

“Failed state”: Report Calls for Five-Year Plan to Save World’s Over-Fished Oceans

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The world’s oceans need saving from overfishing and pollution, a new report says, as this “failed state” is rapidly declining, and an independent panel behind the report announced Tuesday that urgent action is needed within the next five years.

The Global Ocean Commission (GOC), a group of senior politicians formed in 2013, stress that effective rescue measures should include restricting industrial fishing and establishing tougher regulations for offshore oil and gas exploration on the high seas.

“The oceans are a failed state,” David Miliband, a former British foreign secretary and a co-chair of the commission, told Reuters [1]. “A previously virgin area has been turned into a plundered part of the planet.”

The high seas are an area outside national coastal zones and cover almost half the globe, and this is where fish are under pressure from illegal and unregulated catches, according to the report.

About 10 million tons of fish worth \$16 billion, from tuna to mollusks, are caught every year in the high seas out of a global fish catch of 80 million tons, the commission said.

Failure to successfully implement their suggested five-year plan, the panel argues, would mean international communities should consider turning the high seas into a “regeneration zone” where fish stock could recover.

Closing these plundered regions may have some economic impact - it would cost each person on the planet \$2, Reuters reported - but in the long run it is more beneficial, causing a \$4 rise in fish yields in coastal regions, management consultants McKinsey and Co. estimate.

Only 10 countries engage in high seas fishing, so the move would only affect nations such as the United States, European Union, China, and Japan.

As part of global efforts to protect the seas, President Barack Obama announced just last week his plans to create the world’s largest marine sanctuary, [2] an initiative that will protect a large part of the Pacific Ocean from overfishing, energy exploration and pollution.

“The ocean provides 50 percent of our oxygen and fixes 25 percent of global carbon emissions. Our food chain begins in that 70 percent of the planet,” said Jose Maria Figueres, co-chair of the commission, said in a GOC press release.

The commission is calling for a new agreement to be negotiated under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Such an accord would make the ocean a top priority, protect high seas marine protected areas, prevent wasteful exploitation of fish, as well as allow the government to safeguard 64 percent of the ocean that lies outside national jurisdiction.

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* Jun 24, 2014 01:31 PM EDT:

<http://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/7735/20140624/report-calls-for-five-year-plan-to-save-worlds-over-fished-oceans.htm>

Footnotes

[1] <http://in.reuters.com/article/environment-highseas-idINKBN0EZ05H20140624>

[2] <http://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/7615/20140617/obama-to-protect-pacific-ocean-from-fishing-and-energy-exploration.htm>