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World's running out of places to catch fish

Global fisheries have expanded so rapidly over the past half-century that the world is running out of places to catch wild fish, according to a new study conducted by researchers in Canada, the United States and Australia.

By [The Washington Post](#)

Global fisheries have expanded so rapidly over the past half-century that the world is running out of places to catch wild fish, according to a new study conducted by researchers in Canada, the United States and Australia.

The findings, published in the online journal PLoS ONE, are the first to examine how marine fisheries have expanded geographically over time. Looking at fleets' movements between 1950 and 2005, researchers charted how fishing has been expanding southward at roughly 1 degree latitude each year in order to compensate for depleted fish stocks in the Northern Hemisphere.

During that same period, the world's fish catch increased fivefold from 19 million metric tons in 1950 to a peak of 90 million in the late 1980s, before declining to 79.5 million tons in 2008, the most recent year for which figures are available.

Daniel Pauly, a co-author at the University of British Columbia Fisheries Centre, said the global seafood catch is now dropping "because there's essentially nowhere to go." That fish catches rose for so many decades "looks like sustainability but it is actually expansion driven. That is frightening, because the accounting is coming now."

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