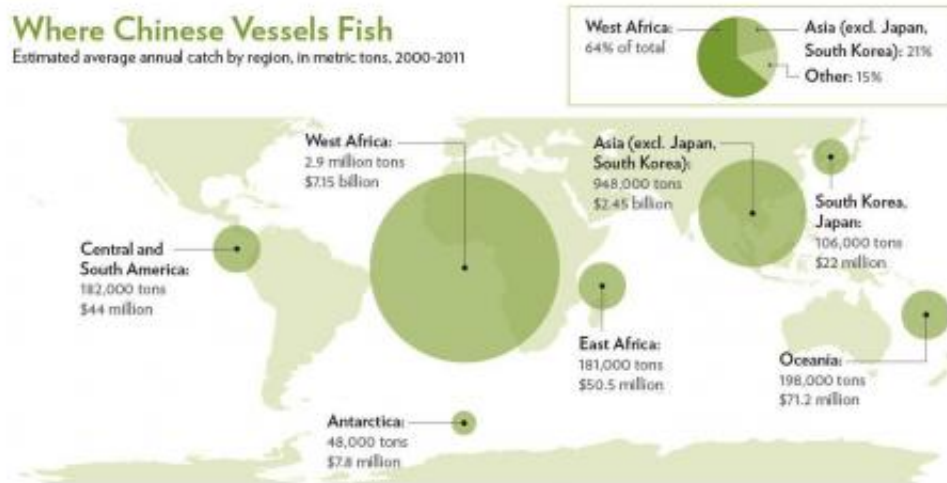


Chinese foreign fisheries catch 12 times more than reported, study shows

April 3 2013



A map illustrating where and how much Chinese vessels currently fish beyond their own waters

Chinese fishing boats catch about US\$11.5 billion worth of fish from beyond their country's own waters each year – and most of it goes unreported, according to a new study led by fisheries scientists at the University of British Columbia.

The paper, recently published in the journal *Fish and Fisheries*, estimates that China's foreign catch is 12 times larger than the catch it reports to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization, an international

agency that keeps track of [global fisheries](#) catches.

Using a new method that analyzes the type of fishing vessels used by Chinese operators around the world and their catch capacity, the UBC-led research team estimates Chinese foreign fishing at 4.6 million tonnes per year, taken from the waters of at least 90 countries – including 3.1 million tonnes from African waters, mainly [West Africa](#).

"China hasn't been forthcoming about its fisheries catches," says Dirk Zeller, Senior Research Fellow with UBC's Sea Around Us Project and the study's co-author. "While not reporting catches doesn't necessarily mean the fishing is illegal – there could be agreements between these countries and China that allow fishing – we simply don't know for sure as this information just isn't available."

"We need to know how many [fish](#) have been taken from the ocean in order to figure out what we can catch in the future," says Daniel Pauly, principal investigator of UBC's Sea Around Us Project and the study's lead author.

"Countries need to realize the importance of accurately recording and reporting their catches and step up to the plate, or there will be no fish left for our children."

About the study

To calculate a more realistic value of the Chinese foreign catches, the team of 20 researchers used a new method consisting of analysing scholarly articles, news reports and expert knowledge to estimate the number and types of Chinese vessels fishing in other countries' waters. This information is then combined with published data on the amount of catch per vessel type to estimate total catch.

While the new method contains uncertainties, it provides crucial information when official reports alone are insufficient or untrustworthy. It may soon be used to calculate the catches of other countries that fish around the world, such as Spain. Foreign catch information offers a valuable resource for [fisheries](#) managers, particularly in developing nations, where most of the foreign fishing occurs.

Provided by University of British Columbia

Citation: Chinese foreign fisheries catch 12 times more than reported, study shows (2013, April 3) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-04-chinese-foreign-fisheries.html>

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