

75x More Fish Were Caught In Arctic From 1950-2006 Than Officially Reported: New Data

by Matthew McDermott, New York, NY on 02. 4.11



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Apropos of the [UN Food and Agriculture Organization](#) just told us that **we're eating all time record amounts of fish**: Researchers from the [University of British Columbia](#) are reporting that between 1950 and 2006 the total amount of fish caught in Arctic waters was nearly 75 times the amount reported by the FAO.

At the heart of the discrepancy is what's at the heart of nearly every such discrepancy, lack of transparency and inaccurate reporting. Report lead author Dirk Zeller:

Ineffective reporting due to governance issues and a lack of credible data on small-scale fisheries has given us a false sense of comfort that the Arctic is still a pristine frontier when it comes to fisheries. We now offer a more accurate baseline against which we can monitor changes in fish catches and to inform policy and conservation efforts. ([Science Daily](#))

Here's what Zeller's team found:

Based on official stats from Russia supplied the FAO, from 1950 to 2006 just 12,700 tonnes of fish were caught. During the same time period the US and Canada reported no catches in the Arctic.

This more extensive research shows that a more accurate catch total for the last half of the 20th century and first six years of the 21st for Russia is 770,000 tonnes--that's more caught each year of the time period than Russia reported for the entirety of it. Based on state-level data from Alaska, the US caught at minimum 89,000 tonnes. In Canada, Zeller's team determined that commercial and small-scale fishermen caught 94,000 tonnes of fish.