



**verumar**  
philippines

# Regional IUUF Intel report

October 2020



# verumar

Situational Awareness in Fisheries  
Philippines



VERUMAR is supported by the UK Space Agency's  
International Partnership Programme







## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>THE PHILIPPINES</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	HACKATHON WINNERS TO HELP FIGHT ILLEGAL FISHING [OCT 3]	5
1.2	P2.1-M WORTH OF IED MATERIALS RECOVERED IN NORTHERN SAMAR [OCT 8]	5
1.3	BLAST FISHING POSSIBLE CAUSE FOR MASS WHALE STRANDING IN CATANDUANES—BFAR [OCT 9]	6
1.4	2 'HULBOT-HULBOT' ILLEGAL FISHERS APPREHENDED, FINED IN CEBU [OCT 17]	6
1.5	BFAR ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR ENFORCEMENT OF VESSEL MONITORING [OCT 20]	6
1.6	PNP MARITIME GROUP COMMENDED FOR CATCHING ILLEGAL FISHERS IN TAWI-TAWI [OCT 21]	7
1.7	A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ADDRESSING IUU FISHING [OCT 22]	8
1.8	THESE FILIPINA WOMEN PATROL THEIR LOCAL MARINE ECOSYSTEM BY KAYAK [OCT 24]	8
1.9	7 NABBED FOR ILLEGAL FISHING OFF TAWI-TAWI [OCT 26]	8
1.10	3 PERSONS NABBED FOR 'ILLEGAL FISHING' [OCT 30]	9
<b>2</b>	<b>INDONESIA</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	INDONESIA SEIZES VIETNAMESE BOATS FOR ILLEGAL FISHING [OCT 3]	10
2.2	INDONESIA SEIZES 2 PHILIPPINE VESSELS FOR ILLEGAL FISHING [OCT 6]	10
2.3	3 ACEH FISHERMEN HOME AFTER YEAR STUCK IN INDIA [OCT 11]	10
2.4	VIETNAM, INDONESIA INTENSIFY MARINE, FISHERIES COOPERATION [OCT 16]	11
2.5	3 FILIPINO FISHERMEN REPATRIATED FROM INDONESIA [OCT 17]	11
2.6	ILLEGAL FISHING AND SEA DISASTER DETECTION SENSORS BY ITS STUDENTS [OCT 19]	11
2.7	INDONESIA BALANCES WAR ON ILLEGAL FISHING WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS [OCT 28]	12
2.8	AUTHORITIES URGED TO INTENSIFY PATROLS IN NATUNA AMID RAMPANT ILLEGAL FISHING [OCT 28]	12
2.9	BREAKING: DEATHS OF 2 MORE INDONESIAN CREW UNCOVERED ON BOARD CHINESE TUNA FLEET [OCT 29]	13
2.10	FOREIGN SHIPS CONTINUE ILLEGAL FISHING IN INDONESIA'S NORTH NATUNA SEA [OCT 29]	14
<b>3</b>	<b>MALAYSIA</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1	CHINA'S PUSH LETS FOREIGN POACHERS STEAL OUR FISH, SAY EXPERTS [OCT 11]	15
3.2	MALAYSIA'S MMEA SEIZES 6 CHINESE ILLEGAL FISHING VESSELS, ARRESTS 60 MEN [OCT 11]	15
3.3	CHINA URGES MALAYSIA TO 'FAIRLY INVESTIGATE' HELD FISHERMEN - CNA [OCT 12]	15
3.4	MMEA: HEIGHTENED SECURITY MEASURES EMPLOYED DURING PANDEMIC [OCT 26]	16
<b>4</b>	<b>VIETNAM</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1	VIETNAM STRIVING TO COMBAT IUU FISHING: SPANISH OFFICIAL [OCT 13]	17
4.2	VIETNAM SEEKS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES [OCT 29]	17
4.3	VIETNAM DETERMINED TO REMOVE EC'S IUU FISHING WARNING [OCT 31]	18
<b>5</b>	<b>THAILAND</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1	FISHERMEN IN PATTANI SEEK HELP FROM EU [OCT 8]	19
5.2	EU SET TO RESUME FTA TALKS WITH THAILAND [OCT 31]	19
<b>6</b>	<b>CHINA</b>	<b>20</b>
6.1	MARINE BIOLOGIST: CHINA 'FOREVER' ERASED CORAL REEFS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA [OCT 7]	20
6.2	THE CHINESE DISTANT WATER FISHING FLEET AND IUUF [OCT 13]	20
6.3	INSIDE THE HAUNTING 'GHOST SHIPS' IN THE SEA OF JAPAN [OCT 13]	21
6.4	CAT AND MOUSE ON THE HIGH SEAS: ON THE TRAIL OF CHINA'S VAST SQUID FLEET [OCT 21]	21
6.5	WORKING GROUP OF NATIONS GO AFTER CHINA'S FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE [OCT 22]	22
6.6	ILLEGAL CHINESE FISHING FLEETS ARE ENDANGERING GALAPAGOS ISLANDS [OCT 22]	22
6.7	CRISIS IN THE GALAPAGOS: CHINESE FISHING FLEETS AND COVID THREATEN A NATURAL WONDER [OCT 23]	23
6.8	US COAST GUARD TO TACKLE CHINA 'ILLEGAL' FISHING IN PACIFIC [OCT 24]	23
6.9	CHINA'S 'DARK' FISHING FLEET LAYS WASTE TO GLOBAL ECOSYSTEMS [OCT 26]	24
6.10	COAST GUARD HOMEPORTING CUTTERS IN W. PACIFIC TO COUNTER CHINA'S ILLEGAL FISHING [OCT 26]	24
6.11	PHILIPPINE FISHERMEN: BASING COAST GUARD SHIPS IN W. PACIFIC IS WASHINGTON'S RIGHT [OCT 26]	25
<b>7</b>	<b>TAIWAN</b>	<b>26</b>
7.1	TAIWAN ALL AT SEA ON ILLEGAL FISHING PRACTICES [OCT 18]	26



<b>8</b>	<b>FURTHER AFIELD – SELECTED GLOBAL IUUF NEWS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
8.1	DATA INITIATIVE SETS SIGHTS ON TACKLING GLOBAL OCEAN CHALLENGES [OCT 4].....	27
8.2	MALTESE ARMY BEGINS MARITIME PATROLS FOLLOWING FISHERMEN'S PLEAS ABOUT PIRATES AT SEA [OCT 7].....	27
8.3	EU URGES GHANA TO END SAIKO FISHING [OCT 15].....	28
8.4	WORLD FISHING & AQUACULTURE   CALL FOR SUSTAINABLE EU FISHERIES RULES [OCT 20].....	28
8.5	LEVERAGING NGOs AND VOLUNTEERISM FOR MARITIME SURVEILLANCE AGAINST IUU FISHING [OCT 20] .....	29
8.6	SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE WORK: TRACKING SHARK FINS AROUND THE GLOBE [OCT 21] .....	29
8.7	EXPERTS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED TO STOP INSURING AND FINANCING ACTIVITIES THAT HARM THE OCEAN [OCT 22].....	30
8.8	YEMEN URGED TO DETAIN, PROSECUTE TOOTHFISH POACHER [OCT 23].....	31
8.9	IUU FISHING TO 'GAIN FROM TARIFF EXEMPTIONS' [OCT 23].....	31
8.10	GHANAIAN WORKERS REPORT APPALLING ABUSE ABOARD CHINESE-OWNED VESSELS [OCT 26].....	32



# 1 THE PHILIPPINES

## 1.1 Hackathon winners to help fight illegal fishing [Oct 3]

- In a hackathon event organized by Oceana to support its campaign against illegal fishing, Parrotfish SeaMate was adjudged the winning entry among 15 participants in the Karagathon codefest, held in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Department of Science and Technology-Advanced Science and Technology Institute (DoST-ASTI).
- The Parrotfish SeaMate is a portable battery-operated fishing boat tracker and transceiver that forms part of a smart wireless network that serves as smart buoys equipped with sound detection technology and satellite systems to identify illegal entries in protected bodies of water.
- The winning system which bagged P100,000 prize was proposed by the Parrotfishnet group composed of Rey Mark Tion, Allan Bajuyo, Jay Tamayo, Ace Mark Gella and Diogenes Pascua. It has been successfully pilot tested in El Salvador City, Misamis Oriental.
- Second place was 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, which developed a mobile app that can track the trajectory of fishing boats, detect fishing patterns, and store and handle all needed data.
- Oceana Vice President Atty. Gloria Estenzo Ramos said the Karagathon is an eye opener and a living testimony to the endless possibilities of sourcing local solutions to the prevailing problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) activities which had and still is having impacts in the lives of small-scale fishing folk.

## 1.2 P2.1-M worth of IED materials recovered in Northern Samar [Oct 8]

- [Northern Samar](#) Police Provincial Office personnel seized some tools for making improvised explosive devices (IED) at an abandoned manufacturing site in Barangay Burabod, San Antonio, Northern Samar.
- According to information from the NSPPO, they are estimated to be worth P2.1 million.
- The area was tracked down after a follow-up operation by the police after the P3.5 million worth of explosives was recovered this September 20 in the said barangay.
- Based on the information, authorities recovered 915 meters long time fuses worth P64,050; about 30,000 blasting caps reaching a market value of P2 million; 19 pieces of wooded molder for blasting cap; 9 pieces of concrete molder, 10 kilos of Penta Eryth Tetra Nitrate (PETN) white powder explosive chemical worth P10,000; and other explosives.
- The authorities' informant found out that there are still IEDs operating on the said island and it is not only used for illegal fishing. The source said rebels also allegedly used them to make explosions against government forces.
- IED materials are said to be distributed in Eastern Visayas, Masbate, Cebu, and Quezon.
- Northern Samar Police provincial director PCol Arnel Apud ordered to look for those behind IEDs in San Antonio and Northern Samar.
- Last month, government forces discovered Saturday new explosive materials in the same barangay where Jolo's twin blasts occurred in August.
- The Armed Forces of the Philippines – Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) said Sunday the Philippine Coast Guard found a set of abandoned [explosives](#), consisting of two electric blasting caps, a rifle grenade, a spark plug, and some concrete nails in Barangay Walled City. The location was between Harbor Master and the Maritime Police Office.



### 1.3 Blast fishing possible cause for mass whale stranding in Catanduanes—BFAR [Oct 9]

- Authorities are looking into blast fishing as a possible cause for the mass stranding of melon-headed whales in San Andres, Catanduanes.
- The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said at least 13 melon-headed whales were found dead on Thursday (October) after a mass stranding in the coastal waters of the province. Around 70 melon-headed whales were found stranded in a mangrove area in Barangay Bon-Ot.
- Chief of Marine Fisheries Resource Management Section of BFAR Bicol, Nonie Enolva, said these kinds of whales are usually under the deep parts of the sea and the loud sound of a blast fishing might have disturbed them.
- Initial investigation of the agency also found blood on the mouth, ear drums and blow holes of the melon-headed whales which might have been an effect of a huge shockwave under the sea.
- “Iyong mga nabingi because of blast fishing activities ang behavior niya is inangat sa surface ng tubig as if gasping for air, *(Those who have been deafened because of blast fishing activities, their behavior is to swim to the surface as if gasping for air)*,” the official said.
- Authorities also said they will continue to monitor the area to immediately respond to another possible mass stranding.

### 1.4 2 ‘hulbot-hulbot’ illegal fishers apprehended, fined in Cebu [Oct 17]

- CEBU CITY — The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in the Central Visayas (BFAR-7), through its Fisheries Management, Regulatory and Enforcement Division (FMRED), has apprehended and penalized two commercial fishers from the towns of Bantayan and Madridejos who were caught using illegal fishing methods destructive to coral reefs and marine life habitat.
- BFAR-7 FMRED Chief Josefina Flores said two medium-scale commercial boat operators fishing in the waters off Sante Fe town in Bantayan Islands, Cebu, were arrested on October 10.
- Administrative complaints were also filed against them.
- They were also fined over P600,000 each, and their fish catch turned over to the Sante Fe Municipal Government.
- However, Flores did not name the violators.
- “To date, the total collected fines this year summed up to more than P3.3 million with the recent over P1.2 million settlement fines imposed on the two commercial fishing boat operators,” Flores said.
- The committee cited violations on certain provisions of Republic Act 10654 or “An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing,” which amended RA 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.
- Flores also said the two operators also faced administrative liability for violating Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) 246-1 banning of Danish Seine and modified Danish Seine fishing in Philippine waters.
- The erring operators were reportedly utilizing the Danish Seine method of fishing, which is locally known as “hulbot-hulbot” or “liba-liba”.
- This method destroys the coral reef systems since the gear could drag the coral reefs that serve as critical habitat to fishes and other species, Flores explained.

### 1.5 BFAR issues guidelines for enforcement of vessel monitoring [Oct 20]

- The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has finally issued the guidelines for the enforcement of Vessel Monitoring Measures (VMM) and installment of Electronic Reporting System (ERS), a move that will intensify the government’s fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.



- BFAR said yesterday that Agriculture Secretary William Dar has signed Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) no. 266, which will enhance the capacity of the government to monitor fishing operations and enforce laws in Philippine waters.
- VMM, which covers the use of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), will be used to track and monitor the position, course, and speed of fishing vessels at any given time for the purpose of management of fisheries and fishing effort and traceability.
- The system will use an Automatic Location Communicator (ALC) or a tracking device equipped with a distress alert button, which when activated will automatically locate the vessel and alert authorities during accidents or other emergencies, ensuring safety of fishers at sea.
- Based on the new order, BFAR will accredit, verify as fully operational, and certify the tracking devices that will be used as prerequisites for registration or renewal of license.
- Aside from this, an ERS will be used to record and transmit catch data including species and volume of fish caught, position of the vessel where the fish are caught, vessel activity, and port of origin and arrival in real time. The system will improve the country's catch documentation and seafood traceability.
- Data from ERS and VMS can also be used in tracking fishing behavior for scientific research and serve as a basis for more effective fisheries management measures.
- Based on the new FAO, vessels weighing 3.1 to less than 30 GT must have a BFAR- approved VMS installed within one year from the effectivity of the FAO.
- For vessels weighing 30 GT or more, VMS must be installed immediately as required by FAO 260. Under Section 119 of Republic Act 10654 or the Amended Fisheries Code, non-compliance to the VMM or violations such as intentionally tampering with, switching off or disabling the VMS may result in administrative or criminal liability.
- The set of guidelines for VMM and ERS is a product of public consultations and deliberation by the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (NFARMC), the country's highest recommending and advisory body on fisheries policies.
- In a separate statement, Oceana and other civil society groups, local governments, and artisanal fisherfolk said the issuance of fishing vessels monitoring rules by BFAR is a "timely and important step to secure the food of our children and the next generation".

#### 1.6 PNP Maritime Group commended for catching illegal fishers in Tawi-Tawi [Oct 21]

- MANILA, Philippines — Environmental groups on Wednesday commended the police Maritime Group for implementing the Amended Fisheries Code in Tawi-Tawi with the apprehension of five boats using "superlights" in the municipal waters of Languyan.
- In a joint statement, Oceana, Environmental Legal Assistance Center, Philippine Earth Justice Center and Pangisda Natin Gawin Tama (PaNaGaT) said the Amended Fisheries Code bans the use of "superlights", or fishing light attractors, in municipal waters and bays.
- The groups said the arrest by the Maritime Group's 1st Special Operations unit of LB Khalil 6, LB Khalil 4, LB Rain, LB Balyena VII and LB Yaz on October 8 demonstrated "exemplary performance of their mandate to implement our laws including the Fisheries Code as amended by RA 10654, amid the COVID-19 pandemic."
- They said that using "superlights" disadvantages municipal fisherfolks who use sustainable fishing methods like hook-and-line fishing, which they said are "no match to the sophisticated and highly efficient fishing gears employed by commercial fishing vessels."
- "By protecting the municipal waters from illegal fishing encroachment, we are protecting the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the marginal fisherfolks to the preferential use of their traditional fishing grounds," they also said.



## 1.7 A holistic approach to addressing IUU fishing [Oct 22]

- In the constant battle against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the country, numbers alone do not tell the whole story. According to the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Fish Right Project, the human element has to be considered too, for any positive impact to take place in just one site.
- For the longest time, regulators and enforcers have measured their efforts based on the number of violators apprehended, the number of required patrol boats, equipment, training, and other resources they need.
- However, according to Rollan Geronimo, Fish Right's IUU Fishing Specialist through the Marine Environment and Resources Foundation, Inc., "Understanding IUU fishing requires recognizing a complex interplay of factors that include looking at the perspectives of fishers and their motivations, moving towards incentivizing the act of going legal, and overcoming the task of quantifying its prevalence."
- Early this year, Geronimo, together with his colleagues Atty. Wilmon Peñalosa and Jomel Babao, have initiated a new way of measuring IUU fishing in the Calamianes Group of Islands in Palawan. Ideal for its vast marine waters and rich marine biodiversity, the area is also a longtime site of several research efforts by local and international groups. Its municipalities are also highly dependent on fisheries resources, making it a hotspot for IUU fishing activities.
- Threat maps. Fish Right conducted a mapping exercise where representatives from municipalities of the Calamianes Group of Islands were asked to point out where the various types of violations occur and rate their relative frequency. IUU fishing specialist Rollan Geronimo noted that these are useful in identifying IUU fishing hotspots and developing strategies to sweep these threats off the map, one point at a time.
- Through ongoing workshops with the local government units, the team applies strategies that focus on compliance and behavior change, gaining insights from the socio-economic factors that drive illegal fishing.
- "By putting IUU in a more human perspective, we point out that these practices are done by choice, and incentivizing legal practices can help instill positive changes in their behavior, and make them see how going legal benefits their communities," Peñalosa explained.

## 1.8 These Filipina Women Patrol Their Local Marine Ecosystem By Kayak [Oct 24]

- Every day, Evelyn Malicay paddles her kayak into a reef off the island of Siquijor in the central Philippines to patrol and protect the marine ecosystem where she lives.
- The coral, fish, and other inhabitants had been destroyed by illegal fishing. But thanks to the establishment of the Binoongan Marine Sanctuary, these underwater communities have had a chance to recover.
- Malicay has gathered women from across the island to patrol and protect the sanctuary. They've set up a bakery and catering service to help fund their volunteers and supplies like kayaks and lighting equipment.
- Before the lights were installed, Malicay was nearly shot by an illegal fisherman during a nighttime patrol.

## 1.9 7 nabbed for illegal fishing off Tawi-Tawi [Oct 26]

- Military and coast guard personnel have arrested seven fishermen engaged in illegal fishing in the waters of Tawi-Tawi province over the weekend, officials said Monday.
- Lt. Gen. Corleto Vinluan Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the fishermen were arrested Saturday in the waters of Barangay Taungoh in Sibutu, Tawi-Tawi.





- Vinluan said the fishermen were arrested after Mayor Alsheefa Pajiji reported to the 312th Marine Company-Sibutu Detachment "the ongoing dynamite fishing in their municipality".
- Vinluan said the marine troops immediately coordinated with the Tactical Operations Squadron of the Philippine Air Force and Philippine Coast Guard Sub-Station in Sibutu and conducted a seaborne patrol in Taungoh waters that resulted in the arrest of the seven fishermen and the confiscation of several illegal fishing paraphernalia.
- He identified the arrested individuals as Namli Romas, 28; Balli Kengli, 30; Misganda Solomon, 25; Namli Laja, 19; Herman Sayjuwan, 25; Laja Batuk, 20; and Uwang Sayjuwan, 30. They are all residents of Sitangkai municipality, Tawi-Tawi.
- Col. Arturo Rojas, commander of the Joint Task Force Tawi-Tawi, said the arresting team seized from the fishermen several improvised dynamites (bungbung), six detonators, and nine double-engine indigenous motorboats.
- "They are conducting illegal fishing in the south side of Sibutu to hide from the authorities and return to Sitangkai undetected," Rojas said.

### 1.10 3 persons nabbed for 'illegal fishing' [Oct 30]

- ILOILO City – For alleged illegal fishing, three individuals were arrested in Baranga Odiongan, San Dionisio, Iloilo.
- They were Elmer Magallanes, 45; Renze Octavio, 30; and Rubin Libo-on, 62, a police report showed. Personnel of the town's Bantay Dagat apprehended the suspects around 4 p.m. on Oct 28. The three were brought to the San Dionisio municipal police station, facing charges.



## 2 INDONESIA

### 2.1 Indonesia seizes Vietnamese boats for illegal fishing [Oct 3]

- JAKARTA, Oct. 3 (Xinhua) -- The Indonesian Navy said Saturday that it has seized two Vietnamese-flagged fishing vessels on the North Natuna Sea in the Riau Islands province.
- On the seizure made on Friday, Dato Rusman, commander of the marine combat force of Fleet Armada Command I, said in a statement that Indonesia will take stern measures against any violations of the law in the country's territorial waters.
- The foreign vessels were accused of catching fish in the Indonesian waters without the necessary legal documents and using fishing gears banned by the prevailing rules, according to him.
- According to Abdul Rasyid, the commander of Fleet Armada Command I which oversees the waters in western Indonesia, they will further examine the two fishing vessels and question their crew members who illegally operated foreign-flagged vessels in Indonesia's exclusive economic zone.

### 2.2 Indonesia seizes 2 Philippine vessels for illegal fishing [Oct 6]

- JAKARTA, Oct. 6 (Xinhua) -- Indonesia has seized two Philippine fishing vessels with 21 crew members in the Indonesian waters, according to the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries Affairs (KKP) on Tuesday.
- Minister of Marine and Fisheries Affairs Edhy Prabowo said the two vessels were arrested on Oct. 1 by the KKP Orca 04 Supervisory Ship.
- "This is the first time we seized illegal fishing vessels in the Pacific Ocean," Prabowo told a virtual press conference.
- He added that the modus operandi and movement of illegal fishing vessels are very dynamic, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- One of the vessels is a 105.90-gross tonnage (GT) vessel with 18 Filipino crew members who caught fish using purse seine. Meanwhile, the other vessel is a 20.62-GT lightboat with three Filipino crew members.
- The two vessels were taken to the Bitung Marine and Fishery Resources Monitoring Base for further inspection.
- It's reported that Indonesia held 74 illegal fishing vessels consisting of 57 foreign and 17 Indonesian vessels since 2014.

### 2.3 3 Aceh fishermen home after year stuck in India [Oct 11]

- Three Indonesian fishermen detained by Indian authorities in September of last year returned to Indonesia on Thursday morning, the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry has announced. They were Munazir, 34, Karauddin, 43, and Azman Syah, 30, from Aceh.
- The men were working aboard fishing vessel KM Athiya 02 when they were arrested by Indian authorities in the Andaman Sea for alleged visa violations and illegal fishing.
- The ministry's marine and fishery resources management director general, TB Haeru Rahayu, said Indian authorities had released the fishermen from detention. He cautioned other fishermen to obey fishing regulations so that similar cases would not occur. "We appreciated the Foreign Ministry for its cooperation in repatriating our fishermen. This is our commitment to protect our citizens, including fishermen," Haeru said in a statement on Thursday.
- According to a statement from the Indonesian Embassy in New Delhi, the three fishermen were found not guilty by a court in Andaman and Nicobar. However, the embassy said they could not return to Indonesia because India had imposed a COVID-19 lockdown in the country, stopping flights between the two countries. Officials from the embassy brought the fishermen from Andaman to New Delhi on Oct. 3 to be repatriated along with other Indonesian citizens.



- Separately, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry regulation violation management acting director Nugroho Aji said at least 88 Indonesian fishermen had been detained abroad and were awaiting trial for alleged illegal fishing in foreign waters. Of the 88 fishermen, 32 were in Malaysia, 50 were in India, five were in Papua New Guinea and one was in Myanmar.

#### 2.4 Vietnam, Indonesia intensify marine, fisheries cooperation [Oct 16]

- Jakarta (VNA) – Vietnamese Ambassador to Indonesia Pham Vinh Quang had a working session on October 16 with the host country’s Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Edhy Prabowo to exchange views on measures to intensify bilateral marine and fisheries cooperation.
- The Indonesian minister stressed that his government attaches importance to relations with Vietnam and expressed his hope to bring the cooperation with the country to a new height. He also proposed the two sides to cooperate more closely in the time to come.
- As for the remaining issues, he agreed with Ambassador Quang to settle the problem of detained fishermen in the spirit of humanity and bilateral friendly relations, preventing it from adversely affecting the developing relations.
- The minister further said the Indonesian side will positively consider so as to soon sign a memorandum of understanding between Vietnam’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and his ministry on establishing a hotline against illegal fishing activities.
- At the session, the two sides also exchanged ideas on the conditions of Vietnamese fishermen who are detained in Indonesia. The Indonesian side pledged to ensure their living conditions and health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 2.5 3 Filipino fishermen repatriated from Indonesia [Oct 17]

- DAVAO CITY – Three fishermen from Mati City, who were apprehended in the waters off Indonesia last July, were repatriated to the country, and arrived in General Santos City on Saturday, October 17.
- Repatriated were Nelson Demo and Rey Mabulay, while the other fisherman remained unidentified because he tested positive for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) based on a swab test they took before their return to the Philippines.
- According to Mati City Information Office Head Ben Tesiorna, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was able to coordinate the repatriation of the fishermen with the Indonesian government.
- Tesiorna said the fishermen, who were accosted in Indonesian waters last July 11, were fetched by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and arrived at the General Santos City wharf on Saturday morning.
- A Mati City Incident Management Team (IMT) was already at the wharf waiting for the fishermen with two vehicles, one of which was an ambulance that would transport the COVID-19 infected fisherman.

#### 2.6 Illegal Fishing and Sea Disaster Detection Sensors by ITS Students [Oct 19]

- Five Students of Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS) Surabaya have made an innovation in the maritime sector by creating an underwater technology sensor that is installed in the water borders of Indonesia.
- Standing proudly behind the innovation, there are Muhammad Mursyid, Ghifari Hanif Mustofa, Ahmad Fahmi Prakoso, Edo Danilyan, and Aldiansyah Wahfiudin who worked together to make Humanless Underwater Sensors Technology (HUST).
- Wildan Muhammad Mursyid, the team leader, explained that HUST is an innovative endeavor that is functioned to detect ships without permission or ships suspected for illegal fishing. “The HUST technology can also be used to detect marine disasters such as submarine earthquake and tsunami” he added.



- Wildan pointed out that the idea arose because of several reasons. One of them is because the number of illegal fishing cases that occurred in Indonesian territorial waters remained high. If this issue continues, it can cause a rapid decline in the fish biomass in the territorial waters.
- Wildan said that currently, Indonesia does not have proper development of sensor technology and underwater earthquake detector. Indonesia only has detection sensors (seismic network) which only worked in mainland areas. Therefore, HUST is expected to be a substitute means of detection sensors (seismic networks) in water areas, and eventually, it can improve the accuracy of existing detection systems.
- The team leader also continued that HUST system work under three sensor mechanisms. Those are earthquake sensors to detect seabed vibrations, metal sensors to detect approaching ships, and ID sensors to detect the ID Transmitters that already have fishing permits in border areas.
- In the operation, HUST system and detector can provide four types of information: normal conditions (no visible vibration), detected vibrations, licensed ships, and illegal ships. The data obtained by HUST will be delivered to the monitoring post via signal transmitters.

## 2.7 Indonesia balances war on illegal fishing with international obligations [Oct 28]

- *International law requires coastal states like Indonesia to promptly release foreign fishing vessels and crews caught for alleged illegal fishing if they post a reasonable bond or security.*
- *But Indonesia lacks the legal framework to fully comply, and in fact maintains a law allowing it to sink suspected poaching vessels before a binding court ruling is issued.*
- *With a change of fisheries minister last year and an overhaul of existing policies, the government is seeking to achieve compliance while still taking a strong stance against illegal fishing in its waters.*
- Since Susi Pudjiastuti left her post atop the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries in 2019, the nation's fisheries policy has undergone major changes. Besides reviving a controversial lobster larvae export program that Susi had banned and ending her policy of sinking foreign poaching boats, now the ministry is formulating regulations on how to promptly release illegal foreign fishing vessels caught by Indonesian authorities. So is it the best time to have such a regulation in Indonesia?
- Indeed, the obligation for granting a prompt release for illegal foreign fishing vessels and crews is laid out under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). UNCLOS not only grants a sovereign right to a coastal state to explore and exploit natural resource in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), but also the right to conduct law enforcement against any breach of national regulations if there are a foreign fishing vessels illegally fishing in the coastal state's EEZ.
- However, UNCLOS also imposes a limitation on law enforcement in the EEZ, since coastal states only have sovereign rights over natural resources and not full sovereignty. Article 73(2), for instance, states that if vessels and their crews are caught for illegal fishing practices in the EEZ, they should be promptly released upon the posting of a reasonable bond or other security.

## 2.8 Authorities urged to intensify patrols in Natuna amid rampant illegal fishing [Oct 28]

- The Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) has called on the Indonesian government to increase patrols around the country's outermost islands in the North Natuna Sea of Riau, following reports of rampant illegal fishing by foreign fishers over the past few months. The fisheries watchdog reported on Wednesday that authorities had seized at least 31 foreign fishing vessels from June to October this year for illegal and unreported fishing within Indonesia's exclusive economic zone in the Natuna waters.





- “Twenty-one among them are Vietnamese-flagged fishing vessels,” DFW Indonesia coordinator M. Abdi Suhufan said in a statement obtained by The Jakarta Post. In addition to unlawful overexploitation of fish stocks in Natuna waters, Abdi said, the foreign vessels also violated Indonesia’s sovereignty. He demanded that the government respond to the issue carefully but assertively. Abdi further said that Indonesian authorities’ efforts to crack down on illegal fishing at sea had often been met with strong resistance that led to high-seas brawls, including with Vietnamese-flagged vessels.
- “This is dangerous and it needs to be handled with great care,” he said. Echoing Abdi’s concern, DFW researcher Muh. Arifuddin suggested that Indonesian authorities conduct joint sea and air patrols on a regular basis. “Indonesia cannot passively stand by as rampant illegal fishing and violations of sovereignty take place in Natuna waters,” he said, pointing to the lack of surveillance in the area by the current administration.
- Despite promising greater military deployment in Natuna waters, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Edhy Prabowo had only detained 71 illegal foreign fishing vessels up until August this year. He began his role as minister in October last year. Meanwhile, during the five-year term of former minister Susi Pudjiastuti from 2014 until 2019, more than 500 foreign vessels were seized or sunk for operating illegally in Indonesian waters. Many deemed this policy successful in tackling illegal cross-border fishing activities.

## 2.9 Breaking: Deaths of 2 more Indonesian crew uncovered on board Chinese tuna fleet [Oct 29]

- *Official documents show the deaths of two Indonesian crew members of a Chinese fishing fleet went unreported amid an outcry over the deaths of four other men and allegations of forced labor and illegal fishing.*
- *Saleh Anakota, 22, died on Aug. 10, three months after the deaths of four of his compatriots aboard the same boat, the Long Xing 629, drew international condemnation; Rudi Ardianto, 30, died on Aug. 8 aboard another boat, the Tian Xiang 16, in the same fleet.*
- *Both deaths, attributed to an unknown “sickness,” are mentioned in Indonesian Foreign Ministry documents seen by Mongabay.*
- *The documents also show Indonesia and China are working to bring home 155 Indonesian crew members from the Long Xing 629 and 11 other vessels owned by Dalian Ocean Fishing (DOF), a major Chinese tuna-fishing company that supplies Japanese and Chinese markets.*
- Another Indonesian crew member has died aboard the Long Xing 629, a Chinese vessel alleged to have used forced labor to engage in illegal fishing, including shark finning, Mongabay has learned.
- The man, 22-year-old Saleh Anakota, passed away on Aug. 10, three months after the boat became the focus of an international outcry over the deaths of four other Indonesian crew, who fell sick from an unknown illness after allegedly being physically abused and overworked by senior officers.
- News of Saleh’s death, not reported in the media until now, has emerged as Indonesia quietly works to repatriate 155 of its citizens serving as crew aboard the Long Xing 629 and 11 other vessels owned by China’s Dalian Ocean Fishing (DOF), according to documents from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs seen by Mongabay. The company is a major supplier of sashimi-grade tuna to Japanese and Chinese markets.
- In addition to Saleh, a 30-year-old crew member named Rudi Ardianto died on Aug. 8 aboard another DOF ship, the Tian Xiang 16, the documents show.
- Both died from “sickness,” according to Judha Nugraha, the ministry’s director-general of citizen protection.



## 2.10 Foreign Ships Continue Illegal Fishing in Indonesia's North Natuna Sea [Oct 29]

- The Indonesian Navy and Coast Guard (Bakamla) continues to have their work in the North Natuna Sea off the Riau Islands Province cut out for them, despite their vigorous efforts to assert Indonesian sovereignty in the area. The Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) Indonesia NGO noted that there have been 31 instances where foreign trawlers were caught illegally fishing in the waters since last June. “Vietnamese trawlers make up the majority of the offenders, as they were involved in 21 of the incidents,” said DFW Indonesia National Coordinator Moh Abdi Suhufan in a written statement on October 28. “They are also the likeliest to resist the Indonesian authorities by ramming and other violent actions. These actions are dangerous and need a high degree of anticipation.”
- He urged the Indonesian government to tread carefully in handling illegal fishing, as it is not the only issue encountered in the Natuna Sea. “The North Natuna Sea is subject to volatile international geopolitics. Aside from illegal fishing by Vietnamese boats, China vessels are also known to illegally enter Indonesian territorial waters.” DFW researcher Muh Arifuddin agreed with Abdi. “Indonesia needs to carry out combined air and sea patrols [to enforce] Indonesian interests [in the Natuna Sea].” Also read: Indonesia Will Not Provide Any Bases for Other Countries “These patrols should be done regularly so Indonesia can project its military power [in the area]. This gesture also shows that Indonesia will not stand by passively, while other countries disregard its sovereignty in Natuna sea by trawling fish at will in Indonesian waters.” Indonesia claims the North Natuna Sea as part of its exclusive economic zone. The country’s stand put it at odds with China, as parts of the waterway are included in the ‘nine dash line’ of territorial waters claimed by Beijing.
- 
-



## 3 MALAYSIA

### 3.1 China's push lets foreign poachers steal our fish, say experts [Oct 11]

- PETALING JAYA: China's dominance in the South China Sea, and the big power rivalry in the area, has led to foreign fishing vessels poaching in Malaysia's rich marine resources, say experts and fishermen.
- Thomas Benjamin Daniel, of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), told FMT: "The pervasiveness of the South China Sea dispute, and China's dominating role in it, has impacted coastal fishermen in Sabah and Sarawak.
- "Besides reports of illegal Chinese fishing in Malaysian waters, China has also forced Vietnamese fishermen to fish further south and into our waters. Malaysia's capacity to constantly monitor such a huge stretch of water is also limited."
- The lack of enforcement and surveillance technology on Malaysia's territorial waters has made it easier for foreigners to encroach into Malaysian waters.

### 3.2 Malaysia's MMEA seizes 6 Chinese illegal fishing vessels, arrests 60 men [Oct 11]

- The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) have seized six illegal Chinese fishing vessels from territorial waters east of Johor, and arrested 60 men on board.
- Captain Mohd Zulfadli Nayan, MMEA's Tanjung Sedili zone director, said that the vessels from Qinhuangdao, China, were spotted at two separate locations during an agency operation at around 9 am on Friday (October 9), reported The Straits Times.
- "We had earlier received a tip-off from the Johor Port Authority about the trespassing vessels. Our patrolling squad then found the vessels near 2.1 nautical miles and 2.3 nautical miles and three of them were found hovering near one another," he said.
- He further added that the vessels were carrying six captains and 54 crewmen, all of them Chinese nationals, aged between 31 and 60.
- According to The Straits Times, the case was being investigated under a section of the Fisheries Act, for failure to report to department for entering into state waters, which carries a maximum fine of RM 6 million and RM 600,000 for each crew member.
- The case was also being investigated under a section of the Merchant Shipping Ordinance for illegal anchoring, which carries a fine of up to RM 100,000 or jail, or both, upon conviction, said Zulfadli.

### 3.3 China urges Malaysia to 'fairly investigate' held fishermen - CNA [Oct 12]

- BEIJING: China on Monday (Oct 12) called on Malaysia to "fairly investigate" the cases of Chinese fishermen held for allegedly operating illegally in Malaysian waters.
- China has sent personnel to visit detained crew members from six boats seized on Friday and provide them with personal protective equipment and other assistance, foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters.
- "We have requested that the Malaysian side fairly investigate the case in accordance with law, protect the lawful rights and interests of the Chinese citizens involved and report the progress of the investigation in a timely manner," Zhao said at a daily briefing.
- Malaysia is among the countries exercising overlapping claims with China to territory and resources in the South China Sea and has sought to clamp down on Chinese illegal fishing.
- China claims virtually the entire strategic waterway, home to rich but over-stressed fishing stocks and a potential wealth of mineral resources, as its own.



- Malaysian officials said 60 Chinese crew members were arrested for lacking permits and anchoring illegally at two separate locations on Friday morning after a tip-off. They face fines and potential jail terms.

### 3.4 MMEA: Heightened security measures employed during pandemic [Oct 26]

- KUALA LUMPUR: While the country wrestles with the Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysian maritime authorities are diligently ensuring that foreigners do not illegally enter our waters.
- Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) chief Admiral Datuk Mohd Zubil Mat Som said the agency has beefed up enforcement operations to curb cross-border crimes and illegal fishing activities in the South China Sea.
- "When the government implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO) to stem the transmission of Covid-19, many fishermen from Vietnam took advantage of it to intrude into our waters and rob us of our marine resources.
- "We chased away 83 Vietnamese and 74 Indonesian fishing boats between March 18 and June 23. As of Oct 23, 719 Vietnamese crewmen of 66 fishing boats and five 'motherships' have been arrested under Op Kuda Laut, which was introduced on June 24," he said in a statement.
- Zubil said a total of 129 foreign fishing boats and 1,290 fishing crew were detained under Op Naga Barat in April 2019.
- As of Oct 26, another 886 foreign fishermen from 102 fishing boats were arrested for intruding and robbing Malaysia's fishing resources under Op Naga Timur in Sabah and Sarawak.
- Zubil said the agency's participation in the national-level, multi-agency Op Benteng since May has led to 82 arrests for various offences, the seizure of 18 boats without owners, chasing away of 14 foreign vessels, 47 sightings of "suspicious activities" and a sea robbery.
- The agency's Op Dalal also crippled syndicates smuggling illegal migrants, especially Rohingya, in the northern Peninsula area, after arresting several agents and ground coordinators between April and July this year.
- Zubil said the country's maritime borders present a unique challenge, as it cannot be guarded by erecting gates and fences, unlike land borders.
- "Therefore, MMEA ensures that seven sea assets operate round-the-clock daily at each of the nation's maritime borders with the help of two aircraft and our Sea Surveillance System (Swasla) radar station.
- "Elite personnel from our Special Task and Rescue team are also on standby with our air assets to be deployed for special operations, especially in Sandakan, Semporna and Klang.





## 4 VIETNAM

### 4.1 Vietnam striving to combat IUU fishing: Spanish official [Oct 13]

- Vice Chairman of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam Rubén Saornil Mínguez recently appreciated efforts by the Vietnamese Government, businesses and fishermen in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing following the European Commission (EC)'s recommendations.
- Hanoi (VNA) – Vice Chairman of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam Rubén Saornil Mínguez recently appreciated efforts by the Vietnamese Government, businesses and fishermen in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing following the European Commission (EC)'s recommendations.
- He made the assessment when attending a conference themed “Promoting Tuna Value Chain, Combating IUU Fishing and Exporting Tuna to EU in line with the EVFTA Commitments” in the central province of Khanh Hoa on October 10, the Nong nghiep (Newspaper of Agriculture) reported.
- To implement EC recommendations, Vietnam issued the Fisheries Law 2017 and guiding documents towards sustainable aquaculture and fishery development. And to boost strict enforcement, the country set up a national steering committee for IUU fishing prevention and has required all fishing vessels to install position monitoring devices.
- The moves show that the country has made a remarkable improvement compared to what it did in the previous inspection, he reportedly affirmed.
- As of August 31, 24,851 out of the 30,851 fishing vessels, each with the length of 15m and above, or 80.61 percent of the total fleet had been equipped with the vessel monitoring systems.
- Rubén also reportedly spoke highly of Vietnam’s moves to intensify the traceability of aquatic products in the supply chain, well control fishing vessels in and out of fishing ports, as well as the output of seafood handled at the ports, and build ships in accordance with Vietnamese and EU standards.

### 4.2 Vietnam seeks sustainable development of fisheries [Oct 29]

- Can Tho (VNS/VNA) – Fisheries output is expected to reach 8.2 million tonnes this year, much higher than the target of 6.5 – 7 million tonnes set under a 2016-20 sustainable seafood development programme, according to the Directorate of Fisheries.
- The export value is expected to be 10 billion USD against a target of 8- 9 billion USD.
- The output last year was 8.15 million tonnes, 4.38 million from aquaculture.
- Yet the Government has invested only 14.5 trillion VND (626 million USD) in the programme, or 29 percent of the amount earmarked, for building fishing ports, storm shelters for fishing boats, seafood farming areas, fish fry farms, and other infrastructure.
- Speaking at a seminar to review the programme in Can Tho city this week, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Phung Duc Tien said the investment has been too low with the development of infrastructure not meeting the requirement even as the country signs more and more international trade agreements.
- Aquaculture has huge potential and so the country needs to reduce its catch at sea and increase marine aquaculture to develop fisheries sustainably, he said.
- He presented a draft strategy for seafood production for the period up to 2030 to gather public opinion before submitting to the Government for approval.
- It aims to expand the fisheries sector until it accounts for 30 percent of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.



- It seeks to increase output to 10 million tonnes a year, 25 – 30 percent from the sea and 70 – 75 percent from aquaculture.
- It aims to increase exports to \$18 - 20 billion a year and creating 3.5 million jobs.

#### 4.3 Vietnam determined to remove EC's IUU fishing warning [Oct 31]

- Removing the European Commission (EC)'s illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing "yellow card" is not easy and cannot be done overnight, but the Vietnamese business community and associations are still determined to do, not only to meet EU requirements, but also for the sake of sustainable fishery development.
- Removing the European Commission (EC)'s illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing "yellow card" is not easy and cannot be done overnight, but the Vietnamese business community and associations are still determined to do, not only to meet EU requirements, but also for the sake of sustainable fishery development. The message was delivered by leading officials of the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) at a workshop evaluating the three-year implementation of the "Vietnam Marine Product Companies Commit to Combat IUU Fishing" programme in Ho Chi Minh City on October 31.
- VASEP statistics showed that the "yellow card" has made Vietnam's seafood exports to the EU decrease continuously since 2018. The country's export turnover of seafood declined by 6 percent in 2018, 15 percent in 2019, and 13 percent in the first nine months of this year. From the second biggest importer of Vietnamese seafood with a value of 380-480 million USD a year, the EU now ranks fifth, after Japan, the US, the Republic of Korea and ASEAN. Nguyen Thi Thu Sac, VASEP Vice President and head of its Seafood Committee, said that the EU, however, remains important partner of Vietnam's fishery sector.
- Therefore, the association and the seafood business community are exerting every effort to maintain this market. At present, 82 percent of fishing vessels are equipped with position monitoring devices, the trace for seafood origins has improved, and the legal framework has gradually completed.
- Many delegates attending the workshop emphasised the need to raise fishermen's awareness of abiding by EC recommendations.
- 
-



## 5 THAILAND

### 5.1 Fishermen in Pattani seek help from EU [Oct 8]

- A group of commercial trawler operators from Pattani has asked for European Union (EU) assistance in relieving impacts caused by the government's policies to control Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU).
- They have asked the bloc to directly tell the government to stop implementing regulations that further harm their livelihoods.
- Ankate Leelapaiboon, chairwoman of the Pattani Fisheries Association, said the EU has already learnt about what has happened to fishing communities and fishing-related businesses as a result of IUU regulations implemented by the Thai government, describing the effects of such regulations as something that should not have happened.
- "The EU seemed surprised by the information that we gave it and told us to write a report on the impacts of the government's IUU regulations. We want the EU to have a serious talk with the government to limit the impacts on us, especially to cut unnecessary laws against fishing," she told the Bangkok Post on Wednesday.
- The EU in 2015 issued Thailand with a yellow card due to its poor performance in stopping IUU fishing, covering the use of illegal fishing gear and illegal workers onboard fishing vessels. The then military-led government set up a committee to deal with the issue, including the issuance of executive orders on fishing control, together with over 300 related-fishing laws to control over 20,000 commercial trawlers.
- The regulations introduced a number of measures for commercial trawlers, such as Vessel Monitoring Systems to track fishing routes, and logbooks to report the number and type of fish caught, together with measures to protect the rights of crew members.

### 5.2 EU set to resume FTA talks with Thailand [Oct 31]

- The European Union is ready to resume Thai-EU free trade agreement (FTA) talks as soon as possible, senior officials have insisted.
- Director-General of the Department of European Affairs Sasiwat Wongsinsawat and the EU's Deputy Managing Director for Asia and Pacific Department at the European External Action Service (EEAS) Paola Pampaloni on Wednesday co-chaired the 15th Thai-EU Senior Officials' Meeting via video conference.
- This year's annual meeting discussed Covid-19 and its impact on the economy, as well as the political developments in Thailand, according to a statement released by the Department of European Affairs, with both parties also agreeing to strengthen ties by signing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement by the end of next year.
- The EU also confirmed its readiness to resume Thai-EU FTA talks as soon as possible. Relevant agencies will discuss the details at a meeting of a committee on trade and investment in December.
- At the same time, Thailand and the EU voiced a desire for close and tangible cooperation including in the fight against Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing via the Asean Network on Combating IUU Fishing, and by setting up a Thai-EU Security Dialogue and promoting the protection of labourers via the Thai-EU Labour dialogue.



## 6 CHINA

### 6.1 Marine Biologist: China 'Forever' Erased Coral Reefs in South China Sea [Oct 7]

- Some coral reefs in the South China Sea are “gone forever” due to China’s illegal creation of military bases atop them, a marine biologist and expert on the sea told Radio Free Asia (RFA) on Monday.
- “If you built something, if you’ve put dirt, rubble, and pavement [on top of coral reefs] ... There’s no way to recover that,” John McManus, a professor of marine biology at the University of Miami in Florida, told RFA.
- “The overwhelming majority of such construction has been by China, which infamously dredged up Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef, Mischief Reef, Woody Island, and some other islets between 2014 and 2017, to make way for artificial islands that now host its military,” according to the report.
- Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef, and Mischief Reef belong to the disputed Spratly archipelago. All three reefs are primarily claimed by the Philippines, but China also lays claim to them. Similarly, Woody Island pertains to the disputed Paracel Islands and is chiefly claimed by Vietnam, but China also vies for control of the island.
- Beijing claimed to have halted its large-scale reclamation in the contested maritime region in 2017, but recent “satellite imagery shows some parts of the South China Sea are still being built up” by China, RFA noted.
- “A new area of reef in the northwest of Woody Island, China’s main military base in the Paracels, has been torn up and dredged to make way for an unknown structure. Construction equipment has been spotted periodically on that patch since early April,” according to the report.
- Another major threat to the South China Sea is Beijing’s large-scale harvesting of giant clams in the waters. China uses an ecologically devastating method to harvest the endangered clams, according to the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI).
- “The typical method employed by these poachers involved anchoring their boats and then dragging the reinforced props of their outboard motors across the reef surface to break up the coral, allowing the clams to be easily lifted out,” AMTI reported in May 2019.
- “Since late 2018, satellite imagery has shown these fleets operating frequently at Scarborough Shoal [claimed chiefly by the Philippines] and throughout the Paracels, including at Bombay Reef,” the organization revealed.
- Chinese fishermen “can earn about \$1,000 for just two giant clams, which are found in layers of cement-like coral,” McManus told RFA on Monday.
- “[V]irtually all of that harvesting in the South China Sea is by a fishing fleet from the southern Chinese town of Tanmen where trade in the clam shells is a lynchpin of the local economy,” he added.

### 6.2 The Chinese Distant Water Fishing Fleet and IUUF [Oct 13]

- Chinese interests operate the largest distant water fishing fleet in the world, estimated to be 1,600-3,400 ships in size.
- The Chinese distant water fishing fleet could be five to eight times larger than that, however, and operate in every region of the world.
- While most of those vessels operate legally, with permission from host states and in accordance with international maritime law, there is considerable scope for Chinese fishing operators to act in a legal grey zone.
- Beijing has militarised part of its fishing fleet, enabling it to act as a third sea force capable of projecting power and advancing Chinese strategic interests.





### 6.3 Inside the haunting 'ghost ships' in the Sea of Japan [Oct 13]

- The battered wooden "ghost boats" drift through the Sea of Japan for months, their only cargo the corpses of starved North Korean fishermen whose bodies have been reduced to skeletons. Last year, more than 150 of these macabre vessels washed ashore in Japan, and there have been more than 500 in the past five years.
- For years the grisly phenomenon mystified Japanese police, whose best guess was that climate change pushed the squid population further from North Korea, driving the country's desperate fishermen dangerous distances from shore, where they become stranded and die from exposure.
- But an investigation based on new satellite data and conducted by an international team of academic researchers; Ian Urbina, a former New York Times investigative reporter who now directs [The Outlaw Ocean Project](#); and [Global Fishing Watch](#), a nonprofit organization that specializes in the use of satellite technology and artificial intelligence to track illegal activities on the high seas; have revealed what marine researchers say is a more likely explanation: China is sending a previously invisible armada of industrial boats to illegally fish in North Korean waters, violently displacing smaller North Korean boats and spearheading a decline in once-abundant squid stocks of more than 70 percent.

### 6.4 Cat and mouse on the high seas: on the trail of China's vast squid fleet [Oct 21]

- The ocean is as black as chipped obsidian, yet whichever way you look dozens of bright lights illuminate the water and the night sky. Nearly 400 nautical miles from the South American mainland, the crew of a Peruvian coastguard ship count more than 30 Chinese squid boats lighting up the sea like a city at night.
- Some of the boats shine luminous green, others glow blinding white like an alien spacecraft in a movie. Rigged along each side of the ships, incandescent lamps attract giant squid near the surface, where they can be hauled from the ocean by long metal arms jutting over the water.
- The coastguard cutter Río Cañete drifts within 100 metres of a squid jigger, and the men on each boat gaze at each other across the water. The Chinese fishermen work in silence; the crew of the Peruvian boat is also hushed – none of them has witnessed such a scene before.
- "This is just part of a considerable fleet off our coastal waters," says Commander Eduardo Atkins, looking out from the bridge of the 55-metre patrol boat.
- "They've always been off our coasts, from Ecuador to Argentina, [but ] this time there's been more media attention and the public feel affected. Our job is to dissuade them from entering our maritime domain."
- The Guardian recently joined the Peruvian coastguard on a four-day patrol into international waters which came amid growing tension over the presence of the huge Chinese fleet off the coast of South America – some of the richest fishing grounds in the world.
- More than 250 Chinese ships were first detected in July as they skirted territorial waters off the Galápagos Islands, stirring outrage in Ecuador and raising global concern about the practices of the world's largest [distant-water fishing fleet](#).
- Hawkeye 360, a radio frequency data analytics firm, reported that boats were "going dark" by switching off their AIS satellite tracking and entering [the islands' exclusive economic zone](#).
- "We found multiple examples of maritime radio frequency activity that is within the Galápagos exclusive economic zone adjacent to the Chinese fleet," said HawkEye 360's CEO, John Serafini.
- "These signals don't align with any AIS tracking. Although the activity could represent legitimate vessels, at the very least it is suspicious behaviour," he said.



## 6.5 Working group of nations go after China's flags of convenience [Oct 22]

- Fisheries officials from the European Union, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United States have met to discuss cooperation on limiting the use of flags of convenience by distant-water fishery companies involved in illegal fishing.
- The online meeting, which took place 15 October, follows a report by the advocacy group Environmental Justice Foundation criticizing the process whereby fishing companies buy flags from flag states, which are then unwilling or unable to monitor the activity of problem trawlers. The report, "[Off the Hook: How Flags of Convenience Let Illegal Fishing Go Unpunished](#)," details the damage that flags of convenience cause to fisheries and how they are used to conduct illegal fishing. In the report, EJF calls for sanctions to end the practice and more transparency surrounding the registration of fishing vessels.
- "Flags of convenience in fisheries confound accountability," the EJF report states. Flags of convenience and the frequent practice of re-flagging used by vessel owners to escape sanctions also "hinder efforts to identify and sanction the ultimate beneficiaries of illegal fishing activities," according to the report.
- An earlier EJF report on the same issue, published nearly a decade ago, named the E.U. and fishing countries in East Asia as the key users of flags of convenience. South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand, whose fleets were all the subject of earlier attention from EJF for partaking in flags of convenience, are all now part of the new working group. The group appears to be focused on China, which is not part of the group. China has received a global reputation for operation through ownership of local companies in poor fishing countries and for the frequent use of flags of convenience by its vast distant-water fleet. Chinese vessels fishing in Ghana under the colors of Liberia, a popular source for flags of convenience, have been [a recent focus of attention for EJF](#).
- Aside from flags of convenience, fishing companies dodge scrutiny by registering in jurisdictions with "corporate laws that are permissive, or laxly enforced," according to the EJF report. That enables the local registration of fishery companies that are actually under foreign ownership.

## 6.6 Illegal Chinese Fishing Fleets are Endangering Galapagos Islands [Oct 22]

- The coronavirus has harmed the economy and Chinese fishing fleets keep illegally entering their waters.
- The Galapagos Islands, located in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Ecuador, are most famous as the place where Charles Darwin, in the nineteenth-century, did research that led to the publication of "On the Origin of Species."
- Now, a new report says the Islands are the site of an influx of [illegal fishing](#) which, along with the coronavirus pandemic, [are threatening one of the world's natural wonders](#).
- According to [a new report this week in the Los Angeles Times](#), the Galapagos Islands are suffering these days for multiple reasons. The area, which is heavily dependent on tourism dollars from those who visit the park there, has seen that income dry up due to the pandemic.
- Some in the Islands have also begun to notice an influx of hundreds of [Chinese](#) fishing boats, who have begun to do massive amounts of fishing in the area, where it is not legal for them to fish. It's [a situation](#) that's happened around the world in recent years, which has led to the U.S. Coast Guard [calling out China](#) for the practice.
- The boats have also left behind litter, including water bottles and other materials with Chinese lettering on them, indicating that it was left there recently.
- "This is an attack on our resources," Ángel Yáñez Vinuesa, the mayor of Santa Cruz canton, told the newspaper. "They are killing the species we have protected and polluting our biota with the plastic waste they drop overboard. They are raping the Galapagos."
- One ship captain said that China brought a tanker ship to the area, which provides fuel to other fishing vessels. And in 2017, a Chinese vessel was captured in the area, carrying 300 tons of fish,



including thousands of sharks that were caught illegally. [This led to prison time](#) for those who were caught by the Ecuadorian government.

## 6.7 Crisis in the Galapagos: Chinese fishing fleets and COVID threaten a natural wonder [Oct 23]

- Just south of the Galapagos' Marchena Island, there's a dive spot known by locals as the "fish arena."
- There, within the choppy, cool waters of the Pacific, thousands of colorful fish swim in schools, lobsters poke their long antennae out of rocky outcrops, dolphins bear their young, and moray eels gape menacingly at visitors who swim too close.
- Charles Darwin documented the rich biota of these islands in the early 1800s. In more recent times, an unofficial network of local tour boats and fishing vessels has worked to protect it, by keeping an eye out for those who might harm the marine bounty. But the pandemic has grounded this surveillance fleet, creating an opening for outsiders.
- Earlier this summer, more than 300 Chinese fishing vessels—many designed to hold 1,000 tons of catch—waited at the marine preserve's border, ready to snatch up sea life as it migrated south toward the waters off Peru and Chile.
- By some estimates, China has a "distant water" fishing fleet of 17,000 vessels that has been involved in fishing conflicts off the coasts of West Africa, Argentina and Japan in recent years. Now this fleet is triggering similar anger off Ecuador and Peru, two nations highly dependent on their robust near-shore fisheries.
- "This is an attack on our resources," said Angel Yanez Vinueza, the mayor of Santa Cruz canton, the Galapagos' equivalent of a province. "They are killing the species we have protected and polluting our biota with the plastic waste they drop overboard. They are raping the Galapagos."
- The fleet is hardly the only threat to this park, a UNESCO world heritage site.
- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism has plummeted—tour boats have been moored in Santa Cruz Island's Academy Bay for months, while shops and restaurants are shuttered along Puerto Ayora's main drag, Avenida Charles Darwin.
- It has laid bare the vulnerability of an economic model that is 90% dependent upon tourism dollars, while also highlighting the extraordinary beauty and remoteness of the islands—and the magic that is lost when thousands of tourists descend daily into this fragile ecosystem.
- During a recent visit to the Galapagos, a Los Angeles Times reporting team—the only visitors touring the park by boat—witnessed penguins swimming alongside tropical fish and sea turtles, krill blooms clouding the shallow waters with pink flotsam, and migrating tuna and hammerhead sharks meandering through the darker, deeper waters.

## 6.8 US Coast Guard to tackle China 'illegal' fishing in Pacific [Oct 24]

- The United States said Friday it would deploy Coast Guard patrol ships in the western Pacific to counter "destabilizing and malign" activities by China in disputed fishing grounds of the South China Sea.
- Accusing China of "illegal" and "unregulated" fishing, as well as "harassment" of fishing boats from regional countries, White House National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said in a statement that the US Coast Guard "is strategically homeporting significantly enhanced Fast Response Cutters...in the western Pacific."
- These Sentinel class vessels will carry out maritime security operations, including helping fishing boats "in collaboration with regional partners who have limited offshore surveillance and enforcement capacity, and ensure freedom of navigation," he said.
- Washington regularly accuses China of breaking international law by sending its warships as escorts for Chinese fishing vessels into the fishing grounds of other countries.



- In July, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper slammed a "catalog of bad behavior" in the South China Sea over the previous months and accused the Chinese military of having sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat, harassing Malaysian oil and gas development and escorting Chinese fishing fleets into Indonesia's exclusive economic zone.
- O'Brien added that the Coast Guard, which is under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), was also studying whether to permanently station several of its patrol ships in the area of American Samoa in the South Pacific.
- Last month, Indonesia protested about an incursion by Chinese coast guard ships in its exclusive economic zone, which is situated between its own territorial waters and international waters and where the state claims exclusive rights to exploit natural resources.
- China claims almost the whole of the South China Sea as its own, a claim contested by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei and Taiwan.

## 6.9 China's 'Dark' Fishing Fleet Lays Waste to Global Ecosystems [Oct 26]

- China's fleet of illegal fishing vessels is netting multimillion-dollar catches in Korean, Taiwanese, and Japanese waters, in defiance of international bans and treaties, and has been blamed for a sharp fall in squid populations.
- Fisheries ministries and an international fishing watchdog estimate that thousands of Chinese ocean-going fishing vessels sail to other shores annually in search of catches -- mostly squid -- often carrying no identification or tracking technology.
- Researchers described a fleet of "dark vessels" gathering by night off the coast of North Korea in defiance of an international ban, shining dazzling lights into the inky waters to attract the catch.
- "In 2019, there were nearly 800 fishing boats from China illegally fishing in this maritime area," Hoki Lo, regional coordinator for Global Fishing Watch, told RFA. "The fishing boats ... are operating at a similar scale, using similar methods, this year."
- Meanwhile, South Korea's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries said in an Oct. 5 report that coast guards had driven off some 6,543 illegal Chinese fishing vessels in 2019.
- Their incursions continue: some 360 Chinese fishing vessels entered its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) every day this month, an increase of 80 percent compared with activity in September, the ministry said.
- China has the world's largest ocean-going fishing fleet, comprising around 2,600 ocean-going fishing vessels, and 600 squid boats, which have been blamed for a collapse in squid populations as their nets sweep up immature squid before they are able to complete their breeding cycle.
- "This is the first time in history that we have observed the activities of these dark fleets on such a large scale and over such a long period of time," Lo said.

## 6.10 Coast Guard homeporting cutters in W. Pacific to counter China's illegal fishing [Oct 26]

- YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Coast Guard is "strategically homeporting" its newest fast-response cutters in the Western Pacific to police illegal fishing in the region by China, National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien announced Friday.
- The cutters "will conduct maritime security missions, such as fisheries patrols, enhance maritime domain awareness and enforcement efforts" with U.S. partners in the Western Pacific "who have limited offshore surveillance and enforcement capacity," he said in a statement.
- "China's illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and harassment of vessels operating in the exclusive economic zones of other countries in the Indo-Pacific threatens our sovereignty, as well as the sovereignty of our Pacific neighbors and endangers regional stability," he added.
- O'Brien did not specify where the vessels would be based or when they are expected to arrive, but Guam is awaiting two additional cutters after last month receiving the first of three to be stationed there.





- They replace the U.S. territory's 110-foot Island-class patrol boats used by the Coast Guard for about three decades.
- Fast-response cutters are designed for missions beyond the Coast Guard's traditional search-and-rescue work, such as homeland security and defense.

### 6.11 Philippine Fishermen: Basing Coast Guard Ships in W. Pacific is Washington's Right [Oct 26]

- A U.S. plan to permanently base Coast Guard ships in the western Pacific – which includes the contested South China Sea – is an assertion that no country, especially China, can claim international waters as its own, but the move may also fuel tensions, a Filipino fishermen's group said Monday.
- Meanwhile, the Philippine defense secretary said that as long as Washington ensures that these patrol ships don't transgress into Manila's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the United States can do whatever it wants because that is its decision as a sovereign state.
- "Exercising the right of passage in accordance with international law will assert that no country, especially China, can solely claim established international waters," said Fernando Hicap, chairman of Pamalakaya, a group representing Filipino fishermen, which has been among groups actively protesting Chinese incursions in Philippine-claimed areas of the South China Sea.
- "Every country has the right to sail and conduct their respective businesses in the South China Sea sans China's consent."
- Still, an increased U.S. presence in the disputed sea could "further China's military presence and trigger an actual armed confrontation," which would affect the "fishing security and rights of the Filipino and other" South China Sea nations' fishing communities, Hicap said as he commented on the plan announced on Friday by Robert C. O'Brien, the U.S. National Security Adviser.



## 7 TAIWAN

### 7.1 Taiwan all at sea on illegal fishing practices [Oct 18]

- TAIPEI (Taiwan News) — Taiwan's Fisheries Agency intends to overturn a U.S. decision that censures the nation's fishing fleets by proving that it does in fact comply with International Labor Organization fishing conventions.
- Taiwan's fishing industry was in September put on the U.S. Labor Department's "List of goods produced by child labor or forced labor." This is a black mark on Taiwan's reputation for being a progressive and fair nation.
- It would also appear to undermine President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) policy of welcoming migrant workers, being non-discriminatory, and ensuring their rights. This is being codified in the New Economic Immigration Bill that is still under review.
- Taiwan's fishing fleet is said to be the second-largest in the world, with more than 1,100 vessels employing about 35,000 migrant workers, mostly from the Philippines and Indonesia. It has an annual output value of NT\$40 billion (US\$1.4 billion) and is second in size only to China's fishing fleet, according to [Voice of America](#).
- The VOA report quoted Lin Ding-rong (林頂榮), director of Taiwan's Fisheries Agency deep-sea division, last week as saying the following of the U.S. Labor Department listing: "This has negatively impacted U.S. buyers' confidence in sourcing catch (from Taiwan). Frankly, we disagree with the U.S. decision, which was based on offenses by one or a few vessels but will largely hurt the interests of the majority of law-abiding fishermen here."



## 8 Further afield – selected global IUUF news

### 8.1 Data initiative sets sights on tackling global ocean challenges [Oct 4]

- NOAA announced a new pilot program with Vulcan Inc. to utilize Skylight, a maritime information tool developed to address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.
- Under this contractual agreement, Skylight will be used to provide data solutions that may help NOAA Fisheries and its partners identify potential IUU fishing activities.
- [IUU fishing](#) is an internationally recognized problem that has far-reaching consequences for national security, global economies and marine fisheries. In addition to helping to identify IUU fishing activities, this partnership calls for the development of potential approaches to increase the use of maritime domain awareness that support the protection and conservation of [North Atlantic right whales](#), an endangered large whale species with only about 400 remaining. Entanglement in fishing gear and vessel strikes are the leading causes of right whale mortality.
- “NOAA scientists from across the country will work with the Vulcan team on the use of data systems to help tackle some of the biggest challenges facing our Blue Economy,” said retired Navy Rear Admiral Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D., assistant secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and deputy NOAA administrator. “When U.S. science and technology agencies and leading private sector firms work together, we can achieve great success in tackling real-world challenges while also fostering innovative approaches.”
- Seattle-based Vulcan Inc. developed the Skylight system as part of its philanthropic ocean portfolio and is working with partners across the globe to tackle one of the leading drivers of ocean decline and threat to a sustained food supply. Skylight leverages artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms to identify suspicious activity, cutting through the noise, helping authorities to focus investigations and determine proper action.

### 8.2 Maltese Army begins maritime patrols following fishermen's pleas about pirates at sea [Oct 7]

- Malta's armed forces have been brought in to police seas for illegal fishing, after local fishermen complained that Tunisian rivals were plundering their *lampuki* catches.
- Patrols are being carried out by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture together with the Armed Forces of Malta and involve surveillance in both territorial and international waters.
- The patrols, which the department said are not exclusively targeted towards any particular country, are intended to keep an eye on use of Fishing Aggregated Devices (FADs) in international waters. FADs are manmade objects used to lure fish and catch them.
- Local fishermen have claimed that armed Tunisian pirate boats are plundering their *lampuki* fishing rafts and that their pleas for government protection have been ignored.
- In September, the department urged Maltese fishermen and women to film and photograph potentially armed pirates plundering their *lampuki* fishing rafts because the Armed Forces might not be in a position to come to their rescue.
- Complaints about pirates ransacking local fishermen's catches date back almost 20 years. The issue was recently brought back to public attention after former PN MEP candidate Peter Agius flagged it to the European Commission.
- According to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, a regional fishing management organisation that falls under the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, vessels are prohibited from catching fish attracted by an FAD that has been placed by another vessel.
- It is therefore unlawful for Tunisian vessels to fish on FADs deployed by Maltese vessels, and vice versa, the government said.



- While the AFM has no jurisdiction in international waters, the government said they would be providing assistance and "gathering the required evidence to be in a position to escalate matters in the appropriate fora."
- Fishers have also been asked to report and provide any evidence - from photos to video or GPS coordinates - of any such breaches.
- Malta petitions EU
- Malta, through joint cooperation between various ministries, has submitted substantial evidence collected through official and unofficial activities to the European Commission.
- The Maltese authorities have also actively engaged with the European Commission and the European Fisheries Control Agency and discussed these unlawful activities.

### 8.3 EU Urges Ghana To End Saiko Fishing [Oct 15]

- The European Union (EU) has called on Government of Ghana to do everything in its power to end the illegal trade of Saiko before the practice destroy the entire sector.
- Saiko is a destructive form of illegal fishing, where industrial trawlers target the staple catch of small-scale canoe fishers and transfer it to specially adapted boats at sea for sale at local markets.
- He expressed disappointment that the activities of saiko goes on openly and unabated on Ghanaian waters.
- In 2017 alone, the saiko trade took around 100,000 tonnes of fish, worth over US\$ 50 million when sold at the landing site, 80 percent of which was landed at Elmina, the Central Region hot spot for saiko activities.
- Mr Roberto Schiliro, Team Leader and Head of the Sector Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Section, EU Delegation in Ghana who made the call described "saiko" as a canker that should be completely eliminated.
- He was speaking in an interview with the media following the handing over of an indenture of the duly registered British Komenda landing site to the community on Monday.
- The move was carried out by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) and Hen Mpoano, implementing partners of the "Far Dwuma Nkodo" project to secure landing sites for fishing communities in the context of coastal development.
- Mr Schiliro said Saiko was the single most undesirable illegality that was fast depleting the fish stock in Ghana's marine waters which must be tackled with all seriousness.
- "The artisanal fishing represent an important portion of the Ghana's economy. They employ over three million of the Ghanaian people. So they deserve the attention. It is a productive sector and its importance must not be underestimated", he stressed.

### 8.4 World Fishing & Aquaculture | Call for sustainable EU fisheries rules [Oct 20]

- Europêche and the EU IUU Coalition have urged EU decision makers to enable a robust EU fisheries control system that ensures seafood products sold in the EU are sustainably sourced, fully traceable and properly monitored by Member States.
- As the revision of the EU fisheries control system continues, the organisations have called on Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and EU fisheries Ministers to resolve the shortcomings.
- The EU IUU Coalition said: "It is critical that the revision of the fisheries Control Regulation ensures the sustainability objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy are met. The revised rules must strengthen compliance, modernise data management, intensify the fight against illegal fish products and guarantee a level playing field for all stakeholders in the EU."
- Europêche and the EU IUU Coalition point out the current lack of harmonised sanctions for infringements, insufficient data exchange, ambiguity of legal provisions, and disparities in the level of scrutiny in the implementation of control measures and traceability across Member



States are creating a complex and uneven playing field for operators, leaving the system open for abuse. These issues highlight the need for simplification and harmonisation, they said.

- The organisations call on EU decision makers to enhance and digitise traceability of seafood products, simplify and better align control measures, require additional information for imported fisheries products, require tracking and electronic catch reporting for small-scale fishing vessels (taking into account the specifications of the fishery), and provide more public information on the implementation of enforcement measures by Member States.

## 8.5 Leveraging NGOs and Volunteerism for Maritime Surveillance Against IUU Fishing [Oct 20]

- As strategic competition heats up between the U.S. and China, the U.S. is seemingly at a disadvantage when compared to China's ability to mobilize and militarize commercial enterprises with plausible deniability like its vast distant-water fishing fleet. In order to adequately counter China's aggressive overseas fishing fleet, the U.S. should rely on a combination of technology and global volunteerism. Just as Coastal Patrol helped plug a capability gap and hobble German U-boat operations, the U.S. can help counter malign Chinese fishing activities by supporting allies with cheap surveillance networks and capitalizing on environmental volunteerism.
- Commercial Fishing Fleets
- Recently, Ecuador raised alarm over the presence of 340 fishing vessels congregating outside the protected waters of the Galapagos Islands. Almost all of them were part of the Chinese distant-water fishing fleet. The situation escalated when many vessels within the fleet turned off their satellite transponders to avoid being monitored and, presumably, the scrutiny of Ecuadorian authorities. Ecuador responded by sending surveillance assets to monitor the flotilla. Unable to adequately monitor such a large flotilla with their own assets, Ecuador requested assistance and intelligence sharing from Colombia and Peru.
- Ecuador had reason to worry. In 2017 Ecuadorian authorities seized a Chinese fishing vessel with over 300 tons of illegally fished sharks (some endangered) comprising of roughly 6,600 animals. When Chinese fishermen act aggressively and illegally, it is likely that they have at least some form of tacit government approval considering the authoritarian nature of the Chinese regime. Though Beijing denies irresponsible fishing practices, the data suggests otherwise. China has the largest distant-water fishing fleet in the world at over 17,000 vessels. The fishing fleet also receives government subsidies that incentivize private companies and ship owners to expand their fleet and range. China has militarized part of its fishing fleet as part of the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia, which can be employed as a paramilitary force in altercations with other national fishing fleets and law enforcement vessels. Beijing uses the Maritime Militia as part of a coordinated effort to challenge maritime sovereignty and conduct surveillance of its neighbors within the "gray zone" where triggered responses are unlikely to rise to the level of direct military intervention. Retired U.S. Navy Admiral James Stavridis has argued that China's distant-water fishing fleet is part of a strategy of "hybrid warfare." Through "coercive maritime diplomacy," Chinese fishing vessels assist Beijing in asserting claims in contested waters by using sheer numbers to overwhelm another nation's ability to enforce their sovereignty. These vessels have been used in disputes against claimants in the South China Sea and Japan. As the immediate peripheral waters surrounding China were depleted of marine life and its growing population's demand for sources of protein grew, its fleets moved outward.

## 8.6 Scientific Detective Work: Tracking Shark Fins Around The Globe [Oct 21]

- Donning their detective hats, scientists Florida International University scientists Dr. Demian Chapman and Dr. Diego Cardeñosa are protecting living shark populations by letting the dead speak.



- More specifically, gathering clues from shark fins found in retail markets in China and Hong Kong. Collaborating with researchers in Hong Kong to track and monitor the global shark fin trade using DNA testing, the detective work was able to trace where sharks were initially caught. The results are grim: almost 85 percent of fins sampled in these markets were genetically traced back to the Eastern Pacific.
- “The findings weren’t surprising, because earlier this year we discovered the majority of fins from endangered scalloped hammerhead sharks also originated from the Eastern Pacific,” Cardeñosa said. “This is a region with poor fisheries management and poor capacity to enforce international regulations.”
- Cardeñosa is right – this isn’t the first time fins from endangered sharks have been linked to this specific area. The Eastern Pacific not only attracts tourists from around the world to take advantage of the multitude of marine habitats in this region, but it has also gotten the interest of industrial fishing fleets. The growing presence of Chinese industrial fishing vessels just off the Galápagos Islands made international news as journalists reported on the “[discovery](#)” of this “[massive](#)” fishing armada of Chinese fishing vessels which fluctuated to over 350 ships before they left by mid-October to fish farther south.
- The public (and scientists) is right to worry about the illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing that can and does go on in these sort of fishing fleets. One of the largest arrests over IUU fishing was back in 2017 when the Chinese-flagged vessel FU YUAN YU LENG 999 was found in the Galápagos with about 3,000 tons of endangered species onboard in their freezers, including roughly 600 sharks. And earlier this year in Hong Kong, customs officials intercepted an illegal shipment from Ecuador that contained 26 tons of thresher shark fins. Thresher sharks, famous for their whip-like tails, are protected under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This means that in order to trade these sharks, the sellers must have permits certifying the animals were legally caught and are traceable through the supply chain. Since 2017, CITES permits have documented more than five tons of shark fins exported from the Eastern Pacific to Hong Kong. But that only captures the legal trade operations, not the illegal trade happening right alongside it.
- The secret tool behind this recent historic seizure of shark fins was a DNA testing kit co-developed by Dr. Chapman and Dr. Cardeñosa. So, this type of genetic testing works. And that is why the researchers are so sure the clues left behind the tested fin trimmings are leading them back to the scene of so many maritime fishing crimes: the Eastern Pacific. “Our research pinpoints the Eastern Pacific as a major supply chain starting point for thresher sharks and other threatened sharks, and also a high-risk region for illegal trade,” Cardeñosa said. “With what we know, we can begin to guide intervention efforts to monitor and enforce international laws. It’s especially important to use all available technology and tools to detect and deter illegal trade of CITES-listed species.”

## 8.7 Experts highlight the need to stop insuring and financing activities that harm the ocean [Oct 22]

- Oceana calls on financial institutions to take a leading role in combatting illegal fishing
- A new paper, commissioned by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, outlines key actions that can be taken by public and private sectors to transition towards a sustainable ocean economy. Highlighted among these actions, is the need to stop insuring and financing non-compliant activities that are significantly harmful, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- Oceana has been engaging with the marine insurance sector for several years, developing and promoting industry recommendations that assist insurers and brokers in identifying and avoiding contracts associated to IUU fishing. Even illegal fishers seek insurance and other financial





services to support their business operations. If financial institutions prevent these unscrupulous actors from gaining access to their services, they can play a key role in reducing IUU fishing.

- Oceana also encourages companies to introduce policies that increase transparency, such as requiring insured vessels to be registered under an International Maritime Organisation (IMO) number or to be equipped with and actively use publicly accessible vessel tracking technology. These measures would also help to increase accountability within the fishing sector, which can promote more sustainable behaviour.
- “Healthy marine ecosystems are essential for maintaining a sustainable ocean economy. Subsidies towards harmful activities must stop, and significantly greater financing must be channelled to sustainable projects that restore and protect our ocean”, said Oceana Board Member Rashid Sumaila, Professor and Director of the Fisheries Economics Research Unit at the University of British Columbia’s Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, and co-lead author of the Blue Paper on Ocean Finance.
- “Oceana calls on financial institutions – including insurers, brokers, banks and other investors, to take a leading role in combatting IUU fishing. Removing support from the financial sector to activities that harm the ocean is an essential first step towards building a sustainable ocean economy.” said Dana Miller, Senior Policy Advisor for Oceana in Europe and contributing author to the Blue Paper on Ocean Finance.

## 8.8 Yemen urged to detain, prosecute toothfish poacher [Oct 23]

- Global nonprofit marine conservation organization Sea Shepherd is pleading the Yemeni government to detain, investigate, and prosecute a vessel suspected to be involved in toothfish poaching in the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) convention area.
- Sea Shepherd said the suspected poacher, Cobija, “was listed as anchored in the Port of Mukalla in the Republic of Yemen through the Yemen Arabian Sea Port Corporation website.”
- The vessel, which was formerly named Cape Flower, “is an internationally-blacklisted fishing vessel that was added to the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization’s illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) blacklist in 2017.”
- “Since then, it is suspected to have conducted IUU fishing for toothfish in the Commission for the CCAMLR convention area,” the statement said.
- Sea Shepherd suspects the Cobija, which claims to be flagged to Bolivia, “is believed to be stateless and any registration documents would therefore be forgeries.”
- Sea Shepherd further suspects the Cobija could have toothfish on board, with the beneficial owner presumed to be based in the Galicia region of Spain, “based on the usual practice of other toothfish poachers.”
- According to Sea Shepherd Director of Campaigns Peter Hammarstedt, “crimes ranging from illegal fishing to forgery are part of the modus operandi of these toothfish poachers.”
- CCAMLR has listed on its website a raft of measures to tackle the threat of IUU fishing such as vessel licensing, monitoring of vessel movements, monitoring of vessel transshipments, the system of inspection, the vessel monitoring system, and the catch documentation scheme.
- Through its Operation Icefish, Sea Shepherd took action that led to the arrest and detention of at least three toothfish poachers between 2014 and 2018.

## 8.9 IUU fishing to ‘gain from tariff exemptions’ [Oct 23]

- More than 800,000 tonnes of imported fish will annually benefit from tariff exemptions even if the originating country has been shown to be involved in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing if Council of the EU plans go ahead, says the fishing sector.
- The Council of the EU will shortly approve a regulation setting autonomous tariff quotas (ATQs) for the years 2021-2023 but Europêche and European Association of Fish Producers



Organisations (EAPO) believe that ATQs are being used to obtain cheap and low-standard fish from foreign fleets. Both are calling on the EU Council of Ministers to reduce the amount of imported duty-free fish to at least levels set in the European Commission's proposal.

- “The Council only listens to some EU processing companies that want to get access to cheap fish from non-EU countries regardless of the origin or way of production,” said Javier Garat, president of Europêche.
- “The increases in volume of duty-free fish works to the detriment of EU producers who have to comply with the highest standards of sustainability,” he added.
- The EU catching sector is not opposed to a rational tariff-free setting for certain fishery products that are not sufficiently produced in the EU. However, in light of the negative socio-economic consequences of ATQs for the EU fishing industry, Europêche and EAPO argue that this should not increase imports from non-sustainable sources nor put pressure on EU producers' prices.

## 8.10 Ghanaian workers report appalling abuse aboard Chinese-owned vessels [Oct 26]

- *Ghanaian workers have reported shocking human rights abuses aboard Chinese-owned trawl vessels, from beatings to a lack of drinkable water or basic medicines and punishing working hours. This abuse of the crew goes hand-in-hand with threats, the bribery of fisheries observers and large-scale illegal fishing. The testimonies, documented in a new [report](#) from EJF, are a deeply troubling indication of the treatment of local crew on board Chinese-operated trawlers, which are ubiquitous along the West African coast.*
- Although it is against Ghanaian law, the vast majority of trawlers operating in Ghana – an estimated 90% – are owned by Chinese corporations that use Ghanaian ‘front companies’ to gain registration. Chinese nationals occupy the more senior positions on board the vessels, with Ghanaian crew in lower roles.
- All 10 Ghanaian crew interviewed by EJF had personally experienced or witnessed physical abuse at the hands of Chinese captains and officers. One man said: “Violence occurs all the time. [...] those who are not fast, the captain will take anything he will get and hit you with it. Whether a stone or anything they will get. Especially the captain.”
- On another vessel, a Chinese national allegedly used a basket to hit a Ghanaian crew member in the head. When he retaliated, the Chinese officer is alleged to have threatened him with a knife. This treatment is combined with gruelling working hours said the men, stating that sometimes they are not allowed to sleep at all in 24 hours.
- Living conditions on board are also appalling, the men testified. They are not allowed to sleep in the cabins, where the Chinese crew sleep, but must stay on deck under makeshift tarpaulins. The water they are given to drink is often filthy, and sometimes makes them unwell. One man said: “The tank we drink from is very dirty and rusty, but we still drink from that same tank...Sometimes after drinking the water, we suffer from stomach pains, vomit and diarrhoea.”

Verumar Project Director

Lee Hardy OBE

[lee.hardy@nlaltd.co.uk](mailto:lee.hardy@nlaltd.co.uk)



Registered office: Mill House Farm, Blackthorn Hill, Blackthorn, Oxfordshire OX25 1TJ

Registered in England: 10801372