

Conservation and Science Program



Marine Fisheries Strategy Brief

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's ocean conservation work focuses on achieving a greater balance to how we use our oceans. We envision healthy oceans that support a diversity and abundance of marine life which can endure pressures over time, providing people and communities with food, stable livelihoods and social, economic and cultural benefits.

The Marine Fisheries subprogram works to transform the global seafood market to incentivize fishers and fish farmers to adopt responsible practices to curb overfishing, the most immediate threat to ocean health.

The Challenge

Covering more than 70 percent of Earth's surface, our oceans are home to more than 230,000 species that provide food and a way of life for people around the world.

But, there are serious threats to our oceans, leading to a drastic decline in our global fish supply. Overfishing is one of the primary reasons for this devastating decline.

While there has been an increase in demand for sustainable seafood and progress in reducing overfishing in some parts of the world, estimates still show that more than 40 percent of fisheries have crashed or are overfished, resulting in more than \$50 billion in global economic losses per year.

Allowing fish populations to rebound is a critical component of restoring our world's ocean health. With one billion people who depend on fish for protein and more than 200 million people employed in fishing and related industries, businesses have a role to play in incentivizing better fisheries practices to meet this growing demand.

We envision a marketplace where businesses go beyond just buying and selling sustainable seafood. In this marketplace, industry leaders set a high bar for sustainability, and stronger government policies lead to healthy, well-managed fisheries.

Our Strategy

The Packard Foundation is working to catalyze the recovery of fisheries worldwide by transforming global seafood markets to align economic and conservation incentives that help fisheries recover and thrive. We aim to achieve this goal by creating demand for sustainable seafood that incentivizes improvements in fisheries management and aquaculture production.

Our target is to have one-third of the volume of wild-captured seafood coming from well-managed, sustainable fisheries or from fisheries in the process of rebuilding by 2022.

As consumers and seafood companies demand sustainable seafood, it encourages fisheries and aquaculture managers to improve their production practices. High market demand for sustainable seafood also empowers fishermen to fish more sustainably so that they can sell their fish in these markets.

Through this strategy, we can transform the way fish are caught and farmed to create healthy and sustainable global fisheries that provide a long-term supply of sustainable seafood.

Our Approach

To be successful, we need to bring together key players to support solutions that meet human, conservation, and business needs. The Foundation is creating demand for sustainable seafood in three core ways:

1. *Advancing Business Leadership on Sustainable Seafood*

We aim to have three-quarters of major U.S. and Canadian retailers strengthen their commitment to sustainable seafood by 2017. To achieve this, we support organizations that encourage North American retail and supply companies to buy and sell seafood that is either:

- Certified by a credible third party, or assessed by a rigorous, scientifically based rating program.
- Demonstrating progress in a fishery improvement project.

To assess whether specific fisheries meet the above sustainable seafood criteria, the Foundation works with our grantee organizations and their partners to use the following industry standards and definitions:

- To assess **third-party certification systems**, we use the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance's [credibility principles](#). The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council currently meet these standards.
- Monterey Bay Aquarium's [Seafood Watch](#) program uses **rigorous and scientifically based assessments** for its seafood recommendations and ratings.
- The Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions developed an [accepted definition](#) of a **fishery improvement project**. Several new models of fishery improvement projects are also being tested.

2. *Improving Fisheries and Fish Farms*

We invest in programs that engage seafood companies—such as retailers, distributors, and suppliers—and empower fisheries and fish farms to address environmental and management challenges. Our efforts include leveraging credible certification programs as a tool to restore fisheries, especially by creating incentives for good environmental performance; and supporting fishery and aquaculture improvement projects that help rebuild fisheries and farms. In turn, this increases the supply of environmentally responsible seafood products, which enables companies to deliver on their sustainable seafood commitments.

3. *Attracting New Financial Investments*

The Foundation is building a network of donors and investors to fund fishery and aquaculture business efforts that expand the supply of sustainable seafood and encourage industry innovations that result in environmental, social and financial benefits. Through educational outreach and events, we expect that new

connections made among investors, seafood businesses, and ocean experts will result in new investments, helping drive growth in the sustainable seafood sector.

Where We Work

Our work is focused on supporting fisheries improvements worldwide while maintaining demand in North American seafood markets.

In addition, the Foundation is currently exploring:

- Increase consumer demand for sustainable seafood among retailers in Japan.
- Enable seafood to be traced through the full supply chain and back to its original source, even in major processing countries such as China.
- Reform policies and change business practices to enable growth in the tuna population in the Western and Central Pacific.
- Identify strategies to support increased capacity, leadership, and infrastructure of the marine conservation and sustainable seafood sector in Asia.

Progress

Over the past several years, the sustainable seafood movement has gained significant momentum.

Through the work of conservation organizations, advocates, and business leaders, the majority of the top 20 supermarkets in North America now have commitments to source sustainable seafood.

This increased market demand has helped fisheries and fish farms better address environmental challenges, allowing them to sell their products in these markets. To date, 10 percent of global fisheries by volume are MSC-certified, and an additional 12 percent of fisheries by volume are engaged in credible improvement projects.

We believe these improvements will lead to restored fisheries that, in turn, create healthier oceans that all people depend on.

What We Don't Fund

We fund market-based approaches. In general, we do not fund scientific research or education.

To Learn More

For more information about the Packard Foundation's Marine Fisheries Subprogram and grantmaking, visit www.packard.org/marine-fisheries or contact our team:

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