

World running out of productive fishing ground

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The fishing industry mainly run by large fishing companies

According to a Canadian study, the world is running out of fishing ground due to depleted supplies of fish from unsustainable fishing practices.

According to researchers from the University of British Columbia and National Geographic, the decreasing number of fish population was masked by fishing companies venturing into unexploited fishing grounds and coming back with tons of fish.

The study, published on Thursday on an online journal PLoS ONE, said that the increase in catches from expanded fishing grounds hid the fact that original fishing areas already had depleted supplies of fish.

Daniel Pauly, a scientist at the university and co-author of the study, said that they knew the expansion was happening but this was the first time they studied the numbers. Pauly said, fishing today is managed mostly by huge companies who ignore the decrease in stock by just moving to new fishing grounds.

From data retrieved by the research team between 1950 to 2005, they found that 19 million tons of fish were caught in the 1950's. The number went up in the 1980's to 90 million tons. The world's fishing fleets ran out of fishing ground by the 1990's.

The study states that most of the fishing took place in North Atlantic and the Western Pacific in the 1950s but by the 1990's, 1/3 of the globe's oceans and 2/3 of continental shelves were already utilized. The expansion of fishing grounds has depleted fish supplies in high seas, leaving only icy waters in the Antarctic and Arctic for fishing companies to move into.

The researchers outlined problems in their study regarding dwindling fish supplies and suggests that steps be taken to protect the existing fish stocks from over fishing. Enric Sala, the study's co-author suggests stricter fishing regulations and adding more marine reserves to stop the current trends of dwindling fish supplies.



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