

Environmental issue in Asia: Overfishing

I did my research finding out that a big environmental issue Asia is currently facing right now is overfishing. Fish are a key source of food for virtually all Asian states, providing one of the largest sources of animal protein to the world's fastest growing commodity market. The world's largest tuna fishery crosses the jurisdiction of at least 21 countries—as well as extensive high-seas areas of the Pacific Ocean—and involves harvesting by fishing vessels from 26 different nations.

It is possible to overfish as we have customized technology to be able to catch a giant quantity of fish over a short period of time. In this time, fish left are not able to reproduce fast enough to sustain the population, this is causing the fish population to plummet and is becoming a big global issue.

Across the Pacific and in many coastal and riparian parts of Asia, fishing is a significant part of the economic base, providing food, employment, revenue, and foreign exchange earnings. World fisheries are being overfished as marine catches increased from 17 million metric tons (MMT) in 1950 to a peak of 87.1 MMT in 1996. As a result, there has been a steady increase in the frequency of clashes and incidents at sea caused by foreign fishing trawlers illegally encroaching into Exclusive Economic Zones and territorial seas.

Aquaculture production is a growing part of the fisheries sector. In 1996, 20% of all global fisheries production was from aquaculture. Asia dominates world aquaculture for fish, shrimp and shellfish, with China producing 68% of the global total. If done in an environmentally friendly manner, aquaculture can be a positive contributor to the world food supply. For example, giant tiger prawn production in Thailand has exploded from 900 to 277,000 tons in the last decade. However, reckless pumping of seawater into shrimp ponds can damage neighboring fields and hurt coastal marine life.

To protect fisheries and insure sustainability, cooperative resource management schemes such as fishing quotas need to be established and enforced. Militaries, coast guards, law enforcement, and courts should cooperate to reduce the possibility of disputes, collisions, and pollution, such as negligent oil spills.