

pirate fishing

illegal, unreported, and unregulated



PIRACY PAYS. Growing seafood demand, combined with fewer fish, poor traceability systems, and a vast ocean impossible to patrol adds up to big returns for those willing to catch fish illegally and funnel them into the legitimate supply chain. Whether illegal fishing consists of fishing in forbidden waters, catching protected species, using prohibited gear, or catching more than allowed, pirate fishing causes enormous economic and environmental damage. It skews the market for honest fishers, diverts revenue and food supply from coastal nations, depletes stocks for local fishers, and distorts catch statistics critical for setting regulations. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) depends on anonymity. New technologies that can expose pirate hideouts and plunder could bring an end to their pillaging in the near future.

KEY FACTS

- » *Pirate fishing costs an estimated \$10-23.5 billion US annually.*
- » *An estimated 20% of global catch is from pirate fishing, 11-26 million metric tons per year.*
- » *Pirate fishing may represent up to 30% of the catch for some high-value species*
- » *Crews can buy “flags of convenience” online for as little as \$500 so they can move incognito into regions where they have no license or right to fish.*
- » *Drug trafficking, human trafficking, and illegal immigration often accompany pirate-fishing activities.*
- » *The high seas—international waters beyond the 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zones of coastal nations—cover 45% of the planet and are where most IUU occurs.*

CHALLENGES



LOW RISK, HIGH REWARD Pirate fishing becomes more lucrative as global seafood demand grows and global fish stocks plummet.

FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE In theory, the country to which a vessel is registered is responsible for monitoring that vessel's activities; in practice, states that turn a blind eye to illegal activities provide flags of convenience in exchange for registration fees.

NO VIN NUMBERS FOR FISHERS Until recently, fishing boats, unlike other maritime vessels, were exempt from having vessel identification numbers. Without these, re-flagging and re-naming a ship to evade prosecution is easy. The IMO recently removed that exemption, paving the way for member states and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to mandate VIN numbers for fishing vessels.

PATCHWORK OF REGULATORY BODIES No one regulatory body polices IUU. When IUU occurs in national waters, coastal states often lack enforcement capabilities. On the high seas, international management bodies can only police activities by vessels from countries that have signed on as parties to specific agreements.

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AT-SEA PROCESSING Huge floating fish-processing factory ships mean pirate fishers never have to go to port to "land" their catch before moving it into the supply chain.

OPPORTUNITIES



VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS How a boat moves says a lot about what it fishes: the type of gear, the frequency of active fishing, the destination ports. Satellites put eyes on the water and provide new data to analyze vessel movement and potentially alert authorities to suspicious activities.

TRACEABILITY TECHNOLOGY New technology that labels and tracks fish at each point in the supply chain helps distributors identify IUU fish within their supply chains, while providing more confidence to retailers and consumers about the safety, origins, and nature of their seafood.

LOCAL SOURCING A new wave of seafood distributors and retailers who take extra steps to source from local fishers with histories of responsible practices help to bring legal, sustainable catch to market.

THE WHOLE FISH TALE Telling the story behind each seafood dish can help educate consumers about the larger human rights and environmental issues associated with IUU and increase demand (and therefore, price) for legal, safe, and sustainable fish.

OTHER RESOURCES



Triple Pundit: Impacts of Worldwide Illegal Fishing

www.triplepundit.com/2013/05/illegal-fishing-big-problem-all-world/

Pew Environment Organization Fact Sheets IUU

www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/fact-sheets/faq-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing-85899500819

Barton Seaver Ocean Views

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/08/26/can-technology-end-pirate-fishing/>