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The World Is Running Out of Fishing Grounds, New Study Shows

EINNEWS, December 3---An expanding world population is developing an increasing appetite for fish. And that's a problem for both people and the fish.

A study published Thursday indicates that the world's fishing industry is running out of new ocean fishing grounds, and that is depleting older ones through unsustainable harvesting practices.

The study was conducted by researchers at Vancouver's University of British Columbia in conjunction with the National Geographic magazine.

"We knew the expansion was going on, but this is the first time we have quantified it," said Daniel Pauly, a scientist at the Vancouver-based university who co-authored the report published in the online journal PLoS ONE.

The study says that 90 million tons of fish were landed in the late 1980s, up from 19 million in the 1950s.

Using advanced computer models, the researchers tracked the expansion of fishing activity that examine both the total number of fish caught and the impact that catching different types of fish has had on the ocean's productivity.

By the late 1990s, the world's fishing fleets had largely run out of new fishing grounds to exploit, the researchers said.

"The sooner we come to grips with it, the sooner we can stop the downward spiral by creating stricter fishing regulations and more marine reserves," co-author Enric Sala said in a statement.

The researchers said that in 1950 most heavy fishing was done in the North Atlantic and the Western Pacific, but by the mid 1990s, a third of the world's oceans and two-thirds of the continental shelves were exploited.

That expansion has left only unproductive fishing areas on the high seas and the ice-covered waters of the Arctic and Antarctic for boats to move into.

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