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Dear Dr. Game,

I am pleased to submit our manuscript “Exploring the role of access regimes over stewardship behaviors of small-scale fishers” for consideration as a letter in *Conservation Letters*.

Local environmental stewardship is crucial to secure the sustainable use of natural common-pool resources. An approach increasingly applied by nations to foster local stewardship in small-scale fisheries is the formal implementation of collective exclusive access regimes. Chile was a pioneer in introducing collective exclusive access as a legally binding policy to manage its benthic resources. In this work, we exploit Chileans’ fishers experience with formal exclusive access to address the relevant question of whether stewardship behaviors are more prevalent under this type of regime relative to open access.

We compare fishers’ decisions in a common-pool resource game framed as the harvest of Loco (*Concholepas concholepas*), which is managed under collective exclusive access in real life, with decisions made in the same game framed as the fishing of Hake (*Merluccius gayi*), which is fished under pseudo open access. Our approach is novel in that we use framing to prompt differences in behavior between situations with the same monetary incentives, but arguably different social and intrinsic motivations.

The evidence we present supports the premise that collective exclusive access can foster the internalization of key stewardship behaviors, such as compliance and peer-enforcement. However, we observe that this is not the case in in every fishers’ association.

Our findings are of great interest to managers and policy makers involved in co-management as well as to scholars working in social-ecological systems and natural resources management. Our results also speak to the increasing number of environmental scientists and economists implementing lab-in-the-field experiments. Given the interests of the broad readership of *Conservation letters*, we consider it to be the best journal to feature our work.

On behalf of my co-authors, who have read and approved the enclosed version, I state that this work has not yet been published and is only under consideration for publication by *Conservation Letters*.

Thank you for your consideration.   
Sincerely,

Maria Ignacia Rivera-Hechem

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