

**Committee:** Special Conference on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SPECON)

**Topic:** Strengthening international cooperation to combat Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fishing

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### Topic Introduction

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, otherwise called IUU Fishing, poses a great threat for marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries globally. IUU Fishing refers to fishing activities which may violate a state's laws, be unreported, misreported or unregulated. All aspects of IUU Fishing violate fishing regulations on both a national and international scale, as the proper documentation and usage of fishing vessels is an essential part of the appropriate conduction of fishing activities.

IUU Fishing is an intercontinental issue whose long-term effects can result in potent repercussions to the world's most vital ecosystem. Such repercussions affect various sectors of society, having an environmental, political and socio-economic impact. Most cases of IUU Fishing are very difficult to monitor and regulate as they take place illicitly and are mostly unregistered. Therefore, international cooperation is crucial to make the tracking and prevention of IUU Fishing more efficient and successful, as well as to protect the creation of sustainable fisheries.



## Definition of key concepts

### Illegal Fishing

“Fishing activities conducted in contravention of applicable laws and regulations, including those laws and rules adopted at the regional and international level.”<sup>1</sup> Some types of illegal fishing include blast fishing (using dynamite), fishing using a cyanide solution which mass incapacitates the fish in the area , and fishing without a licence.

### Unreported Fishing

“Fishing activities that are not reported or are misreported to relevant authorities in contravention of national laws and regulations or reporting procedures of a relevant regional fisheries management organisation.”<sup>2</sup>

### Unregulated Fishing

“Occurs in areas for which there are no applicable conservation or management measures and where such fishing activities are conducted in a manner inconsistent with State responsibilities for the conservation of living marine resources under international law.”<sup>3</sup> Fishing which takes place in areas without proper regional or international management measures, often involving undocumented and unregulated vessels.

### Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs)

“RFMOs are treaty-based bodies whose objective is to ensure the sustainable conservation and management of shared fish stocks and other living marine resources through international cooperation”<sup>4</sup> Fishing activities are also unregulated when occurring in an RFMO-managed area and conducted by

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<sup>1</sup> Fisheries, NOAA. “Understanding Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing.” NOAA, [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing).

<sup>2</sup> Fisheries, NOAA. “Understanding Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing.” NOAA, [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing).

<sup>3</sup> Fisheries, NOAA. “Understanding Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing.” NOAA, [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing).

<sup>4</sup> Fisheries, NOAA. “International and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.” NOAA, 8 Nov. 2023, [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/international-affairs/international-and-regional-fisheries-management-organizations](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/international-affairs/international-and-regional-fisheries-management-organizations).



vessels without nationality, or by those flying a flag of a State or fishing entity that is not a party to the RFMO in a manner that is inconsistent with the conservation measures of that RFMO.

### Sustainable Fishing

“Sustainable fishing respects marine ecosystems and adapts to the reproductive rate of fish to maintain a balance and ensure the survival of all species.”<sup>5</sup>

### Bycatch

“Fish or other sea creatures that are caught unintentionally by people who are trying to catch other types of fish.”<sup>6</sup> When blast fishing takes place, which is a form of illegal fishing, dynamite stuns multiple fish at once, which results in an excess amount of fish being incapacitated which were not planned for, such fish are referred to as bycatch.

### Flag State

The state chosen by merchant ships to be registered in, so that the vessel is bound to carry the flag of that state and comply with its rules and regulations. The flag state is responsible for enforcing regulations over these vessels in accordance with the international maritime rules and stipulations”<sup>7</sup>

### Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

“An area of the ocean, generally extending 200 nautical miles beyond a nation’s territorial sea, within which a coastal nation has jurisdiction over both living and nonliving resources.”<sup>8</sup> Exclusive Economic Zones were introduced in the 1982 United Nations “Convention on the Law of the Sea”. However EEZs are vulnerable to IUU Fishing activities, due to their insufficient surveillance and monitoring.

### Capacity-Building

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<sup>5</sup> “The Survival of Marine Fauna Depends on Sustainable Fishing.” *Iberdrola*, Iberdrola, 22 Apr. 2021, [www.iberdrola.com/social-commitment/sustainable-fishing](http://www.iberdrola.com/social-commitment/sustainable-fishing).

<sup>6</sup> *Bycatch | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bycatch](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bycatch).

<sup>7</sup> “Flag State.” *International Seafood Sustainability Foundation*, 20 Dec. 2017, [www.iss-foundation.org/glossary/flag-state/](http://www.iss-foundation.org/glossary/flag-state/).

<sup>8</sup> “What is the ‘EEZ’?” *What Is the “EEZ”?: Exploration Facts: NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research*, [oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/facts/useez.html](https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/facts/useez.html).



“Capacity-building is defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.”<sup>9</sup> Capacity-building is vital in combating IUU Fishing as it allows states to sustain their naval resources.

### Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS)

“MCS is the implementation of a plan or strategy, where the monitoring and control aspects of MCS provide the base of information and legal framework for sound fisheries management and operational planning<sup>10</sup> and surveillance refers to the degree and types of observations required to maintain compliance with the regulatory controls imposed on fishing activities.”<sup>11</sup>

### Background Information

The term IUU Fishing (Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing) was firstly used in 1997 by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) while dealing with a report on unsanctioned fishing which took place on the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Southern Ocean<sup>12</sup>. IUU Fishing became recognised as a global issue in the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO’s) “Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries” in 1995, followed by the release of its comprehensive guide, the “International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA 2001)”.

### How IUU Fishing Occurs

#### Illegal Fishing

Illegal Fishing refers to fishing activities taking place in waters under the authority of a state, without the state’s permission, or such activities which go against the State’s regulations and laws. There are several ways through which a fishing activity could be considered illegal, such as the illicit entry into Exclusive

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<sup>9</sup> “Capacity-Building.” *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/academic-impact/capacity-building](http://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/capacity-building).

<sup>10</sup> “3. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance: Definition and Context.” *An Introduction to Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Systems for Capture Fisheries*, [www.fao.org/4/V4250E/V4250E03.htm](http://www.fao.org/4/V4250E/V4250E03.htm).

<sup>11</sup> “3. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance: Definition and Context.” *An Introduction to Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Systems for Capture Fisheries*, [www.fao.org/4/V4250E/V4250E03.htm](http://www.fao.org/4/V4250E/V4250E03.htm).

<sup>12</sup> *NCSU*, [gambusia.zo.ncsu.edu/readings/Pages%20from%20Manez\\_Poulson\\_oceansPast\\_2016.pdf](http://gambusia.zo.ncsu.edu/readings/Pages%20from%20Manez_Poulson_oceansPast_2016.pdf).



Economic Zones (EEZs). For example, a foreign fishing vessel that is fishing within a State's maritime Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) without an authorised fishing licence or approval from that state would be considered illegal.

Another violation of trespassing maritime borders includes fishing in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which are usually determined as vulnerable marine ecosystems that must remain protected. It is also considered illegal for someone to exceed the allocated fishing quotas per vessel. Furthermore, the use of driftnets or ammunition such as dynamite or cyanide is also a prime example of illegal fishing. These aforementioned methods of fishing lead to a vast bycatch of fish as well as the potential destruction of marine ecosystems.

### Unreported Fishing

Unreported fishing does not only concern fishing activities that haven't been reported, but also those that have been misreported to the relevant administration, which goes against national legislations. A frequent occurrence of non-reported catches include unreported bycatch especially if the said bycatch belongs to an endangered species or is prohibited. Additionally, many fishing vessels report lesser catch volumes than what they actually caught to avoid quotas, which would restrict them from resuming their activities. Fishing is also considered unreported if it takes place in unmonitored areas, therefore their catches don't get registered, or taking advantage of poor weather conditions to fish illicitly when there is limited surveillance.

Unreported Fishing is a problem of great importance in the Gulf of Guinea in Western Africa, as small-scale fisheries are vital parts of the economies of these countries. However, surveillance is poor and many catches remain unreported, leading to massive bycatch amounts.

### Unregulated Fishing

Unregulated fishing refers to fishing which takes place in areas where there are no appropriate regional or international management measures applied. This may also involve fishing during which the vessels used are not properly documented and regulated. There are multiple cases which could be considered as unregulated fishing, such include destructive fishing practices, which cause the destruction of marine



ecosystems such as the coral reefs, as well as immense bycatch. Unregulated fishing also includes the exploitation of certain regions by fishing in unsupervised areas.

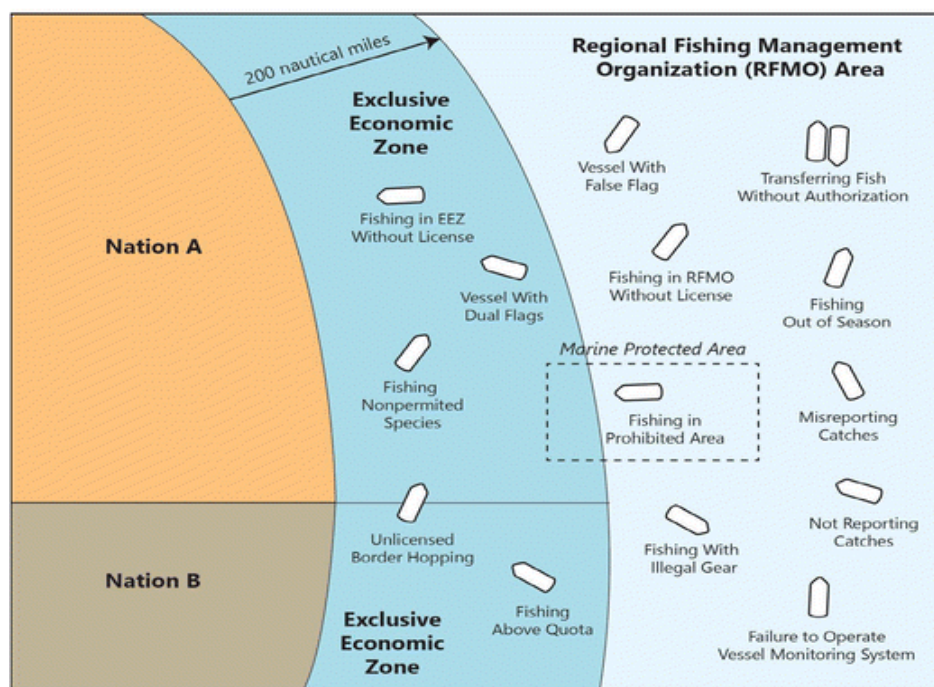


Fig 1: A diagram depicting the most common types of IUU Fishing<sup>13</sup>

Links for further research:

UN Food and Agriculture Organisations articles on IUU Fishing:

<https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/en/>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing>

The UNs International Maritime Organization article on combating IUU Fishing:

<https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/IIIS/Pages/IUU-FISHING.aspx>

The Impacts of IUU Fishing

<sup>13</sup> 4. Illustration of Types of IUU Fishing. within an EEZ There ...,

[www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-types-of-IUU-fishing-Within-an-EEZ-there-may-be-unlicensed-fishing\\_fig1\\_308514276](http://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-types-of-IUU-fishing-Within-an-EEZ-there-may-be-unlicensed-fishing_fig1_308514276).



### Environmental Impact

One of the main effects of IUU Fishing is the environmental impact. It is one of the biggest threats to the marine ecosystem. This happens because such activities lead to overfishing and consequently the decrease of fish stock, disrupting natural dynamics and biodiversity. This also aligns with the destruction of habitats, via methods such as blast fishing (the use of dynamite), which destroys coral reefs, and contributes to the development of marine pollution. The disrupted ecosystem also harms the natural marine food web, as many species go extinct in a particular region, leading to an imbalance.

### Socio-Economic Impact

The socio-economic effects of IUU Fishing indirectly impact the local communities.. Initially, and most importantly, IUU Fishing is a leading reason for economic losses, as the bycatch of multiple fish species leads to a deficiency in the local markets, and some communities rely on them, so they will have to turn to international production rather than local, which consequently is more costly. Moreover, such activities are also associated closely with Human Rights violations, as, in many cases, exploitative labour routines and even human trafficking regimes have been recorded in such environments. Finally, the cooperation amongst nations is vital when a vessel is found on an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), increasing the potential of communities that rely on fishing to maintain their livelihoods.

### Case Studies

#### Case Study 1: Chinese vessel “Lu Rong Yuan Yu 668” in Argentina's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) - 2020

A world renowned case study of an example of illegal fishing is the Chinese vessel “Lu Rong Yuan Yu 668” in Argentina's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in 2020. The Argentinean Coast Guard detected the vessel running in the country's EEZ without notice on May 4th 2020. The “Lu Rong Yang Yu 668” vessel belonged to the Rongcheng Homey Ocean Fishing company which holds a long record of unregistered vessels and illegal fishing activities in the area. The Chinese vessel ignored the signals sent out by the patrol vessel which goes against international regulations. This triggered an incentive for a search for the perpetrating vessel which headed out for international waters. This breach of the regulations led to a criminal and administrative case under the Federal Fisheries Rules. This incident highlighted the importance of



bilateral cooperation for resolving such activities, as due to severe weather conditions the illicit affairs were dealt with through diplomatic and legal means. However, around 100 of other foreign vessels were operating nearby Argentina’s EEZ and were prepared to overpower the Argentinean patrol vessels during that time, and were not intimidated by Argentina’s efforts<sup>14</sup>.

### Case Study 2: The Arrest of “Labiko 2” - 2017

Another example of a vessel actively participating in IUU Fishing activities is the internationally blacklisted vessel “Labiko 2”. It is legally flagged under Sierra Leone, which is considered a “flag of convenience”, as it is considered a nation with limited regulations. The vessel was found to be engaged in multiple illicit activities, most importantly it was found fishing in Liberia’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) without proper authorisation and using prohibited equipment. The vessel used deep-water gillnets, which lead to the massive bycatch of marine species. The Liberian Maritime Authorities (LMA) initiated an operation aimed at the vessel’s arrest. In 2017, the operation was successful and “Labiko 2” was arrested, and a discovery was made on board. A shark liver oil production facility was found which had the ability to process 500,000 sharks per year<sup>15</sup>. The arrest of this vessel uncovered the large, hidden shark liver oil industry, as well as saved an estimated half a million sharks yearly.

Date	Description of the event
May 1966	The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) was formed
10 December 1982	Adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
31 October 1995	The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was adopted

<sup>14</sup> “Argentine Coast Guard Chases Chinese Jigger Operating in the Country’s EEZ.” *MercoPress*, [en.mercopress.com/2020/04/29/argentine-coast-guard-chases-chinese-jigger-operating-in-the-country-s-eez](https://en.mercopress.com/2020/04/29/argentine-coast-guard-chases-chinese-jigger-operating-in-the-country-s-eez).

<sup>15</sup> “Behind the Scenes: How Sea Shepherd Combats Illegal Fishing.” *Sea Shepherd Australia*, 5 June 2024, [www.seashepherd.org.au/latest-news/combat-iuu-fishing/](https://www.seashepherd.org.au/latest-news/combat-iuu-fishing/).





7 November 1997	The term “IUU Fishing” was first used by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)
2 March 2001	Adoption of the FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU)
May 1 2007	The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (2007) was established
29 September 2008	Establishment of the European Union’s Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008
June 2016	Entry into Force of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)
10 December 2019	The United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution on sustainable fisheries (RES/78/68) <sup>16</sup>
17 June 2022	The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) <sup>17</sup>

## Major countries/ organisations and alliances

United States of America (USA)

<sup>16</sup> UN, [documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/397/75/pdf/n2339775.pdf?token=vV4oaFI8xUgzp9Qri5&fe=true](https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/397/75/pdf/n2339775.pdf?token=vV4oaFI8xUgzp9Qri5&fe=true).

<sup>17</sup> *The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies*, [www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/rulesneg\\_e/fish\\_e/fish\\_factsheet\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_factsheet_e.pdf).



The United States of America has created the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the nation's primary agency for marine conservation and fisheries management, which allows the USA to have strong internal enforcement systems that can be used as an example for other countries. An example of such a system is the establishment of a legislative framework such as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (2007), which governs the nation's marine fisheries management. Additionally, the NOAA uses satellites and other vessel monitoring systems to supervise the nation's waters. Finally, it has also implemented the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), which prevents fish collected from IUU Fishing activities from entering international markets, as well as collaborating with other nations for the installation of standardised controls. The NOAA also participates in RFMOs such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), where all member parties enhance their cooperation to tackle the issue of IUU Fishing. The US also provides substantial financial and technical aid for global monitoring and enforcement initiatives, such as the installation of Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) systems, as well as funding intergovernmental organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). However, the USA is not a nation which deals with many IUU Fishing activities, due to its highly monitored and protected waters.

Links for further research:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's articles on IUU Fishing:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/international-affairs/iuu-fishing>

<https://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/>

The United States Department of State's article on IUU Fishing:

<https://www.state.gov/key-topics-office-of-marine-conservation/illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing/>

### Indonesia

Indonesia is a country that has been majorly affected by IUU Fishing, which has caused economic loss in the nation. Indonesia has one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the world, as it is made up



of about 17,500 islands<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, its vast naval territory makes it susceptible to IUU Fishing. Indonesia has subsequently increased marine surveillance systems, which enhances international cooperation by encouraging neighbouring nations to conduct joint patrols. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) has even implemented frameworks on policing fisheries to help the nation tackle IUU Fishing.<sup>19</sup>

Further Links:

Indonesia's National Plan of Action to Prevent and to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ins165159.pdf>

### Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is located along the coast of north-west Africa, and highly depends on marine resources for financial stability and security. However, its fisheries management is being undermined as a result of IUU Fishing. By 2018, IUU Fishing was costing Sierra Leone around \$50,000 a year<sup>20</sup>, along with a drastic drop in fish stock for the nation. The country's Exclusive Economic Zone had been trespassed, which led to the nation's high vulnerability to IUU Fishing activities taking place. To combat this prominent issue, Sierra Leone has updated its fisheries laws and regulations while imposing stricter penalties for the perpetrators of such activities.

Links for further research:

Union Africaine's article on empowering communities in fighting illegal fishing on Sierra Leone's coast:

<https://au.int/fr/node/27094>

Seafood Source's article on Sierra Leone's war against illegal fishing trawlers:

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<sup>18</sup> Fisheries, NOAA. "Fighting IUU Fishing at the Ports: A Photo Journal of Port State Measures Training in Indonesia." NOAA, 2 Oct. 2017, [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/fighting-iuu-fishing-ports-photo-journal-port-state-measures-training-indonesia](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/fighting-iuu-fishing-ports-photo-journal-port-state-measures-training-indonesia).

<sup>19</sup> *Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing In ...*, [iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/1081/1/012013/pdf](https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/1081/1/012013/pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Webster, Nick. "Illegal Overfishing in Sierra Leone Leaves Locals Fearing Dark Future." *The National*, The National, 31 May 2023, [www.thenationalnews.com/world/2023/05/31/illegal-overfishing-in-sierra-leone-leaves-locals-fearing-for-dark-future/](http://www.thenationalnews.com/world/2023/05/31/illegal-overfishing-in-sierra-leone-leaves-locals-fearing-for-dark-future/).



<https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/sierra-leone-intensifies-war-against-illegal-fishing-tractors>

### Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations whose main goal is to combat world hunger. Considering that the IUU Fishing has a major impact on fish stock, and the fish market, the FAO plays a pivotal role in tackling the issue. It supports the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA)'s implementation, meaning that it aids in capacity-building and technical support to all its member states. The FAO has also created a set of guidelines to help its members comprehensively understand how to implement the PSMA. In addition, the FAO also encourages the collaboration of its members to establish networks connecting ports to facilitate the sharing of information among them.

Links for further research:

UN Food and Agriculture Organisations articles on stopping IUU Fishing:  
<https://www.fao.org/4/Y3554E/y3554e01.htm>

### European Union (EU)

The EU has made multiple attempts to tackle the issue of IUU Fishing, these include the establishment of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which is one of the five European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) which means it aims to deliver more jobs, welfare and growth within the EU. 11% of the fund is managed by the EU and the remaining 89% is managed by the Member States through operational programs.<sup>21</sup> The EMFF allows for the implementation of effective fisheries management as well as supports the application of maritime management policies. The EU also supports the enforcement of MCS Systems as part of their capacity-building attempts. Additionally, the EU promotes traceability and transparency in the seafood supply chain, which plays a pivotal role in combating IUU Fishing.

Links for further research:

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<sup>21</sup> “European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).” *Oceans and Fisheries*, [oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund-emff\\_en#the-fund](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/funding/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund-emff_en#the-fund).



An EU article on the EU's rules to combat IUU Fishing:  
[https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/rules/illegal-fishing\\_en](https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/rules/illegal-fishing_en)

### Previous attempts to solve the issue

#### United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)<sup>22</sup> - 1982

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) adopted on 10 December 1982, presents the comprehensive legislation of all the world's oceans and seas and how their resources are governed. The UNCLOS has been successful, as through the robust cooperation of its members it has led to the creation and establishment of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), and Territorial Seas, which have become crucial in mitigating the issue of IUU Fishing as they allow each nation to recognise their responsibilities concerning resource exploitation. The UNCLOS has also managed to lead to reduced conflicts regarding maritime frontiers. The UNCLOS promotes the creation of agreements to address marine environmental issues which further enhances international cooperation. An example of such an agreement is the Regional Seas Convention under the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP).

#### The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) - 1995

The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) was adopted in 1995 and its main objective was to regulate key fisheries which require global cooperation for their management and conservation. UNFSA targets two different fish stocks, straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. Both refer to fish stocks who migrate either between areas of national jurisdiction and international waters, and also long distances across various jurisdictions. The Agreement promotes the management of fisheries in regards to the entire ecosystem rather than focalising the protection of individual species. International cooperation is crucial when dealing with migrating fish stocks as they enter various jurisdictions, therefore different nations' territories, therefore an effort from multiple Members is essential. Although the UNFSA was deemed successful in promoting international collaboration for the sustainable

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<sup>22</sup> *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*,  
[www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf).



management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, it wasn't effective due to inconsistent implementation.

### International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)<sup>23</sup> - 1966

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) was first introduced on September 14, 1966 in Madrid, Spain. It is a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) responsible for the conservation of tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and nearby seas. The success of the ICCAT relies on the compliance of the member states with its decisions and regulations, additionally, such cooperation is crucial for managing migratory species of tuna across various jurisdictions. The ICCAT has introduced multiple useful systems and programs including quota systems and extensive scientific research programs which have been successful in tackling IUU Fishing practices.

## Possible solutions

### Enhanced Monitoring and Surveillance

Enhancing monitoring and surveillance of fishing activities around maritime borders through vessel monitoring systems can allow relevant authorities to monitor activities with much higher accuracy through the help of an international Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) such as the "Global Fishing Watch". This can support governmental efforts through transparently analysing the data derived from satellites to identify malicious fishing behaviours. In addition, agreements between Regional Fishing Monitoring Organisations (RFMOs) and nations may enhance international cooperation while ensuring transparency by sharing the data derived by the aforementioned surveillance systems, which will allow the sharing of data to be strictly confidential. Enhanced surveillance and monitoring can ensure that both the regional and international regulations are being in place while protecting international waters and each nation's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

### Creating an international IUU Fishing Database

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<sup>23</sup> iccat.int. "Recent Publications." *ICCAT-CICTA-CICAA*, [www.iccat.int/en/#](http://www.iccat.int/en/#).



The creation of an intercontinental IUU Fishing database will allow all Member States to assemble comprehensive data on incidents, operators and vessels in regards to IUU Fishing. This will enhance transparency as data can be visibly compared with the rest of the world, through increased international cooperation among nations and organisations. Certain functions of such a database would include vessel registry as well as incident tracking through technological integration including the use of artificial intelligence to identify and analyse data patterns and identify any potential outliers, as well as the use of satellites to track vessel movement and suspicious activities. Different stakeholders including governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), researchers, etc. will be granted different access to the database. Overall, the creation of such a database will improve accuracy, accountability, and collaboration.

### Promoting Sustainable Fisheries

In an attempt to prevent illicit and unsustainable fishing activities, enforcement mechanisms could be reinforced through surveillance, and inspections conducted by a UN Specialised Agency such as the “International Maritime Organisation.” Such activities include maintaining watch on patrol boats to ensure they're following guidelines on protected areas, quotas, and are using the appropriate, approved gear, which will ensure the protection of the marine ecosystems that it will come into contact with. Additionally, through international cooperation, global campaigns can be executed emphasising on the importance of Sustainable Fisheries, especially since IUU Fishing majorly contributes to the destruction of various marine ecosystems and environments which affects the produce of fish harvested as well as the quality of the oceans.

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## 12<sup>th</sup> Champion School Model United Nations | 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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