GLOBAL FISHING WATCH
Sustainability through Transparency

Transforming the Way the World Manages Ocean Fisheries

Powered by machine learning and artificial intelligence, our platform processes billions of signals from ships at sea to identify and map commercial fishing vessels based on their movement. Our freely published data and analyses are bringing unprecedented transparency to the world's commercial fishing fleet and opening the door to improved science, management and governance for the sustainability of our oceans.

The world relies on sustainable fisheries

More than 3.1 billion people rely on the ocean for nearly 20 percent of the animal protein in their diets. And yet, nearly 90 percent of the world's fish stocks are overfished or fished to capacity. What's more, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) accounts for an estimated 20 percent of the world's wild catch.

Coastal fishing nations face a complex challenge to ensure the stability of their fisheries and food security for millions of people today while also conserving marine biodiversity for future generations to come.

We can't manage what we can't see

Because fisheries on the open ocean operate out of view, there historically has been no evidence-based means to know how much fish is being harvested or where and when fishing occurs. Effective monitoring and management have been hindered by a lack of the most basic and critical information.

Transparency is vital to sustainable management

Global Fishing Watch is the first publicly available resource to provide data from direct observation of fishing vessels at sea on a global scale. Now researchers and policy makers can access the data they need to investigate the impacts of fishing and develop science-based management strategies that protect the environment while also promoting productive, sustainable fisheries.

Transparency fosters compliance and accountability

When everyone can see where fishing happens, governments and regulatory bodies will be held accountable for enforcing their regulations, fishers will be able to validate the source of their product, seafood buyers and consumers will be able to make informed purchases, unscrupulous fishing operators will have fewer places to hide, and opportunities to sell IUU seafood will narrow until it is no longer profitable.

Year One

Global Fishing Watch has been used to:

Evaluate
monitoring and compliance during the strictest fishing moratorium in China.

Mitigate
seabird bycatch

Expose
illegal fishing by EU vessels in African waters

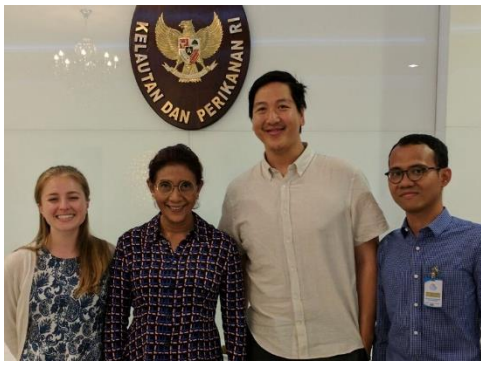
Support
MPA designation in the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, South Pacific and Eastern Pacific oceans.

GLOBAL FISHING WATCH
Sustainability through Transparency

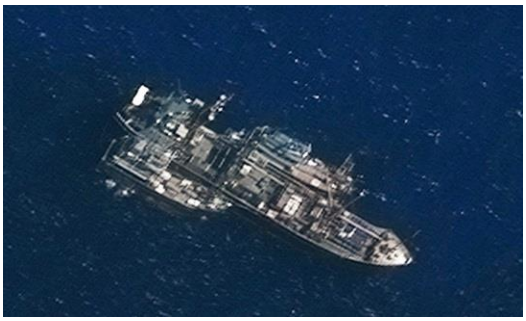
Year One
September 2016 – October 2017

Paving the way for Unprecedented Government Transparency

Until June 2017, no government had ever released its proprietary vessel monitoring system (VMS) data publicly. It was something many people said would never happen. But Indonesia proved them wrong by publishing its VMS data publicly through Global Fishing Watch and revealing the activity of its fishing fleet to the world. Four months later, Peru committed to do the same. These are unprecedented steps that come at a time when coastal nations are increasingly aware of the need for a collaborative effort in governing the ocean's shared resources and ending IUU fishing.



Minister of Fisheries and Marine Affairs Susi Pudjiastuti meets with members of the Global Fishing Watch team.



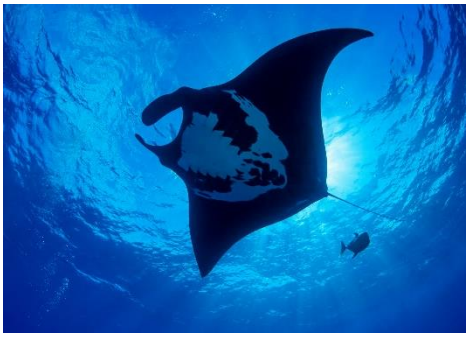
In the Indian Ocean, the refrigerated cargo vessel Leelawadee with two unidentified likely fishing vessels. Image captured with help from SkyTruth and Global Fishing Watch on November 30, 2016. (DigitalGlobe)

Discovering Patterns that Expose Suspicious Practices at Sea

Before we came along, hiding in the open ocean was much easier, and a refrigerated cargo ship meeting with multiple fishing vessels to consolidate catch had little concern for being seen. But today, our platform is revealing where and when such rendezvous happen. It's called transshipment and it is one method of mixing illegal fish with legitimate catch on the way to market. Our Transshipment Report exposed over 5,500 rendezvous, highlighting the global extent of the practice. In August, when a refrigerated cargo vessel was captured illegally transporting 6,000 sharks through Galapagos waters, our founding partner, SkyTruth, used our platform to trace its history, discovering a potential rendezvous with four fishing vessels just days before. The discovery exposed the behavior that would previously have gone undetected.

Making The Case for A Marine Protected Area in Mexico

The path to creating a marine protected area is often fraught with hurdles, not the least of which is demonstrating how restrictions will affect fishing revenue. Traditionally, such information was often based on data provided by the fishing industry, but in 2017, Pristine Seas used Global Fishing Watch to provide direct evidence of fishing vessel activity within a proposed MPA off the coast of Mexico. After calculating fishing effort and estimating catch value, they found that the fishing revenue the area produced paled in comparison with income from tourism. That led to the Mexican government announcing in October 2017 that it will expand the Revillagigedo reserve to nearly 148,000 square kilometers. It will be the largest no-take reserve off the Americas.



Known for its abundance of giant oceanic manta rays, the Revillagigedo islands support 31 animals that range from vulnerable to critically endangered. (photo courtesy: Octavio Aburto)