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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Wild-Caught Fish Are Feeding the World

Sound Fisheries Management in Africa Improves Lives



Sla Kambou/FAO

In Africa, more than 400 million people rely on protein from fish for their nutritional health, and millions of people, many of them women, earn a living in the

Hundreds of Millions of Africans Depend on Wild-Caught Fish for Food, Nutrition and Income

capture fisheries sector.^{1,2,3} However, inadequate attention to fishing policies and management threatens human health and results in \$2 billion in lost revenues each year.⁴ Understanding the overall value and the threats facing the sector can strengthen USAID goals of increasing food security, improving global health and alleviating poverty in order to promote resilience, lasting stability, peace and democracy.

Four Key Takeaways in Support of Protecting Wild-Caught African Fisheries

- Secure fisheries help alleviate poverty and boost economic growth.
- Fish is nutritious and key for food security.
- Wild-caught fisheries are at risk.
- Proven management strategies and approaches can restore and increase productivity.

Improved management of wild-caught fisheries in Africa is key to maintaining their productivity and contribution to food security, nutrition, health, poverty alleviation and economic growth. With adequate management approaches and continued investment, the natural productivity of wild-caught fisheries can be enhanced, leading to improved economic growth and overall well-being for people and communities.



Greenpeace



African Progress Panel



Samuel Aranda

Poverty Alleviation and Economic Growth

The United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that the fisheries and aquaculture sectors contributed more than \$24 billion to the GDP of African countries in 2011. Marine small-scale fisheries contribute the most value and boost the economies of many coastal East and West African countries, including Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Somalia, Tanzania and Mozambique. The contribution of small-scale fisheries in Africa is also often underestimated; a recent analysis of West African small-scale fisheries revealed that they may employ several times more people than the official estimates.⁵

Fish Is Nutritious and Supports Food Security

A decline in wild-caught fish threatens human health and nutrition.⁶ When compared with other protein sources like chicken, goat or beef, fish is a better source of many essential vitamins and minerals such as magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, and vitamins B-12, D, and E. When fish is eaten whole or as fish sauce, calcium, iron, sodium, zinc and vitamin A are additional nutrients. Once processed, fish is often transported inland to people and communities who would otherwise go without this important food.⁷

Wild-Caught Fisheries Are at Risk

Chronic overfishing in unregulated and undermanaged environments threatens an already declining small-scale fisheries sector. A number of African nations including Mozambique, Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Cameroon and Ivory Coast are among those most vulnerable to the risk of fisheries collapse due to their high reliance on fish as a source of nutrition and economic viability. West Africa's fisheries face a projected 20 percent decrease in maximum marine catch by 2050.⁸ Aquaculture, often seen as a solution, cannot replace the quantity and nutritional value of food provided by wild-caught fisheries.

Management Strategies and Tools That Work

While the wild-caught fisheries sector in Africa faces numerous challenges to sustainable fish production, these factors are not insurmountable.⁹ Proven strategies to improve fisheries management include:

- Promoting policies that secure tenure and access for small-scale fishers.
- Reducing or eliminating subsidies that distort the market and drive overfishing.
- Providing training and resources to support modern management approaches, strengthening fishing associations and decreasing post-harvest loss.
- Using an ecosystem-based approach to enhance productivity and resilience.

Additional Resources

Fishing for Food Security: The Importance of Wild Fisheries for Food Security and Nutrition (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MIT3.pdf)

The Importance of Wild Fisheries for Local Food Security: Country Summaries (<https://agrilinks.org/library/importance-wild-fisheries-local-food-security>)

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2. FAO. 2014. The Value of African Fisheries.
3. Belhabib, Dyhia, U. Rashid Sumaila, and Daniel Pauly. "Feeding the poor: contribution of West African fisheries to employment and food security." *Ocean & Coastal Management* 111 (2015): 72-81.
4. Golden, C. et al., "Fall in Fish Catch Threatens Human Health," *Nature*, 534, 7607 (June 2016): 317-320.
5. Belhabib, D. et al. 2015.
6. WorldFish. 2015. Fish Trade for a Better Future program brochure.
7. Ibid.
8. Golden, C. et al. 2016.
9. AUC-NEPAD. 2014. Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa: 62.



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BRIDGE is a five-year USAID project (2015-2020) implemented by DAI Global, LLC and managed by the Forestry and Biodiversity Office that supports USAID and partners to better integrate biodiversity with other development sectors for improved conservation and human development outcomes. Contact: USAID Contracting Officer's Representative, Olaf Zerbock (ozerbock@usaid.gov). USAID's Forestry and Biodiversity Office website: <https://rmpportal.net/biodiversity-conservation-gateway>