

Shocking facts!

Facts about fisheries

- Fisheries around the globe produced 84.2 million tonnes of marine fishery product in 2002.
- In 2002, fisheries provided direct employment and revenue to 38 million people worldwide.
- The diets of 2.6 billion people depend on fish as a source of animal protein.
- 52% of the world's marine fish stocks are fully exploited, which means that they are being fished at their maximum biological capacity. 24% are overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion. 21% are moderately exploited. Only 3% of the world's marine fisheries are under exploited.
- 40 out of 60 commercial fish stocks in the North-east Atlantic are being fished unsustainably. This could jeopardise the jobs of 15 000 full time and 3500 part time fishers in the UK alone.
- In 1992, some 30 000 Canadians were suddenly without work when once plentiful stocks of cod off the coast of Newfoundland completely collapsed. The stock has yet to show any real signs of recovery.

Information sourced from:

- The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) State of the World's Fisheries and Aquaculture Report 2004 – (http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/DOCREP/007/y5600e/y5600e00.htm)
- WWF website (<http://www.wwf.org.uk/researcher/issues/livingseas/000000020.asp>),
- Green Facts www.greenfacts.org/fisheries and the
- World Resources Institute (<http://www.wri.org>)

Species facts

- Cod stocks have undergone severe declines during the last few decades and the species is now threatened with commercial extinction in UK waters.
- A study by Oceana estimates that 25% of the world's fish catch is wasted as bycatch. This includes thousands of marine mammals, birds and other creatures.
- Of the seven species of marine turtles in the world, only one is not endangered or critically endangered. Bycatch is a major threat as is illegal fishing and international trade in turtle shells.
- Half of the 12 species of baleen whales are endangered. Grey whales are extinct in the North Atlantic, northern right whales are listed as endangered and it is estimated that there may be less than 5000 blue whales left in the oceans. This is a result of historical whaling, boat collisions and entanglement in fishing gear.
- The 2006 World Conservation Union (IUCN) Red List shows that sharks and rays are disappearing at an unprecedented rate across the globe. Approximately 20% of the 547 species of sharks and rays surveyed have been included on the list. Many were previously served on dinner dishes throughout the world.

Information sourced from:

- Oceana – *Oceans at risk: wasted catch and the destruction of ocean life 2002* (http://www.oceana.org/uploads/bycatch_final.pdf)
- BBC Nature website (www.bbc.co.uk/nature/animals/conservation),
- BBC Nature news (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4963526.stm>).

Good news!

While these facts are shocking, it's not all doom and gloom. Much can be done to reduce the negative impacts of fishing on marine ecosystems and in ensuring that fisheries are conducted in a sustainable way, so that future generations can enjoy marine resources too.

West Australian Rock Lobster Fishery – this MSC certified fishery has implemented a Code of Practice to reduce whale entanglements. Fishers shorten tethered ropes or lines and keep a close watch over fishing gear during whale migration periods.

South Georgia Toothfish Longline Fishery – this MSC certified fishery has implemented research to gain vital information about toothfish populations. This will assist in ensuring that the amount of toothfish harvested in the fishery is sustainable.

South African Hake – this MSC certified fishery has placed scientific observers onboard their fishing vessels to monitor seabird bycatch in trawl nets. This will assist in developing methods to reduce seabird bycatch in the future.

Information sourced from:

Environmental benefits resulting from certification against MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing – Final Report 2006 (www.msc.org)