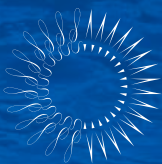


SUSTAINING THE BLUE PLANET

Advocating Globally for
Effective Oceans Governance
and Biodiversity Conservation



THE
PEW
ENVIRONMENT GROUP





THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Oceans cover 70 percent of the Earth's surface. They generate most of the oxygen in our atmosphere, detoxify and recycle much of our pollution and absorb vast quantities of carbon dioxide. Hundreds of millions of people depend directly or indirectly on marine resources for their livelihoods. However, the marine environment, once thought to be inexhaustible, is showing the damage caused by overexploitation and abuse.

Populations of marine species that were formerly considered abundant have experienced significant declines and now face an uncertain future. Scientists estimate, for example, that many species of large predatory fish have declined by up to 90 percent from historic levels.

In addition, the continued viability of ocean ecosystems and the services they provide are increasingly at risk. One report has found that 60 percent of coral reefs could be lost as early as 2030 because of fishing, pollution, disease, invasive alien species and coral bleaching resulting from



climate change. Given the important ecosystem services that healthy reef systems provide for fisheries, tourism and shoreline protection, this is particularly troubling. It is also worth noting that even though ocean ecosystems are critical to the overall health of our planet, less than 1 percent of the world's ocean environment has been protected in the form of no-take reserves in which no extractive activity, including fishing, is allowed. Moreover, there is virtually no protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity on the high seas (international waters).

The Pew Environment Group is the conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a nongovernmental organization that works globally to establish pragmatic, science-based policies that protect our oceans, preserve our wildlands and promote clean energy.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Much of the degradation in the marine environment can be attributed to human activities, chief of which is fishing. Marine species face numerous threats, including overfishing; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; destructive fishing practices, particularly from industrial fleets; and inadequate management and governance. When these threats are compounded by the impacts of climate change, it is harder for vulnerable species and ecosystems to recover, and many will not survive. The gaps in ocean governance are illustrated by recent statistics:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that 80 percent of global fisheries are either fully exploited or overexploited.
- More than half of the shark species caught in high seas fisheries are threatened or near-threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Some populations, such as porbeagle sharks and spiny dogfish sharks in the Atlantic, have been reduced by 90 percent or more.
- Populations of commercially important species such as Atlantic bluefin tuna have declined by up to 85 percent.



The loss of species and ecosystems radically changes the natural environment and brings unforeseen consequences. It also impacts the lives and livelihoods of local communities. People depend on healthy ecosystems for food security and revenue. Weak to nonexistent fisheries management in many parts of the world has contributed to the depletion of numerous stocks along with the habitats that are essential for their survival. Growing rates of species decline will continue unless sufficient conservation and management measures are implemented. The negative impacts of these losses in the marine environment will hit developing countries the hardest, particularly coastal and small island developing States. An effective global response is urgently needed.



PEW'S INTERNATIONAL MARINE WORK

A significant amount of the Pew Environment Group's work is oriented toward fisheries reform in the United States and internationally, with an emphasis on ecosystem-based management and the application of the precautionary principle in dealing with the management of living marine resources. Pew is committed to disseminating information to policymakers and the public about the causes, consequences and solutions for environmental problems, and it applies a range of tools in pursuit of practical, meaningful solutions, including applied science, public education and policy advocacy. As an international NGO, the Pew Environment Group is pleased to facilitate the communication of science-based research findings and expertise to aid decision makers and stakeholders in designing and adopting appropriate management mechanisms and policy decisions to ensure the sustainability of marine resources.



Pew's ocean work is structured around habitat conservation and strengthening of international fisheries governance, and we advocate for policies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of fish stocks. Globally, Pew works to:

- Combat IUU fishing by promoting stronger port and flag State measures and enhanced monitoring, control and surveillance within countries' waters and on the high seas.
- Enact science-based conservation and management measures for tuna, sharks and other pelagic fish through national and multilateral approaches.
- Cooperate with the United Nations and its various organizations and processes, RFMOs, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other treaties to ensure the sustainability of marine species and ecosystems and promote an environment that facilitates accountability and transparency of management in decision making and practices.



- Help governments protect and preserve some of our planet's most important and unspoiled marine ecosystems by working to establish oceanic-scale no-take marine reserves.
- Protect vulnerable deep-sea ecosystems from destructive fishing practices.

To adequately strengthen ocean governance, policy decisions need to incorporate the best available science. The failure to implement measures based on science and sound management has played a major role in the precipitous decline of numerous fish stocks that are subject to commercial fishing. Pew sponsors applied research to inform the policy debate on the best way to address and manage problems affecting the marine environment. These studies, conducted independently by scientists from universities and research institutions throughout the world, are subject to peer review and published in leading scientific journals. The findings are then communicated to policymakers, resource management agencies and regulatory bodies to help inform government decision making.



PEW'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL FORA

Commercially exploited marine species such as tuna and sharks are highly migratory, traveling across jurisdictional boundaries (so-called straddling stocks). Thus, management of these species does not fall under the jurisdiction of any one country. In areas beyond national jurisdiction, the conservation and management of marine species are under the purview of a number of multilateral fora and legal instruments. These include the United Nations and its various organizations and processes, regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES and others.

In an effort to achieve stronger conservation measures for the marine environment and the species within it, the Pew Environment Group engages with a number of multilateral institutions. These intergovernmental fora offer a critical opportunity to pursue numerous objectives relating to our marine conservation work and to collaborate with government policymakers to promote actions that will ensure a healthy future for marine species and ocean ecosystems. This, in turn, will ensure a sustainable future for millions of people worldwide.



For more information on the Pew Environment Group's programs,
please visit our website, www.PewEnvironment.org/IP.

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