

**Overfishing**  
**American Spaces Student Worksheet**  
**by the Smithsonian Ocean Portal**



Many human cultures from around the world have a deep connection to the ocean, and 3 billion people rely on fisheries for 20 percent of their protein. The ocean may seem like it can provide an endless amount of fish, but the fact is that fish can't reproduce fast enough to keep up with modern fishing practices, particularly when combined with other threats to the ocean such as warming waters, pollution and ocean acidification. Many fish populations around the world are facing collapse due to large-scale trawling and other types of commercial fishing. We have many challenges ahead to conserve the sea's biodiversity, resources, and value to human culture and society, but also many possibilities available right now to meet these challenges.

**Objectives:**

- Understand various types of modern fisheries
- Understand that fish populations aren't endlessly sustainable
- Explain some ways that fishing can be sustainable

Read through the Helpful Herbivores article (<http://ocean.si.edu/blog/helpful-herbivores>). Write down answers individually or in small groups, and then go over the following questions as a group.

1. How does seaweed harm coral?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What kind of fish are important to protecting corals from seaweed and why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What causes seaweed to grow out of control on coral reefs?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is resilience and how does it help coral reefs?

5. How can marine protected areas help stop seaweed growth?

#### VOCABULARY SCAVENGER HUNT:

1. Define "ecological resilience"
2. Define "herbivorous"
3. Define "marine protected area"

#### **Additional Reading and Media**

World Fisheries from Sea to Table slideshow: <http://ocean.si.edu/slideshow/world-fisheries-sea-table>

Sustainable Seafood overview: <http://ocean.si.edu/sustainable-seafood>

Video from PBS about overfishing around the world:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNai7VjxEGg>

Sustainable Seafood Glossary of Terms: <http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-news/sustainable-seafood-glossary-terms>

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna: <http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-news/atlantic-bluefin-tuna-thunnus-thynnus>

Rough Going For Orange Roughy: <http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-news/rough-going-orange-roughy>