



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



5 June 2021

International Day for the Fight against  
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing



Get involved!

**SUSTAINABLE  
FISHING  
STARTS WITH US**

# Get involved!

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On 5 December 2017 the United Nations General Assembly, in its annual resolution on sustainable fisheries, proclaimed 5 June as the International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. The date marks a historic event, namely the day when the Agreement on Port State Measures entered into force as the first international treaty devoted to combat IUU fishing.

This international day is an important opportunity to highlight efforts taking place globally, regionally, and nationally to combat IUU fishing as one of the greatest threats to the sustainability of fisheries. We all have a role to play!



# What is IUU fishing?

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The term “IUU fishing” refers to fishing and related activities that operate outside the law and undermine sustainable fisheries. IUU fishing includes many types of illicit activities, for example, fishing without a license or authorization, not reporting or misreporting catches, fishing in prohibited areas and catching or selling prohibited species or fishing in areas not covered by a regulatory framework. IUU fishing takes place whenever fishing vessels do not operate in line with the requirements established by national, regional, and international regulatory schemes and management systems.

Read more here:

<http://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/what-is-iuu-fishing/en/>

## WHY IS COMBATTING IUU FISHING IMPORTANT?

IUU fishing:

- Puts the sustainability of fish stocks and the whole wellbeing of aquatic ecosystems in peril, as it involves uncontrolled harvesting of living resources and frequently involves the use of destructive fishing practices.
- It is often linked to unsafe and indecent working conditions, labour abuse, forced labour and slavery, together with human trafficking and other crimes.

Do you need any additional reason to combat it?

## FAO'S WORK TOWARDS COMBATTING IUU FISHING

Although putting an end to IUU fishing is a daunting challenge, governments have the international instruments, mechanisms, and tools in place which can be used to bring us closer to reaching this goal. These include:

- [FAO Agreement on Port State Measures \(in force since 2016\)](#) – prevents illicitly caught fish from entering the value chain through foreign ports.
- [FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance \(2014\)](#) – provides a comprehensive checklist and guidelines for flag States to implement their internationally agreed responsibilities in relation to flagging and controlling their fishing vessels.
- [FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes \(2017\)](#) – provides better and more harmonized traceability of fish along the value chain.
- [FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear \(2018\)](#) – are international guidelines for the marking of fishing gear, aimed at mitigating the problem of abandoned, lost or discarded gear, as well as combatting IUU fishing.
- [Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels \(2014\)](#) is a state-certified repository of vessels involved in fishing operations.



# Key facts

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- IUU fishing catches millions of tonnes of fish every year.
- It is estimated that IUU fishing accounts on average for about 20% (or 1 in 5) of the world's catch.
- Poaching ruthlessly into the oceans' resources, IUU fishing creates unfair competition, especially with coastal communities and small-scale fishers that go by the rules and regulations, threatening their food security and livelihoods.
- IUU fishing takes advantage of corrupt administrations and exploits weak management regimes, in particular those that lack the capacity and resources for effective monitoring, control, surveillance, and enforcement.
- IUU fishing puts the sustainability of fish stocks and the wellbeing of marine ecosystems in peril.
- IUU fishing runs against the principles set out in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other international instruments which define standards aiming to achieve sustainability.
- IUU fishing, especially when it involves certain fishing techniques or operations, is often linked to indecent working conditions, labour abuse, forced labour, trafficking, child labour and slavery.



# Calls to action

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**MANY CONSUMERS** seldom make the connection between IUU fishing, its threat to the sustainable use of aquatic resources and to conservation goals, and its substantial negative impacts on the world oceans and other aquatic ecosystems, trade, and coastal communities.

Buying fish products originating from IUU fishing even unknowingly, means indirectly supporting unsustainable practices and the often-criminal activities behind them. The consumer's choice is important in the market: fishers engaged in IUU fishing practices should have no market!

## **WHAT CAN THEY DO?**

- The fish or fish products you buy may be derived from IUU fishing. Make an informed choice when buying fish including by:
  - Knowing where the fish comes from (fishing areas).
  - Knowing fishing techniques used to fish (Europe).
  - Avoid buying fish that appears on a [list of endangered species](#).
- Replace overfished and endangered species with sustainable alternatives.
- For seasonal fresh fish, eat it when in season.

**GOVERNMENTS** have a primary responsibility in combatting IUU fishing but we, as consumers, also have a crucial role to play to put an end to IUU fishing and in working together to protect, manage and conserve our oceans and our future.

## **WHAT CAN THEY DO?**

- Strengthen the regulation, monitoring, control, surveillance of fishing operations within national waters and in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- Develop national educational and communication strategies to guide consumers on their buying habits of fish and fishery products, favouring sustainable and IUU fishing-free choices.
- Improve traceability of fish products along the value chain (including labelling).
- Strengthen port controls to combat IUU fishing (PSMA), share your vessel list. (Global Record), know the benefits and the importance of closing your ports to IUU fishing.



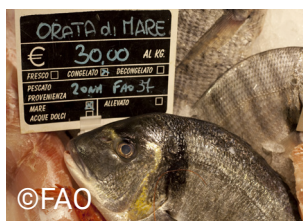
# How to participate

Here are some ideas to help you observe the International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing.



## ORGANISE AN EVENT

Take a fresh approach by considering different activities or new formats for events – either by going digital or respecting any physical distancing measures. For example, talk shows, roundtables or public lectures with a focus on the impacts IUU fishing might have on oceans or the coastal communities of your country.



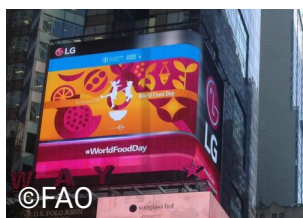
## PARTNER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Involve private restaurants and retailers that pursue sustainability as part of their corporate responsibilities, and partner to maximize the outreach of your messages. Restaurants and retailers are a privileged channel to reach out to consumers.



## GET THE MEDIA INVOLVED

Share IUU fishing knowledge through radio interviews, talk shows or media briefings to illustrate positive stories as a result of the PSMA application in your country.



## INVOLVE YOUR TOWN OR CITY

Approach municipalities, outdoor advertisers, transportation companies (e.g. city metro, buses or trains), shopping malls, cinemas or airports now, to place our visuals.



## USE OUR VISUAL

You can produce a range of promotional materials using our free graphics available in the [International Day for the Fight Against IUU Fishing 2021 Asset Bank](#). Remember to use our visual as much as possible across events and activities, even if online!



## SPREAD THE WORD

Join the campaign online by sharing our [free material](#) on digital channels. You can also publish photos, messages, or videos to show your actions to combat IUU fishing! You can also identify and engage with local and national digital influencers in the food sector (bloggers, celebrities, public figures, photographers, chefs, experts) to amplify our messages.

Let us know your plans and send us photos and/or videos of your events to [FAO-IUU@fao.org](mailto:FAO-IUU@fao.org)





# Communication materials

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Multilingual communication materials to promote the International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing will be available very soon, so stay tuned as the resources are updated on the [International Day for the Fight Against IUU Fishing 2021 Asset Bank](#). These materials can be downloaded and shared easily with external partners or providers.

To share our content on social media, have a look at our [Trello Board](#) and remember to tag @FAO in your posts with one of the accounts below:

## [Facebook](#)

**Twitter** @fao, @faoarabic, @faoenespanol, @faoenfrancais, @faorussian, @faofish

## [Instagram](#)

## [YouTube](#)

## [Weibo](#)

**WeChat:** Search “FAOChina” on WeChat

## [TikTok](#)

## Contact us

Thank you for promoting the International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing! Do you have any ideas you would like to share with us? We want to hear from you. Contact us at: [FAO-IUU@fao.org](mailto:FAO-IUU@fao.org)

[www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/fight-iuu-fishing](http://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/fight-iuu-fishing)  
[#FightIUUFishing](#) [#SaveOurOcean](#)



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