



Learning Activities

Overfishing the Ocean



We have overfished the ocean to the extent that over 90% of global fisheries have now been exploited or overexploited. Which means, according to United Nations data, that less than 10% of global fisheries are deemed to have healthy numbers of fish.

90% of the predatory fish, including sharks, tuna, albacore, icefish, swordfish and grouper are gone.

Two of the reasons for overfishing are illegal fishing and by-catch. Globally an average 30% of the commercial fishing catch is taken illegally and around 25% is by-catch (unwanted and mostly unused catch).

Globally over 4 million fishing vessels and bringing in catches from the ocean.

To see where these catches are taking place visit Global Fishing Watch and view the map.

<https://globalfishingwatch.org/our-map/>

On this map you will see thousands of white dots, which represent fishing vessels.

Notes:

- Along the bottom of the map, you can select the period you wish to view. For this exercise you will need to look at a single day and a one month period. Ensure you change the date range and allow the map to refresh.
- When zooming into an area give the map time to reload data.
- To see the path of a fishing vessel over a month click on the dot and wait for a pink line to appear which tracks the vessels movement.

Complete the following activities:

- Identify a region that has a high rate of fishing.
- Zoom in on the area and see how many vessels are in the area fishing on that date.
- Select one vessel and track its movements for one month.

Based on vessels you find research the following:

- What species are they likely to be catching at this time of year?
- What is the current status of this species?
- In what ways could this vessel be involved in overfishing?

To find out the current status of a species visit: [IUCN RedList](https://www.iucnredlist.org/search) (<https://www.iucnredlist.org/search>)

To find out more about the status of commercial fisheries read the UN FAO report. Read details from the report and download a copy: <http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture>