

FREEDOM OF FISHING

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Fishing pressure rapidly increased over past few decades to feed the ever increasing world population. As a result, half of major marine fish stocks have reached or are very close to their maximum sustainable limits and a quarter have been over exploited and significantly depleted. Overfishing lead to the collapse of commercial fisheries in many regions.

A fifty year thrust in fishing technology created an immensely powerful industrial fleet of 73000 ships crewed by about a million of people, world wide, based on freezer trawler that can catch and process a tonne or more fish in one hour.

The traditional fishermen, twelve million in numbers, world wide, however, operate from small boats, could not share the technology boom that has made the Industrial fishing vessels of developed nations so powerful.

In the face of declines in fish catch, both the traditional and industrial fishermen fishes harder. In some poor nations unemployment forces more people to the sea, where they must fish to survive. Conflict is inevitable.

The voluntary system of regulation of global fisheries failed, instead anarchy in the oceans emerged. Without fleet reduction, according to fisheries economists, any management will not work.

Until only the past few decades, most of the sea was free, wild, unregulated, a place of opportunity for anyone brave enough to venture out from shore. But declining fish and feuding fishermen prove that the limits of our seas have reached. The sea will not remain open. More limits will come as regulations and environmentalists press for them. When the sea will be confronted with limits, the sea's wild freedom will have gone out of fishermen's soul in coming generation.

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