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MARINE BIOLOGY

MARINE ECOSYSTEM AND THE PHENOMENON OF ILLEGAL FISHING

Hello, we are some students of Massimiliano Ramadù high school campus and we are part of a project concerning marine biology.

We have produced an article about illegal fishing, especially in Africa and we would like to show you what we found by also putting in contact with an expert in the field, Mika Odido, a UNESCO colleague who works for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in Africa.

During the course of the work, we looked for some information on illegal fishing which are as follows:

"The non-governmental organization Greenpeace Africa has called on West African governments to strengthen the surveillance of the region's oceans and the protection of fish resources against all forms of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Illegal fishing undermines the regional economy and costs states billions of dollars in lost revenue.

To overcome these challenges, according to the international organisation, States must combine their efforts to put an end to all forms of unregulated fishing.

Hence the need to implement any transparency initiative in the fisheries sector, the reduction of overcapacity and the strengthening of water monitoring. The implementation of these good governance measures will prevent the depletion of fish stocks, the degradation of marine habitats, but also the destruction of an entire ecosystem vital to the economy and food sovereignty of the region.

About 20% of the world's illegal fish come from the territorial waters of six West African countries, according to a report recently published by Investigative Journalism Reportika (Ij-Reportika), an international network of investigative journalists. The countries concerned are Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing not only affects the economies of these countries, but also the artisanal fishing and the millions of families who live on it. In the six West African countries with the most looted fish resources in the world, the loss of revenue is estimated at about 2.3 billion dollars a year and about 300,000 jobs.

The report, which is based on field investigations and satellite monitoring of the main deep-sea fishing fleet (Dwf), notes that illegal fishing in West Africa is largely practiced by Chinese trawlers.

In Africa, Latin America and the Indian Ocean, most of these Chinese vessels are engaged in trawling, an extremely destructive form of fishing that collects everything it encounters and is largely responsible for the almost total disappearance of fish in Chinese national waters.

While illegally scouring the bottom of a country, these boats disable their automatic identification system (Ais), a device that provides information about their identity, status, location and route for an average of at least 8 hours. Some ships even operate under the flag of the host country when entering its territorial waters to avoid being registered by the AIS. For example, the "Yu Feng 1, 3 and 4" ships fly the Chinese flag when in international waters, before operating under the Ghanaian flag when fishing in Ghana's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

In West Africa, Ij-Reportika reporters have found that Chinese fishing vessels engaged in illegal fishing are also involved in other illegal activities, such as trafficking in African animal species used in Chinese medicine and fentanyl production, a potent synthetic opioid whose misuse as a drug often leads to overdoses and deaths. The report also reports that illegal fishing by China is not limited to the coasts of West Africa. It also affects many coastal countries on the continent, including Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Ivory Coast and Liberia. “

In addition to this general information, we asked Mika Odido questions in order to find out as much information as possible; the questions are:

- Have you ever had contact with people who were fishing illegally ?
- How is UNESCO hindering operators?
- What has been the most surprising story of illegal fishing since you joined the world?

These questions were answered as follows:

1. No, I haven't had direct contact with people who fish illegally. Within the UN system, the Agency responsible for fisheries, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) is the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/en/>
2. FAO has developed a Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) to combat IUU. A joint working group on IUU fishing was established in 2000 and details of its activities are available at: <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/tools-and-initiatives/joint-working-group-on-iuu-fishing/en/>
3. An international framework has been developed to address fisheries management and consists of both binding agreements and voluntary instruments that facilitate fisheries management at global, regional and national levels. <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/international-framework/en/>
4. In addition to IUU fishing, the activities of fishermen and vessels engaged in IUU fishing may constitute, lead or accompany offences in the fisheries sector. Examples include drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking, piracy. <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/links-crimes/en/>

Following these answers we went to inform ourselves more through the links he recommended and we extrapolated several new information, such as:

INFORMATION ON ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION:

the IMO is working with a series of interested parts in order to sensitize on the agreement of Cape Town of 2021 and to increase safety of the peach through a series of regional webinars turned to the decisor of the marine administrations, the fisheries and maritime law enforcement authorities.

The 2012 Cape Town Agreement is an internationally binding instrument. The agreement includes mandatory international requirements for stability and navigability, electrical machinery and equipment, life-saving equipment, communication and fire protection equipment, and the construction of fishing vessels.

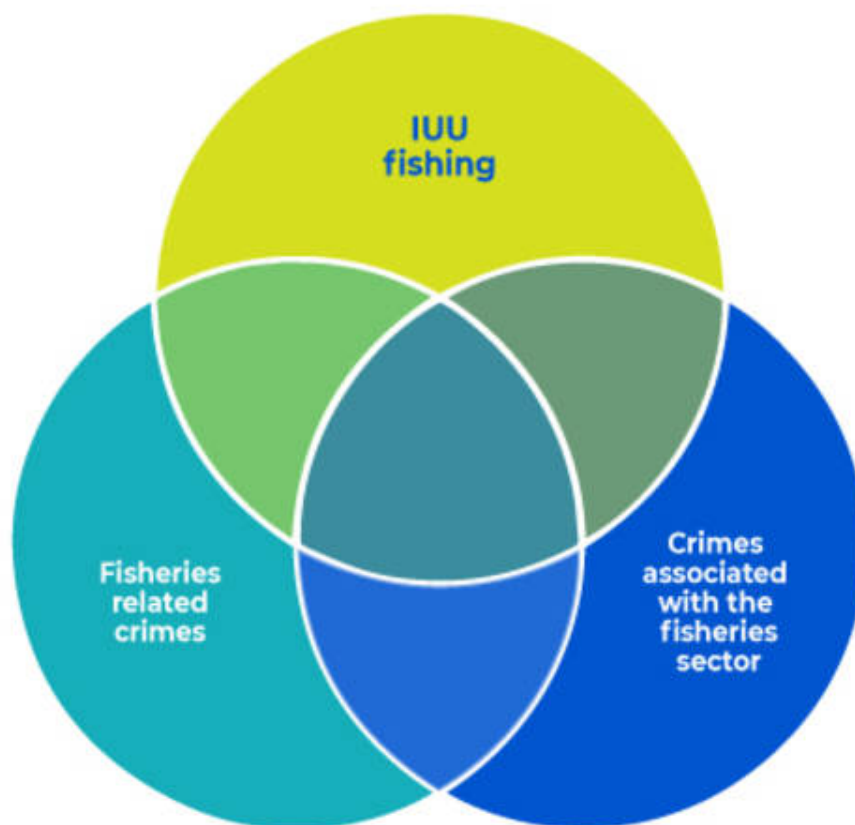
The total number of fishing vessels in the world is estimated at about 4.6 million. Most of these are small vessels. About 64,000 fishing vessels 24 metres long and over operate in marine waters.

But fishing is one of the most dangerous professions in the world. It is estimated that thousands of fishermen live their lives every year.

That is why the IMO has worked for many years, together with other stakeholders, to improve the safety of fishing vessels and save lives at sea.

This work will also contribute to the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

INFORMATION ON ILLEGAL FISHING RELATED OFFENCES::



The above diagram demonstrates the links between IUU fishing and fisheries offences, namely fisheries-related offences and fisheries-related offences.

Fisheries-related offences are closely linked to the fishing operation, even if they are not considered illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing, as they may not constitute fishing as such. Examples of fisheries-related offences include document fraud, such as spurious fishing licences, tax offences, money laundering, inappropriate working conditions, etc.

Offences associated with the fisheries sector are offences which have no direct connection with fishing operations but take place on fishing vessels, or during a fishing operation and which use the fishing operation

as cover, opportunity or means to commit such offences. Examples of these include: drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking, piracy, etc.

Addressing each of these three different categories requires special and concerted action by different agencies and different operational and legal frameworks. They may not necessarily be addressed using the same tools. However, in some cases, a ship may be involved in activities falling into all three categories that require coordinated enforcement action.

A number of agencies have worked to develop tools to address the crimes associated with the fisheries sector. For example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) led the development of the Work in Fishing Convention (C188), which was adopted in 2007 and entered into force in November 2017. This Convention sets out a minimum standard for the employment of workers on fishing vessels, including minimum age, working conditions, worker safety, payments, return, accommodation and other matters.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has several initiatives addressing fisheries-related crimes and fisheries-related crimes, including the Global Programme to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime, the Maritime Crime Programme, the Global Money Laundering Programme and the Container Control Programme. UNODC has also worked with its members on the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2000 and entered into force in 2003.

 e hope we have been interesting and passionate about illegal fishing.