

Climate change means winners and losers in fisheries: B.C. study

BY LARRY PYNN , VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 8, 2009



Fishermen hauling out tuna during the "Almadraba" (fishing of the tuna) in Zahara de los Atunes, southern Spain. A study published in the journal *Global Change Biology* predicts climate change through 2055 may lead to a 30-to-70-per -cent increase in catches at higher latitudes and a drop of up to 40 per cent in the tropics. Norway, Greenland, Alaska and the east coast of Russia stand to benefit the most, while the biggest losers could include Indonesia, the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii), Chile and China.

Photograph by: Jose Luis Roca, AFP/Getty Images

Warming oceans over the next half century will hurt fisheries on the west coast while benefiting those in the east, predicts a joint study by the University of B.C. and Princeton University.

The west coast may experience a decrease in catch levels of almost 20 per cent, the study suggests, while the east coast may get a 10-per-cent boost.

Published in the journal *Global Change Biology*, the study predicts climate change through 2055 may lead to a 30-to-70-per -cent increase in catches at higher latitudes and a drop of up to 40 per cent in the tropics.

Norway, Greenland, Alaska and the east coast of Russia stand to benefit the most, while the biggest losers could include Indonesia, the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii), Chile and China.

The study, led by UBC Fisheries professor Daniel Pauly, cautioned that more research is needed to account for the multitude of factors that affect every ocean ecosystem.

While warmer waters might attract new species to colder regions, the rise in temperature might make the environment inhospitable to current species in the region that cannot move to even higher latitudes.

The study analyzed 1,066 species ranging from krill to sharks that constitute roughly 70 per cent of the world's catch and used models that included a large number of environmental and biological factors that affect fisheries.

For further information, visit www.seaaroundus.org/about.

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