

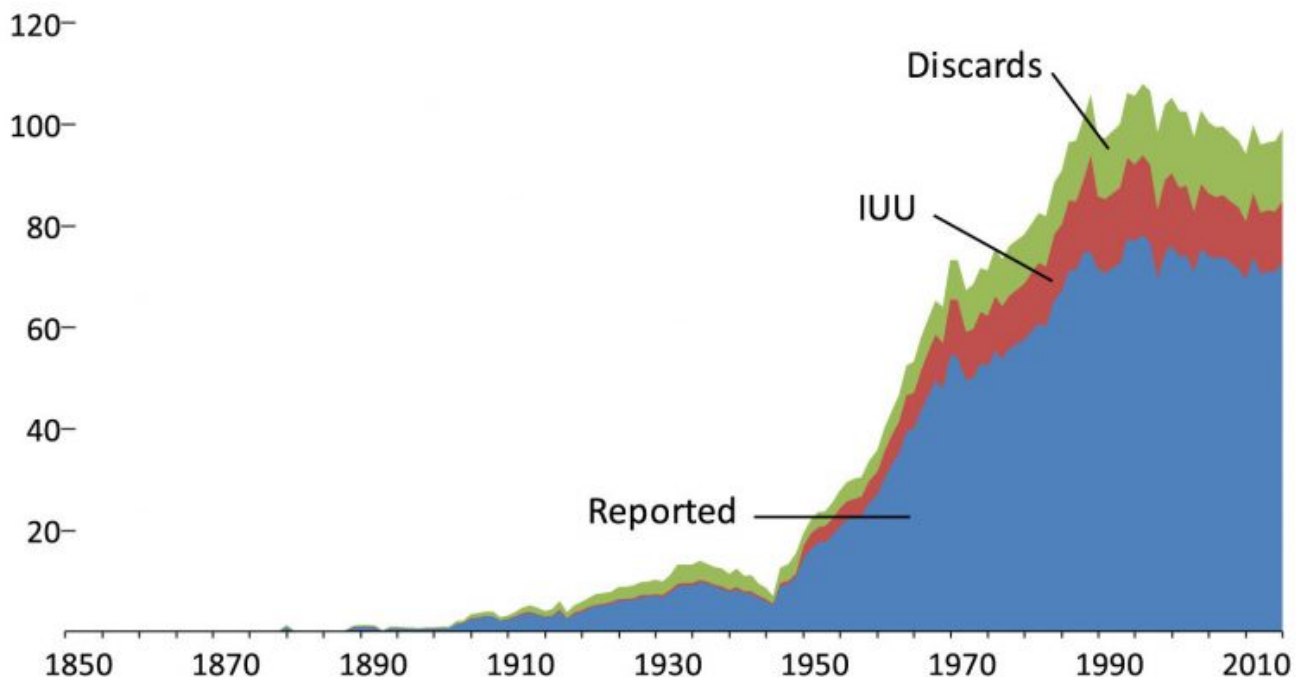


# Global Fisheries Beautifully Illustrated & Mapped

📅 May 3, 2018 ➤ Recent Research 💎 fishery science, open data, world fisheries

A new paper out in Marine Policy (\$) gorgeously illustrates global fisheries over the past 150 years. The figures tell the story and are cool as hell (spoiler—we saved the best for last):

**How much fish has been caught annually?**

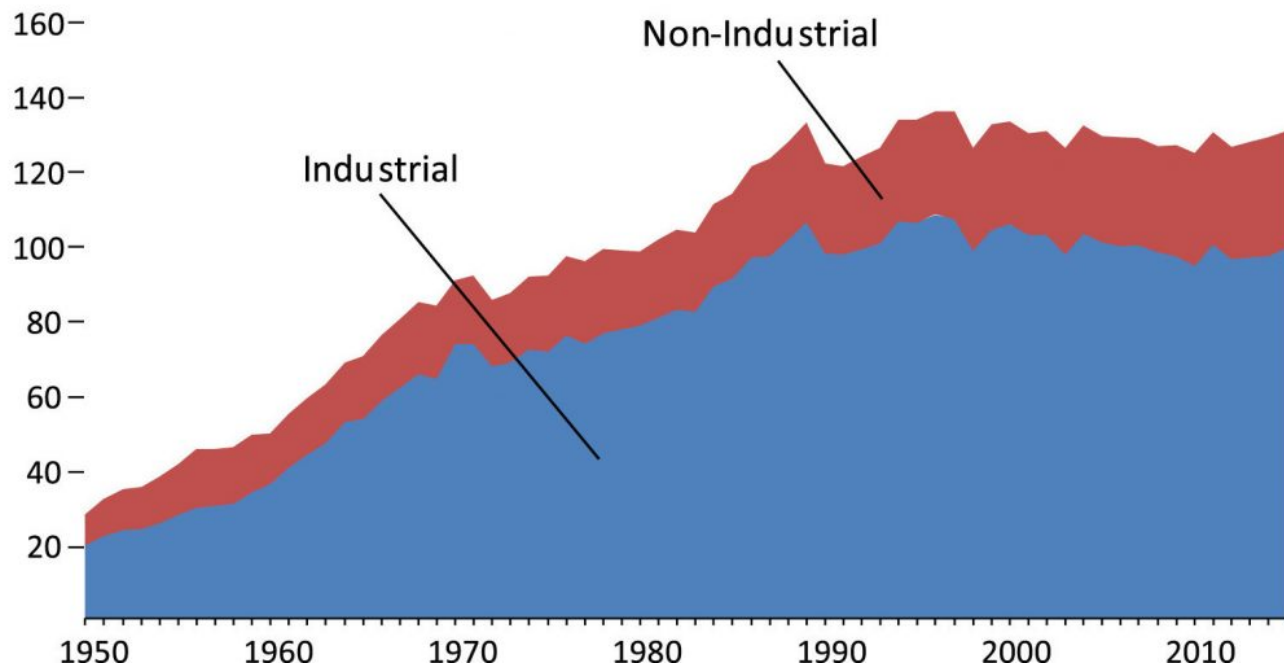


Estimated landings in industrial fishing over time. Global catch in million metric tons.

The surge in landings after 1950 is mostly due to the fact that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) started recording landings then; catches before 1950 were probably much higher than indicated in the figure, but data is sparse.

Global reported catch has been hovering around 80 million metric tons for the past 30+ years, with proportional amounts of discards and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

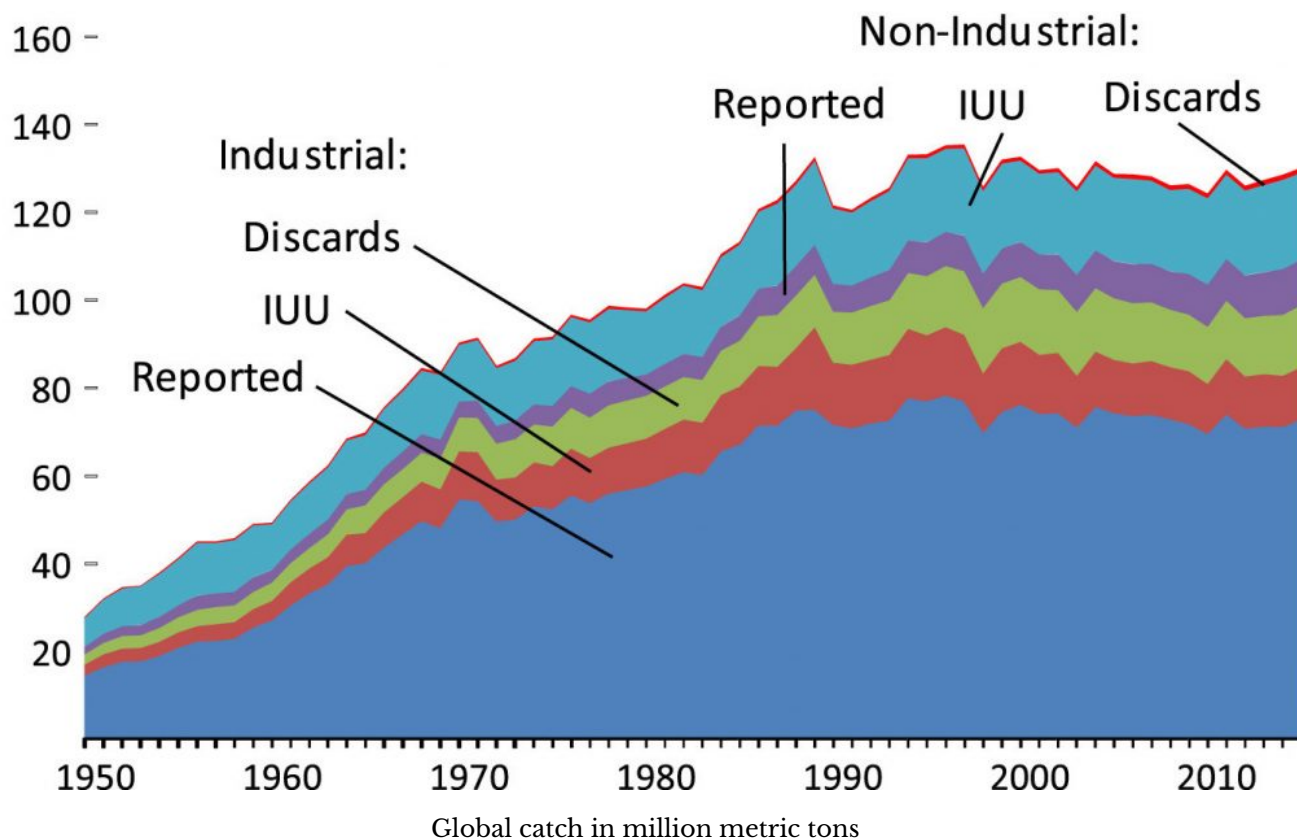
## Industrial fishing vs non-industrial



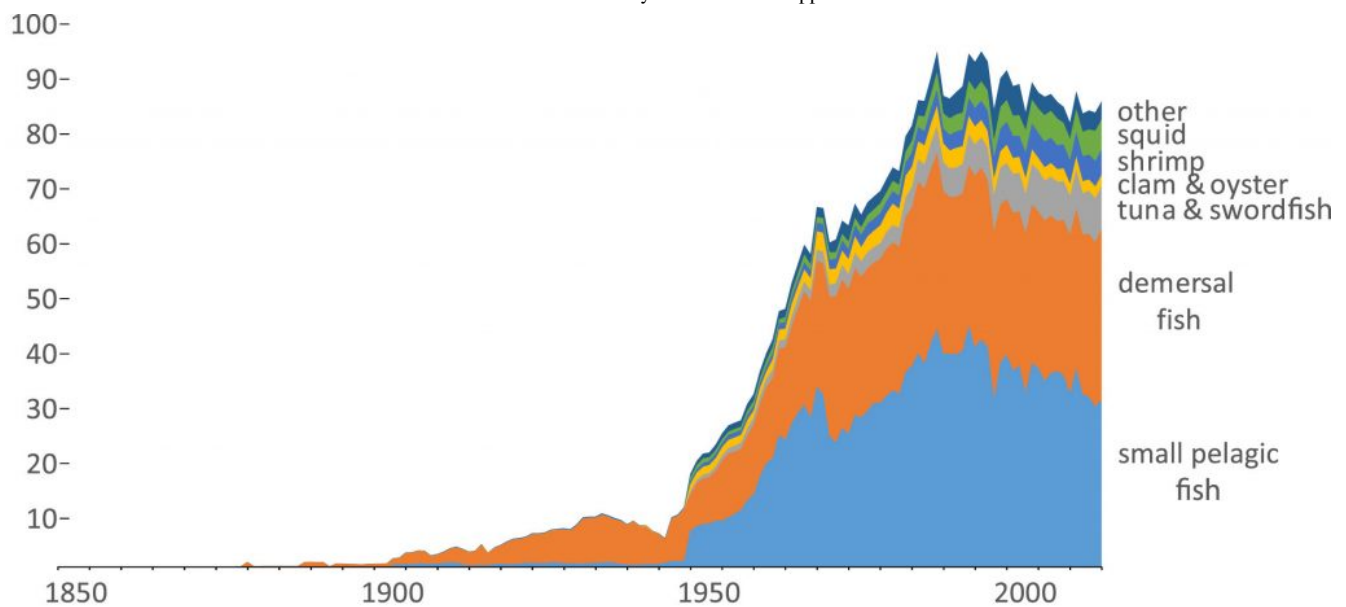
Estimated Industrial vs non-industrial catch since 1950. Global catch in million metric tons.

Non-industrial fishing includes subsistence, recreational, and some small-scale fishing.

## All fishing since 1950s



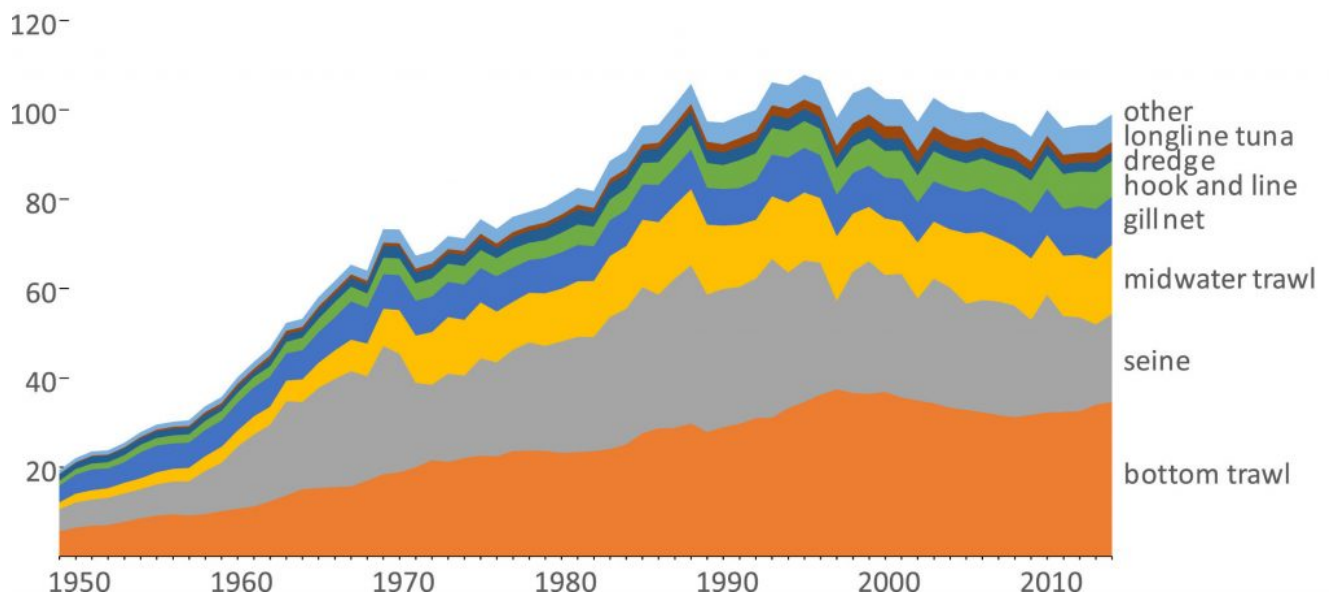
## What kind of fish is caught?



Major groups of fish caught since 1850. Global catch in million metric tons.

Much of the small pelagic fish like sardines and anchovy are turned into fishmeal to feed livestock and farmed fish. Demersal fish are fish that live near the bottom of the ocean like cod.

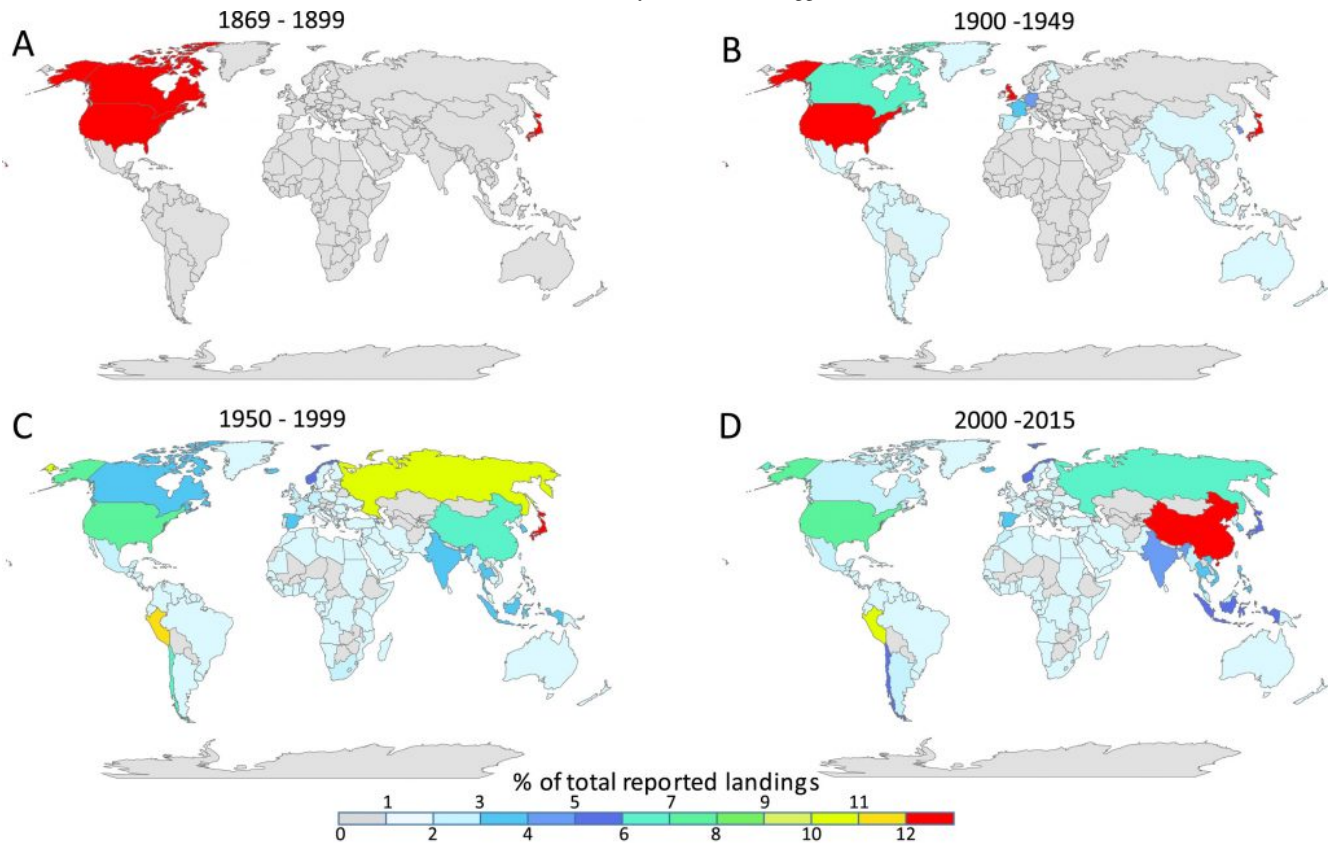
## How is fish caught?



Global catch by gear type in million metric tons.

For in-depth descriptions of each type of fishing gear, check out our [explainer in Seafood 101](#).

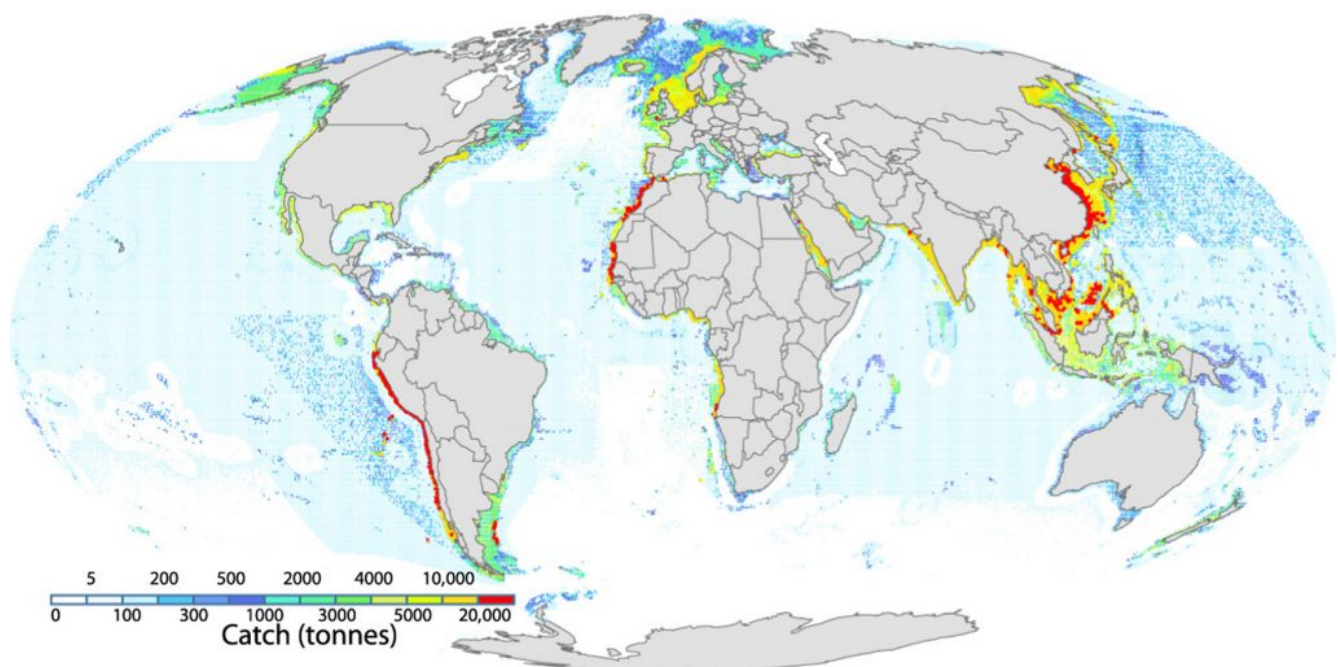
## Who is catching the fish?



Proportion of total global catch by country. E.g, modern day China catches the most fish.

This figure shows the emergence of Asia as a major player in global fisheries.

## Where is fish caught?

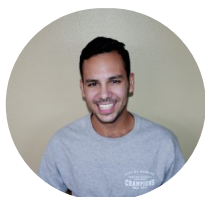


Geographical representation of where fish is caught. Areas shaded by amount of catch in metric tons.



This is one of the coolest figures we've ever seen. You can see that areas with lower catch (like the high seas) correlate to areas with lower primary productivity—we go into further detail about primary productivity and fisheries [here](#), in Seafood 101. A few weeks ago a different [paper](#) was published in Science that mapped the “footprint” of fisheries, essentially showing where fishing boats travel in the ocean. The paper was criticized for failing to show what the above figure shows clearly: how much fish is caught where. This is the true map of global fisheries.

The dataset used to create all these figures and maps are available to the public [here](#).



## Max Mossler

*Max is an expert in environmental perception & policy. He is the managing editor at Sustainable Fisheries UW.*



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## Your thoughts?

### 2 thoughts on “Global Fisheries Beautifully Illustrated & Mapped”



**JEREMIAH O'BRIEN**

MAY 5, 2018 AT 8:56 PM

Thanks for the great work. This brings a tremendous amount of data to our finger tips. We have passed this to many of the folks here in Morro Bay. Dr. Hilborn and UW have out done themselves.

Jeremiah O'Brien

MBCFO

[Reply](#)

**KIRSTY DORAN**

MAY 22, 2018 AT 3:55 AM

Fantastic Data especially Industrial fishing vs Non Industrial. I think TAS state government and Federal Govt in Australia should see this.

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