

Study highlights ways to improve fishing practices

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Researchers from The University of Western Australia and Stanford University have confirmed eco-labels on seafood are a trusted way for consumers to ensure they are buying sustainable seafood products and

also encourage the seafood industry to be more sustainable.

The advice comes after the scientists carried out one of the largest global studies to examine the success of fisheries that use fishery [improvement](#) projects.

Fishery improvement projects work by using [consumer demand](#) for sustainable [seafood](#) to encourage improvements in [fishing practices](#) and management. When successful, these projects improve the sustainability of fisheries, often earning the fishery an eco-label, which entices consumers to choose that product.

The effectiveness of fishery improvement projects is often questioned and has been the subject of great debate, and with a lack of research into their success, the researchers put 67 fisheries from 50 countries to the test.

Lead researcher Dr. Kendra Travaille from the UWA Oceans Institute and School of Biological Sciences said long-term projects with regional level management arrangements and focused on species in danger of over-fishing had the best success rates.

"Interestingly, and contrary to popular opinion, the level of success didn't come from how well financed the fisheries were or their size, with fisheries in developing countries and smaller catches often carrying out effective improvement initiatives," Dr. Travaille said.

She said the study used online data and although Australia was not part of the study and in general had great fishing practices, the research provided useful insights for the industry and government about what makes a fishery improvement project successful.

"The research also highlights the power we have as [consumers](#) in

ensuring a sustainable and high standard of fishery practices," she said.

The research has been published in the *Fish and Fisheries* journal.

More information: Kendra L. Thomas Travaille et al. Key attributes related to fishery improvement project (FIP) effectiveness in promoting improvements towards sustainability, *Fish and Fisheries* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/faf.12357](https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12357)

Provided by University of Western Australia

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