the national strategic deployment, it is essential to address several key issues, recognize and resolve the challenges and difficulties of the fishing ban, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Yangtze River fishing ban and achieve the overall goal of comprehensive protection of the Yangtze River. The Yangtze River fishing ban is regarded as the most challenging administrative enforcement measure in the history of China's efforts to protect the Yangtze River, facing numerous difficulties.

First, the challenge lies in the broad scope of the work. As a vital ecological treasure trove and ecological barrier for China, the Yangtze River connects the main and tributary rivers, lakes, and reservoirs along its course. The fishing ban policy covers the "One River, Two Lakes and Seven Rivers" as well as 332 aquatic biodiversity conservation areas. The Yangtze River Estuary Fishing Ban Management Zone spans over 4,000 square kilometers. The vast and dispersed regulatory waters make it difficult to investigate and prosecute illegal fishing cases smoothly. The entire process of evidence collection, judgment, tracking, and apprehension relies on manual handling, which is time-consuming and arduous, significantly increasing the difficulty of advancing the fishing ban. Therefore, the enforcement mechanism for the fishing ban urgently needs to be further implemented and improved.

Second, the challenge lies in the lengthy work cycle. The 10-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River is based on a comprehensive consideration of ecological needs and current conditions, and it is a protracted battle that must be won. Years of excessive exploitation have severely degraded the ecological functions of the Yangtze River basin. Implementing a 10-year fishing ban and simultaneously improving the habitat environment for aquatic organisms can break the vicious cycle caused by overfishing, gradually enhance biodiversity levels, and effectively restore the water ecological balance of

the Yangtze River basin. From a practical perspective, previous phased fishing bans have failed to meet the sustained needs of aquatic organisms' growth cycles. Implementing a ten-year fishing ban and voluntarily abandoning the exploitative development model of "draining the pond to catch all the fish" is a necessity dictated by the current situation.

Third, the challenge lies in the significant regulatory pressure. The covert nature of illegal fishing activities, coupled with their unpredictable timing and locations, makes it difficult for enforcement agencies to investigate, gather evidence, enforce laws, and coordinate across departments. Illegal fishing often occurs in remote water areas or at night, and it is highly mobile, making it challenging for enforcement personnel to conduct long-term surveillance or make on-site arrests. Meanwhile, the destruction and disposal of illegally caught fish are relatively straightforward, further complicating the process of obtaining effective evidence. Additionally, the threshold for criminal prosecution of illegal fishing is high, while administrative penalties are low, making it difficult to establish an effective deterrent. Due to consumer habits, there remains a persistent demand for "Yangtze River wild fish," necessitating efforts to sever the sales supply chain.

Fourth, enforcement capacity is insufficient. Fishery ban enforcement relies on professionals who understand the law to exercise enforcement authority and prevent abuse of power by relevant departments. Therefore, enforcement teams must accelerate the training of enforcement personnel's professional capabilities and address the practical challenges of uneven enforcement personnel quality, aging staff, and shortages of personnel. Additionally, due to the vast and dispersed nature of fishery ban areas, sufficient enforcement tools must be provided to frontline staff to prevent the phenomenon of fishery enforcement authority being "delegated but not effectively utilized."

Fifth, it is difficult for fishermen who have retired to change jobs and employment is unstable. Fishing ban in the Yangtze River is not only an ecological project, but also a livelihood project. No-fishing policy is an important measure to protect and restore the ecological environment of the Yangtze River, but for a large number of fishermen in the Yangtze River basin, it means the livelihood problem of returning to catch and changing jobs. However, it is not a one-off job for fishermen to change jobs. How to ensure that fishermen can "withdraw smoothly, settle stably, and achieve prosperity" is the key to steadily implement the strategy of protecting the Yangtze River. Whether the fishermen who have retired can stay steady in changing jobs is largely affected by macroeconomic development and employment situation.

The ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River is an important strategic decision for the benefit of the country and the people and generations. Steadily promoting the ban on fishing and consolidating the achievements of the Yangtze River management are related to the sustainable development of the Chinese nation. It is necessary to face the risk challenges in the ban on fishing and fishing, strengthen law enforcement and supervision by combining dredging and blocking, continuously improve the coordination mechanism of the ban on fishing in the Yangtze River, optimize and improve the operation mechanism of local special work, compact the responsibility of local subjects, guide citizens and social groups to participate in the supervision of the ban on fishing and fishing and ecological restoration, and fully implement the relevant national arrangements.

4 Based on the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River, promote the construction of a new pattern of high-level protection and governance

The relevant strategic spirit of promoting the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt profoundly explains the inherent requirements and development direction of Chinese modernization in which man and nature coexist harmoniously, avoiding the fracture of material changes between man and nature. The Yangtze River has closed fishing for ten years and attached importance to important relations such as development and protection, environment and people's livelihood, realizing the unity of man and nature in purpose and regularity. In order to continue the virtuous circle of mutual promotion and complementarity with the overall work of great protection, it is necessary to promote the construction of a new pattern of Yangtze River basin governance.

First, we must improve our political stance and strengthen the responsibility mechanism for fishing ban and withdrawal efforts. It is an important political task to promote the ban on fishing in the Yangtze River basin, and it is also an unshirkable responsibility to reward the construction of ecological civilization through the towns in the basin. Local governments should firmly shoulder their responsibilities, so that the main responsible comrades can personally take the lead and take the initiative to implement research and deployment and on-the-spot supervision. In order to better promote protection and better support and serve the Chinese modernization drive, all localities have strengthened organizational leadership and systematic planning. While advancing the overall work of fishing ban and fishermen's resettlement, they have always kept the relevant policies in mind, implemented the work plan for the long-term mechanism of fishing ban in the river basin, ensured the consolidation of governance achievements, and strived to win the tough battle of fishing ban in the Yangtze River.

Secondly, we should focus on the key work and implement comprehensive rule of law. Yangtze River ecological

restoration is a long-term complex process, and continue to consolidate the results of the fishing ban need to rely on the rule of law, strengthen law enforcement and supervision, crack down on illegal fishing behavior, and promote the follow-up ban on the rule of law, so that the fishing ban and the rule of law is unified, the focus of the work of the law has a basis. Policies should be done to strictly prohibit all kinds of productive fishing in the Yangtze River Basin, electric fishing nets and angling, etc., in accordance with the law to severely investigate and deal with illegal catches of prohibited persons, illegal income; governments should synchronize law enforcement actions in the basin, improve the inter-regional and inter-departmental law enforcement and cooperation mechanisms, and strengthen the fisheries law enforcement and supervision; in the face of all kinds of "three no" ships to be Faced with various "three-no" ships, we must demolish all that should be demolished and show no leniency, the root of the illegal chain of fishing to cut off, and strengthen the standardized management of all types of vessels in prohibited waters; increase the efforts of remediation of non-compliance with the rules and regulations of the ship, to eliminate the hidden dangers of illegal fishing.

Third, we must adhere to the people-oriented, properly do a good job of fishermen's livelihood. In the face of the problem of fishermen's resettlement, a multi-pronged approach to the proper resettlement of retired fishermen. Local governments have basically realized that they should help and protect fishermen as much as possible, and have timely grasped the changes in their willingness to be employed, their ability to be employed and their need for assistance, so as to improve the resilience and flexibility of the protection policy. A variety of ways to drive fishermen to switch to production and industry. We should do a good job in ensuring the resettlement of retired fishermen, make good use of the subsidies from the central government and local governments to support the resettlement of fishermen, and make concerted efforts to promote the proper resettlement of retired fishermen. In addition, the provinces have not only achieved positive results in broadening the employment of fishermen, in order to consolidate the effectiveness of the ban on fishing, the localities have also implemented the policy of subsidizing fishermen's pension insurance contributions, helping to solve the problem of medical care for retired fishermen, and fully implementing the pension insurance policy, which has effectively enhanced the sense of acquisition, happiness and security of fishermen.

Fourth, we should strengthen ecological protection and restoration to promote harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Continuously strengthen the key areas of pollution control, clear to integrate the water environment, water ecology, water resources, promote the Yangtze River upstream, downstream and downstream synergistic management, in-depth implementation of urban sewage and garbage, industrial wastewater, agricultural drainage, and other key areas of the lunch governance, the implementation of the Yangtze River Basin key lakes ecological protection and restoration of the water, the construction of the community of life between human beings and nature and the realization of a fundamental way of symbiosis between the two. In addition, all regions need to vigorously and orderly carry out the protection of the entire life history of rare species. They should effectively promote the implementation of the action plan for the rescue of rare and endangered aquatic organisms such as the Chinese sturgeon, the Yangtze sturgeon and the Yangtze finless porpoise, formulate "one species, one policy" targeted protection measures, promote the implementation of major protection and restoration projects, promote the restoration of natural reproduction in the wild, standardize the release of fish and the monitoring of resource surveys and strengthen the supervision of fishery-related projects.

Fifth, it is necessary to mobilize the society to participate in supervision and strengthen the publicity and education of fishing ban. In promoting the ten-year fishing ban, all provinces and cities have further enhanced the awareness of risk prevention and control of fishermen and other residents by organizing hidden danger investigation and risk assessment. The main work units actively collect feedback on the interests of fishermen who have returned to catch, find the signs of related problems as early as possible, fully control negative public opinion, and resolve the problems in the bud. At the same time, we should do a good job in the publicity and promotion of the fishing ban, which not only improves the awareness of risk prevention and control of law enforcement officers, but also enhances the awareness of collaborative supervision of other residents, and enhances the sense of participation and responsibility of all members of society in the fishing ban and social governance. In addition, mobilize news media and communication platforms in various forms, give full play to all kinds of grass-roots law popularization positions, scientifically publicize the great significance and related policies of the Yangtze River fishing ban, widely publicize the serious harm of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, respond to the concerns of the masses in time, ensure that the awareness of fishing ban is deeply rooted in people's hearts, and comprehensively enhance citizens' awareness of risk prevention and control.

Sixth, we must strengthen overall leadership and promote the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. Since the fishing ban was fully launched in 2021, various tasks have achieved remarkable results in stages. In the next step, with the deepening of the fishing ban policy, all towns and regions in the Yangtze River Basin will speed up scientific and technological innovation, promote the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, pay close attention to the formulation of new formats and models, enhance the resilience of industrial development, systematically plan, carefully deploy and make solid progress, lay a solid foundation for sustainable economic development, increase investment in ecological protection and economic development and construction actions, and promote a virtuous circle

of ecological beauty, industrial prosperity and people's prosperity in the basin.

At present, the fishing ban needs more sustainable and normalized development. Taking the fishing ban in the Yangtze River as the breakthrough point, we should strengthen coordination with major national strategies such as the development of the Yangtze River Delta, green development, and comprehensive rural revitalization, and promote the construction of a new pattern of high-level protection and governance. While implementing the construction of ecological civilization and comprehensively governing the country according to law, we will promote the fishing ban to achieve greater, more stable and sustainable results. To further promote the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, we should strengthen systematic thinking and precise policy implementation, promote it at a high level, put people first, continuously optimize policies in accordance with the national strategic deployment, comprehensively strengthen organization and implementation, make overall use of state subsidies and social resources, establish and improve policy mechanisms suitable for the new stage of the ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River, and promote the improvement of policy efficiency and governance capacity. In the second half of the fishing ban in the Yangtze River, we should continue to be guided by the concept that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets", adhere to the goal orientation and strategic measures, correctly handle the relationship between the protection and development of the Yangtze River Basin, successively carry out scientific monitoring and evaluation and policy and system innovation, and unswervingly push forward the ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River based on the principle of jointly protecting and not engaging in large-scale development.

About the Author

Yan Song, female, master, research direction: basic theory of marxism.

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