



PEW FELLOWS PROGRAM IN MARINE CONSERVATION

Pew Marine Conservation Fellows' Action Statement for Fisheries Conservation

The urgent need to restore depleted marine populations and maintain sustainable fisheries was endorsed by the World Summit for Sustainable Development in August 2002. These renewed commitments complement numerous prior international agreements, including the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing and the FAO statement on a precautionary approach to fisheries management. All of these accords provide the context for the actions we stress below.

Two core problems face fishery management around the world: (1) a wide array of institutions and policies that provide perverse incentives to overfish and (2) the lack of alternatives for people plagued by poverty. National governments will need to address these core problems, employing a precautionary approach and a fully participatory process while implementing the following seventeen priority actions.

Engaging institutions and stakeholders

1. Secure the participation in policy-making and management of all interested parties, including fishers, managers, traders, consumers, scientists, and public interest groups.
2. Establish institutions and forms of governance that provide effective incentives for fishery participants to conserve fishery resources.
3. Ensure that all fishing activities within national waters are conducted under an allocation system that provides tenure to identifiable groups of domestic fishers, in a fair manner.
4. Empower consumers to use marine resources sustainably by strengthening and implementing verifiable third-party certification systems for sustainably produced marine products.

Managing and evaluating fisheries

5. Eliminate subsidies that contribute to the expansion of fishing effort beyond sustainable levels.
6. Assist in the development of environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable alternative and supplementary income opportunities for fishers, such that fishing effort in unsustainable fisheries is reduced.
7. Maximize any fishery's economic and social benefits to society within limits of environmental sustainability.
8. Manage offshore fishing rights to provide equitable benefits within the country.
9. Set performance objectives and publish regular evaluations of progress towards achieving actions listed in this statement.

Conserving ecosystems

10. Ensure development and use of fishing gear and practices that prevent harm to habitats and non-target species.
11. Develop and enforce laws banning fisheries practices and gears that are deleterious to habitats and non-target fauna and flora.
12. Establish national and regional networks of no-take marine protected areas (MPAs) to sustain and enhance fisheries and protect habitats, as a contribution towards global networks of MPAs.
13. Monitor for early detection of ecosystem degradation, then plan and implement responses to halt this degradation.

Addressing technological interventions

14. Design and enforce standards for sustainable aquaculture that ensure economic viability (independent of perverse incentives) and prevent ecological harm.
15. Establish and enforce standards to prevent the escape of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) from production operations and subsequent introduction to coastal and offshore environments.
16. Exercise the greatest caution and scientific judgement before contemplating any intentional production or release of GMOs in the marine environment. Almost all such practices will be counterproductive to broader conservation efforts.
17. Advance and expand our understanding of the state of the oceans and ocean resources, creating and employing new technologies where necessary and environmentally acceptable.

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