

Corruption is devouring the world's fish stocks

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Corruption is eating into the bones of the fishing industry, say fisheries experts, who are in Washington DC this week to discuss the issue with the World Bank and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

They say that fishing rules are increasingly being disregarded, as catches across the world shrink. The number of pirate boats flying flags of convenience from landlocked nations has boomed; fish are falsely labelled sustainable; inspectors are increasingly harassed or bribed; shrimp farms employ child labour; and a fifth of all catches worldwide are illegal.

This has led scientists to underestimate the pressure on stocks, so they recommend quotas that are too high. Even these may not be observed by authorities. "Fisheries managers should be held accountable when ignoring scientific advice," says Andrew Hurd of the IUCN.

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