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"Overfishing or Over Reacting? Management of Fisheries in the Pantanal Wetland, Brazil"

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Historically, small-scale inland fisheries have been overlooked. Management practices based on industrial fishing, rarely take into account vital factors such as complex socio-environmental relations. This paper aims to help address this gap, contributing to a better understanding of small-scale inland fisheries. It uses the Pantanal wetland of Brazil as a case study, in which policymakers established restrictive fishing rules based on claims that local overfishing had caused numbers of recreational fishing tourists to decline. Through multiple regressions, participatory observation and mapping, this paper deconstructs the environmental narrative and uncovers the area's complex traditional system of use. The case study, firstly illustrates the adverse consequences of misconceived top-down fishing management practices and, how such environmental narratives may be deconstructed. Then it presents important aspects of customary management in inland floodplains fisheries, including high levels of mobility within a common property regime and unexploitable reserves. It concludes by analysing recently proposed categories of property regimes, identifying fundamental elements that must be taken into account in designing appropriate management policies in inland floodplain fisheries. (Text from author's abstract)

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