

Coral reefs and food security: Study shows nations at risk

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A new study shows nations most vulnerable to coral reef loss from a food-security perspective. Local fisherman shows off his catch of octopus in Kenya. Credit: Tim McClanahan/WCS

A new study co-authored by the Wildlife Conservation Society identifies countries most vulnerable to declining coral reef fisheries from a food-security perspective while providing a framework to plan for alternative protein sources needed to replace declining fisheries.

The study looked at 27 countries around the world and found two common characteristics: nations with low incomes that lack the ability to adapt to alternative protein sources; and middle-income nations with

higher adaptive capacity but higher sensitivity to climate change. According to the analysis, Indonesia and Liberia were the most vulnerable countries to fisheries declines from a [food security](#) perspective, while Malaysia and Sri Lanka were the least vulnerable.

The study, which appears in the November issue of the journal [Environmental Science and Policy](#), is authored by Sara Hughes, Annie Yau, Lisa Max, Nada Petrovic, Frank Davenport, and Michael Marshall of the University of California; Tim McClanahan of the Wildlife Conservation Society; Edward Allison of [WorldFish Center](#); and Josh Cinner of James Cook University.

The authors say the results of the study should be a wake-up call for nations to begin enacting policies to promote alternative protein sources, either through land-based means such as growing beans and poultry farming, or increased aquaculture. Coral reef fisheries are expected to decline with climate change and other human caused disturbances.

"The study identifies countries where climate change is likely to be felt first by threatening people that depend on fisheries," said the study's co-author Tim McClanahan of the [Wildlife Conservation Society](#). "These countries are priorities for developing adaptation actions before the [effects of climate change](#) undermine their ability to feed themselves. Some countries will be stressed by climate yet have enough capacity to make the adaptation, while others will not. Making them realize this early will save considerable human suffering in the future."

Provided by Wildlife Conservation Society

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