

# Choice

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Pauly, Daniel. **In a perfect ocean: the state of fisheries and ecosystems in the North Atlantic Ocean**, by Daniel Pauly and Jay Maclean. Island Press, 2003. 175p bibl index afp ISBN 1-55963-323-9, \$50.00; ISBN 1-55963-324-7 pbk, \$25.00

In the words of National Geographic Society's Sylvia Earle, this book "is destined to be a classic scientific work, but with the appeal of a compelling detective story." Eschewing the turgid, cautious language of formal scientific literature as well as the overblown rhetoric and underdocumented assertions of much environmental media, Pauly (Univ. of British Columbia) and Maclean penetrate to the heart of their subject: the fate of fisheries in the North Atlantic. It is an unpleasant story of failed fishing governance, "fishing down," "squashed pyramids and shorter food chains," and once-teeming ocean areas turned into biological deserts or marginal fisheries sustained by large national subsidies. The authors discuss the waterfront, from food chain and bioenvironment through fisheries history, technology, and politics. They reviewed "thousands of reports, books, articles, scientific papers, and electronic databases" to tell the story for the first time on a 50- to 100- year time scale. The book offers minor success stories and presents detailed, pragmatic scenarios to rebuild fisheries. Its detailed documentation will appeal to serious professionals, graduate students, and policy makers, and the text will inform and excite the literate general reader.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels. -- *F.T. Manheim, George Mason University*