

Fishing could feed 20 million more if better managed: study

(AFP) – 1 day ago

VANCOUVER — A landmark study by scientists and economists has estimated that better management of the world's wild fisheries could feed 20 million more people, especially in impoverished countries.

Researchers at the Fisheries Centre in Vancouver released Tuesday the first global estimate of the value of the industry, set at 240 billion dollars, but warned that government subsidies encourage over-fishing that is destroying the resource.

The work is "the first big-picture analysis of the value fisheries have for people worldwide," said Rebecca Goldberg, a scientist with the Pew Environment Group, which funded the research. The reports were released via a telephone news conference Tuesday from the Pew Trusts in Washington.

Key findings of the series of four reports, published Tuesday in the Journal of Bioeconomics, include:

- Global wild fisheries are worth 240 billion dollars annually when multipliers such as processing are included.
- Fisheries could feed 20 million more people if over-fishing were eliminated.
- Ocean-related sports fishing, whale watching and diving, account for one million jobs, a value up to 47 billion dollars.
- Of 27 billion dollars in annual fishery subsidies, such as for cheap fuel, 16 billion dollars worsens over-fishing that destroys fish stocks.

"Maintaining healthy fisheries makes good economic sense," said Rashid Sumaila, director of the Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia in western Canada, which led the research.

The value of fisheries was historically measured by the landed value at dockside, which in 2000 was 85 billion dollars worldwide, Sumaila told AFP in an interview.

The study was the first globally to put a figure on the industry taking into account the many economic spin-offs, he said.

"In terms of the global economy, this is not a big amount, you're talking a small fraction of trillions," Sumaila acknowledged. But he said an accurate assessment of the ocean harvest -- as well as its food security worth -- will give governments an incentive to better manage stocks.

Sumaila told AFP up to half of all wild fish populations are now over-fished and in the process of "crashing" or have already crashed -- as did once-bountiful northern cod in the North Atlantic nearly 20 years ago.

"If we don't do something now, we are likely to lose most of these benefits," said Sumaila. With better management, "we could have met the needs of 20 million people in malnourished countries."

He recommended governments start by redirecting industry subsidies from fuel and other areas that worsen over-fishing, to research and helping fishers adopt sustainable methods.

"Large developed countries are spending twice the amount of taxpayer money on global fisheries subsidies that encourage overfishing than they are on subsidies that protect oceans," said the report.

The researchers used data from international catches of wild fish in 2000, within the economic zones of all countries. Further research now under way using data up to 2008 will include an analysis of the corporate structure of the fishing industry, said Sumaila.

Copyright © 2010 AFP. All rights reserved. More »

Related articles

Fishing could feed 20 million more if better managed: study
AFP - 1 day ago

World's fisheries worth US\$240B: BC study
CTV.ca - 1 day ago

Global Fisheries Research Finds Promise and Peril
PR Newswire (press release) - 2 days ago

[Fishing Guide BC](#)

Guided Sturgeon & Salmon Fishing in British Columbias Best Rivers
www.fishingguidebc.ca

[Kyuquot Sound Lodge](#)

Sea Otter Lodge offers unmatched fishing and wilderness adventures.
www.SeaOtterLodgeBC.com

[MT Spring Creek Fly Fish](#)

Montana Fishing Guest House
Yellowstone River. Spring Creeks



Fisheries could feed 20 million more people if over-fishing were eliminated

Map

