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FACTSHEET

2011



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Offshore Fisheries

ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PACIFIC TUNA

Fishing Problem



“A RECENT STUDY BY THE WORLD FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION ESTIMATES THE COST OF ILLEGAL AND UNREPORTED FISHING ALONE AT US\$10-23.5 BILLION PER YEAR.”

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is often an organised criminal activity, professionally coordinated and truly global. For example, a pirate vessel may appear to be owned by a company in the Caribbean but is really owned by someone in Spain; it might have a Russian skipper and crew from the Philippines or mainland China; and it may be flagged to Togo, in Africa. The ventures use various strategies to evade apprehension and avoid laws and agreements that protect fish populations and other marine resources.

IUU fishing includes the following:

- i. Fishing in contravention of the laws and regulations of a country or an international agreement;
- ii. Misreporting catches to the relevant authority;
- iii. Fishing in a way that undermines management efforts to conserve marine species and ecosystems.

Impacts of IUU fishing

Key fisheries such as tuna and mixed fisheries (shrimps and fish living near the bottom of the ocean) are usually affected by IUU fishing. Vessels involved in IUU activities are largely from Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFNs), some of which may be registered with open register countries. Their environmental impacts include shark bycatch and in some areas also turtle catches associated with purse seine fishing using Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) or with longlines.

The most obvious economic impact of IUU fishing on developing countries is direct loss of the value of catches that could be taken by the coastal state in the absence of IUU fishing. Apart from the loss to gross domestic product (GDP), actual revenue can accrue to the coastal state in the form of landing fees, licence fees, taxes and other levies, which are payable by legal fishing operators. In addition to these direct economic contributions, there are indirect and induced impacts. These include the impacts resulting from loss

Impacts of IUU fishing (continued)

of income and employment in other industries and activities in the supply chain upstream and downstream from the fishing operation itself. On the upstream side, IUU fishing reduces the demand for fishing gear, boats and equipment, and other inputs that otherwise might be present. Downstream from fishing there is fish processing and packaging, marketing and transport that may be negatively affected. Any associated reduction in fishing incomes will also have impacts on the demand for consumption goods by fishing families.

Source: MRAG, Marine Resource Assessment Group Ltd (2005)

According to Environmental Justice Foundation, a UK-based charity, IUU fishing also contributes to unsustainable impacts on both target species and the ecosystem. When IUU fishermen fail to comply with rules designed to protect the marine environment, including restrictions on the harvest of juveniles, closed spawning grounds, and gear modifications designed to minimise the bycatch of non-target species, they inflict damage on vulnerable species such as coral reefs, seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles, and marine biodiversity as a whole.



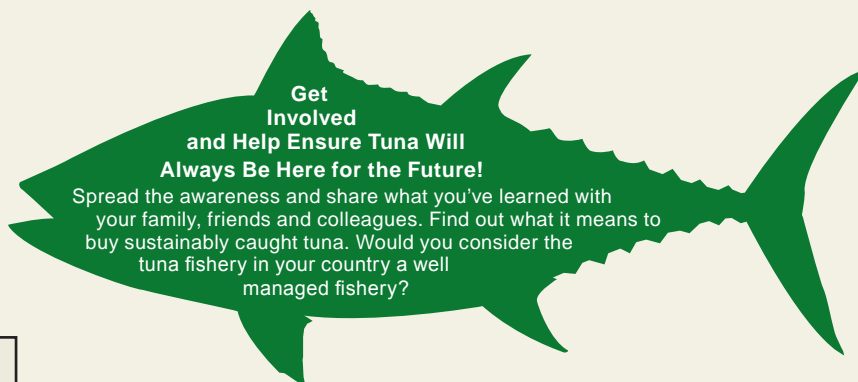
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Flags of Convenience

The biggest problem for fisheries management and the fight against IUU fishing are so-called flags of convenience (FoC).

Under existing laws governing the high seas, i.e. areas of ocean that do not belong to any country, the law of the flag state - the country in which a vessel is registered - applies. So if a country either hasn't signed up to fishing agreements or doesn't enforce them, then vessels flagged to that country are able to plunder the high seas, and even other nations' waters, at will.

One industry source estimates that 1,300 fishing vessels greater than 24 meters are flying flags of convenience.



**Get Involved
and Help Ensure Tuna Will
Always Be Here for the Future!**

Spread the awareness and share what you've learned with your family, friends and colleagues. Find out what it means to buy sustainably caught tuna. Would you consider the tuna fishery in your country a well managed fishery?

For more information

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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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