

Lobster reserves in coastal Norway

- The process towards establishment



Photo: Øystein Paulsen
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Introduction

Four lobster reserves (IUCN category IV MPAs: species management area) were established in coastal Skagerrak in 2006, following an establishment process that started in 2001 and involved management officials, commercial fishers and researchers.

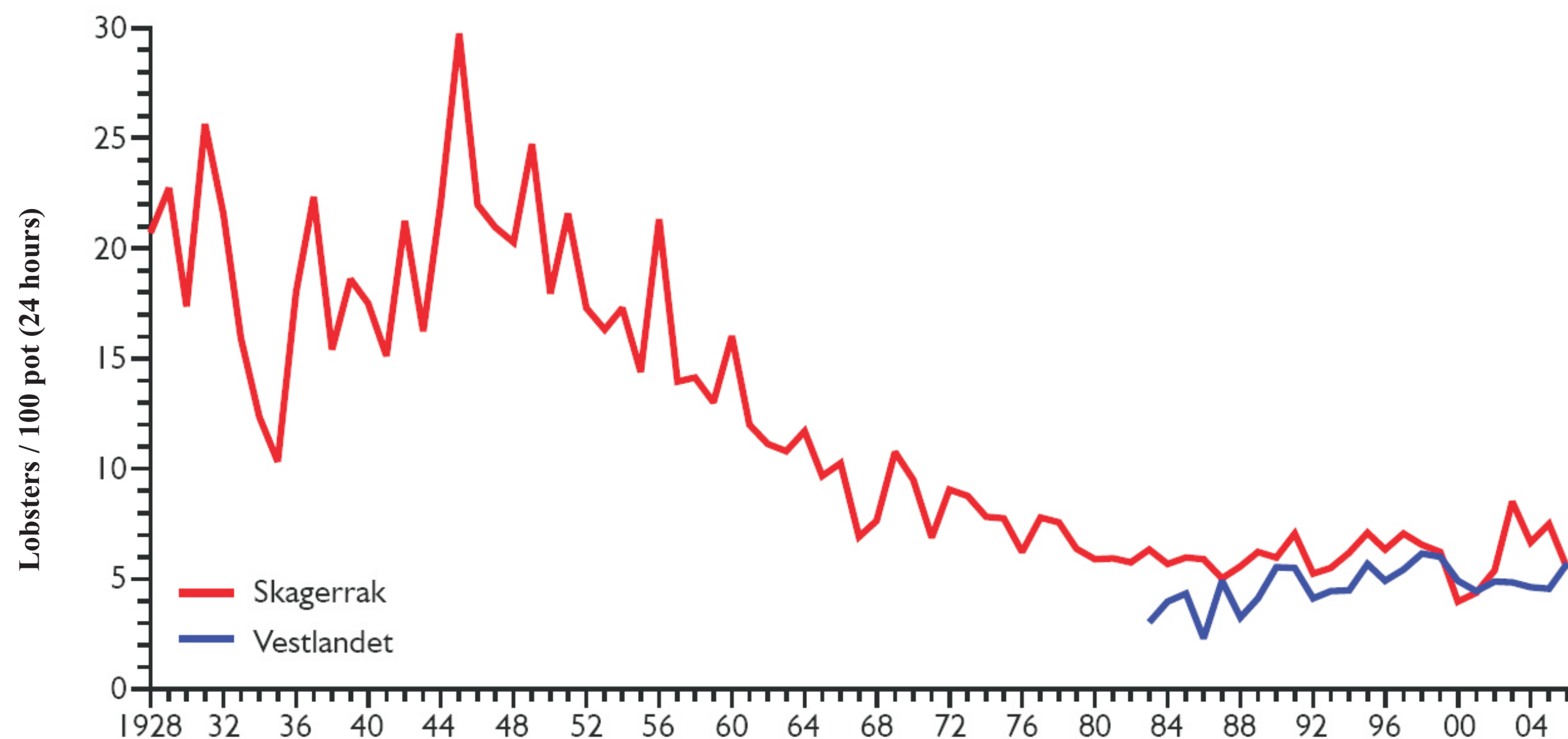


Figure 1: Catch Per Unit Effort of european lobster in **Skagerrak** and the **West coast** of southern Norway 1928-2006. Lobsters/100 pots/24 hours

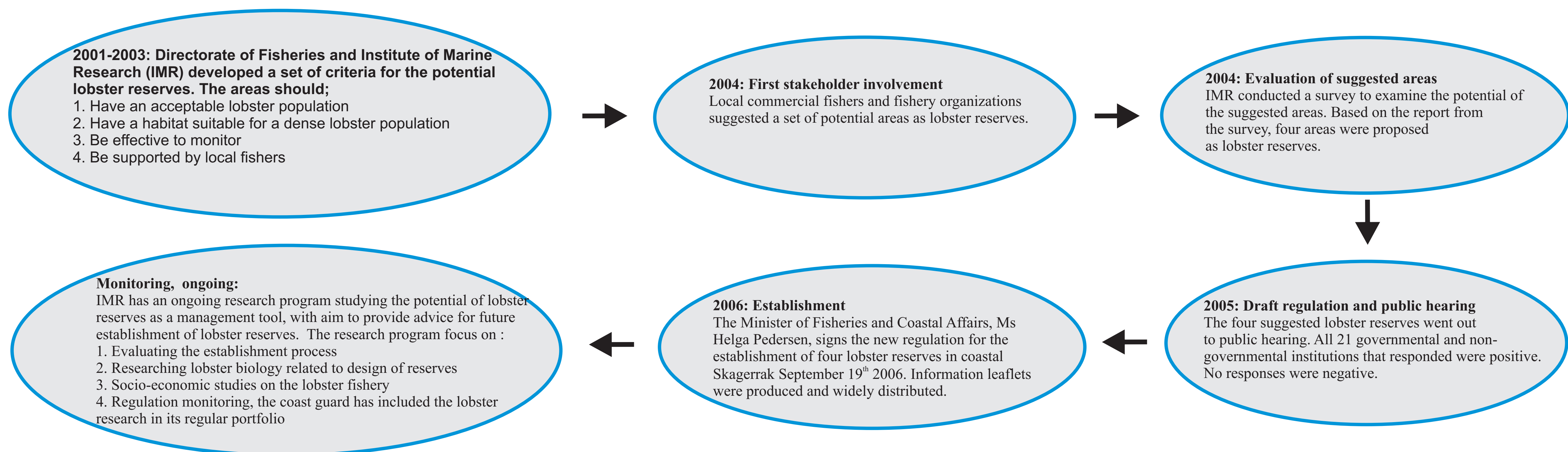
The lobster fishery

During the 1950s the Norwegian fishery accounted for some of the highest annual landings of European lobster in Northern Europe. This situation has changed dramatically, with current landings and catch per unit effort (CPUE) at a historically all time low (figure 1). Existing management regimes have not been able to rebuild the lobster population.

Lobster reserves

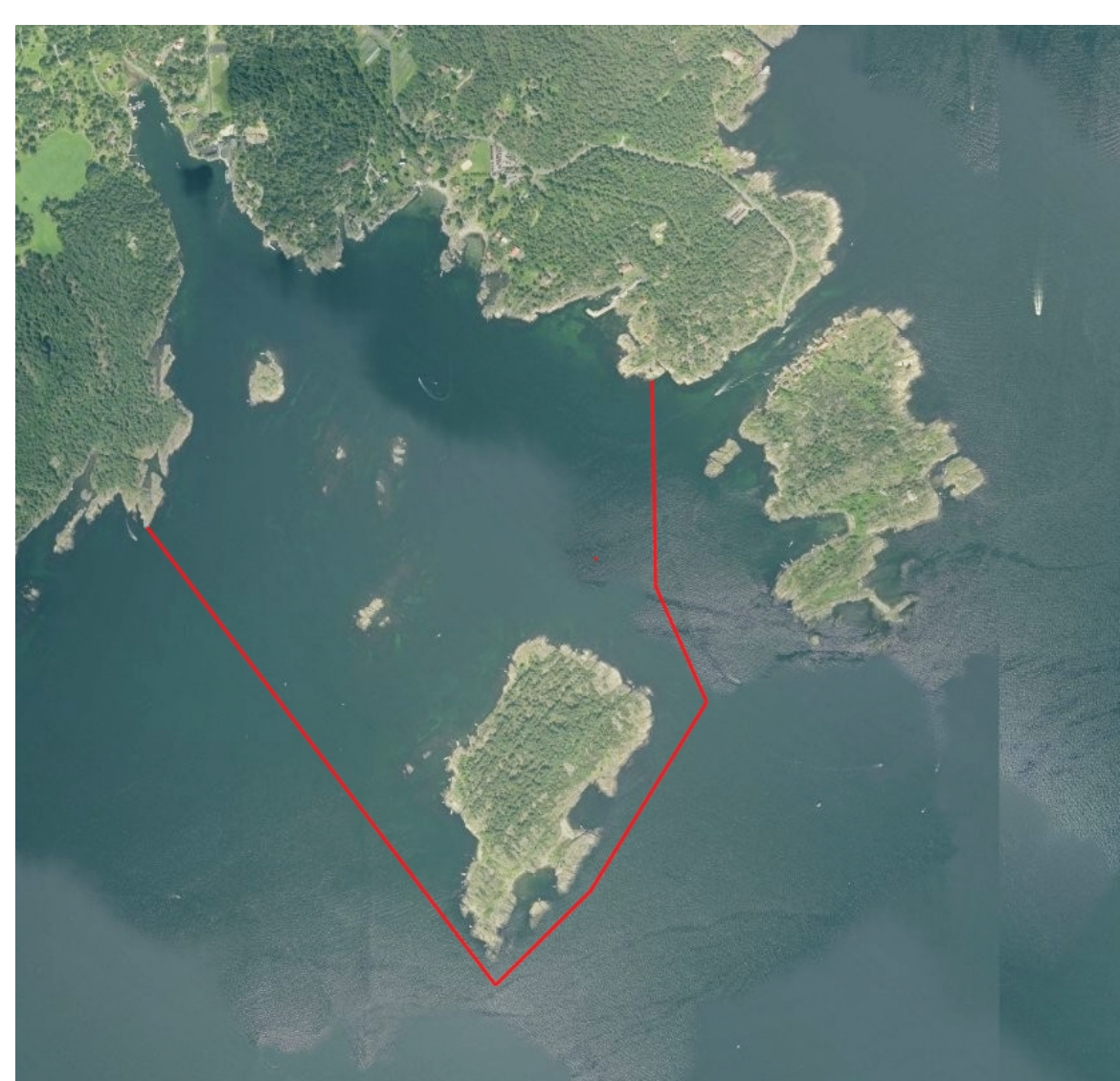
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are a promising tool for preventing overexploitation of marine biological resources. However, there are still few MPAs in temperate waters. The lobster MPAs along the coast of Skagerrak, established in September 2006, may provide indications on the potential of MPAs in the process of rebuilding the lobster population in Norway. The Norwegian Institute of Marine Research (IMR) is now conducting a broad scope research program focused on coastal MPAs, including both biological and socio-economical aspects. This research is supported by the Norwegian Research Council through the "Oceans and Coastal Areas" program.

The establishment process

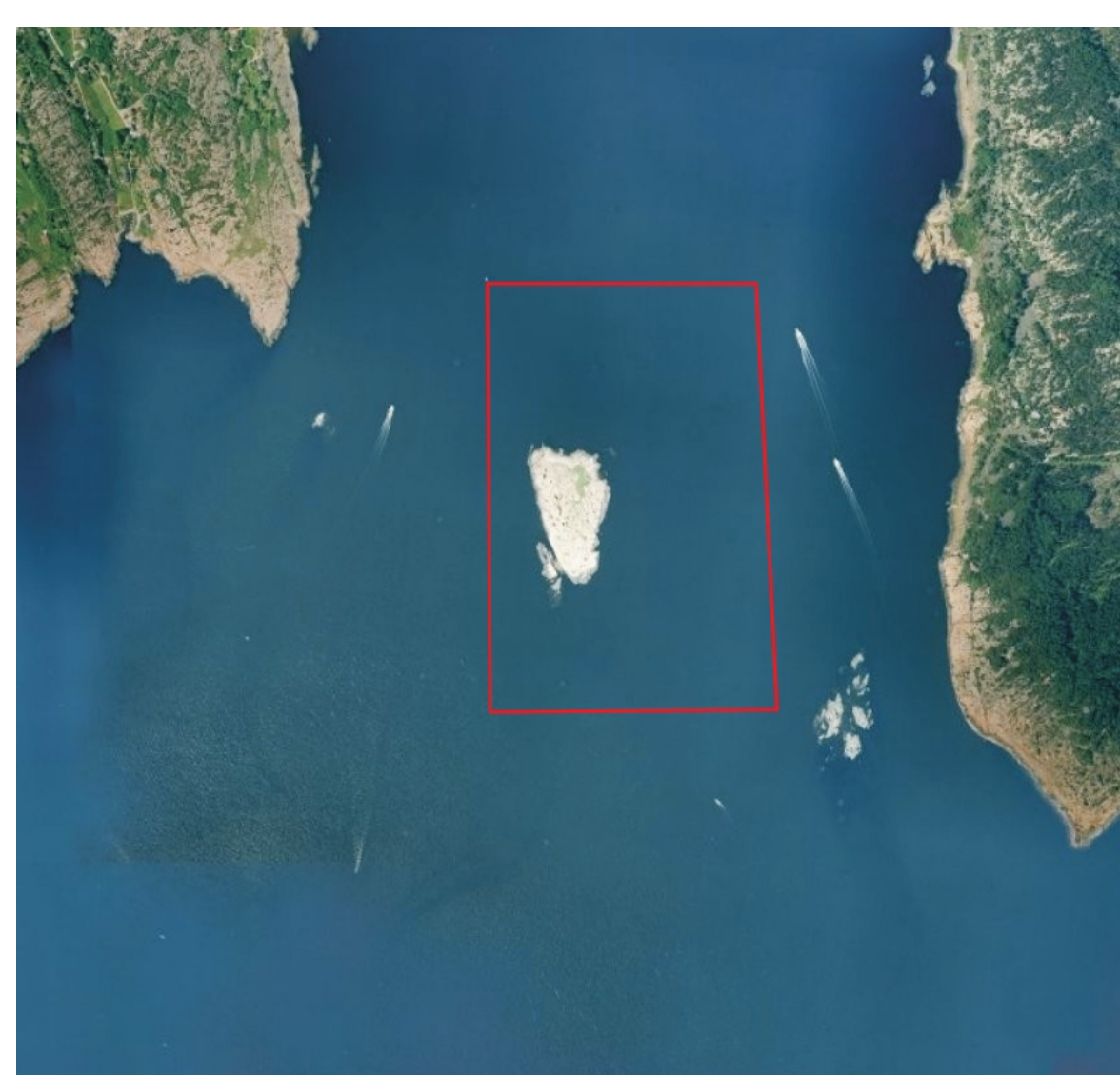


Lessons learned

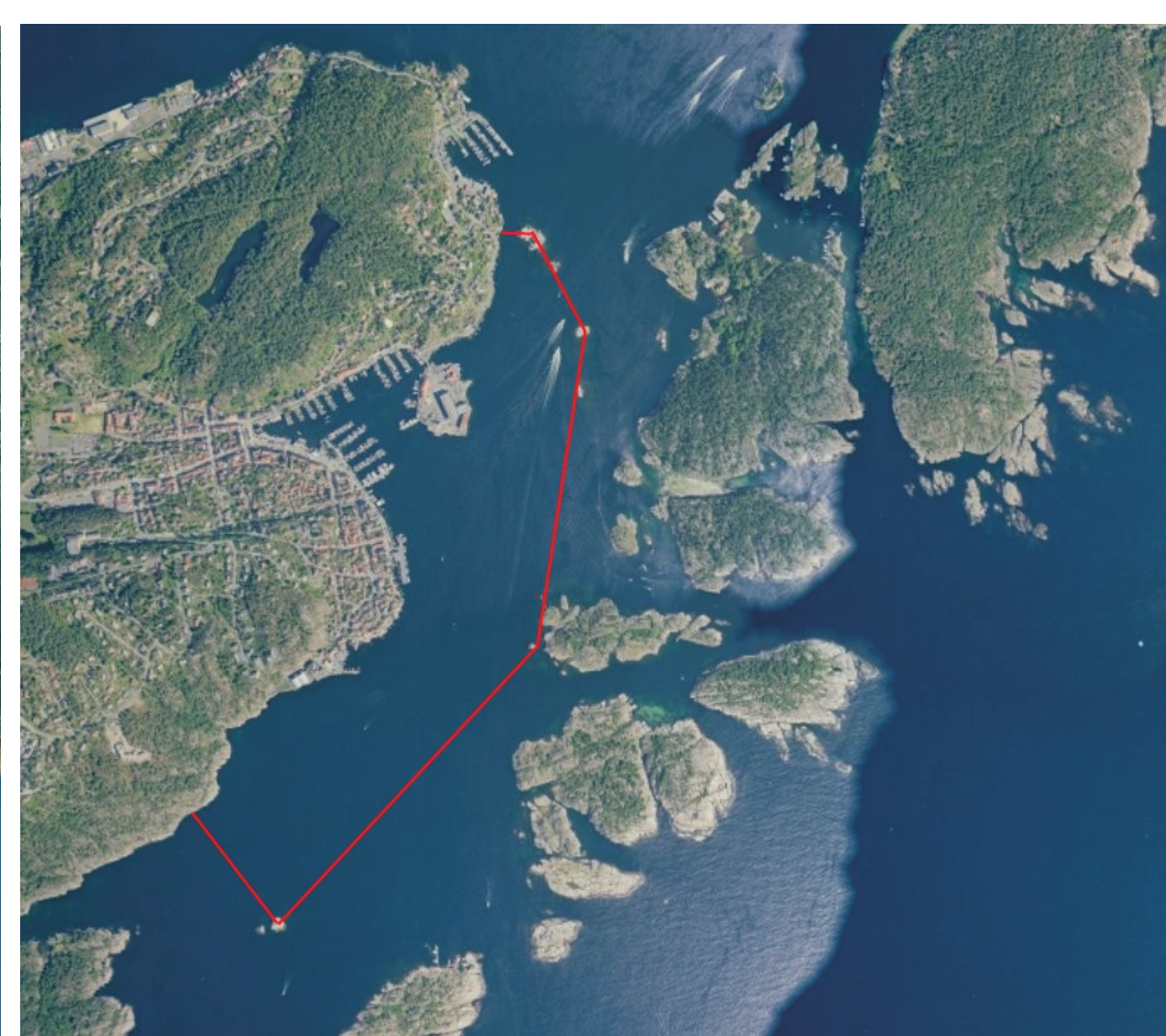
Contributions from stakeholders, such as local fishers, have been an important factor in the process towards establishment of the four lobster reserves. However, recognising and involving all stakeholders is a challenging task, especially the highly diverse and less organised group of recreational fishers. The research group is currently analysing how recreational fishers' can be involved in future MPA establishment processes. Involvement of all stakeholders, realistic expectations, timing and a suitable time schedule are considered among the most important aspects to secure a positive process.



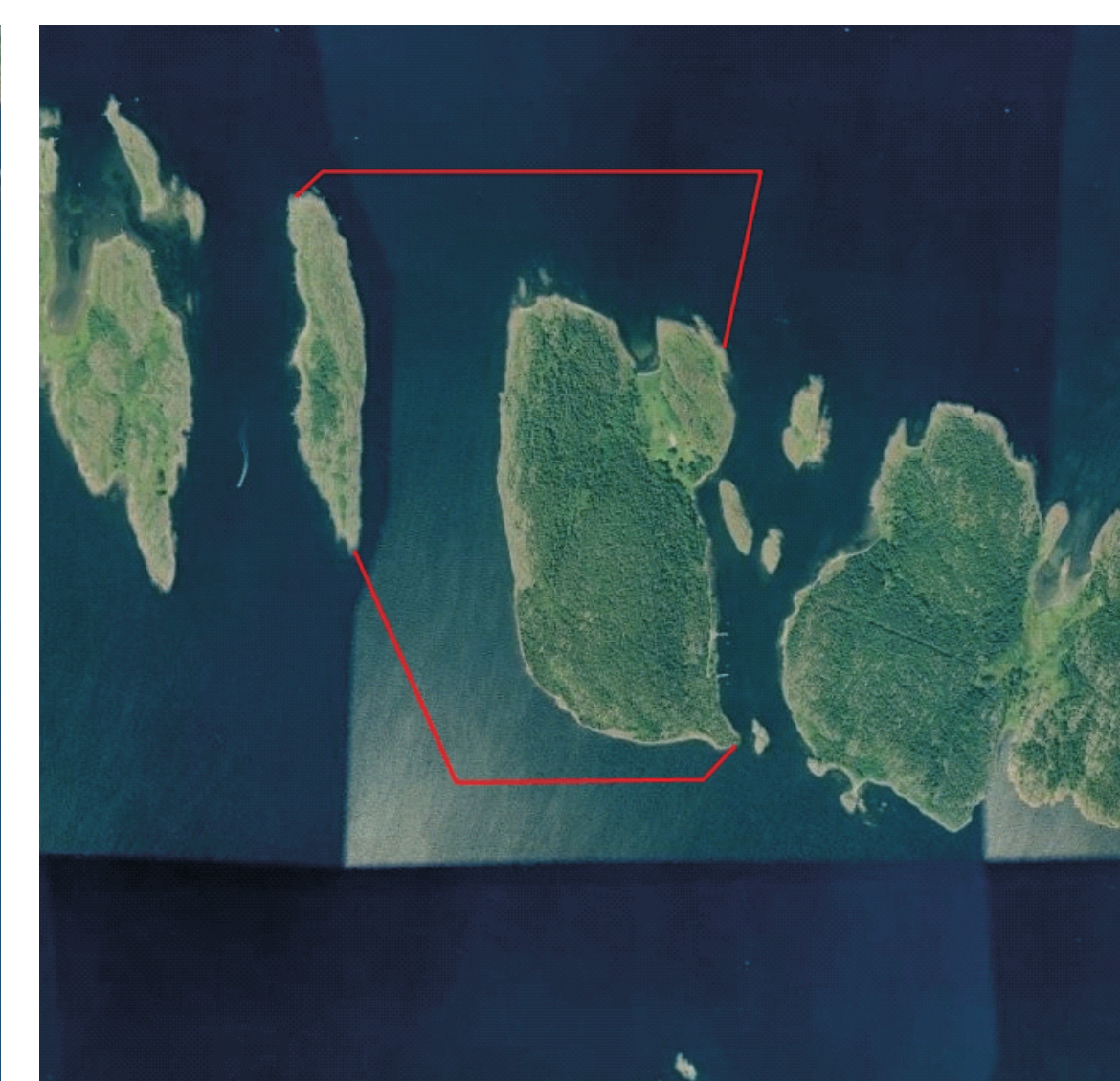
Flødevigen lobster reserve, Arendal
Size: 1 km²



Kvern skjær lobster reserve, Hvaler
Size: 0.5 km²



Risør harbour lobster reserve, Risør
Size: 0.6 km²



Bolærne lobster reserve, Nøtterøy
Size: 0.7 km²