

Reaching the boundaries of the Blue Planet:

**Dwindling Stocks, Disappearing
Communities & the Failure of Neoliberal
Solutions**



Maria Hadjimichael, Innovative Fisheries Management, Aalborg University, Denmark
Degrowth 2014, Leipzig, Germany

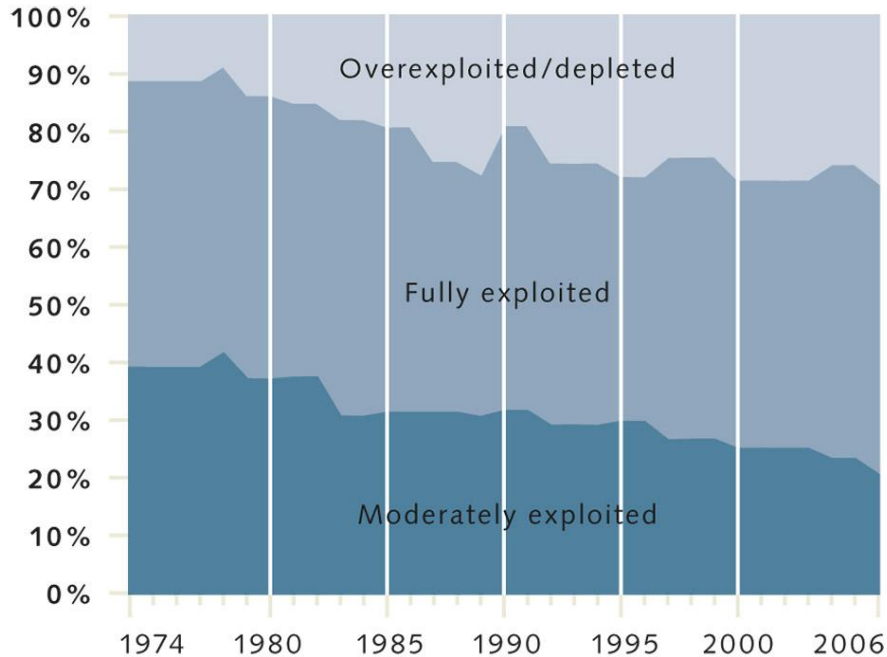
Introduction

“Ultimately, the human appetite is at the root of the marine fisheries crisis. But religion, technology, population pressure, science and our economic systems have provided vehicles for human appetite and thus contributed to overfishing”

Jacquet, J. 2007. Silent water: a brief examination of the marine fisheries crisis



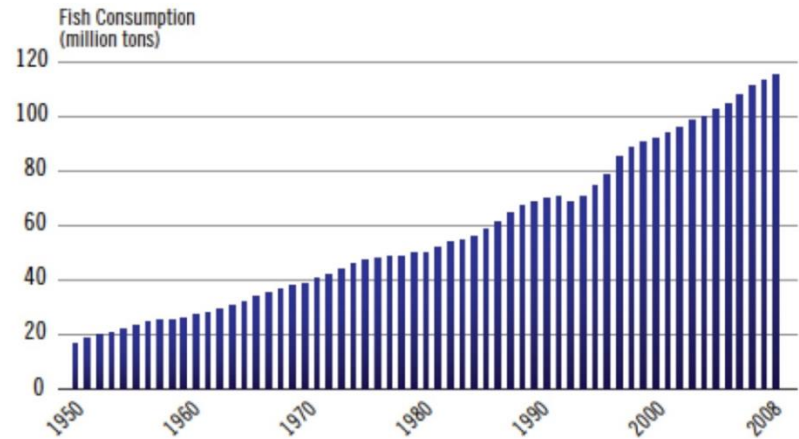
Dwindling Stocks



www.worldoceanreview.com

WORLD FISH CONSUMPTION

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011















In the European Union:

NE Atlantic: *47% of known fish stocks are overfished*, 15% are outside safe biological limits, 60% status of the stock is unknown because of poor data

Mediterranean and Black Sea: *80% of stocks* for which scientific advice is available *are overfished*

(European Commission 2012)

Fish Dependence Day Calendar (New Economics Foundation)

JAN		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
FEB		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28				
MAR		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
APR		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
MAY		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
JUN		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
JUL		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
AUG		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
SEP		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
OCT		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
NOV		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
DEC		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

But how can we continue eating fish? *...the 'European' solutions*

- Promoting responsible consumption - using the market to enforce 'sustainable practices';
- Rights-based management in the form of Individual Transferable Quotas - assigning tenure arrangements;
- Fisheries partnership Agreements - fishing in third country waters to fill the gap between demand and supply
- Marine aquaculture - farmed seafood to fill the gap between demand and supply.



Responsible Consumption [1]

- Campaigns by e-NGOs and institutions (EU, national and the private sector) aiming at consumers
- **The EU's inseparable campaign:** *“as consumers and market actors we have to be aware that what, when and how we eat, buy and sell seafood has a huge impact on this precious food source”*.
- Urges consumers to diversify their consumption to lesser known fish species, do their research and ask questions when going to a restaurant or the fishmonger.
- **E-NGOs:** Promotion of ecolabels i.e. the Marine Stewardship Council.



Responsible Consumption [2]

Assumes that the solutions lie in the markets (based on consumer choices)

but...

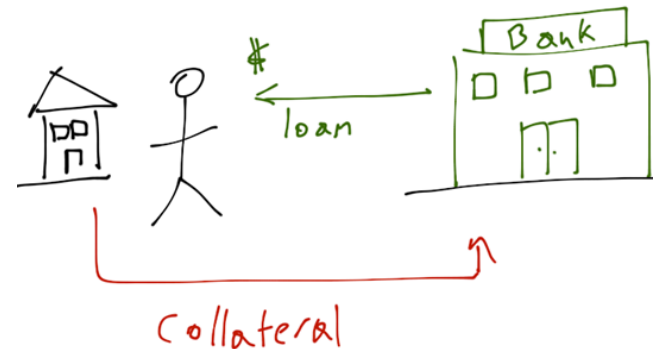
- *Based on different interpretations of what is sustainable*
- *Opening of new markets - exploitation of new species*
- *Eco-labelling is a business*
 - *An inbuilt (short-term) monetary incentive to grant certificates*
 - *Consumers are (deliberately?) not always well-informed*
- *MSC has no social criteria*
 - *Producers in developed countries may not be able to certify as easily*
 - *It may be too costly for small-scale producers to get certified*
 - *Big retailers end up excluding the most vulnerable to 'show they are sustainable'*

Individual Transferable Quotas *Privatizing resources* [1]

“A *right to harvest* a particular amount of resources, that can be transferred, e.g. by sale, lease, or will. A type of quota allocated to individual fishermen or vessel owners and which can be *sold* to others.”

(FAO Glossary / National Research Council 1999)

Owning ITQs implies *ownership* over future fisheries opportunities, in addition the transferability implies that the rights can be capitalised - and hence used as *collateral*.



Individual Transferable Quotas

Privatizing resources [2]

At its best ITQs allows *fishing enterprises to develop their businesses by using their rights as collateral*, it may change the focus from short-term to long-term by securing the right to future fish.

but...

- ITQs used as a shock doctrine [Klein, 2007] for the fisheries crisis.
- It is not the most sustainable fishing enterprises that are allowed to develop through this system but the ones which have the capital to do so.
- Disappearance of small-scale fishers and coastal communities (i.e. Denmark).

Fisheries Partnership Agreements [1]

- Over a quarter of the fish caught by European fishing boats are taken outside EU waters
- Currently 18 fishing agreements with African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries (tuna, “mixed” - shrimp and demersal species).
- Intended to “*allow EU vessels to fish for surplus stocks in a country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), in a legally regulated environment*”
- EU pays the partner countries a financial contribution composed of 2 distinct parts:
 - Access rights to the EEZ
 - Financial support (strengthen the administrative and scientific capacity through a focus on sustainable fisheries management, monitoring, control and surveillance).

Aim to improve scientific knowledge, strengthen governance (human rights clause) and promote sustainable fishing.

Fisheries Partnership Agreements – *Are we stealing from the poor?*

Serious risk of undermining sustainable resource management

→ Corruption - are the fees used for what they are supposed to?

→ Unreliable data - what is the actual surplus?

Overfishing will first hit the local small-scale fleet

And the EU is the responsible partner...

Russia and Asian countries such as China, Japan are now displacing the more responsible DWF.

Access fees BUT negotiations are confidential and unavailable.



Marine Aquaculture [1]

- Marine aquaculture accounts for approximately one third of human consumption of fish - global promotion for expansion
- Annual global production has increased at an average rate of around 8% in the past three decades (i.e., since 1980)
- EU Communication 'Building a Sustainable future for Aquaculture':
"aquaculture provides huge opportunities and raises considerable challenges, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability of production as well as to the quality and safety of the products."
- Subsidies: EFF (2007-2013): €4.3 billion ≈ 28% of the total (50% to freshwater aquaculture projects) / EMFF (2014-2020): €6.6bn

Marine Aquaculture [2]

- Social issues:

Expansion requires an increase of the farming area which means the leasing of an area of public domain.

→ Displacement of artisanal fishers and coastal communities

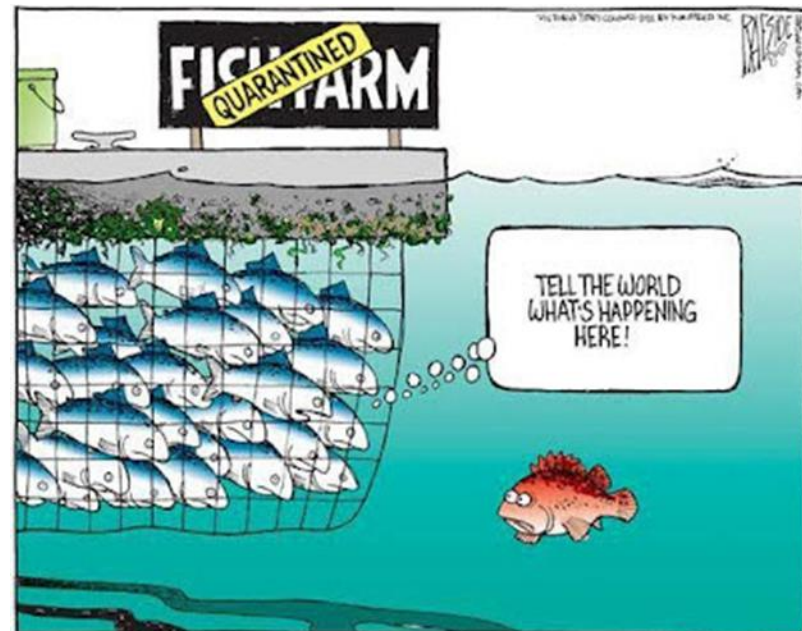
- Environmental issues:

Waste from farm flows out like raw sewage;

The animal being grown a top predator
→ more protein goes in than is produced;

Exposure of wild fish and ecosystems to diseases;

Sea mammal predators attracted to the farms are often killed



Conclusion

- These 'European' Solutions
 - Fail to tackle the root of the problem - the 'overuse' of the sea as a resource provider and as space
 - Support the increasing human appetite for fish (focus on the 'sustainable development' dogma)
- Directly related to issues of environmental and social justice
 - Degradation of the oceans
 - Appropriation of right to space and resources
- Tragedy of the Few - those who have the capital to invest in fishing, buy fishing rights, utilize marine space or buy the fish.
- What is needed is a fundamental shift in values

*So how can marine fisheries satisfy the European (and global) appetite?
Well, they cannot.*