

Arctic fish stocks lower than thought

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Canadian researchers say fish catches in the Arctic have been dramatically under-reported over the past six decades -- and that the northern ocean isn't the pristine environment many might imagine.

When scientists took a closer look at the number of fish caught in the Arctic between 1956 and 2006, they got a shock: it was about 75 times higher than the official figures from the UN.

Their new estimates are based on data that wasn't available before -- like commercial material and records kept by indigenous communities.

The message, say the scientists, is that conservation efforts should now focus on fish stocks in the Arctic, as well as marine mammals like polar bears -- because without the fish, the larger species cannot survive.

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