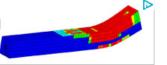


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Science News

Madagascar Marine Resources Plundered by International Seafood **Markets**

ScienceDaily (June 17, 2011) — Fish catches in Madagascar over the last half-century are double the official reports, and much of that fish is being caught by unregulated traditional fishers or accessed cheaply by foreign fishing vessels. Seafood exports from Madagascar often end up in a European recipe, but are a recipe for political unrest at home, where two-thirds of the population face hunger.

These are the findings of a recent

study led by researchers from the

University of British Columbia's Sea

Around Us Project in collaboration

Ventures. The research, published

Policy, used existing studies and

local knowledge to estimate total

Foreign fishing fleets from Europe

catching nearly 80,000 tonnes of

seafood each year -- almost the

same amount as local fishermen --

and are exacerbating the impact of

Consequently, catches of several

key species groups seem to be in

on Madagascar's fisheries by

overfishing at local levels.

decline, including mostly exported shrimp, shark and sea

The findings underline the importance of protecting local

management. Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island

and is home to some of the world's poorest people. Two-thirds

of the country's population is food insecure. Yet, the country has three monitoring vessels and nine speedboats to protect

its waters from illegal fishing boats and monitor domestic

"Both increasing pressure by local fishing communities and

demand from the international market could accelerate the

downward trends we see in Madagascar's fisheries." says

Frédéric Le Manach, lead author of the study and a graduate student at the University of Plymouth in the UK and visiting

The local shrimp fishery, of prime importance for the national

now declining. Most of these shrimp are destined for export to

"Securing Madagascar's fisheries for local consumption is of

paramount importance to Madagascar's sustainable economic

development," says Alasdair Harris, a marine scientist working

in Madagascar. The authors suggest that the new data should

be considered before allowing foreign fishing vessels further

"This study is yet another demonstration of how overfishing

supervising author Dirk Zeller and senior research fellow with

Madagascar, overfishing does not threaten to undermine a nice

impacts humans in different parts of the world," explains

meal at a restaurant, but one of the mainstays of human

economy, has caught about 12,000 tonnes annually, but is

fisheries for food security through stronger fisheries

and Asia are placing huge pressure

online this week in the journal Marine

fisheries catches between 1950 and

with the Madagascar-based

conservation organisation Blue

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The Sea Around Us Project at UBC. "In the case of

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