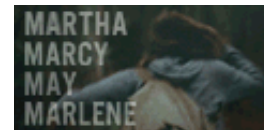


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June 13, 2011

A Clear View of the Troubled Oceans

The scale and toll of industrial fishing is far less familiar than even the scale and toll of industrial farming. Groups like Seafood Watch at the Monterey Bay Aquarium put out sustainable seafood lists for diners and shoppers, good reminders that fisheries are in decline. But even they do not convey how bad things have become.

That is one of the purposes of European Fish Week, which ended on Sunday. The event was organized by [Ocean2012](#), a coalition hoping to change the Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union. Change will not come easily. As the coalition points out, Europe is supporting overfishing with high quotas and direct subsidies for modernizing the European fishing fleet. And since the European fleets fish globally, the effect is global.

A 2003 study by the Fisheries Center at the University of British Columbia shows the plunge in predatory fish over the last century. A map of the Atlantic in 1900, based on that data, is filled with colored splotches showing concentrations of fish. In 2000, the map is nearly empty.

A chart on the [Ocean2012](#) Web site approaches the problem in a different way. [It shows](#) that since the 1950s, the Spanish fishing fleet, once mostly confined to the mid-Atlantic and the Mediterranean, has become a global force, fishing in the Pacific and along the edge of Antarctica as well.

So far, the sensible remedies — including lowering quotas, limiting seasons and retiring fleets — have gone nowhere. Choosing a sustainable fish for supper isn't enough. Both commercial fishermen and the politicians that do their bidding must recognize that global overfishing by many nations now threatens the oceans and the economies that depend on them. And the only way to deal with that threat is with strong international rules to end all unsustainable fishing.