



# Regional IUUF Intel report

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# verumar

Situational Awareness in Fisheries  
Philippines



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## 1 THE PHILIPPINES

### Sixty-two footer DA-BFAR fishing boats to sail soon | Philippine Information Agency [Sep 9]

- QUEZON CITY, Sept. 9 -- Agriculture Secretary William Dar inaugurated the 62-footer fiberglass tuna fish carrier on September 9, 2020 in Mabini, Davao de Oro.
- The fishing vessel is equipped with a fish hold hatch and chiller supported with four units “Pakura”, which will serve as catcher boats.
- Funded by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the P5.25-million FBCA Davao Pacific Bluefin aims to make the fisherfolk of Davao Region self-sufficient.
- Surrounded by vast fishing grounds namely the Davao Gulf, Pujada and Malalag Bays, and the insular waters going to Sarangani Bay, Davao region is a source of various fisheries and aquatic species.
- As such, the fishing vessel is expected to enable the local fishers to explore fishing grounds beyond the 15-kilometer boundary.
- According to Dar, compared to the 32-footer boats previously developed by BFAR, which limits the area of coverage to 5-8 kilometers only, the bigger vessels can cover a wider area of municipal waters.
- “This particular model can also withstand rough seas, and may be used as Patrol Boats under the Bantay Dagat initiative,” the Secretary added.
- The agri chief stressed that fishers must be the first protector of the seas.
- “Protect the seas and protect each other,” he said.
- In his message, Dar underscored the importance of clustering in the fishery subsector.
- “Clustering and consolidating is not only for crops and livestock. It is also important for the fisherfolk to come together and perform collective actions,” Dar explained.
- The Secretary also urged the stakeholders of the subsector to adapt the Big Brother, Small Brother concept for equitable development.

### BFAR, USAID host workshop to battle illegal fishing in PHL | BusinessMirror [Sep 14]

- The US and Philippine governments launched on September 2, a workshop attended by 135 participants to measure and understand the negative impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the country.
- Supported by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAid) through its Fish Right program, experts from the University of the Philippines School of Statistics facilitated the online workshop on September 2 to 3, bringing together various sectors to increase understanding on IUU fishing at a national level.
- “This exercise is a critical first step to understanding the complex global threat that IUU fishing represents to ocean health and maritime security,” stated US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission John Law during the opening session of the workshop. “I commend the Philippine government as it continues to ramp up its efforts against IUU fishing through investment in multi-stakeholder and inter-agency actions.”
- “As we cope and recover from this pandemic, we need to ensure our food security, while at the same time consider our natural capital – our fish stocks and their habitats. This is the bluer normal we want to achieve towards the vision of a food secured and



resilient Philippines with prosperous farmers and fishers. We cannot afford to lose our fish to IUU fishing,” shared Undersecretary for Fisheries and BFAR National Director Eduardo Gongona.

#### BFAR holds fish examiners’ training - SUNSTAR [Sep 19]

- THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is conducting a 15-day Fish Examiners Training Course to boost the anti-illegal fishing campaign in the region, a top BFAR official said. BFAR Regional Director Isidro Velayo, Jr. said the 15-day training, which reeled off Monday, September 14, has 41 participants. The training emphasizes experiential and learning-by-doing activities.
- “There are classroom instruction and field exposure to put into practice what they have learned,” Velayo said. Velayo said the training is to produce Fish Examiners for law enforcement capability enhancement of the municipal government of Sindangan and “to increase the number of licensed Fish Examiners in Region 9.”
- He said it also aimed “to have Fish Examiners at strategic locations, which are accessible, as the need arises, willing to assist apprehending officers in the filing of blast-fishing cases in court.” He said the training has 41 participants comprising mostly of sea watchmen (Bantay Dagat) from Sindangan. The rest are policemen and selected BFAR technical staff from the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay.
- Sindangan Mayor Rosendo Labadlabad, who is active in the anti-illegal fishing campaign, facilitated the conduct of the 15-day training, according to Velayo. He said that Sindangan is one of the coastal towns in the region with reported illegal fishing activities where blast fishing is a problem in their municipal waters. “Due to its serious intent to combat such illegal and devastating fishing method, Mayor Rosendo Labadlabad requested and for their municipality to host the training,” Velayo said. He said the training is also in line with the 57th Fish Conservation Week, which reeled off Monday, September 14. This year’s Fish Conservation Week is anchored on the theme: “Karagatan ay Pangalagaan upang Ani at Kita ay Makamtan maging sa Gitna ng Pandemyang Hamon sa Bayan.” (SunStar Zamboanga)

#### Coast Guard seizes more explosives in N. Samar - Manila Bulletin [Sep 22]

- More explosive materials were discovered in the same village in Northern Samar days after a dynamite factory and P3.5-million explosives were uncovered.
- As a series of inspections continued on September 21, more explosive devices and components, believed to be used for illegal fishing, were found in Barangay Burabod, San Antonio, the Philippine Coast Guard said Tuesday.
- Around 2,000 pieces of manufactured blasting caps, 8,000 pieces of improvised blasting caps, 19 pieces of time fuses, two pieces of time fuses connected to blasting caps, homemade explosives, two lighters, and one aluminum foil were uncovered in a land area within the village.
- According to the Coast Guard, the land area is allegedly owned by a municipal councilor of San Antonio.
- “All seized items remain in the custody of the municipal police station in San Antonio for safe keeping and proper disposition, while thorough investigation about the incident is being conducted,” the Coast Guard said.



- The discovery of the explosive devices and components came days after an explosion was reported in the same barangay due to improvised blasting devices used for illegal fishing on September 17.
- A joint follow-up inspection on September 20 also resulted in the confiscation of P3.5 million pesos worth of explosives and raw materials used in making improvised dynamites for illegal fishing.
- These included 34 kilos of Trinitrotoluene (TNT) and 25,000 pieces of blasting caps.
- The joint investigation team from the Philippine Coast Guard Station in Northern Samar and the Municipal Police Station in San Antonio revealed that the seized items were found in a land area allegedly owned by a female resident of Barangay Burabod.

#### Video: In this Philippine community, women guard a marine protected area [Sep 25]

- *Women in the central Philippines have banded together to protect their marine sanctuaries from poachers and illegal fishers.*
- *Armed with only paddles and kayaks, these women willingly risk their lives to manage their marine protected area.*
- *Philippine waters are teeming with rich coral reefs and fish diversity and abundance, but protecting the seascape is challenging due to illegal fishing and climate change.*
- On the island of Siquijor in the central Philippines, groups of women risk their lives for a cause: to manage and protect their marine sanctuaries. Communities in the central Philippines are heavily dependent on the bounty of the sea, but illegal fishing has decimated coral reefs and impacted fish diversity and abundance in the region. These women are changing that.
- Armed with a paddle and the knowledge that preserving the reef is the only way to feed and protect her community, Evelyn Malicay was shot at by an illegal fisher while on a patrol. But her efforts led to his arrest. In Siquijor, she is considered a superwoman who will stop at nothing to protect the marine protected area (MPA) here.
- “Even though I am a woman, I will catch anyone who violates the MPA,” Malicay says. “What they do not know is that I am always on watch.”
- In this short documentary, Rosa Amanda Tuirán and Sarah Trent traveled to the island of Siquijor to tell the story of a group of Filipino women who ride kayaks to protect one of the most well-managed MPAs in the Philippines.
- This video was supported with a grant from the Earth Journalism Network. The Coastal Conservation and Education Foundation helped with field logistics and interpretation.

#### Battery-operated ‘parrotfish’ wins contest for gadgets to support campaign vs illegal fishing [Sep 26]

- A battery-operated “parrotfish” has been tapped by a non-government organization (NGO) to assist in the monitoring of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF) activities in the Philippines.
- Parrotfish SeaMate was judged as the winning entry among the 15 participants in the recently held Karagathon codefest, a hackathon event organized by conservation group Oceana to support its campaign against illegal fishing.
- The event was held in partnership with the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Science and Technology-Advanced Science and Technology Institute.



- Parrotfish SeaMate is a portable battery-operated fishing boat tracker and transceiver that forms part of a smart wireless network. The device serves as smart buoys equipped with sound detection technology and satellite systems to identify illegal entries in protected bodies of water.
- The system was proposed by the ParrotFishNet group—composed of Rey Mark Tion, Allan Bajuyo, Jay Tamayo, Ace Mark Gella and Diogenes Pascua. They won first place and a P100,000 prize for their entry.
- According to the judges, the Parrotfish SeaMate was chosen as Karagathon winner because it “offers an ingenious, easy to use, practical and cost-efficient means to monitor fishing activities.” It has been successfully pilot tested in El Salvador City, Misamis Oriental.
- The second place winner is the submission from Team Hydraean, composed of Alatheia Grace Del Rosario, Bryce Narciso Mecines, Francis Mago, Hunelleth Villalon and Michael Allan Corpuz.
- The group submitted a working proof concept of what they called as “Seantinel,” a versatile tracking platform that can be used as an independent communication layer to gather reports of illegal fishing and even maritime incidents in municipal waters.
- Third place went to the Oceans13 (Mod7) group of Ariel Doria, Asuncion de Guzman, Rutherford Belleza, Van Randolph Madrid, Zenith Arnejo and John Oneil Geronimo.
- They developed a mobile app that can track the trajectory of fishing boats, detect their fishing patterns, and store and handle all the data needed.
- The second- and third-place winners received P50,000 and P30,000 in cash prizes, respectively.

## 2 INDONESIA

### The eradication of IUU fishing in Indonesia for fisheries resources sustainability by the Task Force 115 [Sep 15]

- Abstract. The Indonesia Government through Presidential Regulation No. 115 of 2015 established a task force to eradicate illegal fishing (known as Task Force 115). Task Force 115 was formed with a special mandate to carry out law enforcement operations to tackle illegal fishing. The purpose of this study is to explain the role of the Task Force 115 in eradicating of illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing activities that occur in the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Indonesia in terms of the ecosystem aspects for fisheries resources sustainability. This research used descriptive-quantitative methods to analyze the case study of eradicating IUU fishing in Indonesia by the Task Force 115. Statistical tests were performed using the Mann-Whitney test.
- This study also aims to analyze the impact of the Task Force 115 performance on fisheries productivity and the conservation of fisheries resources. The results showed that Task Force 115 has a positive impact on the sustainability of Indonesia's fisheries resources. The Indonesian government's efforts to eradicate IUU fishing for approximately 4 years have had a positive impact that can be enjoyed by the people of Indonesia. In the last years since 2013 to 2017, Indonesian fish stocks continued to increase from 7.31 million tons (2013) to 12.54 million tons (2017). Task Force 115 has proven to gradually reduce overfishing, fishing ground distance and fishing time, which positively contribute to



productivity and the welfare of coastal communities. Key Words: IUU fishing, MSY, productivity, The Task Force 115.

### Two fishing boats impounded for using trawls [Sep 27]

- Jakarta (ANTARA) - The Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry has impounded two fishing boats for using trawls to catch fish in the waters of Seribu Islands off Jakarta's northern coast.
- "We seized trawls from two fishing boats MV Hasil Melimpah II and MV Sawung Jaya," Director General of Marine and Fishery Resources Supervision Tb Haeru Rahayu said in a press statement released on Saturday.
- Before the fishing boats were impounded the ministry had disseminated the ban on the use of trawls, she said.
- The skippers of two fishing boats voluntarily handed the trawls to be kept at the marine and fishery resources supervisory (PSDKP) base in Jakarta, she said.
- "We still prioritize nurturing approaches to our fishermen," she said.
- Chief of the PSDK Base in Jakarta Sumono Darwinto said his side is taking intensive steps to fight against the use of trawls in the PSDKP base's jurisdiction.
- He said the PSDKP base seized a total of 55 trawls from 2019 to 2020.

### Indonesia's new intelligence hub wields data in the war on illegal fishing [Sep 29]

- *The Indonesian Maritime Information Center (IMIC), launched in July, aims to tackle illegal fishing and other maritime violations in the country's waters by drawing on data and analysis from various ministries and agencies.*
- *Its proponents say it will enhance and expedite coordination among the many agencies involved and offer a public-facing data-sharing outlet.*
- *Indonesia's waters are frequently plundered by foreign fishing vessels, and some areas are disputed by other countries, including China.*
- In late July, a high-speed chase stirred the waters northeast of Indonesia's Natuna Islands, as patrol officers pursued a Vietnamese vessel suspected of illegal fishing.
- Having fled when authorities approached it for questioning, the Vietnamese crew tossed a fishing net to purge implicating evidence, burned tires to cloud their sight, and zigzagged across the water to evade capture, according to the Indonesian side's account of the incident. Indonesian officers ordered the sailors to stop. Instead, they tried to ram into the patrol boat.
- A visit, board, search and seizure team fired a warning shot into the air, but the Vietnamese attempted to escape. It was only after the team shot the fishing vessel's platform that it slowed down and yielded to inspection, which uncovered two tons of fish.
- The Indonesian Maritime Information Center (IMIC), launched days earlier, on July 22, had helped detect the Vietnamese boat by pooling high-quality surveillance data from several government bodies, according to Demo Putra from the Indonesian Coast Guard (Bakamla), which oversees this initiative.
- Bakamla says it hopes this intelligence hub, the first of its kind, will curb illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and other security incidents around Indonesian waters by enhancing and expediting coordination among the many agencies involved in regulating them and by offering a public-facing data-sharing outlet.





- “We don’t have a comprehensive picture of the maritime situation because the information is separated depending on the agencies and incident type,” Putra told Mongabay. “We established IMIC to integrate all information in Indonesia and create operational planning based on data from every agency. Planning will be better because the data is more comprehensive, more accurate because it’s analyzed by a lot of agencies.”

### 3 VIETNAM

#### Stronger measures needed to combat IUU fishing: Vietnam Deputy PM [Sep 10]

- HÀ NỘI — Deputy Prime Minister Trịnh Đình Dũng urged stronger and more drastic and appropriate measures to early complete all recommendations by the European Commission (EC) so as to remove its yellow card warning over illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU).
- Addressing the fourth session of the National Steering Committee for IUU Prevention on Tuesday, Dũng said that Việt Nam has coordinated closely with the EC in fighting IUU fishing and achieved many progresses in enforcing EC recommendations.
- However, the improvements are not enough, Dũng stressed, pointing to the slow implementation in several localities.
- He assigned the Ministry of National Defence to continue stepping up patrols at overlapping and undefined waters between Việt Nam and other countries.
- The Ministry of Public Security was requested to strictly investigate cases related to bringing Vietnamese fishing vessels to operate illegally in other countries’ waters, and strengthen international cooperation in this field.
- Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry was asked to speed up negotiations towards the signing of agreements on delimitation of special economic zones between Vietnam and other countries, and exert efforts to ensure legitimate interests of Vietnamese fishermen when they are arrested illegally by foreign authorised forces.
- For the long-term solution, the Deputy PM stressed the need of reducing exploitation and increasing aquaculture.
- Speaking at the event, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Nguyễn Xuân Cường said that after nearly three years receiving the yellow card warning, Việt Nam has finished a large volume of works recommended by the EC, with the national steering committee set up and a number of related decrees, circulars and legal documents issued.
- The number of Vietnamese fishing boats seized by foreign forces in the first eight months of 2020 decreased, and 80.61 per cent of vessels with a length of 15m or more had been equipped with the vessel monitoring systems as of August 31.

#### 27 Vietnamese stowaways, 5 suspected smugglers arrested (update) - Focus Taiwan [Sep 15]

- Taipei, Sept. 15 (CNA) Coast Guard officers on Tuesday arrested 27 Vietnamese stowaways and five crew members aboard a Taiwanese fishing boat in waters off Pingtung County and continue to search for others who jumped overboard to avoid being taken into custody.



- A suspicious vessel was spotted at 2 a.m. in waters about 21.5 kilometers off the coast of Kenting, sailing toward Houbihu Fishing Port west of the resort town, according to Coast Guard officers in Hengchun.
- When it was about 5.5 kilometers from the port, the ship suddenly changed course and navigated toward Dingbaisha on the other side of the small peninsula on which Houbihu and Dingbaisha are located.
- After receiving a report of the vessel's movement, the Coast Guard dispatched two patrol boats to intercept the ship, and they detected people jumping overboard using a thermal imager at around 4 a.m.
- Those who jumped from the ship swam toward the Dingbaisha coast, and a Coast Guard team approached and boarded the Hengchun-registered fishing ship and brought it back to Houbihu Fishing Port for an inspection.
- Of the 30 Vietnamese stowaways thought to be on board, 27 have been arrested, included those found on board and some of those who jumped ship and swam to shore, while a search continues for the eight others.
- Of the 27 Vietnamese arrested, 14 were men and 13 were women.
- Five crew members -- two Taiwanese nationals and three Filipinos -- thought to be involved in the suspected human smuggling operation were also arrested, Coast Guard officers said.

#### Vietnam tightens the control of fishing boats on the high seas - Vietnam Fisheries Magazine [Sep 16]

- In the morning of September 08, at the Government Office, Deputy Prime Minister Trịnh Đình Dũng, Head of the National Steering Committee on IUU fishing prevention (NSC on IUU) presided the fourth meeting with the attendance of leaders of ministries, sectors and key prefectures about IUU prevention.
- According to reports by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, there are specific remains in IUU fishing, such as incomplete installation of VMS in fishing boats, especially boats with at least 24m long, which affects the management and control of fishing boats without VMS because those might operate on the ocean and violate the IUU fishing regulation, especially trespassing foreign water territory. The enforcement of regulations on IUU fishing violations has been enhanced but the results are not impressive in the face of multiple boats trespassing foreign waters. Vietnam's competent forces are requested to continue to review, investigate and strictly handle the violated cases, assuring the deterrence of law. The number of Vietnamese boats being captured and handled by foreign authorities has been less than the previous year, but the situation is still overwhelming with collisions of fishing boats, leaving fatal damages to Vietnamese fishermen (for example the recent deadly shooting of Kiên Giang's fishermen by Malaysia's coastal guard during the capture and treatment on August 16, 2020).
- Those remains were driven by a lack of awareness of IUU fishing prevention, poor leadership, direction and resources allocation, leading to unintended consequences. Besides, the performance and implementation of IUU fishing prevention-related regulations in the Fisheries Law 2017 and instruction documents have not been decisive and synchronous. Organizations and individuals (businesses and fishermen) have not strictly followed regulations of IUU fishing prevention. As for Vietnam's fishing boats trespassing foreign waters, Bùi Trọng Thế, Major General, Deputy General Director of the



Department of Economics and Security under the Ministry of Police said that the Ministry investigated the intermediate agencies that took domestic fishing boats to foreign waters for fishing and discovered 8 suspicious groups. They intended to work with relevant institutes for handling this situation.

- In the next few months, 28 coastal prefectures must adopt suitable solutions, frequently check and monitor the implementation and sharing of data. They must promptly report generated issues beyond their jurisdiction, including treatment of cases trespassing foreign waters, boost domestic and international media of the efficiency of IUU fishing prevention, and disseminate regulations of IUU fishing prevention to fishermen. The trespassing foreign waters must be stopped. This is the most important issue that the EU recommended and the risk of a “red card”.

### [Vietnam reels in fishing boats, seeks EU yellow card reprieve - VnExpress International \[Sep 22\]](#)

- Binh Thuan Province has had no fishing vessels operating in waters outside Vietnam for a year thanks to the deployment of a monitoring system.
- During a typical shift, Ho Van Kim and Tran Binh Trong take turns keeping a close eye on fishing vessels operating in waters off the south central province, preventing them from venturing beyond national boundaries.
- Kim and Trong belong to a team of seven charged with monitoring fishing boats around the clock from a center managed by the province's Fisheries Department.
- Every once in a while, Kim clicks the red dots on a screen, which represent boats moving too near the border area.
- Clicking the dots reveals registration numbers and owner information. In case a vessel fares too close to Vietnam's boundary in the East Sea, known internationally as South China Sea, Kim would use a long-range communication system or satellite phone to call it back.
- "They have yet to violate the fishing rule but we need to warn them first, preventing any possible intrusion occurring."
- Since it was launched over a year ago, the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) of Binh Thuan has detected 12 boats crossing the border.
- In case the team fails to reach violating ships, it would attempt to contact their owners, who normally stay ashore and employ their own channels of communication.
- Records of ships crossing the border are all kept as evidence, and in case those ships insist on violating the rules, their owners could face a fine of up to VND400 million (\$17,100), Trong said.
- Huynh Quang Huy, head of Binh Thuan Fisheries Department, said since April last year, the province has requested fishing vessels of more than 15 m in length to be equipped with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) tracking device.
- To date, 90 percent, or 1,700 vessels in the province have been connected to the system, with the remainder stuck on shore due to commercial losses suffered by their owners.

### [Vietnam orders more efforts in IUU fishing prevention - Undercurrent News \[Sep 23\]](#)

- Vietnam's deputy prime minister, Trinh Dinh Dung, has asked ministers and 28 coastal authorities to focus on implementing guidelines to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishery (IUU) in foreign waters, Vietnam Plus reported.



- The order aims to follow the European Council's recommendations in the field, which put this as a condition for the removal of the "yellow card" warning currently in place.
- Moreover, the head of the national steering committee on IUU fishing prevention also requested that the ministry of defense strengthens patrol and supervision in border waters, while coordinating with ministries, sectors, and the 28 coastal authorities to control and inspect fishing vessels to make sure they have full legal documents and equipment.

#### Deputy PM orders more efforts in IUU fishing prevention [Sep 23]

- Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung has asked ministries, sectors and 28 coastal localities to focus on implementing directions and guidelines relating to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing prevention, thus effectively realising European Council's recommendations in the field.
- According to a notification released by the Government Office regarding the conclusion of the Deputy PM during the fourth meeting of the National Steering Committee on IUU Fishing Prevention that took place on September 8, Dung called for efforts to put an end to fishing activities in foreign waters, which is a condition for consideration of the removal of "yellow card".
- The head of the National Steering Committee on IUU Fishing Prevention also requested the Ministry of Defence to strengthen patrol and supervision in border waters, while coordinating with ministries, sectors and the 28 localities to control and inspect fishing vessels to make sure they have full legal documents and equipment. Meanwhile, the Public Security needs to focus on inspecting and handling violations in the field.
- The Deputy PM urged the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to speed up negotiations and signing of agreements on demarcation of special economic zones between Vietnam and other countries to lay a foundation for the ensuring of security and safety for fishing activities. All disputes on the waters should be settled on the basis of diplomatic negotiations, he stressed.
- The official also asked ministries, sectors and the People's Committees in the 28 coastal localities to coordinate with authorised agencies to investigate and handle violations in fisheries, especially illegal fishing on foreign waters.
- The Ministry of Information and Communications should promptly prepare plans to give free support and frequency cost to fishing vessels to install vessel monitoring system (VMS) tracking device. Coastal localities should complete the installation of VMS on fishing vessels, he directed.
- The EC has recognised and lauded commitments and efforts of Vietnam in fighting IUU fishing. However, the EC commented that the improvement remains slow as the installation of the VMS devices has yet to reach expected progress, and illegal fishing activities in foreign waters have still happened, said the notification./.

#### Fisheries sector to be attached with logistics, processing | SGGP English Edition [Sep 27]

- A delegation led by Mr. Phung Duc Tien, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), visited Phu Yen Province and worked with the provincial People's Committee on the situation of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing on September 26.





- According to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Phu Yen Province, from 2019 to now, thanks to many effective measures in implementing the Fisheries Law 2017 and combating IUU fishing, there has been no case of fishing violating the foreign waters in the province. From 2016 to 2020, Phu Yen Province has implemented four projects to supplement and complete fisheries infrastructure with a total capital of nearly VND240 billion. Currently, it has been proposing the Government to support it to consolidate fisheries infrastructure in the period from 2021 to 2025 by eight projects with a total capital of over VND1.25 trillion.
- At the meeting, the representative of the Department of Science, Technology, and International Cooperation under the MARD said that the central coastal provinces of Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Binh Dinh have great potentials for the export of tuna, so they need to connect into a large chain to create a foothold in the world market. Especially, according to the new requirements on combating IUU fishing, provinces need to strive to improve the traceability and seafood record to have specific guidance for functional departments and enterprises.

## 4 THAILAND

### Thailand continues helping fishing sector and open to suggestions - Pattaya Mail [Sep 1]

- Since the National Fisheries Association of Thailand asked the government to help address challenges faced by workers in the fishing sector due to measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the government says that it is ready to consider their demands and find solutions to their problems.
- The Deputy Government Spokeswoman, Dr. Ratchada Thanadirek, said today the government is aware of their plight and has already taken action in many areas, such as making some changes to the rules and regulations, purchasing trawlers from affected owners and improving their liquidity.
- The National Fisheries Policy Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Gen. Prawit Wongsuwan, is overseeing the tasks of related ministries and sending progress reports to Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Gen. Prayut Chan-o-cha. The issue has been declared part of the national agenda, and relevant agencies must work cautiously so that Thailand is not given a yellow-card sanction by the European Union (EU). At the same time, they have to acknowledge the workers' demands.
- The Department of Fisheries has adjusted the rules and regulations to help the fishing sector in many respects, including making changes to the list of fishing gear and fishing zones as well as the issuance of seamen's registration books to deal with labor shortages.
- The government is now improving its vessel monitoring system (VMS) to facilitate the fishing sector. The government is also looking into amending laws related to local and commercial fishing activities, but it must proceed cautiously.
- Unregistered trawler procurement is divided into two groups. The first group comprises 568 trawlers that have been adversely affected by changes in the fishing laws. The government has already allocated funds for the purchase of 252 trawlers, and will purchase 53 additional trawlers this October. The total acquisition budget is 764 million baht. Officials are also inspecting the criteria of 263 trawlers. The second group consists



of 2,505 trawlers, which previously received a license which their owners now want to cancel. Officials are considering these trawlers' criteria and working conditions.

- In addition, the government has approved a low-interest loan project, worth 10.3 billion baht in total, to improve the liquidity of entrepreneurs in the fishing sector. The loans would help them install new equipment and employ workers legally. If local and commercial fishing operators see that their issues remain unresolved and think no progress is being made, the Prime Minister is ready to listen to their suggestions to help solve their problems. (NNT)

### Opinion: Fishing Industry Reforms Are Firmly In Thailand's Best Interests [Sep 24]

- The National Fishing Association of Thailand is once again pushing the Royal Thai Government to roll back its successful fisheries reforms. This short-sighted course of action is not in the interests of Thailand, its fishing industry or those who depend on it for their livelihoods.
- Thailand has made great advances in the fight against illegal fishing and the protection of its fishing industry. Less than a decade ago, rampant illegal fishing and deeply troubling violent abuse of crew was the norm for Thailand's fleet. Catches had fallen to a fraction of what they had once been, with vessels having to travel much further, for longer to catch the same amount of fish.
- The reforms that were brought in as this grim situation was exposed were specifically designed to transform Thailand's fisheries into a sustainable, prosperous system, averting potential collapse and safeguarding fishers' livelihoods for generations to come. These reforms had been long overdue and without them it is clear that Thailand's fisheries would have continued their rapid decline and the country would have been subject to growing international condemnation.
- However, as a result of the action taken by the Royal Thai Government, the country's fisheries have begun to recover. Small-scale fishers say that they are seeing a change at sea. Fish are more numerous, they say, are increasing in size, and they are catching a wider range of species. "I feel that after the regulations came into place seafood stocks are looking healthy again," one small-scale fisher told the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF). He added: "This makes me happy. I am also happy that this will get passed on to our children in the future."
- Yet the National Fishing Association of Thailand (NFAT) is painting a picture of woe. They claim the regulations are endless and that they are being forced out of business, taking it as far as threatening to ask the government to buy back the entire fleet of over 10,000 vessels. They also say the penalties against illegal fishing are 'too harsh' and if only the fleet were allowed to expand unregulated, like in Vietnam, they would be in a much better position.
- These demands are driven by short-sighted, self-seeking greed and will only create profit for a tiny minority, many of them illegal, operators, while penalising all those, especially the poorer small-scale fishers, who depend on the industry.
- However, I am not expecting any reader to take my word for it. Let's explore the facts.



## 5 CHINA

### How China's expanding fishing fleet is depleting the world's oceans [Sep 7]

- For years, no one knew why dozens of battered wooden "ghost boats" — often along with corpses of North Korean fishermen whose starved bodies were reduced to skeletons — were routinely washing ashore along the coast of Japan.
- A recent investigation I did for NBC News, based on new satellite data, has revealed, however, what marine researchers now say is the most likely explanation: China is sending a previously invisible armada of industrial boats to illegally fish in North Korean waters, forcing out smaller North Korean boats and leading to a decline in once-abundant squid stocks of more than 70 percent. The North Korean fishermen washing up in Japan apparently ventured too far from shore in a vain search for squid and perished.
- The Chinese vessels — more than 700 of them last year — appear to be in violation of United Nations sanctions that prohibit foreign fishing in North Korean waters. The sanctions, imposed in 2017 in response to the country's nuclear tests, were aimed at punishing North Korea by not allowing it to sell fishing rights in its waters in exchange for valuable foreign currency.
- The new revelations cast new light on the dire lack of governance of the world's oceans and raise thorny questions about the consequences of China's ever-expanding role at sea and how it is connected to the nation's geopolitical aspirations.
- Estimates of the total size of China's global fishing fleet vary widely. By some calculations, China has anywhere from 200,000 to 800,000 fishing boats, accounting for nearly half of the world's fishing activity. The Chinese government says its distant-water fishing fleet, or those vessels that travel far from China's coast, numbers roughly 2,600, but other research, such as this study by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), puts this number closer to 17,000, with many of these ships being invisible such as those that satellite data discovered in North Korean waters. By comparison, the United States' distant water fishing fleet has fewer than 300 vessels.
- China is not only the world's biggest seafood exporter, the country's population also accounts for more than a third of all fish consumption worldwide. Having depleted the seas close to home, the Chinese fishing fleet has been sailing farther afield in recent years to exploit the waters of other countries, including those in West Africa and Latin America, where enforcement tends to be weaker as local governments lack the resources or inclination to police their waters. Most Chinese distant-water ships are so large that they scoop up as many fish in one week as local boats from Senegal or Mexico might catch in a year.

### Chinese fishing armada plundered waters around Galápagos, data shows [Sep 17]

- A vast fishing armada of Chinese vessels just off the Galápagos Islands logged an astounding 73,000 hours of fishing during just one month as it pulled up thousands of tonnes of squid and fish, a new report based on data analysis has found.
- The discovery of the giant flotilla off the archipelago that inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution stirred controversy and outrage in Ecuador and abroad.
- Nearly 300 Chinese vessels accounted for 99% of visible fishing just outside the archipelago's waters between 13 July and 13 August this year, according to analysis by marine conservation group Oceana.



- The fleet was fishing primarily for squid – essential to the diet of the unique Galápagos fur seals and endangered scalloped hammerhead sharks – as well as for commercial fish species such as tuna and billfish that contribute to the local economy, the report said.
- “For a month, the world watched and wondered what China’s enormous fishing fleet was doing off the Galápagos Islands, but now we know,” said Marla Valentine, an illegal fishing and transparency analyst for Oceana.
- Using a mapping tool devised by NGO Global Fishing Watch in partnership with Google and the environmental watchdog SkyTruth, Oceana documented Chinese vessels apparently disabling their public tracking devices, thus providing conflicting vessel identification information. The new evidence supports claims made by the Ecuadorean government last month. The report also found some vessels engaging in potentially suspect transshipment practices, all of which can facilitate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

### China a Target of US Coast Guard's New Anti-Illegal Fishing Strategy [Sep 18]

- The United States Coast Guard has called out China’s massive distant-water fishing fleet for extractive practices in the waters of its Southeast Asian neighbors and off the coasts of Central America and West Africa.
- The criticism came on Thursday as the Coast Guard unveiled an ambitious new strategy for tackling illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), and as Vietnam detained a Chinese fishing boat for intruding into waters off its coast in the Gulf of Tonkin.
- Adm. Karl Schultz, commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, said illegal fishing had overtaken counter-narcotics and anti-piracy as the most important priority for maritime security around the globe, noting that it “threatens a host nation’s ability to protect their stable resources.”
- “It’s bigger than catching a few boats with illegal tuna,” Schultz said at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington-based think tank.
- “This is really about systemic violations of sovereign nation rights. It’s about threatening sovereignty, economic security, a weakening of the global rules-based order, and that’s why I think the coastguard has an opportunity at this time to put some lines of effort together here to really get after a threat.”
- The strategy report unveiled at Thursday’s event listed three priorities: better intelligence and detection of the actors behind illegal fishing for more effective anti-IUU enforcement, countering state-sponsored “predatory fishing,” and multilateral cooperation.
- Combating IUU fishing was one issue where both the Obama and Trump administrations sought to take action, said Sally Yozell, director of the Environmental Security program at the Stimson Center, another U.S. think-tank.
- “Illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing really hurts honest fishermen,” she said in an interview with Radio Free Asia (RFA), but noted that it was now also being viewed more explicitly as a security concern. BenarNews is affiliated with RFA.
- The U.S. Coast Guard’s new strategy singles out for attention China’s state-sponsored fishing fleets.
- Adm. Craig S. Faller, commander of the U.S. military’s Southern Command – whose area of responsibility covers the Caribbean, Central America and Latin America – said Thursday that the Coast Guard’s combatting of IUU fishing would be part of the U.S. “great power competition” with China.





- China has the largest distant-water fishing fleet in the world and is also the number one source of IUU fishing, according to the IUU Fishing Index, which ranks countries on their enforcement practices.
- “On the one hand, China is trying to do better on paper. There’s new fishing rules and regulations and all the rest. However, they don’t seem to be enforcing their fleets, which is a really big deal whether it’s in West Africa, the Pacific, or North Korea,” Yozell said.

## 6 Brunei

### Vietnamese vessels caught for illegal fishing in Brunei waters [Sep 11]

- Two Vietnamese fishing vessels conducting illegal fishing in two separate locations in Brunei waters were seized by the Royal Brunei Navy (RBN) during a routine surveillance recently.
- According to the Commanding Officer of Marine Police Superintendent Haji Azree bin Haji Abdul Manaf/Munap, both ships were escorted by RBN to the Muara Port and handed over to them. Twenty-seven Vietnamese nationals aged between 15-51 were questioned. Police also found evidence of fishing gear and their catches believed to be made in the Brunei waters.
- The case is being investigated under Section 17 (1) of the Fishing Order 2009 where if convicted, the ship’s captain can be fined not more than BND100,000 or five years’ imprisonment or both. Crew members also face a BND2,500 fine or a year in jail or both.
- Police said they welcome any tip-offs or information on suspicious activities in Brunei waters.

## 7 Further afield – selected global IUUF news

### New paper highlights spread of organized crime from global fisheries [Sep 4]

- *A recently published paper by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy highlights the extent of transnational organized crimes associated with the global fisheries sector.*
- *Besides illegal fishing, these crimes include fraud, money laundering, corruption, drug and human trafficking, and they occur globally throughout the entire fisheries value chain: onshore, at sea, in coastal regions, and online, the paper says.*
- *The paper calls for an intersectional, transboundary law enforcement by governments around the world to combat these “clandestine” crimes in the global fisheries industry.*
- JAKARTA — A new paper calls for greater coordination by governments around the world to tackle the persistent problem of organized crime in the fisheries industry impacting the wider economy.
- The “blue paper” published Aug. 18 by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, an initiative by 14 world leaders, highlights the extent of crimes associated with global fisheries beyond illegal fishing, including fraud, money laundering, corruption, and drug and human trafficking. They occur worldwide throughout the entire fisheries value chain: onshore, at sea, in coastal regions, and online, it says.
- The paper says these crimes are profit-driven while depriving states of national revenue, threatening the livelihoods of coastal communities and endangering marine ecosystems around the world. The authors add that the perpetrators behind organized crime in the



fisheries industry are companies with complex operational activities in many countries. Some of these crimes are corporate in nature, as in the laundering of criminal proceeds through offshore financial centers where ownership can't be traced.

- A pressing issue that the paper highlights is the poor understanding of the true scale of organized crime in global fisheries, given that no statistical data are publicly available to give an accurate estimate.
- "The nature of organized crime is that it is clandestine, making it more difficult to gather accurate empirical data," Emma Witbooi, lead author of the report and director of South Africa-based PescaDOLUS International Fisheries Crime Research Network, told Mongabay in an email.
- Witbooi, who is also a research associate at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, said the empirical studies and data that existed on illegality in fisheries were focused almost entirely on illegal fishing itself, and not the broad range of associated criminal activities throughout the fisheries value chain. She said this was due to the prevalence of traditionally only viewing illegality in the fisheries industry in the context of violations of fisheries management regulations.

#### Illegal fishing in Mexico and policy responses [Sep 14]

- A major recent U.S. bust of a crime ring trafficking totoaba bladders and shark fins from Mexico to China highlights again that illegal fishing in Mexico is an extensive and growing problem. Public focus has centered on the poaching of the totoaba in the Sea of Cortez, where the almost-extinct porpoise vaquita marina dies in the gillnets of poachers. But illegal fishing in Mexico involves many other species and vast areas.
- The Andrés Manuel López Obrador administration at first paid little attention to the issue. But it has come under intensifying economic sanctions pressure from the United States triggered by U.S. environmental NGOs' lawsuits. In turn, President's López Obrador's party MORENA proposed strengthening and elevating the role of the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) in fishery's enforcement, setting off a new controversy about the militarization of public policy domains in Mexico. Involving SEMAR in suppressing illegal fishing is inevitable, but alone it's not a sufficient response.
- Like elsewhere in the world, illegal fishing in Mexico threatens the productivity of fisheries and economic viability of that sector, basic livelihoods for artisanal fishers, sustainability of marine products, marine biodiversity, and food security. Like other illegal economies such as drugs, Mexico's illegal fishing involves rings that smuggle the poached species to distant markets such as China; it also involves poor local fishermen that illegally harvest marine resources. Like drugs, it sets off conflict among and between local communities, and with Mexico's regulatory and enforcement authorities, though the scale of violence is radically smaller than in the Mexican drug markets. Significant transshipment of the fish contraband takes place through the United States.
- Mexico's very long coastline and a fishing fleet involving over 100,000 small vessels, known as pangas, makes enforcement on the seas and on land that serves as launching places of fishermen challenging. Illegal fishing is estimated to account for between 45% and — a staggering — 90% of official fish production in Mexico.
- Internationally, the most notorious case of illegal fishing in Mexico is that of a croaker fish — the totoaba — in the Sea of Cortez for its bladder that is highly valued in China and among Chinese and East Asian communities who without any actual scientific proof



attribute curative Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) properties to it. The gillnets that the fishermen use to illegally capture the totoaba also entangle the vaquitas that rapidly drown, driving the marine mammals — of which perhaps only as few as 10 of these marine mammals remain — to extinction.

### U.S. Coast Guard Has New Plan For Combatting IUU Fishing [Sep 23]

- U.S. Coast Guard leadership has released a new strategy for combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, a global problem both on the high seas and in areas of national jurisdiction. Admiral Karl L. Schultz, commandant of the Coast Guard, said that as a recognized world leader in maritime safety, security and environmental stewardship the Coast Guard has a responsibility to help build a coalition of partners willing to identify and address IUU fishing bad actors and model responsible global maritime behavior.
- The Coast Guard is committed to leading an international effort with America's allies to combat illegal exploitation of fish stocks in the oceans and to protect national interests.
- The Coast Guard's newly released IUU strategic outlook notes that not all maritime nations have the capability to surveil their sovereign waters or the moral conscience to police their fleets, thus creating opportunities for exploitation through illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. This exploitation the Coast Guard report said, "erodes both regional and national security, undermines maritime rules-based order, jeopardizes food access and availability and destroys legitimate economies."
- The global impacts of IUU fishing include the loss of revenue in the billions of dollars, undermining of stock management, and the loss of valuable protein sources to people in nearly half of the world's population on seafood for 20 percent of their animal protein.
- The Coast Guard also cited data noting that 80 percent of fish eaten in the U.S. are imported and without effective traceability and monitoring, illegally caught fish around the world enter U.S. markets.
- Today's fish stocks are under stress not only from growing consumption demand and changing ecosystems, but from deliberate efforts to exploit gaps in existing governance structures, the NOAA report said. Illegal transshipments, heavy-subsidized distant water fishing, and nations who choose to systematically engage in IUU fishing amplify these stressors and catalyze additional criminal activity which further undermines maritime rules-based order.
- The full Coast Guard report is online at <https://www.uscg.mil/IUUFishing/>

### Pew Researchers Launch IUU Fishing Analysis Tool for Port States [Sep 24]

- Researchers with the Pew Charitable Trusts have created a new tool for port states, fishing regulators and seafood buyers to determine where illegally-caught seafood is most likely to come ashore. By launching the tool on World Maritime Day, Pew hopes to draw attention to the problem of IUU fishing and the potential solutions.
- Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing accounts for about \$24 billion worth of catch annually. It often leads to overfishing, damaging the livelihoods of law-abiding fishermen and subsistence fishing communities.
- The new tool uses AIS data from fishing vessels and tenders, and it focuses on ports with the highest number of visits from foreign-flagged fishing vessels. According to Pew, IUU fishing could be greatly reduced through stronger controls at ports, and the new tool is designed to help by showing which port states are most likely to receive vessels carrying



IUU-caught fish. The tool also shows which ports and states are busiest, making it a way to examine activity patterns of fishing vessels.

- In 2016, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) entered into force, helping to combat illegal fishing by requiring parties to place tighter controls on foreign-flagged vessels seeking to enter and use their ports. Today, 66 countries and the EU are party to the treaty. Of the 25 riskiest port states identified by the study, only four had ratified the PSMA.
- The numbers also show a concentration of port calls, with most foreign fishing activity clustered into a smaller number of ports in each state. The tool suggests that Zhoushan, China has by far the most port calls by AIS-enabled fishing vessels, followed by other Chinese ports. Pew's researchers previously found that all of the top 10 ports for AIS-enabled fishing vessels are located in China.
- The dataset may have limitations when looking at ports that serve less-formal fleets: the tool suggests that Bangkok had only 28 fishing boat port calls for all of 2017, a potential reflection of the Thai fleet's AIS use patterns.

### Curbing Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Sri Lankan Waters [Sep 27]

- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing takes place both on high seas and areas within national jurisdiction. All fishing activities conducted by national or foreign vessels without the permission of a state or in contravention to its law, which most of the time go unreported or misreported, or are carried out in disregard of local and international conservation measures, can be identified as IUU fishing practices. In the context of Sri Lanka, both locals and Indian fishermen engage in IUU fishing.
- This has been a historical bilateral dispute for decades and remains unresolved even today. The gap between India and Sri Lanka is limited to 24 Nautical Miles of the Palk Bay and Palk Strait. This has been the main reason for Indian fishermen to claim their historical rights to Sri Lankan waters. Although the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) was demarcated, thereby restricting anyone from trespassing beyond their own 12 Nautical Miles, it has been violated time and again, for decades now. There are approximately 300 Indian vessels entering Sri Lankan waters per day. They are identified by the Sri Lanka Navy and Coastguard on every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.
- Over 600,000 people are employed in the fishing industry and not only do they contribute to the food supply, but also to foreign exchange earnings and therefore, their employment serves a role beyond lives and livelihoods. The root causes for IUU fishing by locals is their inability to afford sustainable methods of fishing, since less incentives are provided by the government and there exists less awareness on technology for the fishing community, etc. The ultimate problem about IUU fishing, besides those who illegally engage in it, is that it is unsustainable. There is a direct impact on human security and an indirect impact on geopolitics, economy, environment and the overall national security. Therefore, to achieve sustainability as the ultimate outcome, the process of eliminating IUU and replacing livelihoods of those who engage in it, should begin from the roots.
- There has been an increase in IUU fishing in recent years, despite existing laws and apprehension expressed by authorities, which has led to seizure of vessels, explosives and other unauthorised nets. From 2015 to 31 July 2020, 7,067 locals and 1,578 Indian fishermen were apprehended while 2,916 others were sighted and chased away. In





addition, 1,930 local fishing vessels and 280 Indian fishing vessels were seized while 72,532 Indian vessels were sighted and chased away during the same period of time. It is dismal that fishermen illegally utilise detrimental fishing equipment including hand nets, pure seine nets, nylon nets and other explosives such as gelignite and water gel, which damage the corals, coral reefs and marine habitats for many species, out of which some are endangered. This is one of the reasons for Indian fishermen to poach in Sri Lankan waters, as most of the marine resources are being scraped out in their boundary, limiting the environment for the sustenance of fish species.

### Covid-19 leaves fisheries observers in the dark - IUU Watch [Sep 29]

- The Covid-19 pandemic does not appear to have hindered the distant-water fleets of China and other major fishing nations, but it has largely sidelined the fishery observers and port officials who monitor illegal fishing.
- “In most of the South Pacific, fishery inspectors cannot come onboard the vessel to do inspections before authorising” the transfer of catch, known as transshipment, says Francisco Blaha, a New Zealand-based fisheries adviser.
- The presence of independent observers on trawlers is a frontline deterrent to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. A 2016 study found that a third of the world’s fish catch is not reported.
- “The absence of observers will bring a level of uncertainty on reporting” catch, adds Blaha. “The biggest issue we have in the South Pacific is misreporting and underreporting by the licensed fleet.”
- This absence comes as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) resumes negotiations in Geneva this month in the latest attempt to reach a consensus on a long-delayed agreement to eliminate harmful subsidies. These promote the IUU and over-fishing that is decimating global fish stocks.
- The 600 onboard observers in the South Pacific, who monitor the region’s multibillion-dollar tuna fishery dominated by China, have remained onshore since April. That’s when the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission ordered them to return to their home ports as the pandemic spread. Observers are currently not due to return to work until November.
- “We don’t know what is happening” aboard fishing vessels, notes Blaha.
- Normally, vessels in the South Pacific that are purse seining are required to come to port to transfer their catch and undergo inspection. But due to the pandemic, some South Pacific island nations are barring vessels from entering their lagoons or prohibiting port officials from boarding ships until crews have quarantined for two weeks.

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