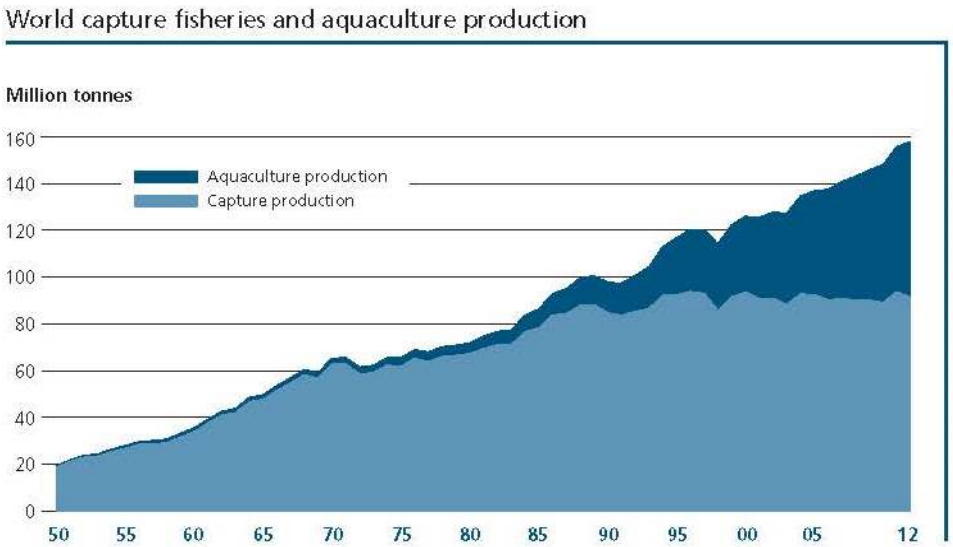
Seafish summary

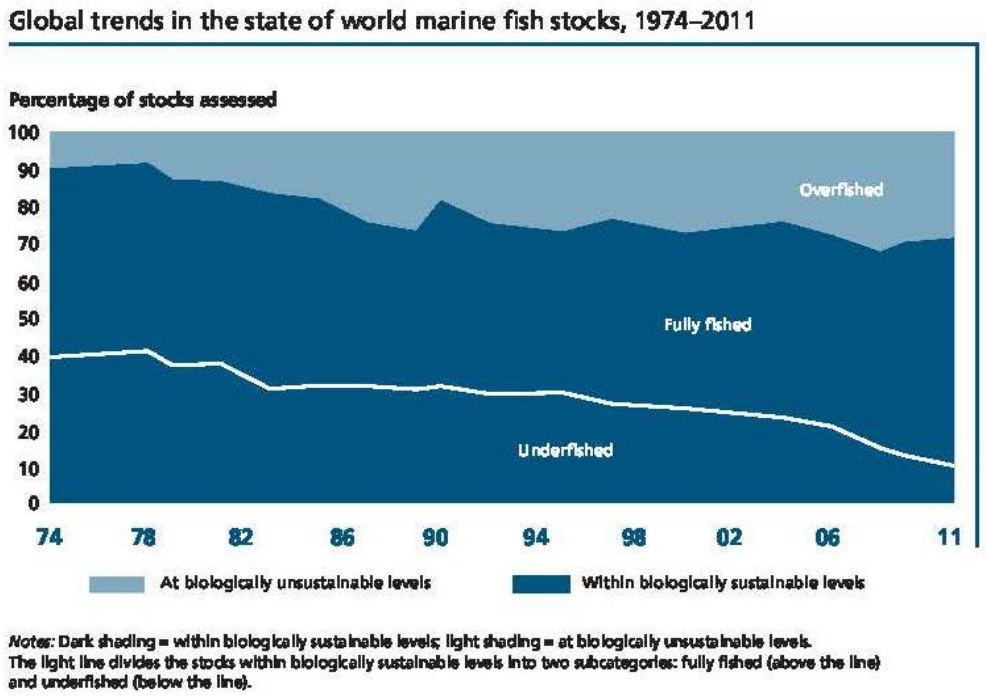
THE STATE OF WORLD FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE (SOFIA) 2014 – Fish stock status highlights



- Global fish production growth continues to outpace world population growth. Global fisheries and aquaculture production totalled 158 million tonnes in 2012 - around 10 million tonnes more than 2010. In 2012, global marine capture fishery production was 82.6 million tonnes in 2011 and 79.7 million tonnes in 2012. Global aquaculture production set another all-time high at more than 90 million tonnes (including almost 24 million tonnes of aquatic plants). Aquaculture remains one of the fastest-growing food-producing sectors and is set to play a key role in meeting the rising demand for fishery products.
- The proportion of assessed marine fish stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels exceeded 70% in 2011, while fewer than 30% of fish stocks were overfished. Of the stocks assessed, fully fished stocks accounted for over 60% and underfished stocks about 10%.
- The share of fisheries production used for direct human consumption increased from about 70% in the 1980s to more than 85% (136 million tonnes) in 2012.
- With this increasing production and greater availability for consumers, per capita fish consumption continues to rise– up from 10 kg in the 1960s to more than 19 kg in 2012 – driven by higher demand from a growing population, rising incomes, and more efficient distribution channels.
- The proportion of fisheries production used for direct human consumption increased from about 71% in the 1980s to more than 86% (136 million tonnes) in 2012, with the remainder (21.7 million tonnes) destined to non-food uses (e.g. fishmeal and fish oil).

Status of fish stocks

- The proportion of assessed marine fish stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels exceeded 70% (71.2%) in 2011 (this figure was 90% in 1974), while fewer than 30% (28.8%) of fish stocks were overfished - a reversal in trend observed during the past few years, a positive sign in the right direction. Of the stocks assessed, fully fished stocks (meaning those at or very close to their maximum sustainable production) accounted for over 60% (61.3%) and underfished stocks about 10% (9.9%).



Of the total number of stocks assessed in 2011:

- Fully fished stocks accounted for **61.3% in 2011** – these percentage figures decreased from 1974 to 1989, and then increased to 61.3% in 2011.
- Underfished stocks **9.9% in 2011** - these percentage figures decreased continuously from 1974 to 2011,
- Percentage of stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels was **28.8% in 2011** – these percentage figures increased, especially in the late 1970s and 1980s, from 10% in 1974 to 26% in 1989. After 1990, the number of stocks fished at unsustainable levels continued to increase, albeit more slowly, and peaked at 32.5% in 2008 before declining slightly in 2011.
- The ten most productive species accounted for about 24% of world marine capture fisheries production in 2011. Most of their stocks are fully fished and some are overfished. Most of their stocks are fully fished and, therefore, have no potential for increases in production, while some stocks are overfished and increases in their production may be possible only if effective rebuilding plans are put in place. The two main stocks of anchoveta in the Southeast Pacific, Alaska pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*) in the North Pacific, and Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*) stocks in both the Northeast and Northwest Atlantic are fully fished. Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) is considered to be overfished in the Northwest Atlantic, but fully fished in the Northeast Atlantic. Chub mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) stocks are fully fished in both the Eastern Pacific and the Northwest Pacific. Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) stocks are considered either fully fished or underfished.

Comparison with previous years

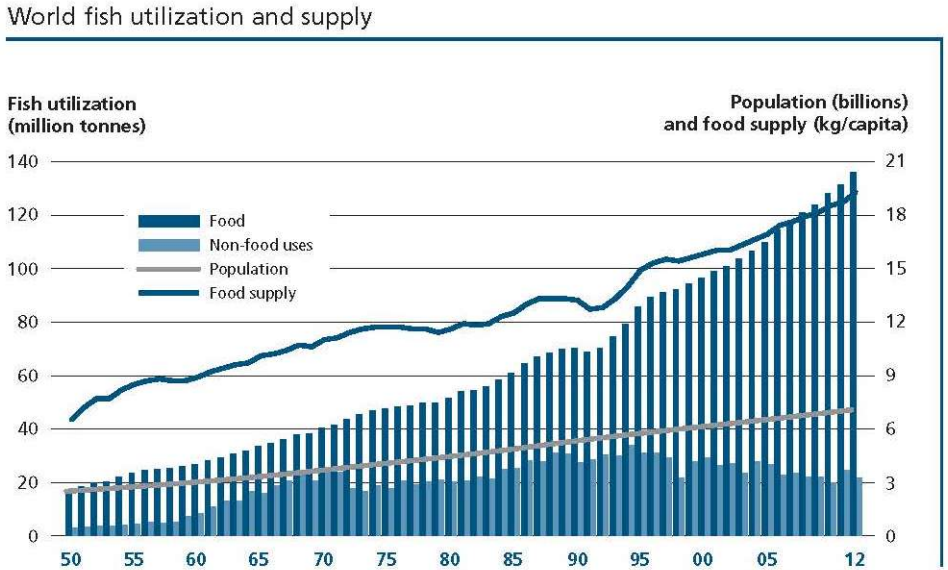
	2006 report		**2008 report***		**2010 report**		**2012 report**		**2014 report**	
Under exploited	3		2		3		No info		9.9	
Moderately exploited	20		18		12		12.9			
Fully exploited	52	**75%** of fish stocks are reported fully exploited/ overexploited (or depleted/ recovering from depletion).	52	**80%** of fish stocks are reported fully exploited/ overexploited (or depleted/ recovering from depletion).	53	**85%**** of fish stocks are reported fully exploited/ overexploited (or depleted/ recovering from depletion).	57.4	**87.3%***** of fish stocks are reported fully exploited or overexploited.	61.3	**71.2 %** of marine fish stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels
Overexploited	17		19		28		29.9		28.8	
Depleted	7		8		3		No info		No info	
Recovering from depletion	1		1		1		No info		No info	

**** It should be noted that the status of fully exploited is not undesirable provided it is the result of an effective and precautionary management approach.*** Statement made only in 2008 SOFIA report.
** Shows an increasing trend.
*** This combined percentage is the highest in the time series.

Explanation

- Stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels have an abundance lower than the level that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and are therefore overfished. They require strict management plans to rebuild them to full and biologically sustainable productivity.
- Stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels have abundance at or above the level associated with MSY.
- Stocks fished at the MSY level produce catches that are at or very close to their maximum sustainable production. Therefore, they have no room for further expansion in catch, and require effective management to sustain their MSY.
- Stocks with a biomass considerably above the MSY level (underfished stocks) have been exposed to relatively low fishing pressure and may have some potential to increase their production.

More detail



- Fish remains an ever-important source of energy, protein and a range of essential nutrients, accounting for almost 17 percent of the global population's intake of animal protein (in some coastal and island countries it can top 70%). Moreover, fish provided nearly 3 billion people with almost 20% of their intake of animal protein, and 4.3 billion people with about 15% of such protein.
- The fisheries and aquaculture sector supports the livelihoods of 10–12% of the world's population. Since 1990 employment in the sector has grown at a faster rate than the world's population and in 2012 provided jobs for some 60 million people engaged in capture fisheries and aquaculture. Of these, 84% were employed in Asia, followed by Africa with about 10%.
- Fish remains among the most traded food commodities worldwide, worth almost $130 billion in 2012 – a figure which likely will continue to increase. An important trend sees developing countries boosting their share in the fishery trade – 54% of total fishery exports by value in 2012 and more than 60% by quantity (live weight). This means fisheries and fish farming are playing an increasingly critical role for many local economies. Some 90% of fishers are small-scale and it is estimated that, overall, 15% are women. In secondary activities such as processing, this figure can be as high as 90%.

For further information:
FAO The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2014 http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3720e.pdf
FAO Press Release The growing role of fish in feeding the world http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/231522/icode/
FAO Highlights: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3807e.pdf

Prepared by: Karen Green, Industry Environmental Communications, Seafish. **T:** 07515 993499 **E:** k_green@seafish.co.uk
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