



Small, sustainable fishing being undercut

Published: Aug. 26, 2008 at 4:33 PM

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Aug. 26 (UPI) -- University of British Columbia researchers in Canada say small fisheries are undermined by ill-conceived eco-labeling initiatives and unfair fuel subsidies.

Even though small fisheries produce almost as much catch using one-eighth the fuel of industrial rivals, they are being driven out of business by poor policies, argues a study published in the current issue of the journal Conservation Biology.

"They are our best hope at sustainable fisheries," says Daniel Pauly, Director of the UBC Fisheries Center and co-author of the study.

"Small-scale fisheries use fishing gear that are more selective and far less destructive to deep sea environments," added co-author Jennifer Jacquet. "As a result they discard very little unwanted fish and almost all of their catch is used for human consumption."

But governmental fuel subsidies up to 200 times what small fisheries receive and well-meaning but poorly thought out sustainable seafood initiatives such as eco-labeling have created a double whammy, they said.

"For the amount of resources invested, we haven't seen significant decrease in demand for species for which the global stocks are on the edge of collapse," says Pauly. "Market-based initiatives, while well-intentioned, unduly discriminate against small scale fishers for their lack of resources to provide data for certification."