

Climate Change To Cause Massive Fish Migration

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Climate change will trigger a massive fish migration toward the poles by mid-century, leading to numerous local extinctions, scientists said on Thursday.

"The impact of climate change on marine biodiversity and fisheries is going to be huge," said the study's lead author, William Cheung, of the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia, eastern England.

Using a massive computer model, scientists studied what might happen to 1,066 aquatic species by 2050 according to three scenarios for global warming.

US fishermen may see a 50 percent reduction in Atlantic cod populations, they reported in the journal *Fish and Fisheries*, to be presented at a meeting in Chicago on Friday.



"We'll see a major redistribution of many species because of climate change," Cheung said. "On average, fish will change their distribution by more than 40 km (25 miles) per decade in the next 50 years," he told Reuters.

Some species will face a high risk of extinction, including the striped rock cod in the Antarctic and the St. Paul rock lobster in the Southern Ocean.

"We must act now to adapt our fisheries management and conservation policies to minimize harm to marine life and to our society," said Cheung.

"We can use our knowledge to improve the design of marine protected areas which are adaptable to changes in distribution of the species."

While Arctic Norway will see increased populations, countries in the tropics will suffer most from reductions in catches, Cheung said. "Some species will face a high risk of extinction, including Striped Rock Cod in the Antarctic and St Paul Rock Lobster in the Southern Ocean," the University of East Anglia said.

"Economically, people in the tropics and subtropics likely will suffer most, because fish are so important in their diets and because they have limited capacity to develop other sources of income and food," said Edward Allison, director of policy, economics and social science at WorldFish.

"We believe it is urgent to start identifying these vulnerable countries, because the damage will be greatly compounded unless national governments and international institutions like the World Bank act now to include the fish sector in plans for helping the poor cope with climate change."

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