

Oceana Canada Fact Sheet

About Oceana Canada

- Oceana Canada, established in 2015 as an independent charity, is part of the largest international group focused solely on ocean conservation.
- Oceana Canada works with civil society, academics, fishers and the government to return Canada's formerly vibrant oceans to health and abundance.
- Oceana Canada believes that the oceans can help feed the 9 billion people on earth projected by 2050, and that Canada has a significant role to play.

About the report

- Oceana Canada commissioned unprecedented research, led by renowned Canadian fisheries scientists, that reveals just how depleted Canada's fisheries are.
- The key findings of the most comprehensive public study ever conducted on the state of Canadian fish are listed below:
 - Less than one-quarter of our fish stocks are now considered healthy.
 - The status of 45 per cent of our fish stocks isn't known due to a lack of basic information needed to assess and manage them.
 - The government doesn't have a comprehensive report on the state of our fish stocks and we are failing to manage our fisheries in ways that allow depleted stocks to recover.
 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has a responsibility to steward this precious resource, and they have to date been unwilling or unable to share basic information on the state our fish populations, and actions needed to bring them back.
 - We need to set targets and timelines for all depleted fish stocks and work to balance rebuilding rates with the needs of the communities that depend on these resources.
 - One of the key threats to our oceans is overfishing and bycatch, which the report shows could be better controlled by basing more management decisions on science, rather than on industry pressure.
 - Canada is making more money from our seafood industry than ever before, but we are dependent on a small number of stocks, namely lobster, shrimp, crab and scallops, leaving coastal communities and the Canadian seafood industry in a vulnerable position when these species or their value declines
 - East Coast and West Coast findings:
 - The majority of the monetary value of Canada's invertebrate fisheries is on the Atlantic coast (77%).
 - There are fewer management plans in place on the Atlantic coast (48% of stocks) than on the Pacific coast (95% of stocks).
 - Atlantic fisheries are dominated by invertebrates (65%) while salmon dominates Pacific fisheries. Invertebrates only represent 8% of landings in the Pacific.
 - The percentage of stocks that are classified as healthy and cautious are similar between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

How We Assessed Canada's Performance

- The report was written by Dr. Julia Baum from the University of Victoria and Dr. Susanna Fuller. It was reviewed by Dr. Jeff Hutchings of Dalhousie University and Alan Sinclair.
- The report focused on 125 stocks where assessments were available, including 28 species in the Atlantic and Arctic coasts and 18 on the Pacific coasts.
- The scientists reviewed Fisheries and Oceans Canada stock assessments, consulted Department staff, and reviewed research documents and found that key data was missing.

- Additional information was pulled from:
 - The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)
 - Canadian policies and laws
 - Species at Risk listings
 - Foundational work provided by the Royal Society of Canada's 2012 Expert Panel report on sustaining Canada's marine biodiversity
- Unlike in Canada, where there is a lack of transparency in fisheries management, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the United States is required to report their findings on a quarterly basis.

Where We Need To Be

- Recovery is possible. With the right measures in place, Canada can rebuild the lost diversity and abundance, and we can much more from our oceans.
- Oceana Canada is calling on the federal government to be accountable to the Canadian public about the state of our fisheries and to establish plans to rebuild the abundance of our oceans.
- Specifically, Oceana Canada urges the government to:
 - Make information about the status and rebuilding plans for Canada's fish stocks publically available.
 - Make fisheries management and decision making open and transparent.
 - Implement the policies that already exist and update the Fisheries Act to require action to be taken when overfishing occurs, and require overfished stocks to be rebuilt.