

IUU Fishing & Sustainable Fisheries

Combating IUU Fishing and Advancing Global Sustainable Fisheries Management



WHY is NOAA leading efforts to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing?

- IUU fishing is a global problem that threatens ocean ecosystems and sustainable fisheries.
- IUU fishing violates national and international fishing laws and regulations.
- IUU fishing threatens our economic security and the natural resources that are critical to global food security.
- IUU fishing puts law-abiding fishermen and seafood producers in the United States and abroad at a competitive disadvantage.
- IUU fishing can be associated with criminal activity, including forced labor, which the United States has committed to fighting with a whole-of-government approach.

WHAT is IUU Fishing?



Illegal

Fishing activities conducted in contravention of applicable laws and regulations, including laws adopted at the regional and international level.



Unreported

Misreported or not reported fishing activities, in contravention of national laws and regulations or reporting procedures of a relevant regional fisheries management organization (RFMO).



Unregulated

Fishing in areas of for fish stocks that are not managed, in an RFMO-managed area and conducted by vessels without nationality, or by those flying a flag of a State or fishing entity that is not party to the RFMO in a manner that is inconsistent with the conservation measures of that RFMO.

Some examples of IUU fishing include:

- Fishing without a license or quota for certain species.
- Failing to report catches or making false reports.
- Fishing in closed areas or during closed seasons, or using prohibited fishing gear.
- Conducting unauthorized transshipments (e.g., transfers of fish) to cargo vessels.

Economic Impacts of IUU Fishing

The inherent nature of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing makes it difficult to accurately quantify the full global economic impacts resulting from these activities. But there is little disagreement that it is in the billions, or even tens of billions, of dollars each year.

HOW does NOAA counter IUU fishing?

Coordination among U.S. government agencies is critical to effectively combat IUU fishing. So are collaborations with foreign governments and entities, international organizations, non-government organizations, and the private sector. We accomplish our work through a comprehensive set of authorities and activities that aim to strengthen global marine stewardship, keep IUU fish and fish products out of U.S. markets, and help other nations build monitoring and enforcement capacity.

Tools for Combating IUU Fishing



Strengthen Global Marine Stewardship

Successfully combating a global problem like IUU fishing requires multilateral cooperation through strong RFMOs and monitoring, control, and surveillance of the ocean areas they manage. Partnerships and agreements with foreign governments, foreign entities, and international organizations allow us to promote sustainable fisheries regulations and effective monitoring systems overseas.

Activity	Authority	Goals/Key Actions
Regional Fishery Management Organization Engagement	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and RFMO implementing legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in RFMOs and negotiate strong conservation and management measures to ensure responsible flag state action in the management of global fisheries resources
Bilateral Engagement	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with foreign partners directly to address policy, trade, scientific, and technical issues, including IUU fishing Advance U.S. goals to sustainably and effectively manage global fisheries resources
U.S. Interagency Working Group on IUU Fishing	Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act (Maritime SAFE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate U.S. government-wide efforts to combat IUU fishing in priority nations and regions and work with foreign nations to improve their fisheries management and enforcement capacity

Prevent and Deter IUU fish and fish products from Entering U.S. Markets

The United States imports nearly 80 percent of its seafood. That means it's essential to ensure that our high demand for imported seafood does not create incentives for IUU fishing activity. We do this by taking steps, in collaboration with other nations, to prevent IUU fish and fish products from entering our markets.

Activity	Authority	Goals/Key Actions
Trade Monitoring Programs	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and RFMO implementing legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require fish and fish product reporting, recordkeeping, and traceability to ensure imported seafood is sustainably caught and imported legally Administer four programs: Seafood Import Monitoring, Antarctic Marine Living Resources, Atlantic Highly Migratory Species International Trade, Tuna Tracking and Verification
Report to Congress on Improving International Fisheries Management	High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a three-step process of identification, consultation, and certification with nations found to have issues related to IUU fishing, bycatch of protected living marine resources, or directed shark catch Encourage identified nations to strengthen their national fisheries laws, take flag state action against their vessels, and improve their engagement in compliance processes and monitoring, control, and surveillance
Port State Measures Agreement	Agreement on Port State Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease incentives for IUU fishing by denying vessels engaging in IUU fishing access to ports and port services
Counter-IUU Fishing Investigations	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Lacey Act, and RFMO implementing legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detect and prevent IUU fishing Intercept IUU fish and fish products on their way to market Direct action against IUU fishing in U.S. waters and coordinate with partner nations to take direct action against IUU fishing in their waters or by their flagged vessels

Help Nations Build Monitoring and Enforcement Capacity

Work with other nations, particularly developing countries, to enhance their abilities to combat IUU fishing by providing tools, resources, information, and information sharing avenues.

Activity	Authority	Goals/Key Actions
Capacity Building	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage internationally to improve the capacity of foreign nations to manage their fisheries sustainably and to detect, deter, and prosecute IUU fishing Provide technical assistance and host training workshops for foreign agencies, organizations, and communities Provide technical assistance to strengthen national policy and legislative frameworks Enhance operational capacities for coordinated monitoring, control, and surveillance operations Deliver training workshops to combat IUU fishing through implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement